

## Public Involvement Overview

September 2009

	Month
Hotline Calls*	50
Comment Sense Submissions/Inquiries**	44
FOIA requests	0
Speakers Bureau	
Presentation/Events	21
Neighborhood Boards	8
TAC	0
Community meetings	1

\*Calls directly to the hotline 808.566.2299

\*\* Includes all comments/inquiries via Project website from the end of the official DEIS comment period on February 6, 2009 to the end of the month.

## September 2009 Website and Hotline Comments

<b>September 2009</b>		
<b>Submission Method</b>	<b>Submission Date</b>	<b>Submission Content/Notes</b>
Hotline	09/02/2009	Maps sent to Ms. Bartlett via USPS 09-03-09 as well as via FTP. Ms. Bartlett was given Sarah Blane's info (ROW).
Website	09/02/2009	Greetings from the City of Detroit. We are interested in finding out the price of your Environmental Impact Statement. I am contacting your Office on behalf of Mr. Tim Roseboom who works for the City of Detroit's Dept. of Transportation and we are on board for the Light Rail Transit in our City. Tim Roseboom City of Detroit - DDOT Planning and Marketing Div. 1301 E. Warren Ave. Detroit, MI 48207 1-313-833-1196
Website	09/03/2009	Can you please provide me with a link or copy of the "HHCTCP Alternatives Screening Memorandum (DTS 2006a)"? This is cited in the DEIS. I have tried to find it online but have been unsuccessful in locating it. Thank You!
Website	09/03/2009	Rail transit will enhance our quality of life, protect our environment, reduce our energy consumption and improve our economy. Go Rail Go. Let's get movin!
Website	09/04/2009	I am reporting on the Neighborhood Commission's FY2009 and need infor for the City's Annual Report. Can you tell me if a presentation of the rail system was made in FY2009 to all 33 NB? If not all, most? 50%?
Website	09/07/2009	I think the stations are very nicely designed, I am for the transit, but I don't see any solar panels anywhere, they could be used for lights and screens or anything else. For the Olympics game in Athens, they uses street lamps powered with wind and solar energy, why not using them? If you google, you will find plenty of them. We have to show the world, that Hawaii is in the 21st century. Thanks
Website	09/07/2009	what company will be building this rail.
Website	09/08/2009	I was hoping to receive more information on upcoming station workshops. I am currently beginning a doctoral research project for the future Chinatown station and was wondering if there will be a workshop for that station sometime in the next year. Please let me know asap! Thank you.
Website	09/08/2009	We are students from the UH School of architecture, researching development possibilities on a lot in manoa. We were wondering if any zoning codes were going to change in this district, and what they would change to, possibly from residential to commercial? Thank you!
Website	09/16/2009	We make plastic railroad ties. We have over 75,000 ties in track at Chjcago Transit, both elevated and ballast. We also have ties in at Washington, Metro North, Long Island, and Bart. Our ties do not contain foreign materials, they are all plastic. 100%GREEN
Website	09/17/2009	Greetings, I am considering relocating to Oahu in the near future and wish to be near a transit stops so that I may make use of the system in the future. Please send a list of the exact locations of the proposed stations and terminals. Thank you, Dr. Frank Kardasz email: kardasz@kardasz.org
Website	09/18/2009	I'd like to know how much was spent on the 4-color flyer I just received from Newsletter c/o Dept of Trans.Svs to tell us what we've already read in the papers? Also who is your advertising agency or was this produced in-house? Also what is the distribution & at what cost? Would appreciate hearing from you. Thanks!

Website	09/23/2009	I wish to obtain the ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS DVD for a presentation I am doing for a MBA Economics Course Oct. 7th. My phone number if not listed above is (808) 295-4217, thank you for your time.
Website	09/26/2009	May I see a detailed map of the area between Ward and Ala Moana Shopping Center. The map on the website is not clear in that area. Mahalo
Website	09/28/2009	Hi, how many trains are going to be in use for this system?
Website	09/29/2009	There was a video at the senior fair this past weekend. Is it available online?



September 1, 2009

## Bill targets pungent riders of Honolulu's transit system

*By Gordon Y.K. Pang  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

Transit riders in Honolulu better clean up their act.

The City Council is considering a bill that will make it illegal to "bring onto transit property odors that unreasonably disturb others or interfere with their use of the transit system, whether such odors arise from one's person, clothes, articles, accompanying animal or any other source."

Councilman Rod Tam, a co-sponsor of the bill, explained why it is needed:

"As we become more inundated with people from all over the world, their way of taking care of their health is different. Some people, quite frankly, do not take a bath every day and therefore they may be offensive in terms of their odor."

There are existing city laws and rules covering passenger behavior on city buses. But council members Tam and Nestor Garcia, the introducers of the bill, thought it was important for the city to consider passenger behavior as Honolulu prepares to build its first commuter rail line.

Tam and Garcia lifted the language pertaining to odors from the King County (Seattle) code of conduct that covers its public transportation system.

Other prohibitions in the bill include spitting, urinating or being intoxicated.

Tam last year unsuccessfully sought to pass a bill addressing the issue of sleeping at bus stop benches, and this year's bill is considered a more comprehensive take on that concern.

Tam said last year's bill failed after opponents wrongly characterized it as an anti-homeless measure when it was meant to ensure the safety and comfort of bus passengers.

As for the odor prohibition raised in the new bill, Tam said passengers have complained to him about the sometimes ill-smelling conditions of city buses.

Garcia acknowledged the challenges with regulating smells and other conduct.

"It is, as you know, very difficult to regulate human behavior, but I thought it was a good idea to get the discussion going," he said.

Garcia stressed that the bill's language is up for discussion. Council Transportation Chairman Gary Okino said he may ask to have the bill deferred from his committee due to several concerns raised, including the odor prohibition.

"There's the whole issue about at what point does it become illegal," Okino said, noting that city attorneys are researching the matter. "How smelly does a person have to be? Just to base things on smell, I just don't feel good about that."

Concerns about the odor prohibition and other issues may extinguish Bill 59-09, which proposes a

"passenger code of conduct" for riders of the city transit system.

## **aclu concerned**

The local chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union and council member Charles Djou said they are worried the bill is onerous and too broadly worded.

"We are obviously concerned about laws that are inherently vague, where a reasonable person cannot know what conduct is prohibited," said Daniel Gluck, of ACLU Hawaii. "Vague laws — like the proposed 'odor' ban — open the door to discriminatory enforcement based on an officer's individual prejudices."

Djou said the bill raises constitutionality issues. "We would like everybody to be polite on city mass transit and I think that's a good idea," Djou said. "But we're not a police state."

Under the bill, a person found in violation may be ordered to leave transit property and issued a summons or citation by a police officer. If convicted, a person could be fined up to \$500, spend up to six months in jail, or be both fined and jailed.

J. Roger Morton, president and chief executive of Oahu Transit Services, which operates TheBus, said that when there are odor complaints, bus drivers are told to "get some assistance" by contacting a supervisor, radio controller or police officer who decides whether a person should be removed.

Morton said that in general, he supports a passenger code of conduct. What's to be included, he said, is up to the city Department of Transportation Services and the council, he said.

The bill will be heard at 9 a.m. Thursday by the Council Transportation Committee.

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September 2, 2009

## Honolulu Vote on Banning Bus Odors Delayed

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Filed at 8:17 p.m. ET

HONOLULU (AP) -- A vote on a Honolulu [City Council](#) proposal that would bar people with offensive odors from public transit vehicles is being delayed.

The proposed ordinance would make it illegal to have "odors that unreasonably disturb others or interfere with their use of the transit system."

Councilman Nestor Garcia said Wednesday the proposal has some technical problems that need to be addressed.

One of those is language that would allow city police to charge a violator with criminal trespass. Garcia says only the state Legislature can pass criminal statutes.

He says testimony will be heard at the council's Transportation Committee hearing on Thursday at city hall. But he says a vote will be rescheduled for a future date.

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LETTERS

An "In my back yard issue"

SEP 2, 2009 | [SHARE](#)

I live and work near the city's proposed "Housing First" project on River Street at Vineyard for 40–100 chronically homeless individuals. We need to look at the potential use of this property and the impact this project has on the over 9,000 people who live in the immediate vicinity. The Nuuanu Stream contains many natural and cultural assets. If this property is developed for mixed use, it can anchor the River Street's businesses—from the planned rail stop at Nimitz to Queen Liliuokalani Gardens. We should use this property to increase economic activity. It will help small businesses in the area as well as increase the City and County of Honolulu and the State of Hawaii's tax base for decades.

*Sandra Pohl Honolulu*

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# NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION

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COVER STORY

# Master work

*The City and County of Honolulu is preparing to unveil a new master plan for bicycling.*

RAGNAR CARLSON

SEP 2, 2009 | [SHARE](#)    



## THINK 350

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On the first page of the first draft of the new Oahu Bike Plan, scheduled to be finalized sometime next month, the authors crank the vision thing about as far as such a thing can be cranked. “It is time,” they intone, “to promote the practice of Kamehameha I’s Law of the Splintered Paddle—the right of all people to be safe on our roadways.”

Elsewhere in the introduction, there is mention of Honolulu’s “great potential” as a bicycling haven. Many similar, seemingly grandiose phrases abound.

It’s hard to reconcile that kind of language with what appears to many observers to be the current state of bicycling in Honolulu. Cyclists and non-riders alike frequently complain—many of them to this

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newspaper—about unsafe roads, clueless drivers and other menaces. Anecdotally, too, it's easy to see that bicycling ranks somewhere behind “hitching a ride” and “in my canoe” as a mode of transportation in Honolulu.

It turns out appearances can be deceiving, for bicycling and bicycling master plans alike. Honolulu, while not on par with European biking meccas or college towns on the mainland, is an active bicycling community by U.S. standards, with a bike-to-work rate three times the national average and a healthy dose of cycling-friendly city programs. And as the City prepares to integrate public comments and formally release the plan in October, many cycling advocates are supportive of what they say appears to be a positive—and pragmatic—step toward a more bicycle-friendly island.

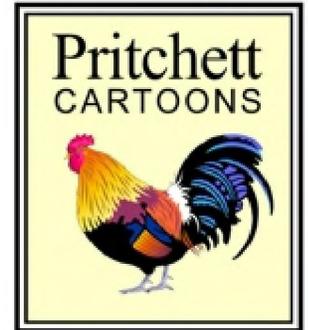
### A pragmatic plan

Honolulu is not Amsterdam. It's not Davis, Calif., the most bike-positive community in the United States, where more than 14 percent of commuters ride their bikes. Oahu has followed the same transportation trends as most U.S. cities since the early 20th Century—a tiny bit of bicycling, a little bit of mass transit and a massive helping of personal automobiles. That balance, or imbalance, creates a challenge for transportation planners looking to improve bicycling convenience and safety.

Chief among the major elements of the Oahu Bike Plan are its emphases of connectivity and feasibility. Those goals stem in large part from lessons learned after the release of the 1999 master plan, the most recent major document devoted to bicycling issues. That plan, widely admired for its ambition and vision of a cycling mecca, bogged down when it came time to fund its ambitious projects. A centerpiece was an unbroken, dedicated cycling path winding from Kahala to 'Aiea, one that never got off the drawing board.

“The 1999 plan I think is a very good plan,” said City Director of Transportation Wayne Yoshioka, whose department was responsible for

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the creation of the new draft. "And if all of that could be built at once, that's fine. But typically plans don't get built that way." When Bicycling Coordinator Chris Sayers and the department's outside consulting team began focusing in earnest on the new plan in early 2008, deteriorating economic conditions made it even clearer that funding would become an issue.

"So, we wanted an emphasis on having a pragmatic plan," Yoshioka says.

This time around, planners avoided high-cost dream projects like circle-island bike paths and focused on what could be done to improve connectivity, planning jargon for making sure bikeways align to form clear routes usable for getting from point a to point b.

"We had to make sure we don't have pockets of great cycling facilities unconnected to one another," said Sayers.

## **Bicycles for miles**

The City's new vision calls for nearly 600 miles of new bikeways, a dramatic expansion on the 117 miles that currently exist. The proposal is most dramatic for the 'Ewa plain, with bicycling lanes as well as storage facilities deeply integrated with the forthcoming rail transit network.

The prominence of 'Ewa-side communities in the new plan is a prime example of how the planners sought to ensure feasibility. Sayers and Yoshioka say that one of their main strategies was to piggyback new bikeways onto already-funded projects, thus dramatically reducing costs. For the proposed new rail stations in Central and West Oahu, that means building bike storage facilities and bike paths into the blueprints.

Yoshioka also says developers in the area, including the Department of Hawaiian Homelands with its Kapolei Two project, are already beginning to build bikeways into new developments from the ground up.

Other new cycling routes may be funded at least in part through a new national planning initiative known as "Complete Streets."

"The idea," Yoshioka said, "Is that all new construction and reconstruction is supposed to take all modes [of transportation] into account." While

federal funding through Complete Streets has not yet fully materialized, Yoshioka says he's hopeful. "Complete Streets is a goal," he said. "It's logical to follow that up. I think the success is going to be that the [federal and state Complete Streets statutes don't] say 'we're going to retrofit the world.' But when the opportunities present themselves, we're going to integrate all modes of transportation, and bicycling included." The piggybacking strategy is already in effect elsewhere on the island, including in the nearly completed resurfacing of Keolu Drive in Kailua/Enchanted Lake.

"They were already putting down new pavement. You're going to have to put down new lane markers anyway," said Yoshioka. "We wanted to use it as an opportunity."

By simply putting paint down in a different place, the City was able to create a new bike path, at zero added expense.

"We changed the road from four lanes to two," said Sayers. The change allowed the City to connect almost all of winding Keolu Drive with an undivided bike lane. "Our traffic engineering division evaluated the plan to make sure it wouldn't negatively impact traffic. We've still got some issues around the shopping center there, but soon virtually all of that road will be connected."

Most of the bike routes in the master plan involve new lanes, not the paths many cyclists crave, an outcome born of necessity, planners say.

"In a built-out city like this one, you'd like to have separate paths, but it's just very difficult and very expensive to accomplish that," said Yoshioka.

While some in the cycling community have expressed frustration with the lack of paths, the Transportation department is confident that the incremental approach will lead to greater success sooner.

For now, the plan is to augment the hundreds of miles of new bike paths with an increased emphasis on public awareness and education programs designed to improve both ridership and safety. There are a number of physical infrastructure projects—clearer route markings, safety-

enhancing “bike boxes” to facilitate turns at major intersections— in the plan, but Sayers and Yoshioka point to evidence nationally that the best way to increase bicycling safety is to increase bicycle ridership.

“It’s based in reality. We’d like to be Amsterdam overnight,” said Sayers, “but it’s not going to happen. It’s going to be more of a snowball effect, where more and more people become aware of biking. Somebody sees somebody they know bicycling and thinks ‘I’m gonna give it a try.’ And pretty soon it becomes more accepted.”

The draft version of the Oahu Bike Plan is available at [[oahubikeplan.org](http://oahubikeplan.org)]. While the official public comment period has closed, Honolulu Bicycling Coordinator Chris Sayers says he welcomes questions, and comments about bicycling in Honolulu. He can be reached at [email: [csayers](mailto:csayers)].

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## Spokes-people

Other voices on the Oahu Bike Plan, and on bicycling in Honolulu.

### Charles Djou

*Honolulu City Council member*

*Djou recently introduced a bill calling for a “three-foot rule” when autos pass bicycles on the road.*

“The three-foot rule has been adopted and implemented in numerous other places. My bill is modeled after a Colorado law. The current law states that a motor vehicle driver must pass a bicyclist “safely,” which basically means “successfully.” In other words, as long as you don’t hit the guy, you passed safely. We want to make it easier to enforce biking safety.

I do hear from constituents about bicycling issues. I think there are a lot of people who want to ride but aren’t sure how to start. I think the new plan is great. There are a lot of good things in it, but the City is broke. While it’s a good plan, realistically I don’t see much of it getting implemented because of budget problems. My rule accomplishes a lot of

the same goals without enormous taxpayer expenditures.

I hope [the plan will be implemented in part]. There are good things in there that are not new expenditures, but anything to do with new construction—realistically it'll be a least a few years. But every little bit helps when it comes to improving the quality of our bicycling options.”

## **Mitchell Nakagawa**

*Executive Director, Hawaii Bicycling League*

Looking at this plan compared to 1999, I think it's a very good plan. It looks at bicycling more holistically, in the sense that we're looking at not only structural and engineering issues, but the education, the enforcement, the role of advocates. Multiple things stand out in the new draft: one is the acknowledgement that we have a very fragmented bicycling network now. Placing an emphasis on connectivity existing bike routes, and integrating them with rail—that's good.

For many of us, connectivity is the greatest source of frustration. Looking at commuting: we don't have an east or windward to downtown route. Look at signage: the routes exists, but they aren't always intuitive.

A general comment about the draft plan: in addition to working on the implementation and ensuring funding for all of these projects, we need to have some way to reach out to the broader community who [is] unaware. Something akin to a citizens guide. I think the city does a good job while the plan is being drafted, but I think there needs to be more ongoing communication about cycling.

[The new plan] is an improvement for two main reasons. One, it encompasses the entire island. Two, it includes all the other influences, like education, outreach, employer support.

I think the plan is very ambitious. They identified lanes, paths routes to be built. That in itself is a very bold step. The key here is to make sure the funding is there at the time of implementation, and that's going to take immense public and political will.

Is it currently safe to bicycle around here? I think that there are options for all types of bicyclists. Still, urban Honolulu is not bicycle friendly in the sense that is defined nationally.

As soon as people begin seeing more bicyclists on the streets, similar to themselves, their uncles and aunties, it becomes a different equation. The single greatest barrier is either a lack of awareness or the perception that bicycling isn't safe.

Overall, I think the community is ready for improved conditions and the decades of work by advocates are about to come to fruition.

## **Frank Smith**

*Owner of Island Triathlon and Bike*

I have spent time looking at bike plans...my own opinion is that they're kind of waste of time. I've seen them since 1978, I think this is the fourth one, and pretty much nothing happens. The real revolution in cycling will come when people learn to cope with the streets the way they are rather than waiting for some magical construction project we're never going to see.

I vehemently object to people who say it's unsafe to bicycle here. I don't think it is. I think if you acquire the appropriate skills that it's reasonably safe. I'm exhibit A.

You have to be totally aware of your environment. It's not the time to zone out with your sound system. You have to be on full alert. You need to be visible, typically in the daytime wearing brighter colors, lights at night. Where you position yourself in the traffic is a huge help. People think it's safer to be far away from cars, they hug the curb or ride on the sidewalk. Sidewalks are terribly dangerous. I'd like to see an educational and an enforcement program for the sidewalks.

There's plenty of drivers that violate our right to share the road. I attribute my success to being able to anticipate every stupid thing that a car can do, so that you're prepared for it. I teach this class called Traffic Kills 101. Really, the answer is to teach the bikers how to cope.

Oahu is very accommodating, with the exception of the streets being bumpy. I really point my finger at the State. Kamehameha Highway, on the Windward side and the North Shore. It's like the Incredible Shrinking shoulder, where you have sand build up, then vegetation, then the shoulder disappears.

I think bike lanes are passe. I don't think they help at all. They become a debris magnet, It makes cyclists and motorists behave contrary to the regular rules of the road. If you're making a right turn, and there's no bike lane, they merge safely. With the bike lane they don't know what to do, so they accelerate or cut you off.

The biggest issue is that we just don't have a lot of room. We just can't carve paths out like they can on the mainland.

Everybody has to follow the same rules. It's a dance. It's not a war. We're not fighting each other. Aside from a very small number of sociopathic people, you know, there's jerks out there, but the vast majority of motorists are accommodating.

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### FEATURES

#### DEVELOPMENT

# There's something about Hoopili

*Proposed 'Ewa development defies snap judgements*

KEVIN O'LEARY

SEP 2, 2009 |



IMAGE: RAGNAR CARLSON

Last Friday's daylong meeting of the State Land Use Commission, to rule on a petition by mega-developer D.R. Horton-Schuler to change the current zoning on 1,500 acres of prime 'Ewa farmland from agriculture to mixed-use residential and commercial, was anything but boring.

Here's Kioni Dudley, intervenor in the case, whom some have called the leader of the opposition: "In the beginning, over two years ago, this was just a gut feeling I had." Now, it is more than a feeling, as Mr. Dudley—and everyone else with a sore gut over the proposed zone change—has picked up some unexpected allies, in the form of at least three State agencies and several local politicians.

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Listen to Bryan Yee of the Attorney General's office, speaking for the State Office of Planning: "We now know that if the petition [for the zoning change] goes through, H-1 will be a parking lot from Waiawa to Makakilo. And the petitioner (Schuler) isn't proposing any solutions."

Or State Senator Clayton Hee: "I'm old enough to remember Waiahole-Waikane." (The windward valleys were slated for a "second city"-sized development back in the early '70s.) "That was a planned development too. Can you imagine what Waiahole and Waikane would look like today? We would have Hawaii Kai on the windward side."

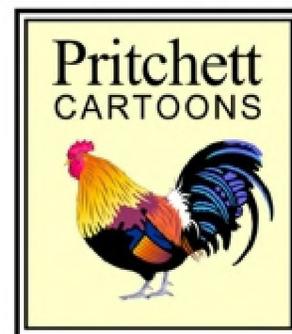
Hee went on to say that he co-sponsored a piece of legislation that proposed a 100-year moratorium on any changes to land currently zoned agricultural, in two senate districts. "Since it was (Senator) Bobby Bunda who was with me on the bill, it would have kept all the (ag land) from Kaneohe to Wahiawa as it is, in perpetuity. Hey, we knew it wouldn't pass. But it was a sign of how important this issue is in this day and age that we had a couple of other senators actually sign on."

It does make one wonder what it really means for a piece of land to be zoned agricultural. As it turns out, not much. The Hoopili acreage, for example, has never had another zoning designation. For decades the parcel was plowed and planted in cane by Oahu Sugar, the land owned, as was much of the 'Ewa plain, by Campbell Estate (recently dissolved, and instantly reconstituted as James Campbell Company LLC, according to their website "a nationally diversified real estate company.") A few years back Schuler Homes paid Campbell several hundred million for the parcel, with their eyes firmly focused on the city's 'Ewa Development Plan, which called for the ag-zoned Hoopili parcel to be eventually sown with 12,000 houses.

All the developer had to do was to get the State LUC to change the zoning, something they do all the time. No problem.

Not so fast. Enter Kioni Dudley. Makakilo resident and long time critic of 'Ewa development, Dudley has intervenor status in the current LUC hearings. An intervenor, according to the Commission's rules, can be any interested party from the public. The status brings remarkable power, as

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**RED MEAT**

was evident during Friday's meeting. Dudley can cross-examine the developer's witnesses. He can call his own, which he plans to do at later meetings—people like business-friendly economist Paul Brubaker, who has labeled the plan "... an irreversible destruction of your ability to grow food".

The Commissioners are required to allow Dudley to comment on nearly everything they do. It's heady stuff, and it has given Dudley the time, he says, to slowly rally the troops against the project.

And most of the people who signed up to speak at Friday's meeting did testify in opposition, although not all. Meet Maeda Timson, who is a member, along with Kioni Dudley of the Makakilo Neighborhood Board. Apparently they go way back. When Timson started into her defense of the development, Dudley immediately cut her off, claiming she was nothing but a paid mouthpiece for the developers, wooed to their camp by lavish dinners and other, unspecified perks. Timson shot back: "I still live in the same little house. Not like Mr. Dudley's mansion up on the hill. If I was paid for all the time I've put in for my community, I'd be rich by now, not still living in my house."

Timson pooh-poohed the traffic issue. "Traffic? There's traffic right now. Hoopili will have at least one rail stop," (referring to the City's planned light rail project). "All the land where Kapolei now is was originally zoned Ag. Why stop at this last piece—when it's all in the development plan already? The west side is already providing the electricity, the rubbish disposal (for all of Oahu). Now we're responsible for the farm land too?"

The idea that Aloun Farms, which currently works the majority of the Ho'opili parcel, is somehow being summarily thrown off the land also strikes others as inaccurate. Al Lardizabal, who said he was just attending the meeting as an observer, pointed out that the farmers knew the lease they signed was for a short term. "They understood that something was going to happen to the land. I think we need to think long term. My son cannot afford a home in Hawaii. It's a supply and demand thing. You either develop in 'Ewa—or some other, less well-planned area."

The enticing formula in which small farmers equals good, developers

equals bad was also shaken a bit by something else going on across town on Friday morning, in U.S. District Court, something that suggested that perhaps D.R. Horton-Schuler Homes and Aloun Farms aren't such different entities after all.

There really is a D.R. Horton. According to the company's website, his name is Donald, and he was raised in Arkansas, the son of a cattleman/real estate broker. Donald moved to Texas as a young man, got a bank loan and built a spec-house. He sold the house. He got a bank loan to build two houses. He sold them. Thirty years later D.R. Horton, through its many acquisitions of smaller builders (like Schuler) is a big, publicly traded company that makes money the same way it always has: by covering the land with houses and spreading the profit among its stockholders.

The Sou brothers, who own Aloun Farms, are Laotian refugees who immigrated to the U.S. in 1977. They got their start in farming by leasing 5 acres in Waianae. Today they lease close to 3,000 acres, and run the second-biggest diversified crop operation in the state. On Friday morning they were indicted in Federal Court, on charges that they imported 44 Thai nationals and forced them to work for, well, pretty much nothing. The actual charges are "conspiracy to commit forced labor, visa fraud, and document servitude." One could say the Sous make money the way they always have: by plowing up the land, reaping the harvest and keeping the profits for themselves.

But maybe that isn't the point here. Could it be this isn't about the individual players, about good guys or bad? Glenn Oamilda, who was standing out on Beretania Street on Friday holding a sign protesting the Hoopili project, put it this way: "It's about two important things. Sustainability and balance. We're not against development—it's gonna happen. But you gotta control it, and deal with the impacts. And, if you live on this planet, you don't get rid of the things that sustain you."

In the end the LUC voted 5-3 to deny the developers (for now) their request for rezoning, by declaring the petition "deficient." Kioni Dudley looked and sounded happy; Mike Jones of D.R. Horton-Schuler less so.

Jones, however, did not seem ready to go home and cry in his beer over this temporary setback. In a brief conversation, he repeated the word "jobs" several times. And with jobs, a half-billion dollar investment and an army of lawyers lined up behind him, the smile on his face seemed quite genuine.

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## **Kioni Dudley at the Kapolei Neighborhood Board March 27, 2008**



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# Midweek

## Rail support

As a working architect and active AIA member, I strongly object to Geoffrey Paterson's letter about rail. While Mr. Paterson may have a history with the AIA, he does not speak for our profession. I completely support Honolulu's elevated rail system, which was chosen after a long, multiyear process.

There are a number of local architectural firms that support this project and have been engaged by the city's rail team to help design elevated stations. And several architects have given rail station presentations to communities in Kapolei and Waipahu, where the rail line will start.

As far as his complaints about rail, they are full of misinformation. Mr. Paterson cites huge maintenance costs for overhead rail. This is not true. The elevated rail line is projected to operate at a cost less than half that of TheBus, according to the city's studies. This is partly due to the fact that the trains will be automatic and won't need drivers. This will help keep long-term costs down.

Mr. Paterson also is inaccurate in his characterization of Vancouver's transit system. The first 18-mile length of its elevated system started construction in 1982, when its population was almost identical to Honolulu's now. Vancouver, known as one of the most livable cities in the world, has extended its elevated system since its inception and continues to do so.

Honolulu's rail project has been thoroughly planned and scrutinized. These 11th-hour tactics are a disservice to everyone. As far as this architect is concerned, we need to move forward with elevated rail, because any unnecessary delays will kill the project forever.

*Roland Libby,  
AIA Honolulu*

# Midweek

## Wrong on rail

Bob Jones' assertion that Honolulu has to have an elevated train along the entire 20-mile route is incorrect. The American Institute of Architects in Honolulu opposes construction of the proposed elevated train for a variety of reasons, including destruction of all view planes along its route.

If the train is going to be built despite all the objections, the initial construction from Kapolei to Waipahu can and should be at grade. There is absolutely nothing in the route path for the first five miles that would require an elevated, expensive, heavy rail be built. If rail is truly being built to relieve congestion, it must be done in such a way as to be affordable so it can be started and finished without exceeding the \$5.4 billion price tag. At grade for the first five miles would save at least \$300 million from the \$971 million being budgeted.

*Cynthia Frith  
Kailua*

Pacific Business News (Honolulu) - September 2, 2009  
[/pacific/stories/2009/08/31/daily38.html](#)

## PACIFIC BUSINESS NEWS

Wednesday, September 2, 2009, 11:43am HAST

# Report: Honolulu drivers have 2nd-longest commute times

Pacific Business News (Honolulu)

Honolulu drivers spend nine extra minutes in traffic because of congestion during peak commute hours, according to a new report.

Honolulu drivers have the second highest metropolitan travel times, just behind Los Angeles, according to the mid-year **Inrix** National Traffic Scorecard released Tuesday, which tracked traffic in the 100 most populated U.S. cities. Drivers in both cities spend an extra nine minutes driving for what would be a 30-minute commute if the roads were clear.

The report pointed out that although Los Angeles and Honolulu drivers face similar delays, Los Angeles has almost 15 times more people and 20 times more road miles of major highways.

But overall traffic congestion in the Honolulu area fell 6 percent from the first half of 2008 to the first half of this year, the report said. That contrasts with the rest of the country, where 64 of the 100 largest cities had increases of traffic during the same time period.

The top 10 most congested cities in the first half of 2009 were Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, Washington D.C., Dallas, Houston, San Francisco, Boston, Seattle and Philadelphia.

Honolulu ranked 38th on that list.

To view the full report, [click here](#).

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## EDITORIAL

# Opposition grows in Ewa

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Sep 02, 2009

Plans for a development of 12,000 homes on agricultural land on the Ewa Plain have been set aside for technical reasons by the state Land Use Commission. The developer plans to try again to obtain the commission's approval, but it will do so at its own risk against mounting and legitimate opposition on more substantive grounds.

By a 5-3 vote, the commission found last week that the petition by D.R. Horton-Schuler Division was "deficient" because the company had not produced an incremental development plan for its Hoopili project. Horton-Schuler would need to specify the timing, phasing and location of each step of the development and could return to the commission in October. The petition was filed in January 2007, and another try could extend the issue before the commission for another year.

Opponents contend that the development between Kapolei and Waipahu would pave over some of the most productive agricultural soil in the state, with lots of sun, gentle winds and cheap water, preferable to land at higher levels.

In an opinion column published last month, Mike Jones, president of Horton-Schuler, contended that only some of the land is "prime" agricultural and that the company would help the farmers relocate. Kioni Dudley, president of the Friends of Makakilo, responded that other arable land on Oahu already has been built upon or lacks the attributes of the Hoopili land.

The developer's strongest argument is that the development would fit into the area's "Second City" scenario, but it may do too much too soon. The H-1 freeway east of Kapolei is highly congested during morning and afternoon rush hours, and more than 30,000 homes in the

Leeward area already are zoned and ready for construction.

Horton-Schuler wants to start building houses in the area in 2012, but the rail transit from Kapolei to Ala Moana is not scheduled to be operational until 2019 at the earliest.

Brennon Morioka, the state transportation director, told the commission that the project would worsen congestion on the H-1 freeway and Horton-Schuler has presented "no proposals for mitigation." Bryan Yee, attorney for the state Office of Planning, warned that the development would result in "a parking lot from Waiawa to Makakilo."

Horton-Schuler's response essentially is that urbanization of the land will include retail outlets and the development's residents will stay there to work. That was the plan for Kapolei, which has been

somewhat successful in that prognosis, but the development of Kapolei also has added immensely to the H-1 congestion.

**Find this article at:**

[http://www.starbulletin.com/editorials/20090902\\_Opposition\\_grows\\_in\\_Ewa.html](http://www.starbulletin.com/editorials/20090902_Opposition_grows_in_Ewa.html)

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

## Letters to the Editor

For Wednesday, September 2, 2009

### **Savings on rail transit an upside to downturn**

Finally, this recession is good for something. With a depressed construction industry, our rail system could be cheaper than the mayor and his engineers first thought.

That's good news and, in this cruddy economy, we need all the good news we can get.

**Derrick Nakagawa**  
Honolulu



September 3, 2009

## Isle roads among worst in U.S.

Potholes, congestion, cost drivers \$500 each year, report estimates

*By Mary Vorsino  
Advertiser Urban Honolulu Writer*

Hawaii's major roads and highways are some of the roughest rides in the nation, according to a new report, which estimates that rutted thoroughfares cost each Hawaii driver about \$500 a year in vehicle repairs, accelerated wear and tear and increased fuel consumption.

The report, released yesterday, highlights how roadway conditions cost drivers, businesses — and lives. The study warns that the situation will only get worse unless the state can secure more funding to address backlogged repairs and an aging roadway system.

"The future of Hawaii's roads, bridges and transportation network is now being placed in jeopardy by insufficient state and local funding and the threat of federal cuts," said Will Wilkins, executive director of TRIP, a national transportation research group that issued the report. "This funding shortfall has left the state's drivers with a network of roads and bridges that are increasingly deteriorated and congested."

The report found that about 43 percent of the state's bridges are deficient or obsolete, and 45 percent of Hawaii's major roadways are congested.

About 27 percent of major roads statewide are rated in poor condition (as of 2007), giving Hawaii the fourth-highest share of roads in poor condition in the nation (behind only New Jersey, California and Rhode Island).

In all, about 71 percent of Hawaii's major roads were rated either mediocre or poor.

At a news conference yesterday with Wilkins, state Department of Transportation director Brennon Morioka said that "nothing in the report was a surprise."

"You really don't need a report to tell people they're sitting in traffic," Morioka said. "You don't need a report to tell them they're running over a whole bunch of potholes. They know. They drive it every day."

## Raising fees, taxes

The study comes as the state is facing a deepening fiscal crisis, so there are big questions about how the DOT will address a long list of deteriorating roads and bridges.

DOT officials say they hope the report bolsters support for the state's \$4 billion highway modernization plan, about half of which would be paid for with increases in vehicle registration fees and fuel and weight taxes.

The plan, meant to revamp the major arteries commuters use, stalled in the last legislative session when lawmakers didn't pass a bill that would have authorized the tax and fee increases.

The other half of the plan would be funded with state and federal dollars.

Morioka said he hasn't given up on the plan, and will return in the coming session to try to get the increases passed.

"I think this report clearly justifies the need for our highways modernization bill," he said.

The TRIP study was compiled from information provided by the DOT, along with other federal and state statistics.

TRIP, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit, is issuing similar reports on about 30 other states to showcase the challenges facing the nation's transportation network in coming years.

The group gets its funding from insurance companies, equipment manufacturers, businesses involved in highway construction and labor unions.

According to the report, pavement conditions on urban roads are some of the worst in the state.

Some 61 percent of highways and major roadways in urban Honolulu were rated in poor condition. For urban drivers, that translates into an extra \$688 a year on average they have to pay in vehicle operating costs for repairs and wear and tear, the report says.

A road in poor condition is defined as having signs of deterioration, including rutting, cracks and potholes. Roads in mediocre condition show signs of wear and tear and may also have visible pavement distress.

Urban drivers also face worsening congestion.

The average Honolulu driver wastes 26 hours a year in traffic delays because of congestion, the study says. The annual cost of congestion to an average Honolulu driver is \$514 in lost time and fuel.

"Traffic congestion in Hawai'i's largest urban areas," the report concludes, "is likely to worsen significantly unless the state is able to improve its transportation system."

## Deadly rural roads

Also of significant concern is the rural traffic fatality rate, which is nearly four times the fatality rate for all other roads in the state, according to the study.

In 2008, Hawai'i's traffic fatality rate for rural roads was 2.52 deaths per 100 million vehicle miles of travel. On all other roads and highways, the traffic fatality rate was 0.64 per 100 million vehicle miles.

From 2004 to 2008, 688 people died in car crashes statewide, an average of 138 fatalities a year.

Meanwhile, Hawai'i's bridges are also aging and need attention.

In 2008, 31 percent of the state's bridges were rated functionally obsolete, which means they no longer meet current highway design standards because of narrow lanes, inadequate clearances or poor alignment. And by 2017, 60 of the 773 state-maintained bridges will need significant repairs, reconstruction or replacement.

Already, 12 percent of Hawai'i's bridges are rated structurally deficient because of deterioration of the deck, supports or other major components.

"Bottom line: For all this, you need to invest," said Panos Prevedouros, immediate past president of the Hawaii Highway Users Alliance.

Prevedouros added that ducking the repairs will only mean bigger costs — to the state and drivers — through more congestion, more wear and tear on vehicles and even closed roadways and bridges.

TRIP officials say many other states are also trying to play catch-up with deteriorating roads and bridges, after years of underfunding maintenance and repairs.

"Certainly, Hawai'i is not alone in this situation," said TRIP spokeswoman Carolyn Bonifas. "There's been a funding crunch nationwide. It is important that something be done sooner rather than later."

The report points out that though plenty of problems need to be addressed, many significant improvements have been made over the past decade.

From 1998 to 2008, Hawai'i got \$1.8 billion in federal funding for road, highway and bridge improvements. That accounts for about 44 percent of all revenues used by the DOT to pay for road, highway and bridge construction, repairs and maintenance.

## Additional Facts

road figures

- 27 percent of Hawai'i's major roads rated in poor condition
- 43 percent of Hawai'i's bridges show significant deterioration or do not meet current design standards
- Hawai'i's rural roads have a traffic fatality rate that's four times the death rate of all other roads statewide
- 45 percent of Hawai'i's urban highways are congested

**Learn more:** Read the report at [www.tripnet.org](http://www.tripnet.org)

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September 3, 2009

## Stinky Tam bill could use a beagle

*By Lee Cataluna*

Leave it to Rod Tam. While others worry about how the city's rail project will look or how loud it will sound, the Honolulu City Council is concerned about how it will smell.

Not the smell of the train itself, but the potential stench of unclean riders.

Tam, the man who as a state legislator brought us the unforgettable "naps and snacks" bill to give state workers the comforts of preschoolers, has now brought us this gem.

Under the measure introduced by Tam and Nestor Garcia, stinky riders on city public transportation could be ordered to get off the bus or train and issued a citation by police. If convicted of violating the "passenger code of conduct," which includes the ban on stinking, a person could be fined up to \$500 and/or spend up to six months in jail, which may or may not improve their personal grooming.

In explaining his reasoning behind drafting this legislation, Tam got himself into a familiar tangle:

"As we become more inundated with people from all over the world, their way of taking care of their health is different. Some people, quite frankly, do not take a bath every day and therefore they may be offensive in terms of their odor."

Whoa.

Look, stink isn't a cultural thing. Stinkiness is universal. We got our own homegrown hauna right here so don't go pointing your Bath and Body Works cucumber/melon hand sanitized finger at the "those guys." Gee, you'd think after the scoldings Tam got last year for using an ethnic slur describing immigrants, he'd learn something.

Yet somewhere in this goofiness is an actual concern. We all know what it's like to get on an elevator or a bus or be stuck on a plane with somebody who smells funkydoodles.

So maybe the city can set aside a hauna car. Like the old "smoking sections" on planes. Passage on the hauna car could be cut-rate, and if you're not hauna but don't mind people who are, you can ride in the car at a discount fare. All manner of smell-offenders could gather together in the car: smokers, women who wear too much perfume, guys who go heavy on the Axe body spray. And the adjudicator will be a dog, maybe one recently retired from sniffing fruit at the airport. Those little beagles are always looking for stuff to do after retiring from the feds. If the transit dog gives you a sniff and points to the hauna car, that's where you're riding. Wouldn't you rather trust that type of judgment to a dog than Rod Tam?

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## DEVELOPING A NEW ATTITUDE

# Ho'opili project doesn't fit Hawaii's renewed focus on a sustainable economy

By State Rep. Chris Lee

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Sep 03, 2009

People seem to either love the Ho'opili development, or hate it. And I can understand that. I'm 28, and will soon be looking for my first affordable home. On the other hand, I'm 28, and my generation and I will have to live with the consequences of poor planning for decades to come.

Fortunately, Ho'opili offers more than a vision of houses stretching across the Ewa Plain; Ho'opili has given Hawaii the opportunity to rethink our future priorities, today.

Last Friday the decision to rezone 1,500 acres of prime agricultural land to "urban" came before the state Land Use Commission. The commission was created by the Legislature specifically to address concerns about "the development of Hawaii's limited and valuable land for short-term gain for the few while resulting in long-term loss to the income and growth potential of our state's economy ... and the conversion of prime agricultural land to residential use ... "

While done on procedural grounds, the Land Use Commission rightfully rejected the request from Ho'opili's developers.

It is important to realize that today, Hawaii imports nearly 90 percent of our food. This dependency siphons billions from our economy each year, and as the cost of oil and shipping continue to rise, so too will prices at the grocery store. So it's concerning that Ho'opili's 11,750 new homes would be built over 14 percent of Oahu's best agricultural land, which is a major contributor to our local food supply and critical to a viable agriculture industry.

Back in 1997 when the plan for more homes in Ewa was originally developed, it may have been good policy at the time. However, since then available farmland in Hawaii has declined by more than 22 percent and the cost of shipping food to the islands has skyrocketed. As a result, in the last decade there has been a paradigm shift in public policy with a new focus on diversifying our economy and redeveloping local agriculture.

The goal is to create new jobs, reduce food prices and sustain Hawaii for the long-term. We have realized there is limited space on Oahu to build new homes — and new strategies for "smart growth" have revolutionized urban planning, and will redevelop old industrial areas such as Kakaako, instead of building over endangered farmlands.

We have to think ahead. Ho'opili is not important because it will build homes or create jobs. Construction crews couldn't begin work until well after the City and County grants approval, potentially many months or years from now, and there are already plans for tens of thousands of other new houses in the Ewa area and thousands of more apartments, condos and lofts planned for urban Honolulu.

What does make Ho'opili important is that it is a clear-cut case of competing uses. The choice pits fertile agricultural land, home to several outstanding local farms, against another 11,750 homes. In this era of new sustainable policy, Ho'opili's rejection or approval will determine whether or not the state is serious about properly managing growth and planning ahead for the long term. It will force our leaders to follow through with commitments to smart growth, renewing local agriculture and diversifying our economy — or to proceed with short-term thinking and business as usual.

Ultimately, the plan for another 11,750 homes on agricultural land is the same urban sprawl that has paved over Oahu for the past 50 years. Hawaii's population keeps growing, and the question is not whether we need new homes. We have to have new homes. The question is where we choose to build them.

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*Chris Lee is state representative for House District 51 (Lanikai, Waimanalo).*

**Find this article at:**

[http://www.starbulletin.com/editorials/20090903\\_Hoopili\\_project\\_doesnt\\_fit\\_Hawaiis\\_renewed\\_focus\\_on\\_a\\_sustainable\\_economy.html](http://www.starbulletin.com/editorials/20090903_Hoopili_project_doesnt_fit_Hawaiis_renewed_focus_on_a_sustainable_economy.html)

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September 3, 2009

## Kakaako high-rise development plan approved by state

### Kamehameha to develop high-rises, business space

*By Andrew Gomes  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

A master plan by Kamehameha Schools to remake 29 acres of its land in Kaka'ako into a largely high-rise residential community was approved yesterday by the state agency that oversees the area.

The approval will allow Hawaii's largest private landowner to break ground as early as next year, possibly starting with a Safeway store on the site formerly occupied by CompUSA.

Overall, the buildout of the nine blocks between Restaurant Row and Ward Centers mauka of Ala Moana is anticipated to take 15 years and produce up to 2,750 homes with seven towers as well as low-rise buildings, some retail and park space.

Approval of the plan followed a highly publicized public hearing held in May that attracted mostly support for the project called Kaiaulu 'o Kaka'ako, or Kaka'ako Community.

Some residents have expressed concerns about the project's concentration of towers and impact on traffic, but the plan closely adheres to rules of the Hawaii Community Development Authority, the agency overseeing development in Kaka'ako.

The HCDA in January approved a similar application from General Growth Properties to redevelop 60 acres under its Ward Centers shopping complex into a dense urban village of largely residences and retail that could include 20 high-rise buildings.

Yesterday, about a dozen supporters turned out to encourage agency board members to approve the Kamehameha plan, which forecasts creating 5,466 full-time jobs at full buildout in addition to roughly 9,000 temporary construction jobs.

Kamehameha Schools spokeswoman Ann Botticelli said the trust is delighted with the go-ahead.

"We have been really gratified by the support the plan has received from our neighbors in Kaka'ako and the general community, and we're pleased that the HCDA supports our vision as well," she said.

The approval locks in a framework for 15 years defining building heights, density, affordable-housing contributions and public-space dedications for the plan.

## Affordable prices

Kamehameha Schools announced its plan in November, and submitted its development application in December. In July, the trust drafted a development agreement with the agency's help that sets out several requirements for the project to go beyond the agency's general requirements.

Under the development agreement approved yesterday, Kamehameha Schools will improve on the agency's standard affordable housing requirement of producing 20 percent of housing at prices affordable to residents earning no more than 140 percent of Honolulu's median income.

The developer agreed to meet the 20 percent requirement, which equates to 550 of the 2,750 homes,

but also make 10 percent of the 550, or 55 homes, affordable to residents earning no more than 100 percent of the median income.

The agreement also allows the developer to earn credits for producing excess affordable housing, donating land to the agency or converting market-priced housing to affordable housing in the area. Credits also could be traded with other Kaka'ako developers.

Kamehameha Schools also committed to identify potential grave sites before development work begins.

Kaka'ako is known to have a relatively high concentration of burials, some of which have been disturbed inadvertently by other developers such as WalMart, General Growth and Kawaiaha'o Church in cases that have triggered deep grief for recognized descendants.

Some people testifying at yesterday's hearing complimented Kamehameha Schools on its proactive cultural preservation approach.

## Connecting parks

Other parts of the plan include connecting Kaka'ako Gateway Park where it ends at Ala Moana with Mother Waldron Park three blocks mauka by adding a strip of park space down both sides of Cooke Street, and converting existing industrial buildings along Cooke into a plaza with a performance area, cafes, restaurants and other neighborhood retail businesses.

The city's planned rail line is slated to connect with the project with a transit station identified for part of Kamehameha Schools land on Halekauwila Street that will help create dense pockets of potential transit commuters.

Another envisioned tie-in for the project is a biotech office complex Kamehameha Schools plans to develop on two blocks near the University of Hawai'i medical school makai of Kaiaulu 'o Kaka'ako.

Kamehameha Schools owns 12 acres over four blocks makai of Ala Moana that aren't included in the master plan because different development rules apply in that area.

An initial phase of construction on Kaiaulu 'o Kaka'ako is estimated to begin next year starting on three blocks between South and Keawe streets.

One of those blocks is the former CompUSA site. Botticelli said Kamehameha Schools is close to signing a letter of intent with Safeway to develop the property. The landowner also is preparing to solicit interest from developers to build on the block bounded by Halekauwila, Pohukaina, South and Keawe streets.

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## DEVELOPING A NEW ATTITUDE

# Rebuild rundown urban Oahu instead of paving prime Ewa farmland

By State Rep. Rida Cabanilla

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Sep 03, 2009

It is very difficult to accept the permanent changes that are about to occur in Ewa in the near future. As a representative of the people, I continually made my objections known to the Land Use Commission for the last two years regarding the development of Ho'opili, a planned residential community on Ewa farmlands. Although some of my constituents support the intent of the development, working at the state Capitol and hearing the different concerns of my colleagues, I can't help but consider not only regional impacts but also statewide impacts of this massive land development.

I recently had a meeting with Bob Stanfield of the City & County Building and Permitting Department, who is in charge of the Ewa Development Plan. His main arguments against my objections of the housing plan stem from the question, "Where else can we build more homes?"

Although a hypothetical question, I have some real answers that the city should take into consideration.

Before Hawaii starts building more homes in Ewa, creating more traffic and depleting the islands of our valuable agricultural lands, we need to redevelop the rundown areas of urban Honolulu. We need to stop sacrificing our limited precious resources.

In Kakaako, there are acres of undeveloped land with adequate underground infrastructure already in place. Last session we passed legislation mandating a certain percentage of affordable housing depending on the land area being developed.

Areas around Kapiolani, Moiliili and McCully are, for the most part, populated by very old, two-story walk-up apartment buildings. The Building and Permitting Department can remove the three-story height limitation on these areas and allow us to go vertical. Going vertical will improve the Honolulu skyline, provide fulfillment of the affordable housing need and create housing options for those who work in Waikiki and downtown Honolulu and even provide off-base living options for our military men and women who work at Pearl Harbor, Hickam and Fort Shafter.

With home prices rising and land area diminishing, the dream of a single-family home on a 5,000 square foot piece of land is difficult to achieve. Going vertical will help preserve our precious agricultural lands. We need to emulate European ideas on infrastructure. Their cities are contained, and they leave the rural areas for agriculture. The argument that we can move these Ewa farmlands elsewhere is just as absurd as saying we can move this housing development within urban Honolulu.

These areas I have suggested for development are blighted communities. Why is there not a push to modernize these slummy downtown areas so that we can be proud of our urban core?

Sustainability, self-sufficiency and food security are goals that the Legislature and the state are working toward. Today we import 90 percent of our food. Without our farmlands it would be impossible to reduce our dependency on outside resources or fulfill our goals.

The state tourism count continues to diminish daily. By building houses on the entire island, we will see even fewer tourists coming to Hawaii. Tourists vacation in Hawaii to enjoy tropical scenery and hospitality, not panoramic views of urban sprawl.

The more houses we build, the more out-of-state people will come to Hawaii to purchase homes, driving the cost of homes through the roof. I know that increasing supply will decrease the prices of homes — but, figuratively speaking, only for a day. As soon as the prices become reasonable, residents of the contiguous 48 states will be here driving the prices up again.

We cannot build more housing complexes without sufficient transportation infrastructures in place. Consider the city's light rail project. If they did not build all these houses in Kapolei, then there would have been no need for the rail. Building more, such as Ho'opili, will create more traffic woes and require more infrastructure, not just the rail.

Supporters of Ho'opili contend that it will bring more jobs to the region, thereby decreasing the amount of commuters to town. How many jobs will there be? Can the project bring more than 2,000 jobs to the region? My answer is no, and if there are jobs, the jobs will probably not pay enough to support a mortgage of these new homes.

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*Rida Cabanilla is state representative for House District 42 (Waipahu, Honouliuli, West Loch and Ewa).*

**Find this article at:**

[http://www.starbulletin.com/editorials/20090903\\_Rebuild\\_rundown\\_urban\\_Oahu\\_instead\\_of\\_paving\\_prime\\_Ewa\\_farmland.html](http://www.starbulletin.com/editorials/20090903_Rebuild_rundown_urban_Oahu_instead_of_paving_prime_Ewa_farmland.html)

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Pacific Business News (Honolulu) - September 3, 2009  
</pacific/stories/2009/08/31/daily43.html>

## PACIFIC BUSINESS NEWS

Thursday, September 3, 2009, 9:37am HAST | Modified: Thursday, September 3, 2009, 9:44am

# Hawaii roads cost drivers \$500 a year

Pacific Business News (Honolulu)

Hawaii's poor road conditions are costing drivers an average of \$500 a year.

A report released Wednesday from **TRIP**, a Washington D.C.-based national transportation organization, said driving on roads in need of repair in Hawaii costs each motorist an average of \$503 a year, or \$431 million statewide, in accelerated vehicle depreciation, additional repair costs and increased fuel consumption and tire wear.

The report, "Future Mobility in Hawaii: Meeting the State's Need for Safe and Efficient Mobility," said 27 percent of Hawaii's major roads are in poor condition, the fourth highest in the nation, behind New Jersey, California and Rhode Island. Another 44 percent of Hawaii's major roads were rated in mediocre condition.

Roads rated in poor condition may show signs of deterioration, including rutting, cracks and potholes, the report said. Mediocre roads show signs of significant wear and may have some visible pavement distress.

A total of 43 percent of Hawaii's bridges are deficient or obsolete, the report said.

And not surprisingly, 45 percent of Hawaii's major roads are congested.

The report said the fatality rate on Hawaii's rural roads is nearly four times greater than the fatality rate on all other roads in the state.

TRIP said Hawaii received \$126 million in stimulus funding for highway and bridge improvements and \$44 million for public transit improvements in Hawaii this year, however, the funding serves only as a "down payment" on needed improvements and is insufficient for the state to proceed with numerous projects.

To view the report, [click here](#).

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September 3, 2009

## **Letter to the Editor**

Pungent bus riders

### **Council should focus on city's real issues**

Although it is probably uncomfortable to ride public transportation with someone who stinks, who will become the "Hygiene Police?" How exactly is stinkiness going to be measured? "Their way," as quoted in the article, potentially sounds like the start of cultural and racial discrimination issues to me.

Misters Tam and Garcia need to get a grip and devote their time to issues of impact — the quality of Hawai'i public education, traffic, jobs, health care, and assisting with the economy, to name a few — instead of monitoring people's bathing habits.

Sandi Grundmanis | Kane'ohe

September 3, 2009

## **Letter to the Editor**

Pungent bus riders

### **Action by city required to address problem**

Although I am in agreement with the ACLU most of the time, as a senior bus rider I have experienced many a bus ride from Waikiki to town with homeless persons who apparently receive a bus transfer from Good Samaritans to head back to 'A'ala Park.

Just last weekend I boarded a bus on Kuhio Avenue and got a seat.

At the very next stop a homeless person got on and sat right in front of me.

Needless to say this person reeked of a combination of urine and earth (dirt) smell that became quite noticeable as the bus loaded up to standing room only and with the increase of body heat temperatures.

It came to the point of being unbearable and I had to get off the bus upon reaching Kalakaua and Beretania and catch another bus to town.

I felt empathy for this homeless person, but maybe a quick arrest and a trip to a homeless shelter for a much-needed hot bath and clean clothes would be more humane.

The homelessness in America started its gigantic upsurge in the mid-1980s and continues to worsen.

Dennis Smith | Honolulu

## Letters to the Editor

For Thursday, Sept. 3, 2009

### **Preserving Ewa land is the correct decision**

It's "no ka oi terrific" that agriculture has been saved for the Ewa Plain. I grew up around agriculture. My father's parents were rice farmers with a 30-acre rice farm in Waipahu and my mom's parents grew "lily root" vegetables in a water farm environment. There was sugar cane around us when I grew up in Waipahu, a sugar plantation town.

I am disappointed that sugar cane fields and pineapple fields have disappeared. Our fight to save the Ewa plain for agriculture is not over yet but I hope it can be preserved as it is the best agriculture land on Oahu.

Frankie Kam  
Waikiki

September 4, 2009

## Biking safety measure deferred

Police say ensuring 3 feet of space for cyclists may be too difficult to enforce

*By Gordon Y.K. Pang  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

City Council members have sent a bicycle safety bill back to the repair shop for retooling.

Action was deferred yesterday on Bill 64-09. It would require motorists to maintain a distance of at least 3 feet while overtaking a bicyclist. It also would make it illegal for a motorist or passengers of a motor vehicle from throwing or "intentionally projecting" an object at a bicyclist.

Honolulu Police Maj. Thomas Nitta said the department appreciates the intent of the bill but that sufficient measures are on the books.

Further, he said, "we probably would have a difficult time enforcing such an ordinance."

City Deputy Prosecutor Lori Nishimura said someone making a complaint would not only have to be able to provide a license, but also identify the driver of the offending vehicle.

"If it's not going to be enforced, I'm not sure how effective it's going to be," she said.

Several members of the bicycling community testified in favor of the measure.

Manoa resident Raymond Tabata, 65, said he often bikes to his job Downtown. "I take every precaution I can so drivers can see me," he said, pointing to his fluorescent yellow shirt.

Despite that, he said, "Every so often a driver will come a little too close (for) comfort, like within inches of my handle bar."

Tabata said he also supports amending the bill to include requiring that cyclists comply with applicable traffic laws.

Mitchell Nakagawa, executive director of the Hawai'i Bicycling League, pointed out that 15 states and a number of municipalities have 3-foot rules.

Councilman Charles Djou said the existing law requiring cars to pass "within a safe distance" is too vague.

"As long as you didn't hit them, you've passed at a safe distance," Djou said. "I don't think that's right."

Even if police were not able to enforce a 3-foot law, passage of the bill alone would improve bicycle safety, Djou said.

"Telling the public that when you pass a bicyclist you should try to give the bicyclist 3 feet, that alone I believe would reduce the amount of accidents and near misses we have."

September 4, 2009

## Honolulu City Council moves to kill conduct bill

*By Gordon Y.K. Pang  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

A City Council committee yesterday snuffed out a bill that would have regulated bad odors and other behavior on city transit vehicles and facilities.

The proposed transit passenger code of conduct bill attracted interest from media outlets globally largely because it attempts to impose regulations on smell. And while the bill does get into many other concerns from the use of electronic music devices to farebox jumping, much of yesterday's discussion was focused on the odor ban.

According to the bill, passengers would not be able to bring "onto transit property odors that unreasonably disturb others or interfere with their use of the transit system, whether such odors arise from one's person, clothes, articles, accompanying animal or any other source."

Committee members said they deferred Bill 59-09 yesterday with the intent of killing it.

Councilman Nestor Garcia, a co-introducer of the bill, said that at some point he'd like to introduce another bill that would address passenger conduct, but made it clear that following yesterday's discussion regulating odors would not be included.

Representatives from the Honolulu Police Department, the Honolulu prosecutor's office and the city corporation counsel's office all voiced concerns with the bill.

HPD Maj. William Chur said police support the concept and intent of the legislation but are bothered that "the bill would make criminal offenses out of certain prohibitive activities that up until now have not been criminal in nature."

Such prohibitions, now subject to citation, would include eating, listening to music without headphones and drinking alcoholic beverages.

"Up until now, those haven't been criminal sanctions, but it may have been cause for a person being asked to leave TheBus," Chur said. "But under this proposal, these activities would in fact be criminal activities."

Chur said the department is also worried about enforceability of the odor prohibition.

"We think that is going to be very difficult to enforce," he said. "The question of odors is a question that is somewhat subjective."

"Too subjective," said Transportation Committee Chairman Gary Okino, who wound up recommending that the bill be deferred.

Chur added: "We're not aware of any other offenses where odors, unless they're clearly identified as nauseous or noxious, are subject to criminal sanctions."

### bill concerns

Deputy Prosecutor Lori Nishimura said her office views the odor prohibition problematic, made worse

because the bill calls for it to be a criminal offense.

"If the (proposed) statute basically leaves it to the arbitrary discretion of each police officer to decide if somebody is too smelly to get on the bus or is OK, I think you're going to have those challenges," Nishimura said.

Nishimura also echoed Chur's concerns about upping the existing violations to criminal offenses. The violations would become either petty misdemeanors with 10 days jail, or full misdemeanors with up to six months in jail. The latter would allow for defendants to have jury trials, she said.

About half a dozen passengers testified on the bill — split nearly evenly among those who supported it and those opposed.

Nu'uaniu resident Robert Asam said he supports the bill, pointing out that he's seen people spit on the bus. At least some are "not from here," he said, adding that he tells them " 'You have to respect where you are. You're in our home.' "

"You can't be worried about the civil rights of one when the rights of all the rest of us are being infringed upon," Asam said. "What makes that person so special?"

Besides a fine, Asam said someone found in violation could go through "some sort of retraining or something."

But Kane'ohe resident and bus rider Irma O'Toole called the code of conduct absurd.

O'Toole said she's worried that if a complaint is made during a bus ride, a bus could be hung up for half an hour or more waiting for a police officer to arrive at the scene.

"Some of these things are ridiculous," she said. "If you don't like the smell, there is a cord that you can pull, and you get off the bus."

O'Toole said she's exposed to a number of smells from ethnic foods picked up by elderly passengers getting on TheBus in Chinatown. "You can appreciate another person's culture or belief because the human smells are not that bad, they're human."

## not a choice

Dan Gluck, senior staff attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union, said his office has already been contacted by people with metabolic disorders which cause them to have a body odor. "It's not hygienic, it can be from a disease," Gluck said.

Councilman Rod Tam said he drew criticism for co-introducing and defending the bill, pointing out that the odor provision was modeled after a passenger code of conduct that is in place in King County, Wash.

Local riders have asked for a code of conduct "to ensure the safety, security, comfort and convenience of public transit users," Tam said.

"I'm getting constant complaints about people not using bus stops for catching the bus but ... for camping, sleeping, whatever you want to call it. So people are afraid to go there."

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September 4, 2009

## Kaka'ako moves toward a vibrant future

Kamehameha Schools now has the principal approval needed to take the first big step toward the rebuilding of Kaka'ako into a exciting and diverse community.

That is excellent news, amid bankruptcy and the general economic doldrums that have slowed plans for much of the district's other development.

The project, which this week received the green light from the overseeing Hawai'i Community Development Authority, has been dubbed Kaiaulu 'o Kaka'ako, which simply means "community of Kaka'ako." That may seem an uninspiring name until it's considered that the sense of community is exactly what is needed in one of the last major redevelopments of Honolulu's urban core.

There is hope that what will emerge is a neighborhood that will complement the retail and highrise residential projects envisioned in the adjacent General Growth Properties master plan. Kaiaulu would comprise a mix of educational/industrial elements — the long-stalled "life sciences" complex is at one end — with affordable and market-priced homes, as well as a range of markets, cafes and small businesses.

Kamehameha officials have raised concerns about the city's planned elevated rail line, which has a station set for the mauka-'ewa corner of the Kaiaulu property. But the system should pair well with the redevelopment because it can provide reliable transportation to residents and visitors who won't need to bring cars into such a densely populated zone.

It's gratifying to see that Kamehameha is taking a proactive approach to anticipating the locations of Hawaiian burials, beginning discussions with families early to avoid conflicts later on. It's a model that needs to be followed throughout the area, where many burials are known to exist.

The schools and government authorities should work to keep this project on course and see that the General Growth developments, once they accelerate, mesh well with Kaiaulu. This is an opportunity to create new vibrancy in a community to be reborn on Honolulu's front doorstep.

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## City Council scrubs body-odor proposal

By [B.J. Reyes](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Sep 04, 2009

A proposal that raised a stink nationwide over an apparent attempt to criminalize body odor on public buses has been shelved by the City Council.

Bill 59 was deferred by the Council's Transportation Committee yesterday.

Honolulu gained nationwide attention, criticism and ridicule over Bill 59, which proposed a new code of conduct for users of the city's planned rail mass transit system. The code also would have applied to existing transit systems, including TheBus.

Civil rights groups and others criticized a provision that would have made it a crime -- punishable by a fine up to \$500, six months in jail or both -- to have offensive body odor.

The code would have barred "bringing onto transit property odors that unreasonably disturb others or interfere with their use of the transit system, whether such odors arise from one's person, clothes, articles, accompanying animal or any other source."

Police and the Prosecutor's Office raised concerns over the enforceability of the proposal as it is written, noting it would make it a crime to have body odor, and offenders would have a right to a trial by jury.

"You would have us doing jury trials and calling in citizens for a person who had odor," said deputy prosecutor Lori Nishimura.

Law enforcement officials also noted the code of conduct overlapped with existing law -- for example, criminalizing vandalism or gambling on transit property -- when state laws already cover such offenses.

Honolulu Police Maj. William Chur said the department took no position on the bill, but was concerned over its potential to make criminal offenses out of activity such as eating, drinking or playing loud music.

"Up until now that hasn't been a criminal sanction," Chur said. "It may have been cause for a person to be asked to leave, but under this proposal these activities would, in fact, be criminal."

Councilman Nestor Garcia, co-author of the bill with colleague Rod Tam, said he would work on a new proposal to address constitutional issues raised by the language of the bill. The provision on odor is unlikely to be included.

"One person's smell is another person's perfume, I guess," Garcia said. "We need to try to figure out exactly how we go about that if we are to continue that kind of procedure."

Tam defended the bill, saying it arose out of constituents' concerns.

"It's our job to do it, whether we like it or not, and whether people want to criticize," said Tam, who previously faced ridicule as a state senator for introducing a bill authorizing naps and snack breaks for public workers.

Councilman Romy Cachola urged colleagues to kill the proposal, noting the national attention it gained for Hawaii.

"I believe that our tourists, our visitors, will be affected by this because sometimes they are so fickle," Cachola said. "News like this will affect their decision to come or not to come here to Hawaii."

Cachola said he wanted potential visitors to know, "This bill is dead."

**Find this article at:**

[http://www.starbulletin.com/news/hawaii/news/20090904\\_City\\_Council\\_scrubs\\_body-odor\\_proposal.html](http://www.starbulletin.com/news/hawaii/news/20090904_City_Council_scrubs_body-odor_proposal.html)

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# Honolulu Advertiser

## Cost for elevated system well worth it

September 3, 2009

The West O'ahu Economic Development Association is a nonprofit organization composed of more than 80 businesses dedicated to supporting the economic growth of the fastest-growing region in the state. WOEDA has been and continues to be an ardent supporter of rail transit.

We believe that it will play a vital role in the economic development of the region by connecting Leeward O'ahu with Honolulu and will enable the orderly growth of Kapolei as a secondary urban center.

The added cost to build an elevated rail system is well worth the investment, particularly when considering the future growth of the West O'ahu region. Elevated trains will not be slowed by traffic congestion and will not be stopped by red lights; automotive traffic won't be slowed by an elevated rail system.

An elevated system also provides more flexibility in design and expansion because the length of the trains will not be constrained by the length of a city block.

Trains traveling 30 to 40 feet above ground will deliver a fast, frequent, reliable system that will transport people between Kapolei and Honolulu in the shortest amount of time and on schedule, contributing to an improved business climate and quality of life. West O'ahu businesses and residents deserve no less.

*Roy Yonaoshi*  
*President, WOEDA*

# Star Bulletin

## **BO ban on bus would be bias**

September 4, 2009

I've heard it all now. Will it rain frogs now? It's blatant discrimination to deny anyone onto a mass transit system for his or her hygiene. Personal hygiene is just that, personal. To me the act of decency is, yes, a measurement of who in your near surroundings is offended for any reason.

I've lived in New York and Los Angeles, and let me say, if the stench of a person were to have him or her banned from any public transit, ridership would drop noticeably. So, does a veterinarian deny a dog help because it's covered in mud? Or what about that impeccably dressed gentleman who keeps flatulating a foul odor from a previous meal? All these scenarios exist all over the world.

Given global death, disease, famine, the very unhealthy national and global economies, health care crises, etc., I can't believe such a stupid and very discriminatory idea has even been mentioned. Gee, Hawaii's got it good if odorous people on buses make the news.

Han Song

Wahiawa



September 6, 2009

## Brushfire halts H-2 traffic

City, federal firefighters battle Waiawa blaze that closed north-bound freeway

*By Michael Tsai  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

Scores of Honolulu and federal firefighters spent yesterday battling a churning brushfire that blackened approximately 150 acres in Waiawa and forced the closure of H-2 north-bound lanes for five hours through the afternoon and early evening.

With flames fanned by the wind and smoke darkening the sky, the fire put on a spectacular show that could be seen for miles. Thousands of motorists were stranded when H-2 north-bound was closed, but ultimately there were no injuries and no structures were threatened.

The fire had been partially contained with only a few active areas when firefighters suspended operations after 8 p.m. They planned to resume "fire suppression" activities this morning.

The fire was first reported shortly before 1 p.m. in a gully off H-2 and Ka Uka Boulevard.

About 60 Honolulu Fire Department firefighters, 11 engines, four tankers and two helicopters responded to the fire. They were joined by 10 federal firefighters, who brought one engine, two additional tankers and a brush truck. A Honolulu Police Department helicopter also assisted with water drops.

In addition, two city and county heavy equipment operators used bulldozers to create fire breaks and extend access to the blaze.

HFD spokesman Capt. Terry Seelig said firefighters concentrated their efforts on fronts advancing toward Mililani and Pearl City.

The department ordered the shutdown of the H-2 north-bound lanes to allow for the movement of vehicles and equipment, and to prevent potentially dangerous situations should the fire reach the highway.

Seelig said the fire came within 300 yards of the highway at one point.

Firefighters were especially concerned that the fire might compromise Hawaiian Electric Co. power lines in the area. However, they were able to keep the blaze from reaching the poles. HECO said it was not necessary to reroute power from the lines.

Firefighters also focused on preventing the fire from moving further toward Pearl City, where it could have endangered a storage facility.

Throughout the day, the three helicopters circled over Ka Uka, dumping water on strategic areas of the fire and refilling their buckets from a plastic reservoir set up in a nearby park.

Dozens of residents and passers-by lined up along a fence on the opposite side of the highway for a clear view of the charred hillside and the billowing smoke that darkened the roadway.

Mike Dau, 52, of Kipapa Gulch said the fire should have come as no surprise given the dry haole koa and grass on the exposed ridge.

"That's going to keep on smoldering for days," he said.

Dau was one of thousands left stranded in traffic due to the road closure. He said it took him more than an hour to drive in from his job at the airport, a commute that normally takes him less than 15 minutes.

Josh Hale, 35, of Honolulu was on his way to visit friends in Mililani when he found himself caught in the traffic backlog. He ended up inching his way to Waipahu then backtracking.

He questioned the necessity of closing all of the north-bound lanes.

"I've driven through fog thicker than this," he said. "I can see it if they needed a lane for emergency vehicles, but why close all of them?"

Last week, dry conditions, low humidity and strengthening winds prompted the National Weather Service to issue a red flag warning for leeward areas of the state, indicating the increased potential for runaway wildfires.

Waiawa Ridge has been the site of several brushfires this summer. Seelig said yesterday's blaze was not related to a brushfire in the same area earlier in the week that burned 350 acres.

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September 6, 2009

## Dela Cruz on list of mayoral hopefuls

*By Gordon Y.K. Pang  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

Honolulu City Councilman Donovan Dela Cruz yesterday said he intends to run for mayor if incumbent Mufi Hannemann steps down next year to contend for governor as expected.

Dela Cruz, 36, has been on the council since 2002 and was chairman from October 2003 to January 2007. Prior to public office, Dela Cruz was in public relations and was best known as the co-author of three books promoting mom-and-pop businesses around the state.

The Wahiawa native is the grandson of Filipino immigrants on his father's side and Puerto Rican plantation workers from the Big Island on his mother's side, and his campaign is expected to focus partly on his local, rural roots.

His grandmother took him and his sister around the island on the city bus and he learned how to swim at the Wahiawa District Park swimming pool and participated in city Summer Fun programs, he said.

"City services have provided a decent quality of life for my family and the people in my community," he said. "So I really feel a debt of gratitude for that."

Politically, Dela Cruz said his campaign will focus on his consensus-building nature and progressive legislation such as establishment of an agricultural task force and environmental legislation.

City Prosecutor Peter Carlisle earlier this summer announced he will run for mayor whenever Hannemann leaves the post.

Others considering a possible bid include council Chairman Todd Apo, city Managing Director Kirk Caldwell and University of Hawai'i engineering professor Panos Prevedouros.

Carlisle, who's been elected prosecutor four times, is the only one to run a successful O'ahu-wide campaign. But Dela Cruz pointed out that he managed Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi's mayoral campaign last year, which took Hannemann into a general election run-off.

Dela Cruz's announcement is expected to have ramifications at both Honolulu Hale and the state Capitol. With his current four-year term on the council expiring next year and ineligible for re-election, he had filed organizational papers to run for lieutenant governor next year.

Among those who have either announced or filed campaign organizational papers for the Democratic lieutenant governor's race: Brian Schatz, the chairman of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i, state Senate Majority Leader Gary Hooser, state Rep. Jon Riki Karamatsu and Councilman Rod Tam.



## 150-acre wildfire forces closure of H-2 freeway

[By Star-Bulletin staff](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Sep 06, 2009

Firefighters battled a spectacular wildfire yesterday that sent smoke above the H-2 freeway and forced police to close northbound lanes for about five hours.

Honolulu fire Capt. Terry Seelig said the fire started about 12:35 p.m. from an unknown cause and burned about 150 acres in the Waiawa Ridge area. This was the second Waiawa Ridge fire in a week.

Responding firefighters found the blaze moving in several directions and encroaching within several hundred yards of the Wahiawa-bound lanes of the H-2. Police closed those lanes shortly after 1 p.m.

Shortly after 3 p.m., the wildfire burned near Hawaiian Electric Co. poles carrying lines that crossed over the H-2, forcing the closure of the town-bound lanes, officials said.

After HECO determined the poles were not damaged, the town-bound lanes were reopened about 4 p.m.

The Wahiawa-bound lanes remained closed, however, backing traffic up to Pearl City.

Darryl Tupinio, who was caught in the traffic, said he could see the flames once he reached the H-1 Waipahu on-ramp.

Police reopened the Wahiawa-bound lanes about 6:20 p.m.

About 60 Honolulu firefighters fought the fire with 11 engines and four water tankers. Two fire helicopters and one police helicopter made water drops, while about 10 federal firefighters helped on the ground.

City bulldozers helped build fire breaks.

Shortly before 6 p.m., Hawaiian Electric Co. considered de-energizing lines where firefighters were working, which would have caused outages in Pearl City, Waipio Gentry and other areas, a HECO spokesman said. The measures were not necessary and the power stayed on.

No HECO utility poles were damaged by the fire, Seelig said.

Earlier last week, a fire in the same area burned about 350 acres and also temporarily forced closures of the H-2 freeway. The cause of the first fire was not determined.

No one was hurt and no structures were damaged by the latest fire.

Firefighters plan to return today to extinguish the blaze.

**Find this article at:**

[http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20090906\\_150-acre\\_wildfire\\_forces\\_closure\\_of\\_H-2\\_freeway.html](http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20090906_150-acre_wildfire_forces_closure_of_H-2_freeway.html)

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## EDITORIAL

# Funding to fix rough roads must wait

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Sep 06, 2009

Hawaii's traffic congestion and road conditions are among the worst in the country, according to separate analyses, and improvements are badly needed. This year's Legislature came close to approval of such an effort - and though fixes must occur, harsh budgetary realities will temper the timing as legislators in the upcoming session deal with the problem.

The Lingle administration supports an expensive six-year transportation modernization plan but realizes the difficulty in paying for it, even with federal funds, during the recession. State Transportation Director Brennon Morioka has called for an "economic trigger whereby increases in taxes and user fees would only occur upon the recovery of Hawaii's economy," estimated to come about in two to three years.

When the bill at issue carried tax increases to take effect in October, Morioka balked, saying the vehicle registration, weight and tax increases should not be initiated "until the economy has demonstrated a level of recovery." The bill deservedly died in a joint House-Senate conference.

Meanwhile, 27 percent of Hawaii's major roads are in poor condition, showing signs of deterioration, including rutting, cracks and potholes, according to TRIP, a Washington-based transportation organization. An additional 44 percent are mediocre, showing signs of significant wear that can be repaired by resurfacing.

The organization figures that motorists in Honolulu's metropolitan area endure an average of \$688 a year in extra vehicle operating costs. That includes accelerated depreciation, repair costs, increased gas consumption and tire wear associated with poor road conditions.

It does not include the price of gas consumed waiting in traffic. INRIX, a Seattle-based transportation company, continues to rank Honolulu highways among the nation's most congested during rush hours. Only Los Angeles is worse.

In Honolulu and across the country, congestion eased slightly when gasoline prices soared last year but it reached its least cumbersome in this year's second quarter, according to INRIX. With unemployment rising in recent months, the number of people driving to and from work declined.

Congestion increases when joblessness and gas prices drop at the same time. The clogging of highways in the months ahead "will largely be shaped by the rate and pace of economic recovery and any severe fuel price shocks," INRIX says.

That is the point at which vehicle fees and gas taxes should be increased to provide funds for badly-needed highway repairs.

**Find this article at:**

[http://www.starbulletin.com/editorials/20090906\\_Funding\\_to\\_fix\\_rough\\_roads\\_must\\_wait.html](http://www.starbulletin.com/editorials/20090906_Funding_to_fix_rough_roads_must_wait.html)

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September 7, 2009

## Rail transit offers a smart alternative

*By Kara Takasaki*

One generalization about the cost of rail is that it continues to grow without transparency, accountability or regulation of city officials. The draft EIS estimate for the project was \$5.4 billion, and the Jacobs Oversight Report from the Federal Transit Administration is 2 percent higher (\$5.288 billion) than the city's current budget of \$5.172 billion. Both the FTA and city officials are happy that the numbers have been so close, considering the size of the project.

In general, it is big numbers that scare the average reader. A recent article mentioned that the cost of rail will be \$4,000 per person in a Honolulu household. This article failed to mention that \$4,000 is spread out over the years that the GET revenues are collected from 2007 to 2022. That comes out to around 50 cents per day.

For some people when every penny counts, 50 cents a day is a lot. However using GET revenues means that people who spend less, pay less. They benefit more from the rail project since they are the people who are most likely to use public transit. The cost of a car and especially fuel in Hawai'i is far more than any person worried about 50 cents a day could ever afford.

In 2007, \$199 million was spent on congestion costs, and per peak hour traveler, it was \$514. It is also little known that around 25 percent of the GET revenues will come from tourists to O'ahu and not from the citizenry.

So who is funding the rail? One source is the \$1.4 billion from the FTA if we continue to show our commitment to the project and meet the requirements of the New Starts program that the federal government has begun to encourage mass transit rail projects like our own. This \$1.4 billion cannot go to any other cause in Hawai'i. If we don't use it for this project, we lose it entirely. The GET revenues cannot be transferred to another cause either. These revenues have been legislatively earmarked for rail, and any transfer of funds to another cause would result in a legal conflict.

Some people are not against mass transit but they want something cheaper. Well, you get what you pay for. The hope is that the rail will have a quality high enough that people who have the choice of using private automobiles will choose rail over fossil-fuel-consuming cars that create numerous congestion costs in time, resources, carbon dioxide emissions, etc.

The end-all argument is the confident statement that it won't be worth it because it won't happen; and if it does, people won't use it. Then it won't be maintained and it will deteriorate, leaving an ugly vestigial mass transit mess on O'ahu. All I can say is, we'll see. Every mass transit project in the nation, in the world, has been fought and decried before it is built and right up until the day it is opened for use. If previous mass transit projects are any testament to this one, people do use it — and what's more, they like it.

It's simply a matter of hard choices, because having an easy choice between using the car or taking the bus is a luxury of the rich and carefree. The problem of the average person is that of economics, unlimited wants with limited resources. O'ahu's population continues to grow, and we cannot support a 1-to-1 ratio in cars to people. On O'ahu that ratio is higher than 1-to-1.

We live on an island with limited space, and fossil fuels are nonrenewable, in high demand and disappearing at an alarming rate. We are stuck in an economic and environmental corner not dissimilar to being stuck between a rock and a hard place. I wonder how long it will be before those

opposed to rail realize that the situation is no longer livable.

*Kara Takasaki is a recent Punahou School graduate attending Tufts University. She was a summer intern for the city's Rapid Transit Division. She wrote this commentary for The Advertiser.*

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# Donovan Dela Cruz Running for Mayor



Written by Jim Mendoza - jmendoza@kgmb9.com

September 07, 2009 05:07 PM



Donovan Dela Cruz kicked off his campaign for Honolulu Mayor with a meet and greet at Kapiolani Park. While he drummed up support for his grass roots race he cited his upbringing as a reason for running.

"I'm a product of city services. When I was growing up my grandmother never drove, she caught the city bus," he said.

Dela Cruz made the announcement on his website over the weekend. He believes his tenure as city councilman and council chairman will help him rise above politics to connect with people.

"I think transparency and accountability are key," he said. "That's what we're really going to focus on."

"He knows all the problems the city has. He's aware that there's the financial problems, too, but he's willing to tackle them," council woman Ann Kobayashi said.

If elected mayor, Dela Cruz said he'd focus on "smart development around transit centers" for Honolulu's 20-mile rail line.

"That's really going to increase our tax base. That's going to provide jobs. It's going to create better communities and that's what we really want to push forward," he said.

Dela Cruz said his administration would expand recycling efforts, focus on environmental policies, and work to establish a property tax qualification for homeowners and tax relief for renters.

"We really want to make sure that our local people and those who have lived here their whole lives are going to be able to still afford to live here," he said.

Dela Cruz council district covers 40 percent of Oahu. A mayoral campaign will be an island-wide outreach. He starts the race with \$38,000 in campaign money. He knows it will take a lot more to get to the big office at Honolulu Hale.



Last Updated ( September 07, 2009 07:00 PM )

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## Honolulu City Councilman Donovan Dela Cruz to Run for Mayor

Reported by: Marisa Yamane  
Email: [myamane@khon2.com](mailto:myamane@khon2.com)  
Last Update: 9/07 9:32 am

Honolulu City Councilman Donovan Dela Cruz is throwing his hat into the ring for the 2010 mayoral race.

"I'm definitely running for mayor in 2010," said Dela Cruz.

That is, IF Mayor Mufi Hannemann steps down to run for Governor.

Hannemann has started raising money for a possible 2010 gubernatorial bid and has formed an exploratory committee, but hasn't officially announced he's running for Governor.

Dela Cruz had previously expressed interest in running for Lt. Governor.

"The reason why I'm running is I want to move Honolulu forward. There's a lot of great things the city is doing and I think we can do more, especially with rail transit. I think it's important we get transit oriented development right. It's going to be a great opportunity for economic development, affordable housing, senior housing, and providing jobs," said Dela Cruz.

Dela Cruz grew up in Wahiawa, graduated from Leilehua High School and the University of Oregon, and worked in public relations before getting elected to the Honolulu City Council in 2002.

He represents District 2, which includes Wahiawa, Mililani, and the North Shore, and was Council Chair for a little over 3 years.

Dela Cruz is also known for co-authoring The Puka Guide, The Okazu Guide, and the Omiyage Guide promoting mom and pop businesses across Hawaii.

And he was the campaign spokesman for Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi when she ran for Mayor last year.

"We're ready to campaign, campaign hard and try to meet as many people as possible and get them excited about changing Honolulu," said Dela Cruz.

Honolulu City Prosecutor Peter Carlisle is the only other person thus far who has announced he plans to run for mayor in 2010, if Hannemann steps down.



## KITV.com

### Opponents Of Development Win Battle

### ***Citizens Group Tries To Stop Ho'opili Project***

POSTED: 7:51 pm HST September 7, 2009

UPDATED: 8:05 pm HST September 7, 2009

Related To Story



**Video: Battle Over Ho'opili  
Land Use Continues**

**HONOLULU** -- Opponents of a development that would urbanize more than 1,000 acres of prime agricultural land in Ewa have won a preliminary battle at the State Land Use Commission.

So now they're targeting the city planning department, hoping to permanently stop the Ho'opili project.

A citizens group opposed to the development met on this Labor Day holiday to strategize about their next moves.

Developer DR Horton-Schuler wants to convert 1,500 acres of prime agriculture land from AG to urban so it can build 12,000 homes there.

But opponents said it's the last major piece of green space, with productive, active farm land between town and Kapolei.

"If we're going to have a second city, you need separation between the first city and the second city. And if they build homes there, then there's no separation. It's all one big city and that's not what anybody wants," said Makakilo resident Thad Spreg.

Late August, the state land use commission rejected the developer's proposal, because the developer had not spelled out its incremental development plan over 20 years.

A group calling itself Friends of Makakilo now wants to get the city to change its development plan for the area, last updated in 1997, to keep the area AG instead of residential development.

"We want that land to stay permanently in farmland and so we're asking the people to write to the department of planning and permitting and to tell them that they want that land in farmland," said Makakilo resident Kioni Dudley.

"There's already 33,000 homes permitted, shovel-ready in this area, so I think we got to look at the plan and see how we can accommodate future development," said Ewa beach resident Glenn Oamilda.

The group plans to hold community meetings and launch petition drives in these neighborhoods, hoping to convince more people to oppose the development.

They're worried traffic will get even worse with thousands more homes in the area.

"The roads clearly cannot take anymore," said Makakilo resident Kioni Dudley.

The developers have called the land use decision a "temporary setback" and said they plan to re-apply for permission to build homes where these farms now stand.

Supporters of the development say it's the perfect place to put more homes, since it's right in the middle of the city's proposed rail transit line.

And we should tell you that we were unable to reach the developers and their public relations representatives because of the holiday Monday.

September 7, 2009

## **Letters to the Editor**

### **Road Repairs**

#### **State can't keep taxing the public**

State Department of Transportation Director Brennon Morioka's only solution to fixing the "worst roads in the country" is to tax the public more. What happened to all the monies the state receives each year from already high taxes and the federal government? Doesn't Mr. Morioka know how to plan and budget monies to fix the roads with what they have already? This is typical waste and bureaucracy again at government levels.

Everyone needs to do more with less, as you cannot keep taxing the public.

Steven Sofos | Honolulu

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September 7, 2009

## Letters to the Editor

### Excuse the aroma of a hard day's work

To the citizens of Honolulu who complained about body odor on buses: I sure hope you are not offended by the builder, plumber, carpenter, roofer or other person who may have to work in the hot sun all day.

Some of these people are building your future homes, schools, hospitals, etc. Maybe you can be uncomfortable long enough for your short ride home after a hard day's work. I know many people use buses to commute, and we don't all smell fresh as roses after working a long day.

If this is all you've got to complain about, then count your blessings. Many people have lost their jobs. I would think your city leaders would have bigger worries than those who may have a little odor after a hard day or night's work. I love to use buses when I can and would never deny that to other citizens of my community just because they may smell bad after working.

**Vince Murphy**  
Ruskin, Fla.

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September 7, 2009

## Letters to the Editor

### Tam and Garcia clearly out of a touch

A simple reminder to City Council members Nestor Garcia and Rod Tam: You need to know that *not* everybody has a reserved parking stall and is working in an office where the room temperature is set at 72 degrees Fahrenheit, sitting in a leather chair with a lei around their neck.

Some people have to sweat to put food on the table, so please stick to the economy to give those people who elected you a more pleasant life. If you want to gain fame, do it with some good intention, not with a stupid idea like this.

**Guy Belegaud**  
Kakaako



September 8, 2009

## Saving 'Ewa ag land group's goal

*By Sean Hao  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

A group opposed to the proposed 11,750-home Ho'opili project yesterday announced an effort aimed at changing the 'Ewa development plan to keep the area permanently in agriculture.

Community group Friends of Makakilo, with support from the state Office of Planning, recently successfully challenged D.R. Horton-Schuler Homes' petition with the state Land Use Commission to urbanize 1,554 acres of farmland. The commission ruled that the developer didn't comply with state law requiring that development be substantially complete within 10 years. Ho'opili is slated to be built over 20 years.

Project backers cite positive impacts including creating as many as 8,000 jobs. Supporters also note that the county long ago designated the region to be part of Kapolei's secondary urban center and a primary absorber of future O'ahu population growth.

At a minimum, the ruling could delay the project for about a year. Traffic is one of the two most frequent concerns raised regarding Ho'opili. The loss of agriculture has been the other.

Kioni Dudley, president of Friends of Makakilo, said the group plans to launch a public information campaign aimed at rallying the public to petition the city Department of Planning and Permitting to change the 'Ewa growth boundary. The department is in the process of updating the 'Ewa development plan, which as written would allow urbanization of the East Kapolei area where Ho'opili would be built.

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September 9, 2009

## Stakes high in race for governor

*By Jerry Burris*

While things have been quiet recently in the cornerstone political fight of 2010 — the race for governor — don't expect that to last too long.

The stakes are simply too high. The Hawai'i governorship is a political plum unlike any elsewhere in the country. Our highly centralized bureaucracy (what other governor has final say over schools, hospitals, welfare, virtually all taxes and more?), makes the governor's office a particular prize.

Not that it has been much of a treat for the current incumbent, Linda Lingle, who has been handed a tanking economy and a Legislature dominated by Democrats who have no desire to do her any favors. That adds up to a rain cloud that would soak any politician, even one as gifted and nimble as Lingle.

Still, Lingle's sour experience has not discouraged folks from wanting to take a crack at the job. Her lieutenant governor, James "Duke" Aiona, is working mightily to slip out of the shadows that surround any lieutenant governor and stake his claim as Lingle's heir apparent. He is clearly the front-runner on the Republican side, challenged at this point by former state Sen. John Carroll, who has been out of the limelight for several years.

Democrat Neil Abercrombie, now weary of the travel and frustration of serving in Congress continuously since 1991, wishes to return home and cap his career by governing the state that welcomed him nearly five decades ago.

Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann, also a Democrat, is clearly eager to advance his promising political career and talent for public service. Many of Hannemann's confidants say his natural goal is the U.S. Congress — perhaps as a senator — but Hannemann has made it clear to anyone who asks that his eye at the moment is on the governor's office.

At this point, it is virtually impossible to know what issues, if any, will sort out this most interesting race. Hannemann and Abercrombie, for instance, are in synch on most matters, particularly the controversial plan to build a multibillion-dollar rail transit system for Honolulu. While Abercrombie has tried in recent days to put a little air between himself and Hannemann on the issue, it would be hard for voters to find a stark black/white difference between the two on rail.

Aiona's best hope is to promise he will continue the tight-fisted conservative policies of his current boss, Lingle, and contrast himself at every turn with Hannemann and Abercrombie who will be painted as free-spending liberals. After all, Hannemann pushed for an increase in the excise tax to fund transit, an idea Abercrombie supports.

While the Democratic primary is likely to hinge primarily on personality, there are areas where one or both of the candidates could be vulnerable: taxes and construction.

Abercrombie, for instance, is vulnerable to attack, fair or otherwise, on his insistence — and he has a lot of clout to insist on this matter through his role as chairman of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Land and Air Forces — that the planned massive military buildup planned for Guam pay prevailing Hawai'i wage rates for construction workers. The same proposal insists that no more than 30 percent of the workers hired for the buildup can be foreign nationals.

That's sweet music to Hawai'i construction unions, but not to Guam officials and the military.

Some officials have said Abercrombie's plan would add \$10 billion to \$15 billion to the cost of the

move (which is supposed to be financed primarily by the Japanese, eager to move U.S. military forces out of their homeland) and could easily kill the deal.

Meanwhile, Hannemann is vulnerable for attacks on his plan to push through with that multibillion-dollar fixed rail system, even though tax collections are down and there is a growing chorus of technical and environmental opposition. True, Abercrombie supports mass transit, but one can see him arguing that the mayor took a good idea and drove it right over the cliff.

So, while the campaign is quiet at the moment, do not expect the peace to last much longer.

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## This Legislative Idea Really Stinks

September 09, 2009  
By Rick Hamada



Photo courtesy Rod Tam

Rod Tam: Something smells

For a radio talk show host and newspaper columnist like me, Honolulu City Councilman Rod Tam is the gift that keeps on giving. His latest legislative faux pas, that harebrained idea that we should outlaw smelly people from TheBus and any other public transit systems will provide fodder for conversation and chuckles for ages.

If you were too busy working for a living and raising your children, you may have missed that Tam, along with colleague Nestor Garcia, announced their facilitation of legislation that would make it illegal to “bring onto transit property odors that unreasonably disturb others or interfere with their use of the transit system, whether such odors arise from one’s person, clothes, articles, accompanying animal or any other source.” In other words, no stink for you!

Yes, ladies and gentlemen of Oahu, you have duly elected leaders who are dedicating their time, resources and your dollars to the identification, extrication and prosecution of people who smell bad.

{embed=“elements/box\_ad”}

Thank goodness. For a while there, I thought they would be concerned about the looming city budget deficit, the deterioration of our roadways, the potential of a billion-dollar judgment on secondary wastewater treatment and the management of a multibillion-dollar transportation project. Naturally, these areas of concern are mere distractions when we have the scourge of B.O.-emanating, toe jamcrusted and halitosis-disseminating citizens riding TheBus. Somebody, please, elevate the Homeland Security threat level to “Skanky.”

But who is truly surprised this idea has Tam’s fingerprints all over it? While in the state Legislature, Tam cooked up the “Naps and Snacks” proposal. Tam also championed that great idea that Koko Head Crater would make a wonderful alternative to the Waimanalo Gulch landfill.

His most recent foot-in-mouth incident occurred while he offended and insulted those of Hispanic persuasion by repeatedly referring to allegedly undocumented workers as “wetbacks.” Now, with this latest demonstration of legislative incredulity, Tam is creating quite the resume to propel him into the 2010 lieutenant governor’s race, where he is sure to run a spirited campaign in capturing 12 votes less than “None of the Above.”

{embed=“elements/google\_ad336x280”}

Imagine if this proposal were to actually pass. The bureaucracy would be staggering. To determine what is legally offensive, an official Nose Commission would be created. The finest noses, past and present, would serve. Historic proboscis figures like Jimmy Durante, Karl Malden and Barbra Streisand would be ideal, with Oscar-winning actor Adrian Brody as chair. TheBus would be staffed with TSA officers. Yes, that’s right,

“Transportation Smelling Authority.” Instead of drug-sniffing dogs, there would be stink-smelling dogs, and each of them would be named “Haunas.” You get the point.

Ideas such as these make national news where Hawaii becomes the butt of not-so-funny jokes. But that’s the least of our concerns. Government officials have got to realize that they should not ingratiate themselves into any and all aspects of our lives. That law-makers believe they should regulate how we smell is the most stink part of this story.

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Find this article at: [http://www.midweek.com/content/columns/ace\\_article/this\\_legislative\\_idea\\_really\\_stinks/](http://www.midweek.com/content/columns/ace_article/this_legislative_idea_really_stinks/)

## Train, News Merger, Funny Farm Biz

September 09, 2009  
By Bob Jones

Bring on that elevated transit train from Kapolei to downtown Honolulu, and start thinking spurs to Mililani and Hawaii Kai.

Are you out of your mind, Jones? Have you no sense of money? Do you want to blight our island? Have you sold out to some politicians or construction unions?

No, yes, no and no. And I'm mad as hell at Mufi's transit man for lying to us about early revenue shortfall projections. But that's an argument for another time, because the revenue could come back with a bang by 2011 and initial construction costs seem to be edging down.

And my read on that rumored cease-and-desist action being readied by some powerful business interests along the right-of-way is that it will be dead on arrival in the court because of current Supreme Court eminent domain rulings.

{embed="elements/box\_ad"}

Let's look at the reality and the baloney about the rail project our City Council OK'd three years ago and you voters approved.

Sight blight: We built like Hong Kong and blotted out the Koolaus. Local architects lined up to erect the high-rises that separate ocean from mountain. Now those same architects claim that a 30-foot elevated train guideway will be a blight. Do you mean worse than the current blight from the airport into town, worse than our Taco Bell hillside and Kahala houses, worse than the concrete Federal Building?

OK, an elevated train guideway is not an aesthetic improvement. I'd rather have a train running right alongside traffic.

Can we do that?

No. We could have a *streetcar*, but not a speedy, computer-operated train. The train will be several cars long and would block traffic crossways. The train's going to be fast and automated and unable to instantly stop for that distracted pedestrian or motorist.

The train's going to be a train. I don't know why the city keeps saying "light rail." It's a train. A helluva *big* train! Like Bangkok's Sky Train, it will zoom from stop to stop and brook no obstacles. That's why it's elevated.

Every now and then a community is asked to make a leap ahead and a leap of faith. Highways, harbors, airports - we have the option to say no. Molokai's done that and it's an economic graveyard for its people - but they made their choices and they live with them.

We've made some bad choices on Oahu: allowing high-rise development at the foot of Diamond Head,

allowing hotels on the beach rather than preserving a beach walkway, not penalizing car/taxi useage with heavier taxation.

The damage is done. We cannot remake this island into a postcard paradise. We're a big city. We've got to move people. Roadways can't handle the job. Flyovers can't handle the job. We'll need this first increment train and some after that.

We need to get over our "oh, the old days" mentality and accept a future- minded reality for the 12th largest city in America.



The KHNL-KGMB newsroom merger layoffs are under way. An early job loser was Randy Ennis, KHNL assistant news director/operations.

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He had written at the No Train, No Gain journalism Web site:

"It seems that reporters have no problem spending the time to massage and rewrite their pieces, thus leaving very little time for the videotape editor to do anything but slap the piece together so it makes it in the newscast. As a result, the final product looks like s—t."

Anchorman Howard Dashefsky is out, too. He was an "A" student of mine when I taught broadcast journalism at the UH. Dashefsky was a very good baseball player but had said "chances of making it into the majors are slim, and I want to learn a skill that will always give me a job."



Did you read that the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation supports development at Ho'opili rather than farming?

The HFBF's mission is "to support agriculture in Hawaii."

Ask HFBF president Dean Okimoto about that next time you see him at his Nalo Farms stand at the KCC Farmers Market. What's the politics there, Dean?

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Find this article at: [http://www.midweek.com/content/columns/justthoughts\\_article/train\\_news\\_merger\\_funny\\_farm\\_biz/](http://www.midweek.com/content/columns/justthoughts_article/train_news_merger_funny_farm_biz/)



September 10, 2009

## Caldwell entering mayoral race

*By Gordon Y.K. Pang  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

City Managing Director Kirk Caldwell yesterday said he will run for mayor when Mayor Mufi Hannemann leaves office, be it 2010 or 2012.

Caldwell, 56, plans to hold a fundraiser this month; tickets for the event say he will run for mayor in 2012, when Hannemann's second and final term expires.

Hannemann has set up an exploratory gubernatorial committee, however, and many suspect he will resign as mayor next summer to run for governor. Caldwell said if that happens, he will throw his hat in the ring for mayor then.

Caldwell joins City Prosecutor Peter Carlisle and City Councilman Donovan Dela Cruz as announced candidates for mayor.

An attorney by trade, Caldwell has been Hannemann's appointed second-in-command since last summer. From 2002 to 2008, the Manoa resident had been a key player as a member of the Democratic leadership in the state House of Representatives.

Caldwell last year chose to forgo re-election to the state House of Representatives and tried to run for an open City Council seat, but his candidacy was ruled invalid because he had not resigned from his state House seat by the deadline.

Caldwell said he is concentrating his efforts on being managing director. "But I want to start early," he said of his mayoral bid. "You need to raise a lot of money. It's a lofty goal running for mayor. It's a huge race."

Caldwell said it's important to announce his intentions now to mobilize his supporters.

He would not be the first managing director seeking to replace his old boss. In 1994, Managing Director Jeremy Harris campaigned successfully for mayor when Mayor Frank Fasi resigned to run unsuccessfully for governor against Ben Cayetano.

Dela Cruz, 36, announced over the weekend his plan to run for mayor next year. Dela Cruz, who cannot run for re-election because of the council term limit, said he has no doubt that Hannemann will run for governor next year.

Carlisle, 56, also said he will run when Hannemann leaves the mayor's office.

Two other potential mayoral candidates told The Advertiser yesterday they are still weighing their political options: City Council Chairman Todd Apo and University of Hawai'i engineering professor Panos Prevedorous, who ran for mayor last year.

## Letters to the Editor

For Saturday, September 12, 2009

### **Rail briefings worth the time**

I am a member of the Pearl City Neighborhood Board, and I've been attending all the city's rail station workshops to date, including the recent meeting on the Pearlridge station. It was well attended and our community got the opportunity to provide input, ask questions and learn all about rail. These meetings are very informative and the public gets a chance to be involved with this important infrastructure project that will change our city, which I believe, for the better.

I encourage everyone to attend these meetings and provide your input. It's also an opportunity to educate yourself so you can learn more about rail that is coming our way.

**Cruz J. Vina Jr.**  
Pearl City



September 13, 2009

## Kamehameha Schools proposes cheaper Honolulu rail plan

Different route, partly at ground level, could save \$1.7 billion, consultant says

*By Sean Hao  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

Honolulu could save an estimated \$1.7 billion by building about half of its planned elevated commuter train at ground level, according to a study commissioned by Kamehameha Schools.

Kamehameha Schools is Hawaii's largest private landowner. Its holdings include the sites where at least four of proposed train stations would be located, making it keenly interested in the project.

Kamehameha Schools hired Phil Craig, a New Jersey railway system designer and transportation consultant since 1955, to study Honolulu's proposed system.

Craig's study concludes that a partially ground-level train could cost less and create fewer aesthetic issues than an entirely elevated train.

The city eliminated the ground-level transit option long ago on concerns that it would interfere with road traffic, operate at slower speeds, generate lower ridership and require the acquisition of more right of way.

Craig said new light rail technologies along with an alternative route could overcome those concerns.

Craig's study proposes building the train system at ground level from East Kapolei to Waipahu and from Middle Street to Ala Moana Center. Only the segment from Waipahu to Middle Street, or about 10 out of a total 20 miles, would be built on an elevated guideway.

### Cost is an issue

A train with half the guideway at ground level coupled with cheaper bus-stop-style stations would cost \$3.6 billion, which is about \$1.7 billion less than the project's current \$5.3 billion price tag, according to Craig.

"There would have to be more detailed engineering done to determine what the precise cost would be," Craig said. However, "there are significant savings that ought to be achieved. Those monies, for instance, could be spent to extend the line into West Kapolei or to UH-Manoa or into Waikiki."

A reduction in the cost of the rail project could also help the city deal with the recent drop in tax collections needed to pay the city's \$4 billion share of the project.

Craig also suggested a different schedule for rail construction. He proposed the first phase of the system should link Middle Street to Downtown and could be ready to open in June 2017.

The city's planned first phase links East Kapolei to Waipahu and would open for full operations by 2019.

A call to city spokesman Bill Brennan for comment on the Kamehameha Schools study Friday afternoon wasn't immediately returned.

Kamehameha spokeswoman Ann Botticelli also didn't return messages for this story. However, last month Botticelli said Kamehameha Schools shared information with the city indicating there may be substantial construction savings with a light-rail system built partially at ground level.

Kamehameha, in documents recently filed with the state, has expressed concerns about the size of the elevated train stations, which will be 50 feet wide by up to 300 feet long. The 21 planned stations also will be three stories high or higher.

## route shift sought

Kamehameha Schools also has asked the city to move a planned station from its property at the intersection of Halekauwila and South streets to Mother Waldron Park, which is about 300 yards diamondhead.

In addition, federal officials are asking the city to shift the route of the planned train away from the Prince Kuhio Federal Building because of security concerns. U.S. District Judge Helen Gillmor and U.S. District Marshal Mark Hanohano this year expressed concerns that the proposed route down Halekauwila Street exposes the nearby courthouse to a potential terrorist bombing or attack by an individual holding a grudge against a particular judge.

However, a threat and vulnerability assessment conducted by the city called an attack on the Prince Kuhio Federal Building from Honolulu's planned elevated commuter train "most improbable."

The route proposed in the Kamehameha Schools study would be substantially the same as the city's planned route, until the train reaches urban Honolulu. The current route, which was created by ordinance, travels the periphery of Downtown by running along Nimitz Highway to Halekauwila Street, then Kapi'olani Boulevard. The study proposes several alternatives including a diamondhead route that would enter Downtown via North King Street to Hotel Street, then makai on Richards Street to South King Street or Queen Street.

Heading 'ewa, the ground-level train would travel from Kapi'olani Boulevard to South Street, then South Beretania Street to Richards Street, then reconnect at Hotel Street.

The slightly longer route would be slower than the current Nimitz route. However, the alternative route could shorten the commute of many riders by placing them closer to their destination, Craig said.

Modern train technology could allow at-grade trains to accommodate the estimated 95,310 daily riders without undue interference with road traffic, Craig said.

"The significant advantage in technology in this decade has been the development of electrical distribution systems that do not require overhead trolley wires," he said. "That allows you then to put the tracks along the curb without having the impact on the trees, and in turn you have the loading platforms just like buses load today.

"There's several (train) manufacturers, including Bombardier, Alstom (and) Siemens, that have this technology," Craig added.

City Councilman Charles Djou said the city has not provided council members with a copy of the Kamehameha Schools study.

"I very much want to see it," he said. "I think anything that's going to make this system work and save taxpayers money is worth the city's attention. This is the kind of stuff the Honolulu City Council should

be holding hearings on."

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Sep

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## [Is it a new attempt to derail rail?](#)

Filed Under [Sunrise on KGMB9](#)

Kamehameha Schools has been quietly paying a mainland consultant to invent an alternative Honolulu rail plan, and now, with the line already planned and ready for groundbreaking, it appears to be suggesting a re-engineering of the project.

The consultant, Phil Craig from New Jersey, wasn't in on the planning for this system. He flew in later, walked the route, and ever since has been second-guessing the people who did plan it, asserting that his ideas would cost less.

Craig's late suggestions have been warmly welcomed by three groups of people: (1) people who think they won't like the way elevated stations look, (2) landowners who think the existing plan might take some land from them, and (3) rail opponents who, having lost a referendum, see every delay as a chance

to derail the project and impose their will anyhow.

The aesthetic objection to elevated stations is untenable unless you are blind to the existing eyesores the city has, including elevated highways that divide the community more than a rail line ever could. Rail builds community no matter where it is.

Kamehameha Schools owns land at four station sites, and according to the Honolulu Advertiser is asking that one be moved to a park instead. City planners can expect a lot of this from people whose land will be taken. It's why the H-1 curves a lot.

Craig says his ideas would save vast sums. Delay will cost vast sums. Even if you could wave a magic wand and have a new engineering plan tomorrow that puts more of the line on the ground, you will, with the wave of your wand, have created new delays, by creating more landowners to sue.

And the more space rail needs on the ground, the greater the chance of finding iwi.

That's not the sort of thing that would occur to a transit planner from New Jersey.

## Comments

### 3 Responses to "Is it a new attempt to derail rail?"

1. Robert Nehmad on September 13th, 2009 12:49 pm

What exactly are Phil Craig's credentials?

I understand that he is railway designer. Based on The Honolulu Advertiser issue of September 13, Mr. Craig states that "The slightly longer route would be slower than the current Nimitz route. However, the alternative route could shorten the commute of many riders by placing them closer to their destination." What evidence does he have to make this subjective statement? Planners use data to reach decisions. Does Craig's report include any facts/data to validate his comments?

[ I think Craig has decent credentials. I've met him and he seems like a nice enough fellow. I just think it's too late. If we want this built we need to get moving. HMD]

2. Bill on September 13th, 2009 1:48 pm

The school can barely ensure the safety and welfare of their students, yet they want to tell the city how to do a transit rail system? Clean up your house first. False pride makes you blind.

3. Michael on September 13th, 2009 4:35 pm

When someone wants to say something, iwi how they have a bone to pick even after life.

### Leave a Reply

Name (required)

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### Rail study catches friction

Posted: Sep 13, 2009 7:25 PM  
Updated: Sep 13, 2009 10:47 PM

By Duane Shimogawa - [bio](#) | [email](#)

HONOLULU (KHNL) - Oahu's rail transit plan is moving full speed ahead. But a Kamehameha Schools report wants it to come to a screeching halt, after it finds a different route, partly at ground level that they say could save the city billions of dollars. The mayor is adamantly against the school's plan.

Kamehameha Schools is keeping a close eye on this project. That's mostly because it owns the sites where four of the proposed train stations would be built.

Its report says a partially ground-level train could cost less, and it would look better than an entirely elevated one.

The first phase of Oahu's rail transit system is scheduled to begin in 10 years, linking East Kapolei to Waipahu.

But Kamehameha Schools and its consultant have much different plans. Its report suggests that a train traveling at ground level halfway, combined with bus stop style stations would cost nearly two-billion dollars less than the current project.

"What they're trying to do here really makes no sense at all, if you look at the report, there are some very serious misstatements," Honolulu mayor Mufi Hannemann said.

The report proposes building the rail system at ground level from East Kapolei to Waipahu and from Middle Street to Ala Moana Center. Only the part from Waipahu to Middle Street would be elevated.

It also says the reduction of cost could help the city pay for the rail. This after recent tax collections were lower than expected. But the mayor doesn't buy it.

"Their consultant failed to discuss his findings with the city, we would have liked to sit down with him, 'cuz it's clear he's not a transportation expert by any means," Hannemann said.

The Kamehameha Schools route is nearly the same as the city's route until it reaches urban Honolulu. The mayor has issues with this and the ground level alternative, among many other things.

"They say they only have to trench 9 to 17 inches, that's false, most Iwi is found 5 feet or less, secondly, they say it will travel faster, and also that's not true, at grade causes accidents," Hannemann said.

The mayor says the current plan in place won't change, whether the school likes it or not.

"They're gonna greatly jeopardize the timetable the more they try to delay, this project and what I say now is it's not so much the longer we delay, the more we gonna pay, the longer we delay, the money goes away," Hannemann said.

Messages to Kamehameha Schools Sunday were not returned.



Mufi Hannemann



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## KITV.com

### Study: Ground Level Tracks Could Save Money

#### ***\$1.7B Could Be Saved***

POSTED: 10:26 am HST September 13, 2009

UPDATED: 10:42 am HST September 13, 2009

**HONOLULU** -- A new study said Honolulu could save about \$1.7 billion by building about half of a planned elevated commuter train at ground level.

The study was commissioned by Kamehameha Schools, Hawaii's largest private landowner with holdings including the sites of at least four proposed train stations.

City officials ruled out the ground-level option due to traffic and concerns it would lower ridership and require the acquisition of more rights of way.

But the study said new light rail technology and an alternate route could resolve those issues.

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September 14, 2009

## **Letters to the Editor**

### **Pungent bus riders**

### **Councilman to be lauded for courage**

Highly offensive odors that create a disruption and make people queasy, create an unhealthy and unsafe environment for passengers.

Chicago libraries, for example, have a rule that patrons "should not enter if they have neglected their bodily hygiene so that it gives offense and constitutes a nuisance."

Ruth Lednicer, Chicago libraries spokeswoman, said, "If they do and it gets to the point where it's offensive to others and becomes a disturbance, we will ask them to leave."

An exception should be made for those who have a debilitating condition certified by a physician that prevents them from attending to their personal hygiene.

Honolulu Councilman Rod Tam has a longstanding record of listening to his constituents and supporting their legitimate concerns. Tam is a man ahead of his time. For example, he once supported a "naps" bill that would allow workers to take a short nap on their lunch hour or during a coffee break. Research including a Harvard University study shows that a power nap boosts performance back to morning levels.

I applaud Councilman Tam for his courage in representing his constituents' wishes as far as protecting the right to breathe Hawaii's pure, fresh and clean air while riding buses.

E. Kam | Honolulu



September 14, 2009

## Honolulu energy use increases by 15%

Consumption up 15% since conservation goal set 2 years ago

*By Sean Hao  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

In 2007, Honolulu officials announced a plan to reduce the city's power consumption by 10 percent by 2017.

The city also pledged to make energy efficiency a priority when Mayor Mufi Hannemann signed the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement in 2005.

But the conservation effort is off to a rough start.

Over the past two years, the city's use of electricity has climbed nearly 15 percent.

"It's going in the wrong direction," said City Council member Charles Djou, who sponsored a bill passed by the council last year that requires the city to annually report its energy consumption.

"We want the overall path of energy use to be going down not up," Djou said.

The city said the increased electricity use is due largely to recent upgrades to its Sand Island Waste Water Treatment Plant, which were mandated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and state Department of Health.

The city used 194.4 million kilowatt hours of electricity at a cost of \$38.8 million during the fiscal year 2009, which ended June 30. That's up from the 169.3 million kilowatt hours of electricity purchased for \$28.5 million in fiscal 2007.

The Department of Environmental Services, which operates the island's waste water collection and treatment system, spent \$17.1 million on electricity in fiscal 2009, which was up from \$11.6 million in fiscal 2007.

If electricity use by the Department of Environmental Services was excluded, the city's electricity consumption would have decreased by nearly 5.3 million kilowatt hours since fiscal year 2007, the city said in a statement last week.

"There's good news in that we're demonstrating steady progress in decreasing our energy consumption, despite the sharp spike in electricity rates," Hannemann said in a news release last week.

While the city government's electricity consumption is rising, total electricity consumption in O'ahu, Maui and Hawai'i counties during the first half of this year was down 5 percent, according to Hawaiian Electric Co.

The city government's increase in annual consumption — about 25 million kilowatt hours — is enough electricity to power nearly 3,500 Honolulu homes for a year.

The city has been working to reduce electricity consumption, including spending millions of dollars on energy conservation efforts at Honolulu Hale, Neal Blaisdell Exhibition Hall and other city facilities. This year, the city plans to spend \$657,000 installing a photovoltaic system at its Halawa Corporation Yard.

The city spent \$2.4 million to retrofit Honolulu Hale. The project, which was completed in 2002, was supposed to save the city at least 1.1 million kilowatt hours of electricity. In 2005 the city spent \$71,000 installing energy efficient light fixtures in the Blaisdell Exhibition Hall. The modifications were projected to save the city 56,000 kilowatts of electricity annually.

The city auditor last summer criticized the city for lacking a comprehensive framework to effectively manage electricity costs and consumption. The audit also found that the city's sustainability goals lacked a plan for achievement.

According to the audit, the city could not verify whether investments in energy efficiency projects were delivering the promised results. Overall city electricity consumption has risen 20 percent since 2005.

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September 14, 2009

## Transit tax brings in record \$17.5 million for August

Transit tax collections jumped to nearly \$17.5 million last month following a change in excise tax deadlines, according to the state Department of Taxation. That's the most raised in any month since the tax was put in place in January 2007.

August tax collections may have been inflated because of a change in filing deadlines that took effect last month, the tax department said. Under the change, excise taxes must be filed by the 20th day of each month rather than the last day of the month.

Through the first two months of the current fiscal year, the half-percentage-point transit surcharge raised \$29.8 million, or an average of \$14.9 million a month. The city is projecting tax collections during the fiscal year, which began July 1, to average \$16.5 million a month.

The tax collection figures include the 10 percent the state takes off the top to pay for administering the tax.

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September 14, 2009

## **Letters to the Editor**

### **Rail transit**

#### **City workshops very informative**

I'm a member of the Pearl City Neighborhood Board, and I've been attending all the city's rail station workshops to date, including the recent meeting on the Pearlridge station. It was well attended and our community got the opportunity to provide input, ask questions and learn all about rail. These meetings are very informative and the public gets a chance to be involved with this important infrastructure project that will change our city, which I believe for the better.

I encourage everyone to attend these meetings and provide your input. It's also an opportunity to educate yourself so you can learn more about rail that is coming our way.

Cruz J. Vina Jr. | Pearl City



September 14, 2009

## Letters to the Editor

### Rider ready to trade TheBus for TheTrain

I'm a bus rider who is eagerly waiting for the new rail to start operating. I catch TheBus to and from work because it saves me a lot of money on gas and parking, and reduces the wear and tear on my car. But my bus is slow, seems to catch every single red light and, when UH and public schools are in session, it's often late in the afternoons.

When the rail system starts service in a few years, I will happily say aloha to TheBus and start riding the brand new trains. I'm sure they will be faster than our buses and much more reliable because they don't have to stop for red lights or accidents. I just hope the "new train" smell is as nice as the "new car" smell.

**Tony Malufunga**  
Waianae



September 15, 2009

## Funding details on rail campaign remain secret

*By Sean Hao  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

City officials continue to withhold details on how much has been spent on a public information campaign for Honolulu's planned rail project.

Last year the city said it spent nearly \$2.6 million from August 2005 through June 30, 2008, on a rapid transit public information campaign that included newsletters and radio and television shows.

However, the city has not responded to several requests by The Advertiser made since June for details on how much was spent since June 30, 2008. The city also hasn't disclosed how much was spent creating a recent "I Love Rail" logo and to hold a June 23 transit symposium, including the costs incurred to make it possible for seven national speakers to appear at the symposium. On other occasions the city has brought in Mainland experts to testify in favor of the project.

Those expenditures come at a time when tax collections needed to build the train are coming in below projections.

The city has maintained that an informational campaign is part of a federally mandated public involvement effort. However, critics have called the effort thinly disguised rail propaganda.

The Advertiser requested updated public information campaign spending figures for rail from city Transportation Director Wayne Yoshioka on June 19 and June 23. The Advertiser then filed an official request for information under the state's Uniform Information Practices Act on Aug. 27. Yoshioka's office acknowledged receipt of that request on Aug. 27 and again as of Friday. The written response from Yoshioka did not specify when or if the city will release the requested information.

As a result, it's still unclear how much the city has spent on a pro-rail campaign that led up to a November vote on the project. Voters last November approved the East Kapolei to Ala Moana rail project, 51 percent to 46 percent.

Tom Brislin, a media ethicist at the University of Hawai'i, said government agencies have a right to advocate. However, when public funds are involved, those expenses need to be transparent, he said.

"I don't think there's an issue of them being an advocate, because they're an advocate for a lot of things" such as public safety, Brislin said. "Certainly if public funds are being used, it should be as transparent as any other public program with an expenditure of funds."

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September 15, 2009

## **Letters to the Editor**

### **Ho'opili**

#### **Denial doesn't help 'road to nowhere'**

The state Land Use Commission's decision to not advance the petition by developer D.R. Horton to build out on the 'Ewa plain carries a unique twist.

On June 27, 2007, Gov. Lingle signed the budget bill HB 500, which became Act 213.

Included in this measure was \$17.2 million to build a portion of the East-West Connector Road.

When completed, this road is to connect the North-South Road corridor to the Fort Weaver Road corridor and serve as the main gateway for 'Ewa's residents to access the upcoming University of Hawai'i West O'ahu campus.

The aftermath in denying D.R. Horton its development scheme leaves the state with building a section of road that ends in a corn field — essentially connecting nothing.

The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands has an entire community planned that is to be served by the East-West Connector Road, as is the Kroc Center.

If this road is not completed through the corn field, which is D.R. Horton's property, folks within this particular DHHL tract will have only one way in and out of their development.

Tom Berg | 'Ewa Beach resident, 'Ewa Neighborhood Board member-Legislative Committee



September 16, 2009

## Honolulu officials balk at alternative rail plan

Arguments in report from Kamehameha Schools 'rehash' issues, official says

*By Sean Hao  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

An alternative rail plan advanced by Kamehameha Schools could save money in the short-term but would create safety, traffic and other problems, according to the city.

Hawaii's largest private landowner recently commissioned a study that estimated the commuter rail project's \$5.3 billion price tag could be cut by \$1.7 billion by building about half of the planned 20-mile elevated train line at ground level.

A response to that report released yesterday by city Managing Director Kirk Caldwell called the Kamehameha Schools report biased and designed to support a predetermined outcome.

The Kamehameha Schools study also overstates the cost savings of ground-level rail while underestimating its traffic impacts, according to the city.

The city also said there is no need for a public hearing to discuss the Kamehameha Schools study.

City Council member Charles Djou said last week that the council should consider holding a public hearing, but Caldwell said in a letter to Djou on Monday that a public hearing would distract from efforts to move ahead with the project as planned.

"Hearings on the KS-commissioned report will not cover new ground," Caldwell wrote. "The arguments in the KS-commissioned report rehash issues that have been discussed in public forums and in Honolulu City Council hearings."

The Kamehameha Schools report was conducted by Phil Craig, a New Jersey railway system designer and transportation consultant. His study proposes building the train system at ground level from East Kapolei to Waipahu and from Middle Street to Ala Moana Center. Only the segment from Waipahu to Middle Street, or about 10 out of a total 20 miles, would be built on an elevated guideway.

A reduction in the cost of the rail project could help the city deal with less-than-anticipated tax collections needed to pay the city's \$4 billion share of the project. However, the city eliminated the ground-level transit option long ago on concerns that it would interfere with road traffic, operate at slower speeds, generate lower ridership and require the acquisition of more right of way.

Craig argued that new light rail technologies along with an alternative route, traffic signal priority techniques and a widening of certain surface streets could overcome those concerns.

The city's response to the Kamehameha Schools report countered that an all-elevated train would be safer and have a greater maximum passenger capacity than a ground-level, or at-grade, train. An at-grade train also would create greater traffic problems and increase commuting times, according to the city.

## the view and cost

Supporters of the current transit plan contend that the elevated track will not disrupt views or change the aesthetics in already congested urban Honolulu. In addition, elevating the train is also cheaper than building a network of underground tunnels or running the tracks at ground level, where more land may need to be acquired, proponents say. Elevating the train also should reduce commuting times and as a result, potentially increase ridership.

However, Kamehameha Schools and the American Institute of Architects have raised concerns about the visual impact the approximately 30-foot-wide, 50-foot-high elevated track system and its elevated stations will have on Honolulu's scenery. Kamehameha Schools is also concerned about the effect on its land values and rental income.

Kamehameha Schools owns about 229 acres with 1,000 lessees and sublessees near the rail route. Its holdings include the sites where at least four proposed train stations would be located. That makes Kamehameha Schools one of the biggest private landowners that could be financially affected by rail.

Kamehameha Schools and others, including some environmental groups, have expressed concerns that options such as an at-grade train system were not fully analyzed during the city's analysis of alternatives. In addition, the drawbacks of an elevated train weren't fully addressed in a recent draft environmental impact study, according to Kamehameha Schools.

The city denies such allegations.

Kamehameha Schools "had ample opportunity to express their concerns about an elevated system during the (alternatives analysis) yet did not voice its opinion," according to the city's written response released yesterday. "The report by Mr. Craig is a late entry into the discussion that raises points that have already been thoroughly assessed over the course of the project to date."

Whether the planned 20-mile train from East Kapolei to Ala Moana runs on the ground or on an elevated guideway could depend on how concerns about an entirely elevated train affect the outcome of an ongoing environmental impact review.

## Altering Timeline

Any significant change in the route or train technology could require the city to prepare what's called a supplemental environmental impact statement, which would disrupt a timeline that calls for construction to begin in December. Despite those delays, a combination elevated and at-grade train could be operational in June 2017, according to Craig. The city's planned East Kapolei to Ala Moana train would open for full operations by 2019.

Djou yesterday reiterated his desire for a council hearing of the alternative proposed by Kamehameha Schools.

"If the city is so confident in an all-elevated system, then why not have a public discussion on it and settle the issue once and for all," he said. "Only if you fear that you might not be 100 percent correct would you not want to have a public hearing."

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# Honolulu Advertiser

## 38 Responses to “On the Hot Seat: Wayne Yoshioka, transportation director, answers questions on the city’s rail transit plan”

1. **[Jeanne Mariani-Belding](#)**:  
[September 16th, 2009 at 11:47 am](#)

Welcome to The Hot Seat. Let’s get started. Here’s a question posted earlier from Julie Ford:

Unfortunately, I won't be at my desk during the Hot Seat tomorrow, but I do have a question for Wayne.

With the steel-on-steel design, can you tell me what assurances we have that the rail system won't succumb to rust? I'm concerned that it will end up like Aloha Stadium -- one expensive heap of corrosion.

2. **[Jason Kawakami](#)**:  
[September 16th, 2009 at 11:56 am](#)

Kamehameha Schools' rail plan has trains making 90 degree turns in downtown and near the Capitol and Iolani Palace. Will it be loud?

3. **[Wayne Yoshioka](#)**:  
[September 16th, 2009 at 11:56 am](#)

Hi Jeanne...Thanks for having us on the Hot Seat today...

Thanks for the question Julie...

There are steel-on-steel systems all over the world that are in tropical and marine environments, and rust poses no problems in those systems.

The old OR&L is still out there on the Ewa Plain and has been for nearly 90 years and is still being used by the Oahu Historic Rail Society. Rust is not a problem. The City's plan is to replace rail every 30 years or so as part of the system's regular maintenance. So rust won't be a problem.

4. **Nick Wong:**  
[September 16th, 2009 at 11:57 am](#)

When will contractors start hiring to build the rail? We need the jobs.

5. **Jeanne Mariani-Belding:**  
[September 16th, 2009 at 11:57 am](#)

This one, posted earlier, comes from Waipahu Dude:  
Kamehameha Schools wants to get rid of traffic lanes in Waipahu, Kalihi and Kapiolani Boulevard streets for rail. Won't that make traffic worse?

When will the city award the first construction contract for rail?

6. **Amber Lee:**  
[September 16th, 2009 at 11:57 am](#)

Won't a train at ground level affect Hawaiian burial sites along the route?

7. **Tanya Miyamoto:**  
[September 16th, 2009 at 11:58 am](#)

I like how the city is integrating the new bike plan with the rail. Will people be able to take their bikes on the trains?

8. **Larry:**  
[September 16th, 2009 at 12:00 pm](#)

If the city went with the Kamehameha suggestion for grade level rail, would the city have to start from square one, and possibly lose federal funding?

9. **Jeanne Mariani-Belding:**  
[September 16th, 2009 at 12:00 pm](#)

Here's another earlier post from Copius231:  
September 16th, 2009 at 10:38 am edit

My question is in relation to some of the immediate problems:

1. Why are the traffic lights not synchronized throughout the island to promote a free flow of traffic?
2. Why is it that our roads throughout the island are constantly in such bad condition despite the size of our city government and why is it not a required "team" effort by all city employees who drive including law enforcement?
3. Do you think it is responsible to even consider the rail project without addressing many of the basic needs regarding Oahu's infrastructure like our roads, sewer and water lines for example?
4. Has the city conducted an analysis of how much monetary damage our poor road conditions have costed tax payers?

Thanks for your time.

10. **Wayne Yoshioka:**  
[September 16th, 2009 at 12:01 pm](#)

Jason Kawakami:

September 16th, 2009 at 11:56 am  
Kamehameha Schools' rail plan has trains making 90 degree turns in downtown and near the Capitol and Iolani Palace. Will it be loud?

-----  
Hi Jason...

KS so-called "plan" does have some extremely tight turns such as the one at Hotel and Richards Streets which could generate noise impacts if it is even possible to construct. The City's elevated rail train does not contain tight turns, and will therefore be less noisy.

11. **Marc:**  
[September 16th, 2009 at 12:03 pm](#)

Is Kamehameha Schools serious about wanting to go back to square one and study rail all over again? What can we do to stop this?

12. **Wayne Yoshioka:**

[September 16th, 2009 at 12:04 pm](#)

Nick Wong:

September 16th, 2009 at 11:57 am

When will contractors start hiring to build the rail? We need the jobs.

-----  
Hi Nick,

The City anticipates awarding contracts toward the end of this year. Mayor Hannemann understands the importance of creating jobs and how the rail transit project, in addition to helping relieve traffic congestion, will be a boost to our state's economy. Not only will there be construction jobs, but there will be a ripple effect and other non-construction jobs will be created as well.

13. **Johnny:**

[September 16th, 2009 at 12:05 pm](#)

When construction actually starts, will local workers get the jobs or will they come from the mainland like on the Aloha Stadium renovations? The Mayor put a big emphasis on the fact that the rail construction will provide jobs for our local people. Do we still have those assurances?

14. **Jeanne Mariani-Belding:**

[September 16th, 2009 at 12:06 pm](#)

Here's one posted earlier from

Nanakuli Bill:

September 16th, 2009 at 6:07 am edit

Mr. Yoshioka

While we can expect an increase in taxes to help pay for this project will it be enough to off set the revenues lost from the decrease sale of gasoline? And will there be adequate parking spaces at loading points?

15. **Taylor:**

[September 16th, 2009 at 12:06 pm](#)

I am really concerned about Kamehameha Schools' proposal, via their commissioned Craig's Report, to reroute the rail transit line from the City's proposed elevated route to a hideous, new ground level route that circulates a train up and down Kapiolani Boulevard and Hotel Street with Iolani Palace, the State Capitol and Honolulu Hale as a middle ground/dividing point. Why would we want to situate a train route outside the front gate of one of the State's most significant Hawaiian cultural sites? And, wouldn't placing a grade level train along Kapiolani Blvd. and Beretania take up valuable vehicle lanes – causing more traffic in those already congested areas?

16. **Jeanne Mariani-Belding:**

[September 16th, 2009 at 12:08 pm](#)

Here's another one posted earlier from Success for Honolulu:

Aloha,

I respect all the hard work and due dilligence that you, Mayor Hanneman and countless others have put into this project but I am wondering why it is that you, the Mayor and your administration has been so defensive about this project and give the general public the impression that you guys are the FINAL authority on this and anything anyone else says is not worth your time and consideration?? I seriously reminds me of the posture that President Obama is currently taking but he is now being forced to compromise on things...which is unlike what the current City administration is doing.

It seems to me that there is a lot of people (can't say a majority) that seems to believe that there should be alternate plans to consider. Isn't the general public's views important enough for you to consider??

17. **Wayne Yoshioka:**

[September 16th, 2009 at 12:10 pm](#)

This one, posted earlier, comes from Waipahu Dude:

Kamehameha Schools wants to get rid of traffic lanes in Waipahu, Kalihi and Kapiolani Boulevard streets for rail. Won't that make traffic worse?

When will the city award the first construction contract for rail?

-----  
Hey Dude,

Any ground level system will take away valuable existing traffic lanes, making traffic congestion even worse than it is today, if you can imagine that. There are other traffic impacts to consider, too...to driveways, cross-street traffic and blocking of streets by trains extending into intersections, not to mention the increased potential for pedestrian and vehicle accidents. An elevated system on the other hand will have a very minimal impact on existing traffic lanes and is completely separated from the vehicular traffic. And there is no chance for accidents with other vehicles and pedestrians.

18. **Micah:**

[September 16th, 2009 at 12:11 pm](#)

I understand that rail transit is one of the best economic stimulus projects to take place for O`ahu during this recessionary period – what kind of short and long term job numbers are we looking to experience from this project?

19. **Jeanne Mariani-Belding:**

[September 16th, 2009 at 12:12 pm](#)

This one was posted earlier from Sue Mason:

My question for Mr. Yoshioka is why there will be 20+ stations for 23 miles of rail, when the EIS identified 7 or 8 transportation sectors in their analysis? The number of stops makes me think this is a glorified bus system and not mass transit. In Japan, where land is scarce the mass transit stops have retail shops, restaurants, etc that encourage and allow riders to shop for necessities etc at the station prior to going home/work. This is not the case with the current proposal. Was this concept considered and why not? Shouldn't there be enough infrastructure to support and encourage the use of mass transit? Was the concept of allowing private entities to contribute to the construction costs of the stations through long term lease concessions considered in an effort to defray the initial construction costs?

20. **Caroline:**

[September 16th, 2009 at 12:13 pm](#)

If elevated rail presents a faster, more reliable and safer transit option, why would Kamehameha Schools propose an at-grade “ground level” option that mixes trains with pedestrians and traffic; a system with unreliable timing (due to getting stuck like vehicles at times); a plan that presents higher operational costs (operators for each train), and increased accident potential?

Also, who will be responsible for paying for litigation costs and settlement costs for at-grade accidents?

21. **Success for Honolulu:**

[September 16th, 2009 at 12:14 pm](#)

regarding my comment...when it says President Obama is reconsidering his posture...I forgot to include that this is involving the recent Health Care debate. Sorry that I was not clear on this in my original email.

Mahalo

Success for Honolulu

22. **Oh my:**

[September 16th, 2009 at 12:17 pm](#)

It's interesting that the KS "plan" would reroute the transit line so it would go right past KS headquarters at Kapiolani and South streets (and also right past the Advertiser building on the opposite corner). Do you think there are undisclosed reasons for wanting to toss out years of planning and tout this substitute "plan" at the last minute?

23. **wondering:**

[September 16th, 2009 at 12:20 pm](#)

while federal will be paying over \$1B, the city's taxpayers must cover the balance or approx 85%-90% of the costs. Previously you indicated that the transit budget will not be increased, so it seems funding for TheBus will decrease (assuming people are switching from Bus to Rail). What is the total costs of The Bus? How much of the Bus is funded by busfares and how much is funded by city general funds. What percent of general funds that the Bus receives will be diverted to cover the cost of Rail.

What happens if after initial period, people go back to the Bus, the cost for the Rail will still need to be paid. Is there some assurance that property taxes will not be increased specifically to address shortfalls for Rail. Will there be transparency and accountability website relating to Rail (similar to ARRA funds) that the general public can view the departments budget and expenditures?

24. **Wayne Yoshioka:**

[September 16th, 2009 at 12:21 pm](#)

Here's another earlier post from Copius231:  
September 16th, 2009 at 10:38 am edit

My question is in relation to some of the immediate problems:

1. Why are the traffic lights not synchronized throughout the island to promote a free flow of traffic?
2. Why is it that our roads throughout the island are constantly in such bad condition despite the size of our city government and why is it not a required "team" effort by all city employees who drive including law enforcement?
3. Do you think it is responsible to even consider the rail project without addressing many of the basic needs regarding Oahu's infrastructure like our roads, sewer and water lines for example?
4. Has the city conducted an analysis of how much monetary damage our poor road conditions have costed tax payers?

Thanks for your time.

-----Howzit

Copius...

You have several questions which I'll address...

Mayor Hannemann has made addressing these issues a priority for my department and other City departments.

1) We currently have 4 separate efforts to optimize traffic signal timing islandwide. The first is in Kapolei and is expected to be implemented within the next couple months. Other efforts are underway in McCully/Moiliili, Downtown, Waikiki, Kalihi and other areas.

2) Mayor Hannemann has poured millions of dollars into road repair and rehabilitation since coming into office in an effort to catch up with our infrastructure work backlog. In fact, a road paving symposium is planned before the end of September at which the City will make contractors aware of the City's upcoming road work plans.

3) Again, Copius, the basic infrastructure needs of our City are being addressed, as Mayor Hannemann has made this a key emphasis of his administration. The fact is, there are a lot of things that need to be done, and rail transit must be included in that mix.

4) We're focusing our efforts on repaving and improving the conditions of our city streets, though there are some studies done nationally that estimate the costs of driving on roads in poor condition.

25. **Kehaulani Silva:**

[September 16th, 2009 at 12:24 pm](#)

What about iwi along the route? Will the City's elevated plan be more damaging to archaeological sites or will KSBE's proposed system present more of a problem? We need to be respectful and provide a less damaging alternative.

Also, construction jobs...this is a good start to getting construction workers back to work, but I understand there may be some hurdles in getting this project off the ground. What do we (public) have to do to get this project going? We are suffering for jobs!

26. **Wayne Yoshioka:**

[September 16th, 2009 at 12:26 pm](#)

Amber Lee:

September 16th, 2009 at 11:57 am

Won't a train at ground level affect Hawaiian burial sites along the route?

-----  
Absolutely, Amber, and much more so than an elevated system will...That's because the at-grade system will need to dig up a trench 30-feet wide and as much as 4-5 feet deep that runs for several miles in the middle of existing streets! An elevated system, on the other hand, would require digging 8-foot diameter holes for columns 100 feet or more apart. It's not only burial sites that will be impacted, but there are utility lines underground as well that will be impacted...Nearly all of our city streets have sewers or water pipes or utilites beneath them. This is an important point that KS failed to address in its "plan."

27. **Wayne Yoshioka:**

[September 16th, 2009 at 12:30 pm](#)

Tanya Miyamoto:

September 16th, 2009 at 11:58 am

I like how the city is integrating the new bike plan with the rail. Will people be able to take their bikes on the trains?

-----  
Aloha Tanya,

Thank you. The City's plan currently allows for bicycles on the train during off-peak hours, and we are looking at the feasibility of accommodating bicycles all the time. Additionally, our recently updated Bicycle Master Plan, which Mayor Hannemann made a priority for my department identifies strong connections between key bicycle paths and transit stations.

28. **Wayne Yoshioka:**

[September 16th, 2009 at 12:35 pm](#)

Johnny:

September 16th, 2009 at 12:05 pm

When construction actually starts, will local workers get the jobs or will they come from the mainland like on the Aloha Stadium renovations? The Mayor put a big emphasis on the fact that the rail construction will provide jobs for our local people. Do we still have those assurances?

-----  
Hi Johnny...One of the reasons Mayor Hannemann had the City divide the rail project into many parts was to encourage and enable the participation of local contractors and businesses. We've met with contractors and they indicate that they are planning to maximize the use of local labor and other local resources to reduce their costs and to benefit from the local knowledge and familiarity of our island workforce.

29. **Its over:**

[September 16th, 2009 at 12:41 pm](#)

Two questions, that relate to the same issue:

1) Why does the DOT permit extraordinarily long stretches of the Pali Highway to remain coned off, when little to no work is actually being performed? For instance, I've seen cones Honolulu bound beginning at the hairpin turn on the windward side, and ending at Waokanaka, with no work activity taking place.

2) Why isn't work on all highways done at night?

30. **Wayne Yoshioka:**

[September 16th, 2009 at 12:42 pm](#)

This one was posted earlier from Sue Mason:

My question for Mr. Yoshioka is why there will be 20+ stations for 23 miles of rail, when the EIS identified 7 or 8 transportation sectors in their analysis? The number of stops makes me think this is a glorified bus system and not mass transit. In Japan, where land is scarce the mass transit stops have retail shops, restaurants, etc that encourage and allow riders to shop for necessities etc at the station prior to going home/work. This is not the case with the current proposal. Was this concept considered and why not? Shouldn't there be enough infrastructure to support and encourage the use of mass transit? Was the concept of allowing private entities to contribute to the construction costs of the stations through long term lease concessions considered in an effort to defray the initial construction costs?

---

Hi Sue Mason...

The number of rail stations is correct. The stations allow riders to access the system and make it useful.

And what you describe in Japan is what we also expect to occur in the vicinity of rail stations. This is referred to as Transit Oriented Development, and is certainly one of the more exciting elements of developing our rail transit system. It is another way our transit system can help to improve the way our island develops in the future.

31. **Roddy:**

[September 16th, 2009 at 12:44 pm](#)

Will the city have enough money in its financial plan to build the rail system?

32. **Wayne Yoshioka:**

[September 16th, 2009 at 12:47 pm](#)

Larry:

September 16th, 2009 at 12:00 pm

If the city went with the Kamehameha suggestion for grade level rail, would the city have to start from square one, and possibly lose federal funding?

---

Hi Larry...

Over the years, engineers have looked closely at a grade level system and have concluded it does not meet the needs for our City...It's not feasible from a safety, traffic congestion, environmental and archaeological perspective.

33. **Dawn:**

[September 16th, 2009 at 12:48 pm](#)

What's happening with the station designs? Will the city do workshops for all the stations or just those on the west side?

34. **Wayne Yoshioka:**

[September 16th, 2009 at 12:52 pm](#)

Nanakuli Bill:

September 16th, 2009 at 6:07 am edit

Mr. Yoshioka

While we can expect an increase in taxes to help pay for this project will it be enough to off set the revenues lost from the decrease sale of gasoline? And will there be adequate parking spaces at loading points?

-----  
Aloha Bill...

Our financial plan indicates that in order to construct this project, only the GET and federal funds will be needed. The City's plan includes 4100 parking spaces at park-and-ride lots.

35. **Jeanne Mariani-Belding:**

[September 16th, 2009 at 12:53 pm](#)

We're out of time. Thanks to all who participated in today's session. Special thanks to Wayne Yoshioka, director of the city's Department of Transportation Services for taking questions from readers.

Be sure to watch for an excerpt of this community conversation in Sunday's Focus section of The Advertiser.

See you next week.

36. **Bob:**

[September 16th, 2009 at 12:53 pm](#)

I have no problems with either KS or the city's plan, although I favor the former primarily due to lower costs. Either way, one thing that has not been addressed, at least in terms of communication to the public, is a commitment by The Bus that they have a definitive time schedule that's going to work as a reliable system. In other words, we can build the best railway, but it could fail as a system, because we have no confidence in how well the bus will work with it. I went to a few town halls and even spoke to a bus supervisor on the street. I walked away with a sense of disconnect between The Bus, the city, and Parsons. The supervisor was the most pragmatic--he said it's hard to predict how the bus will run because there's so much traffic. I say this is where management's job is to predict.

What do you think?

37. **Wayne Yoshioka:**

[September 16th, 2009 at 12:55 pm](#)

Thanks for having us Jeanne...We're always happy to answer questions about the rail transit project and the city's transportation issues. Sorry we couldn't get to everyone today...

38. **Sue Mason:**

[September 16th, 2009 at 1:21 pm](#)

Thank you for your answer concerning the number of stations. Can you clarify or expound on your answer as 20+ stations being correct? What were the factors considered in arriving at the number of stations when the analysis showed 7 or 8 transit zones?

September 16, 2009

## **Letters to the Editor**

### **RAIL TRANSIT**

#### **Elevated line is big step toward a better future**

Kamehameha Schools must release planner Phil Craig's study immediately, so we know the factors Craig considered, and what did he ignore.

The city has explained the problems of building any part of this line at ground level: many times more displaced residents and businesses, and slower train service. However, a ground-level line would also divide neighborhoods like Kapalama and Kaka'ako like a wall.

During peak hours, at least 34 trains an hour will cross the city: 20 trains to Ala Moana, 14 return. Each time a train crosses a street, crossing gates must stop traffic for 50 to 65 seconds. Randomly stopping traffic over 28 minutes of every peak hour would almost block busy streets like Kalihi, Alakea, and Pi'ikoi, leading to risky driving and fatal accidents.

No at-grade line carries as many trains as the proposed elevated rail line, and local residents complain bitterly about those that come close. For example, the 22-mile Los Angeles-Long Beach line, crossing 101 streets at-grade, killed 87 people in 795 collisions in its first 17 years.

Restoring mobility on O'ahu is a serious problem demanding realistic thinking: the "20-mile" elevated East Kapolei to Ala Moana rail line is an indispensable first step toward a brighter, cleaner, more efficient future for us all.

Hannah Miyamoto | Manoa

September 16, 2009

## **Letters to the Editor**

### **RAIL TRANSIT**

#### **Kamehameha study alternative welcome**

Mahalo to Kamehameha Schools for funding a study of alternatives to the city's elevated rail proposal. As a Honolulu resident who shops, works and lives Downtown, I am very concerned about the aesthetic impact of the city's planned elevated rail, both from the pedestrian perspective and from my apartment's view-plain.

I like Kamehameha Schools' plan for other reasons, too. It's less costly, could be brought on line sooner, and by building the first phase Downtown, it would serve more prospective riders. Further, by reducing the need for some of the cement superstructure, it would be more environment-friendly, too. I hope the mayor and the council will reconsider before it's too late.

Elizabeth Winternitz-Russell | Honolulu

# Senate Approves \$60 Million for Hawaii Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Projects

September 18, 2009

by [Hawaii RealEstateRama](#)

Category: [News](#) || [Housing & Development](#) | [No Comments](#)

WASHINGTON, DC - September 18, 2009 - (RealEstateRama) — U.S. Senate Appropriations Chairman Daniel K. Inouye announced today that the full Senate approved \$60,550,000 million in funding for various transportation, housing and urban development initiatives in Hawaii.

The Honolulu High Capacity Transit Corridor Project will receive \$30 million to fund the continuing preliminary engineering phases of initial facility and transit system design, in addition to the refinement of capital costs estimates, as required by the Federal Transit Administration.

“The traffic congestion on Oahu for workday and weekend commuters is untenable, any Oahu driver will attest to that,” said Senator Inouye. “The federal government will continue to support a shared vision for rail transit, as a majority of Oahu voters approved in November. Our role is to support whatever plan emerges from collaboration between county, state and private stakeholders.”

“The substantial resources we secured for Honolulu rail will help the project move forward,” said Senator Daniel K. Akaka. “The bill also contains millions for neighbor island bus systems to improve transportation statewide, and critical funding we need for airline safety, and affordable housing.”

Funds will also enable economic development in our local communities and help to increase the availability of affordable housing throughout the State.

The bill must now face a joint House-Senate Conference and final approval by the Senate and House, before it is transmitted to the White House. The following initiatives were secured funding below:

## **DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

Honolulu High Capacity Transit Corridor Project: \$30,000,000

This appropriation will fund the continuing preliminary engineering phases of initial facility and transit system design, in addition to the refinement of capital costs estimates, as required by the Federal Transit Administration.

Federal Lands Improvement Project: \$4,000,000

Federal property within Hawaii includes several extensive wildlife refuge and national parks located on four islands. These parks encompass rugged volcanic terrain, wetlands, tropical forests, coastline, and historical fishponds used in Native Hawaiian aquaculture. This appropriation will enable access to and within designated federal properties for proper park services maintenance and security.

Rural Bus Program: \$3,500,000

These funds will be used by Hawaii, Maui, and Kauai counties to purchase buses to expand routes and increase the frequency of service throughout the neighbor islands. The funds may also be used to provide bus shelters, transit benches, and upgrades to comply with the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act.

Kapolei Interchange Complex: \$3,000,000

This project will improve Interstate H-1 Freeway access to the city of Kapolei and surrounding employment and

residential areas, and alleviate traffic congestion. The funding will maintain and create additional jobs, as a result of construction and business development in the region.

Alien Species Action Plan Inspection Facility: \$900,000

For the operational and capital costs supporting the Alien Species Action Plan cargo inspection facility in Kahului, Maui, as directed by the Kahului Environmental Impact Statement Record of Decision.

## **DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

Ka Hale A Ke Ola Homeless Shelter: \$500,000

For rehabilitation and improvement of emergency shelter and transitional housing facility and long-term rental housing project for low-income residents in Maui.

Mali Self-Help Housing: \$500,000

For the construction of 76 lot subdivision for self-help housing project for low-income families.

Kahale Mua Public Housing on Molokai Improvement Project: \$400,000

For the renovation of housing units to provide 25 refurbished housing units for low-income individuals on Molokai.

Pahala Elderly Housing Rehabilitation Project: \$400,000

For the construction of 24 units of elderly housing in Pahala, just outside of Hilo.

Waipa Kitchen Incubator Project: \$400,000

For construction and equipment purchase for a state-certified commercial kitchen, food mill, and underground oven in Waipa, Kauai, for the low-income and farming communities.

Wahiawa Employment Training and Support Complex: \$300,000

To renovate and expand the Wahiawa Training and Support Complex to double capacity to provide training and employment opportunities for people with disabilities and other low-income individuals.

Kauai County Self-Help Housing Construction Project: \$250,000

For on-site infrastructure improvements to enable the construction of 26 residential homes for low-income households.

Mookini Education Center for Low Income: \$200,000

Youths Construction Project

For the construction and renovation of a cultural education center for low-income youths.

Institute for Human Services Homeless Shelter: \$200,000

Job Training Project

For the construction of a job and skills training center at Hawaii's oldest and largest emergency homeless shelter communities to use for vocational training and processing of value-added agricultural products to be distributed and sold state-wide.

## **NATIVE HAWAIIAN PROGRAMS**

Native Hawaiian Block Grant Program: \$13,000,000

Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions Program: \$3,000,000

Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Housing Loan Guarantee: \$1,000,000

## **NATIONAL PROGRAMS THAT BENEFIT HAWAII**

Essential Air Service: \$125 million

Community Development Block Grant: \$3.9 billion

# Honolulu Advertiser

## Honolulu views already blighted

Check out the Honolulu skyline from a mile or so inland and then ask if the elevated rail will really harm an already blighted view. Especially when weighed against the traffic congestion created by a street-level system through town.

*Paul K. Funkhouser*

*Wahiawa*

## Letters to the Editor

For Friday, September 18, 2009

### **Rail would bring much-needed jobs**

I live on the windward side, and I'm one of the thousands of construction workers who would benefit from building rail. Because construction is slow, I was without work for many months. When I was unemployed, I cut back and couldn't spend money at the restaurants and stores I usually do, and they lose business when people like me don't have work.

I'm looking forward to years of employment once rail is under way. Besides helping to reduce traffic, rail benefits the economy and our construction industry.

Jasen Akina  
Kaneohe

September 19, 2009

## Gauging values of rail, 2010 prospects

*By David Shapiro*

Sharks, trains and the 2010 election follies highlight our "fASHback" on the week's news that amused and confused:

- The Honolulu City Council advanced a bill to prohibit North Shore shark tours. Native Hawaiians are seeking the ban to show cultural respect for the deep-sea predators, but for council members it's more a matter of professional courtesy.
- The Hannemann administration won't say how much the city has spent on PR for rail transit. You'd think they'd be proud. Those are some of the best-paying positions the \$5.3 billion project has created.
- The transit team rejected a plan to save money by redesigning the all-elevated commuter line to run at ground level. How is the team supposed to build a train that reflects the city's character if it can't have loop-de-loops?
- City power usage has increased by 15 percent in the two years since officials sought a 10 percent reduction by 2017. Auwe, apply that math to the rail budget and it's going to cost more than the return trip to the moon.
- Citing complaints, police are cracking down on street performers in Waikiki. What, are the mimes getting in the way of the hookers and dope dealers?
- State Rep. Lyla Berg said she'll likely join the crowded all-male Democratic field running for lieutenant governor in 2010. Why not? Mazie Hirono proved a woman can do irrelevance every bit as well as a man.
- Councilman Rod Tam can't decide whether his experience best fits the race for lieutenant governor or a run for Honolulu mayor. It's a tough call. He's firmly established his cluelessness on both sides of Punchbowl Street.
- Sen. Donna Mercado Kim blasted state elections chief Kevin Cronin for giving his staff raises and seeking one for himself. Dude, read the memo. The only ones who get raises in this economy are the legislators.
- Speaking of whom, Hawai'i has the country's fourth most expensive Legislature on a per-capita basis, but nobody is up in arms. I guess we're used to paying steak prices for hamburger.

And the quote of the week ... from Board of Education Chairman Garrett Toguchi on a possible labor agreement for teacher furlough days: "Whether we like it or not, there is going to be a negative impact on school days." Translation: The next furlough notices are going to the students.

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## Letters to the Editor

Saturday, September 19, 2009

### Program for cars was real clunker

Brilliant. Cash for Clunkers took 700,000 cars off the road that operated at 15 miles per gallon and replaced them with ones that get 25 mpg. At 12,000 miles per year per car, that represents a reduction of 224 million gallons of gas a year or 5 million barrels of oil. Oil at \$70 per barrel equates to \$350 million. For this, the government spent \$3 billion, working out to spending \$8.57 in taxes for every \$1 of savings.

But that isn't all. Most of the buyers would probably replace their car at some later date, so the savings would be made then without spending any tax dollars. This makes the \$8.57 to \$1 ratio of spending to savings incredibly higher. Secondly, most of the sales went to foreign car companies.

Our representatives and senators who voted to irresponsibly waste the tax dollars of many for the benefit of a very few, should be rewarded by being voted out of office and replaced with legislators who will spend our hard-earned tax dollars more prudently.

**Richard Webster**  
Lahaina



September 20, 2009

## Kamehameha's rail proposal fails to make the grade

*By Wayne Yoshioka*

**Julie Ford:** With the steel-on-steel design, can you tell me what assurances we have that the rail system won't succumb to rust?

I'm concerned that it will end up like Aloha Stadium — one expensive heap of corrosion.

**Wayne Yoshioka:** There are steel-on-steel systems all over the world that are in tropical and marine environments, and rust poses no problems in those systems.

The old OR&L (Oahu Railway & Land Company) is still out there on the 'Ewa Plain and has been for nearly 90 years and is still being used by the O'ahu Historic Rail Society. Rust is not a problem. The city's plan is to replace rail every 30 years or so as part of the system's regular maintenance. So rust won't be a problem.

**Jason Kawakami:** Kamehameha Schools' rail plan has trains making 90 degree turns in Downtown and near the Capitol and 'Iolani Palace. Will it be loud?

**Yoshioka:** The KS so-called "plan" does have some extremely tight turns such as the one at Hotel and Richards streets, which could generate noise impacts if it is even possible to construct. The city's elevated rail train does not contain tight turns, and will therefore be less noisy.

**Nick Wong:** When will contractors start hiring to build the rail? We need the jobs.

**Yoshioka:** The city anticipates awarding contracts toward the end of this year. Mayor (Mufi) Hannemann understands the importance of creating jobs and how the rail transit project, in addition to helping relieve traffic congestion, will be a boost to our state's economy.

Not only will there be construction jobs, but there will be a ripple effect and other non-construction jobs will be created as well.

**Waipahu Dude:** Kamehameha Schools wants to get rid of traffic lanes in Waipahu, Kalihi and Kapi'olani Boulevard for rail. Won't that make traffic worse?

When will the city award the first construction contract for rail?

**Yoshioka:** Any ground level system will take away valuable existing traffic lanes, making traffic congestion even worse than it is today, if you can imagine that.

There are other traffic impacts to consider to driveways, cross-street traffic and blocking of streets by trains extending into intersections — not to mention the increased potential for pedestrian and vehicle accidents.

An elevated system on the other hand will have a very minimal impact on existing traffic lanes and is completely separated from the vehicular traffic. And there is no chance for accidents with other vehicles and pedestrians.

**Copius231:** Why are the traffic lights not synchronized throughout the island to promote a free flow of traffic?

**Yoshioka:** We currently have four separate efforts to optimize traffic signal timing islandwide. The first is in Kapolei and is expected to be implemented within the next couple months. Other efforts are under way in McCully/Mo'ili'ili, Downtown, Waikiki, Kalihi and other areas.

**Copius123:** Why is it that our roads throughout the island are constantly in such bad condition despite the size of our city government and why is it not a required "team" effort by all city employees who drive including law enforcement?

**Yoshioka:** Mayor Hannemann has poured millions of dollars into road repair and rehabilitation since coming into office in an effort to catch up with our infrastructure work backlog. In fact, a road paving symposium is planned before the end of September at which the city will make contractors aware of the upcoming road work plans.

**Copius123:** Do you think it is responsible to even consider the rail project without addressing many of the basic needs regarding O'ahu's infrastructure, like our roads, sewer and water lines, for example?

**Yoshioka:** The basic infrastructure needs of our city are being addressed. The fact is, there are a lot of things that need to be done, and rail transit must be included in that mix.

**Copius123:** Has the city conducted an analysis of how much monetary damage our poor road conditions have cost taxpayers?

**Yoshioka:** We're focusing our efforts on repaving and improving the conditions of our city streets, though there are some studies done nationally that estimate the costs of driving on roads in poor condition.

**Amber Lee:** Won't a train at ground level affect Hawaiian burial sites along the route?

**Yoshioka:** Absolutely, Amber, and much more so than an elevated system will. That's because the at-grade system will need to dig up a trench 30 feet wide and as much as 4 to 5 feet deep that runs for several miles in the middle of existing streets!

An elevated system, on the other hand, would require digging 8-foot diameter holes for columns 100 feet or more apart. It's not only burial sites that will be impacted, but there are utility lines underground as well that will be impacted. Nearly all of our city streets have sewers or water pipes or utilities beneath them. This is an important point that KS failed to address in its "plan."

**Tanya Miyamoto:** I like how the city is integrating the new bike plan with the rail. Will people be able to take their bikes on the trains?

**Yoshioka:** The city's plan currently allows for bicycles on the train during off-peak hours, and we are looking at the feasibility of accommodating bicycles all the time. Additionally, our recently updated Bicycle Master Plan, which Mayor Hannemann made a priority for my department, identifies strong connections between key bicycle paths and transit stations.

**Johnny:** When construction actually starts, will local workers get the jobs or will they come from the Mainland like on the Aloha Stadium renovations? The mayor put a big emphasis on the fact that the rail construction will provide jobs for our local people. Do we still have those assurances?

**Yoshioka:** One of the reasons Mayor Hannemann had the city divide the rail project into many parts was to encourage and enable the participation of local contractors and businesses. We've met with contractors and they indicate that they are planning to maximize the use of local labor and other local

resources to reduce their costs and to benefit from the local knowledge and familiarity of our island workforce.

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In Japan, where land is scarce, the mass transit stops have retail shops, restaurants, etc. that encourage and allow riders to shop for necessities, etc. at the station prior to going home or to work. This is not the case with the current proposal. Was this concept considered and why not?

Shouldn't there be enough infrastructure to support and encourage the use of mass transit? Was the concept of allowing private entities to contribute to the construction costs of the stations through long-term lease concessions considered in an effort to defray the initial construction costs?

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And what you describe in Japan is what we also expect to occur in the vicinity of rail stations. This is referred to as Transit Oriented Development, and is certainly one of the more exciting elements of developing our rail transit system. It is another way our transit system can help to improve the way our island develops in the future.

**Larry:** If the city went with the Kamehameha suggestion for grade-level rail, would the city have to start from square one, and possibly lose federal funding?

**Yoshioka:** Over the years, engineers have looked closely at a grade-level system and have concluded it does not meet the needs for our city. It's not feasible from a safety, traffic congestion, environmental and archaeological perspective.

**Nanakuli Bill:** While we can expect an increase in taxes to help pay for this project, will it be enough to offset the revenues lost from the decreased sale of gasoline? And will there be adequate parking spaces at loading points?

**Yoshioka:** Our financial plan indicates that in order to construct this project, only the GET and federal funds will be needed.

The city's plan includes 4,100 parking spaces at park-and-ride lots.

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## U.S. Senate OKs \$30M for Oahu rail

[By Star-Bulletin staff](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Sep 20, 2009

More than \$60 million in federal money approved for various transportation, housing and urban development projects in Hawaii includes \$30 million for Oahu's planned rail transit system, U.S. Sen. Dan Inouye's office announced.

The rail money would be used for the preliminary engineering and design of the initial phase of the \$5.29 billion project.

The funding was included in an appropriations bill approved by the full Senate and advanced to a House-Senate conference committee.

Other appropriations in the bill include:

- » \$13 million for the Native Hawaiian Block Grant Program.
- » \$4 million to provide for maintenance and security of federal wildlife refuge and national parks lands across the state.
- » \$3.5 million for Hawaii, Maui and Kauai counties to purchase buses to expand routes and increase service in rural areas.
- » \$3 million for the Kapolei Interchange Complex project to improve access to the H-1 freeway from Kapolei and its surrounding commercial and residential areas.

**Find this article at:**

[http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20090920\\_US\\_Senate\\_OKs\\_30M\\_for\\_Oahu\\_rail.html](http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20090920_US_Senate_OKs_30M_for_Oahu_rail.html)

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## America's Cleanest Commutes

Zack O'Malley Greenburg, 09.21.09, 7:21 PM ET

In the late 18th century, British poet William Blake lamented the "dark satanic mills" and squalid urban centers spawned by the industrial revolution. One might expect the recently released American Community Survey to show that, more than 200 years later, large cities are just as filthy as they've always been.

When it comes to getting to and from the office, however, that's just not the case. In terms of commutes, some of the largest cities in the U.S. are the kindest to the environment. The [San Francisco](#) metro area, with its vaunted mass-transit system and relative dearth of solo drivers, tops our list of America's cleanest commutes. The country's three largest cities all rank in the top 10.

### In Depth: America's Cleanest Commutes

"I'm not surprised by that at all," says Sean Pool, an energy and environmental policy researcher for the Center for American Progress, a Washington, D.C. think tank. "Higher density makes public transit more effective. You get more bang for your buck."

[Honolulu](#) ranks second on our list thanks in part to its sterling 15.9% carpool rate; [Washington, D.C.](#), with its extensive subway system, ranks third. The [Seattle](#) and [New York City](#) metro areas round out the top five.

### Behind the Numbers

To determine our list, we used data released Monday by the Census Bureau as part of its annual American Community Survey. Last year, only 5.3% of America's 140 million laborers used mass transit to get to work. So in formulating our list, we considered all areas with at least 275,000 inhabitants and a mass transit rate better than the national average.

Only 15 metropolitan statistical areas--geographic entities defined by the [U.S. Office of Management and Budget](#) for use by federal agencies in collecting, tabulating and publishing federal statistics--met those criteria. Notable absentees included large metro areas such as Atlanta, where a mere 3.7% of workers commuted via mass transit; and Dallas, where only 1.7% of workers did.

We ranked the 15 qualifying metros in three categories: Percentage of workers commuting via mass transit, percentage of workers carpooling and percentage of workers driving alone (the first two measures being positive, the third negative). We assigned points to each metro area based on these categories to form our list.

### A Tale of Two Cities

Somewhat predictably, the [Big Apple](#) fared well in our ranking of clean commutes. But perhaps more surprising is that America's second-most populous city, [Los Angeles](#)--sprawling and heavily reliant on cars--takes the 10th spot on the list.

The City of Angels ranks well in terms of clean commutes due to its surprisingly strong performance in all three categories we considered. Though 72.8% of Los Angelinos drive alone to work, that's still better than the national average of 75.5%; the area's carpool rate of 11.5% is among the best in the nation thanks in part to regional initiatives aimed at reducing congestion and pollution. And although Los Angeles has a reputation for traffic and smog, 6.3% of its residents commute via mass transit--well above the national rate of 5.3%. That number gets a boost from the 18% of L.A. residents who live below the poverty line and have no choice but to rely on the city's extensive bus network.

New Yorkers, however, look to mass transit as their mode of choice. Nearly one-third of the 8.8 million workers in the New York metro area use the system, by far the best rate in the nation. In New York's densest pockets, some 80% of commuters use mass transit. The Big Apple and outlying suburbs are

**If you liked this story, read:**

home to nearly half of the nation's 7.5 million mass-transit commuters.

New York's Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) is the largest in the nation, with 422 rail lines and bus routes and 2,057 track miles throughout the region. The MTA's [Web site](#) boasts that the transit system removes some 3 million drivers from the roads each day, absorbing more carbon emissions than 648,000 acres of forest could.

By the MTA's estimates, carbon dioxide emissions from public transit are about one-fifth the amount produced by single-occupancy vehicles on a per-rider basis, making New York very green on a per-capita basis.

William Blake would have been proud.

**[In Depth: America's Cleanest Commutes](#)**

**[America's Most Improved Commutes](#)**

**[World's Most Expensive Commutes](#)**

**[America's Most Congested Cities](#)**



September 21, 2009

## Parsons Brinckerhoff, which has role in Honolulu rail project, sold for \$626M

Britain builder Balfour Beatty Plc has agreed to buy transportation engineering consultant Parsons Brinckerhoff Inc. for \$626 million.

New York-based Parsons has been active in Hawaii since the 1960s and had a major role in designing H-3 Freeway. PB Americas Inc., a unit of Parsons Brinckerhoff, has the largest contract to date, for \$86 million, working on Honolulu's planned \$5.3 billion elevated commuter rail project. That two-and-a-half year contract expires in February.

Employee-owned Parsons Brinckerhoff operates has about 12,650 employees worldwide. The company posted a profit of \$107 million on \$2.34 billion in revenues in the year ended Oct. 31, 2008. The deal, which is being financed by the sale of new Balfour shares, is expected to be completed by November.

According to Balfour, Beatty Parsons was told that existing contractual compensation and benefits of all Parsons employees would be substantially safeguarded.

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Pacific Business News (Honolulu) - September 21, 2009  
</pacific/stories/2009/09/21/daily11.html>

## PACIFIC BUSINESS NEWS

Monday, September 21, 2009, 2:41pm HAST | Modified: Monday, September 21, 2009, 2:43pm

# Census finds Hawaii 1st in carpooling

Pacific Business News (Honolulu) - by [Randi Petrello](#)

Someone must be using that Zipper Lane after all.

Hawaii ranks No. 1 for the percentage of workers who carpool to work, according to data released Monday by the **U.S. Census Bureau's** 2008 American Community Survey.

Hawaii was tops with 16.2 percent of workers 16 and older who travel to work by car, truck or van in a carpool.

That leaves nearly 66 percent of workers traveling by car, truck or van alone in 2008, ranking Hawaii 49th among the states and the District of Columbia.

Hawaii was No. 7 in the U.S. for workers over 16 who travel to work by public transportation. Nearly 6 percent of workers take a form of public transportation to work, excluding taxicabs, the survey said.

Only 1.2 percent of Hawaii workers worked outside the county they live in -- a fairly obvious statistic in an island state.

Hawaii had the 10th highest average commute time to work, at 26 minutes. New York was ranked No. 1 at 31 minutes.

The data from the American Community Survey contains a broad range of information about working, living and spending patterns and can be found online at <http://www.census.gov/acs>.

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September 21, 2009

## **Letters to the Editor**

### **Rail transit**

#### **Project to be boon for construction**

I live on the Windward side, and I'm one of the thousands of construction workers who would benefit from building rail. Because construction is slow, I was without work and on the bench for many months.

When I was unemployed, I cut back and couldn't spend money at the restaurants and stores I usually do, and they lose business when people like me don't have work.

I'm looking forward to years of employment once rail is under way. Besides helping reduce traffic, rail benefits the economy and our construction industry.

Jasen Akina | Kane'ohe



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HAWAII'S **Complete** SOURCE

## BLOGS >> THE HOT SEAT

« [Coming Wednesday: City Councilman Charles Djou answers your questions](#)

### On the Hot Seat: City Councilman Charles Djou answers your questions

September 23rd, 2009 by [Jeanne Mariani-Belding](#)

Things are busy at Honolulu Hale. The Honolulu City Council has been taking up bills on a variety of controversial issues — from banning sidewalk sleepers, to restricting shark tours, to regulating bed and breakfast operations. And, of course, property tax rates are top of mind for most homeowners, as they deal with increased fees for most city services across the board.

Joining us live today to answer your questions on issues facing the city council will be Councilman Charles Djou. Councilman Djou, who represents District IV, will answer your questions live from 1 to 2 p.m. Wednesday.

Just a reminder of our Hot Seat ground rules: Please keep it civil — no personal attacks; and please keep your questions concise so that we can get to as many questioners as possible.

Ready, post those questions, and let's chat.

Tags: [Charles Djou](#), [Hawaii](#), [Jeanne Mariani-Belding](#)

This entry was posted on Wednesday, September 23rd, 2009 at 12:49 pm and is filed under [Hawaii](#), [Hot Seat](#), [Jeanne Mariani-Belding](#), [economy](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0 feed](#). You can leave a response, or trackback from your own site.

### 80 Responses to “On the Hot Seat: City Councilman Charles Djou answers your questions”

1. **Jeanne Mariani-Belding:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 12:51 pm

Welcome to the Hot Seat. Aloha Councilman Djou, thanks for joining us. Let's get started. Here's one sent earlier from Amy:

How does the City feel about the State's decision to allow furlough days for teachers?

2. **JD:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 12:51 pm

I live on the West side and voted for rail. It will create local jobs in the recession and help traffic. Why should I vote for you for Congress when you refuse to get 100% behind the rail project?

3. **Malia:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 12:51 pm

Kamehameha Schools rail plan would dig a ditch 30 feet wide through Farrington Hwy., Dillingham Blvd. and Kapiolan Blvd. Is that really a good idea considering how many iwi and burial sites that construction would find? Where would all the underground gas, water and electrical lines go?

4. **Dennis:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 12:55 pm

Thank you Council Member Djou for standing up for the residents on Oahu and opposing B&B Hotels and Vacation rentals in residential-zoning! You are one of few honest law makers. You will get my vote!

5. **Gary:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 12:55 pm

I saw in a recent Advertiser article that the "no sleeping" ban also includes "no sitting" on sidewalks. Will you be instructing HPD to enforce this during parades by ticketing all of the children and grandparents who sit on the sidewalk??

6. **Haunani Kealoha:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 12:56 pm

You have said that you support the will of the people and the pro-rail vote. Yet you continually criticize the rail project and throw up roadblocks, even as it gets close to groundbreaking. Why?

7. **Jeanne Mariani-Belding:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 12:56 pm

Here's one posted earlier from concerned:  
September 23rd, 2009 at 1:21 am edit

Aloha Councilman Djou,

I'm wondering what support your office can provide the community in regards to the illegal filling of East Oahu's only wetland alongside the Hawea Heiau in Hawaii Kai. The developer was cited 3 years ago and in June did it again.

8. **Bongo:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 12:57 pm

Councilman, since you have voted for every city budget during your eight years on the council, could it be fairly said that you have done NOTHING for your district?

9. **mattchu:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 12:58 pm

Rail construction is the quickest way to get thousands of unemployed Hawaii residents back on the job. Will you pledge to support rail construction starting next year?

10. **Charles Djou:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 12:58 pm

Here's one sent earlier from Amy:

How does the City feel about the State's decision to allow furlough days for teachers?

+++++

No one wants to furlough teachers or any government workers. The reality, however, is the recession has caused a severe downturn in our government revenues. Faced with a choice between laying off teachers, cutting schools or furloughs - furloughs negotiated by the state and HSTA is the best option of a bad set of choices.

11. **Railroaded:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 12:58 pm

Councilman, after voters approved rail transit in November, you led the charge to switch the route to the airport. So why didn't you vote for the airport route when it was before the council in the first place? It seems like you just wanted to be an obstructionist and hurt the project, then tried to jump on the bandwagon after you caused lots of damage and wasted lots of taxpayer money by forcing them to study a route that has now been abandoned. Are you serious about your support for rail, or this all just a political game for you? Why should anyone believe you?

12. **Bongo:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 12:59 pm

Oooooops...I meantn voted AGAINST every city budget. Since no funding equals no improvements in the district what's your contribution?

13. **Ching Wu Gun:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 12:59 pm

Traffic is the number one quality of life issue on the West side. Why don't you support rail when it will give us a traffic alternative and reduce congestion?

14. **larry:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:00 pm

Kamehameha Schools new rail plan concerns me greatly. We are so close to finally -- finally! -- getting a rail system and this last minute addition seems designed to delay or kill the project. Why do you support the Kamehameha Schools rail plan?

15. **Charles Djou:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:02 pm

JD:

September 23rd, 2009 at 12:51 pm

I live on the West side and voted for rail. It will create local jobs in the recession and help traffic. Why should I vote for you for Congress when you refuse to get 100% behind the rail project?

+++++

If we had an unlimited supply of money, we should of course do rail. The reality is that the City taxpayers do not have an unlimited supply of money and the proposed Honolulu rail system, per capita, will be by far the most expensive rail system ever built in American history. Nevertheless, I respect the vote last November and believe we must work to make sure the rail system is done right. That includes carefully monitoring the cost and exploring all options, including placing a portion of the rail system at-grade. I am proud of my record of working cooperatively and point to my leadership in including the airport on the rail route as a good example of how I would work on this project in Congress.

16. **Bob W.:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:04 pm

Hello Charles, The Republican Party in Hawaii has sort of self-destructed. So, why the attempt to bring partisan bickering to the non-partisan environment of city hall? Have you been positioning yourself to run for Congress at the expense of your constituents for the past 8 years?

17. **Charles Djou:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:04 pm

Malia:

September 23rd, 2009 at 12:51 pm

Kamehameha Schools rail plan would dig a ditch 30 feet wide through Farrington Hwy., Dillingham Blvd. and Kapiolan Blvd. Is that really a good idea considering how many iwi and burial sites that construction would find? Where would all the underground gas, water and electrical lines go?

+++++

While I did not support rail, the voters have spoken and we should try to do rail right. The City Council owes the public a serious look at doing at least a portion of the rail system on the ground. An 'at-grade' rail system may save taxpayers almost \$2 billion in costs compared to an all elevated rail system. Particularly in the less congested West-side of Oahu it make sense to build Honolulu's rail system on the ground. I am disappointed that the City administration and some members of the City Council refuse to even consider having a public discussion on at-grade rail. You make good points but if an all elevated system makes so much sense, why refuse to hold public hearings? The people deserve a public hear on the balance between cost savings with an at-grade rail system and the benefits of an all elevated system.

18. **Ikaika James:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:05 pm

Council Member Djou...

You don't support rail transit, which is the only answer to Honolulu's continuing traffic burden.

For us Hawaiians, rail means construction jobs and new oportunities in our neck of the woods in regard to new jobs via Transit Oriented Development; a faster way to get to UH for schooling from the West side; and jobs for our future...

For O'ahu, rail means a long awaited alternative to sitting in traffic...

For families, rail means more time for us to spend with loved ones and our keiki to support the family nucleus...

Why should we support your political endeavors when you dont support rail transit and providing an immediate alternative to our islands growing traffic situation, jobs and supporting the Ohana?

19. **Jeanne Mariani-Belding:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:06 pm

Here's one, posted earlier, from Danny:  
September 23rd, 2009 at 9:42 am edit

Aloha Council member,

Thank you for stepping up to clean up Waikiki with your proposed ban on sleeping on the sidewalks. What can concerned community members do to help you get this passed into law?

20. **Jeanne Mariani-Belding:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:07 pm

This one, posted earlier, is from Pua:  
September 23rd, 2009 at 10:26 am edit

Aloha Councilmember Djou,  
Mahalo for all that you do. With all the seats likely to be available in the 2010 election cycle, why have you chosen to run for Congress?

21. **Charles Djou:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:07 pm

Dennis:

September 23rd, 2009 at 12:55 pm

Thank you Council Member Djou for standing up for the residents on Oahu and opposing B&B Hotels and Vacation rentals in residential-zoning! You are one of few honest law makers. You will get my vote!

+++++

Mahalo Dennis for your support. Any change in the B&B code needs to include a component for enforcement and a means on paying for such enforcement. The planning department is already stretched thin and simply can not handle its existing job, let alone any additional duties. I oppose the current B&B measure - giving a blanket permit to all existing B&Bs - advancing before the council because it fails to adequately address enforcement.

22. **Bob W.:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:07 pm

Do you subscribe to the Duke Aiona theory that Republicans should be elected for the sole purpose of sabotaging the Obama presidency? Both you and he seem to have little else to offer.

23. **Shirley:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:08 pm

Do you really think a total ban on homeless people sleeping on the sidewalk everywhere on Oahu has any chance of holding up in court?

Or are you just pandering to your rich East Honolulu constituents again knowing full well that you will waste everyone's time and money if you pass a law that won't work and will be struck down as unconstitutional after an expensive legal fight?

And why do you always use such hateful words, like "vagrants," when you talk about poor people? Shame on you! I support the ACLU on this one all the way!

24. **joe:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:12 pm

Councilman, I understand that you did not vote in support of rail. But why support an at grade system. You may save money initially, but what about easing traffic and the additional hazardous it will cause. At grade system will cause more traffic on surface roads and significantly more at intersections. Please also consider the fact that at-grade systems have significantly more train/pedestrian accidents than elevated systems. Saving money now and paying for it with lives is not a trade-off I would like to make. Don't at grade systems on the west coast average between 1 and 2 pedestrian accidents per month. Some are suicide, others are accidents that could be avoided with elevated systems.

25. **Jeanne Mariani-Belding:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:13 pm

Here's on posted earlier from Tania:  
September 23rd, 2009 at 10:35 am edit

Aloha Charles,  
Thanks for all your hard work on the State and City level. I think rail is necessary, but am sincerely concerned about the seemingly escalating cost and rumors of inadequate funding. I recently read in the paper that Kamehameha has just released a study that suggests at-grade rail would be a more prudent and fiscally responsible alternative. What are your thoughts?

26. **Charles Djou:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:14 pm

Gary:

September 23rd, 2009 at 12:55 pm

I saw in a recent Advertiser article that the "no sleeping" ban also includes "no sitting" on sidewalks. Will you be instructing HPD to enforce this during parades by ticketing all of the children and grandparents who sit on the sidewalk??

Here's one, posted earlier, from Danny:  
September 23rd, 2009 at 9:42 am edit

Aloha Council member,

Thank you for stepping up to clean up Waikiki with your proposed ban on sleeping on the sidewalks. What can concerned community members do to help you get this passed into law?

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And why do you always use such hateful words, like "vagrants," when you talk about poor people? Shame on you! I support the ACLU on this one all the way!

+++++

Beuase all three of these questions deal with the same topic, I will answer them together.

No one has a right to take over a public sidewalk or park and treat it as their own private property. Earlier this year the City passed an ordinance banning sleeping in City parks. Many vagrants, however, have found a loophole in the law by merely sleeping on the sidewalk and then immediately returning to take over "their" portion of the parks at daybreak. This is unfair. Most homeless suffer from mental illness or drug abuse and my preference is that all those who need help get help offered by taxpayers. Unfortunately, too many individuals refuse government assistance. The parks department is simply ill equipped to deal with homeless issues. If we do nothing and accept that sleeping is an acceptable use of City sidewalks, the taxpayers will need to redesign all of our sidewalks to accommodate sleeping to avoid liability. This is nonsensical. There is no one perfect solution to fixing homelessness in our community, but recognizing that City sidewalks were never designed for sleeping an encouraging those who need help to avail themselves to help is part of the solution.

It is important to understand that the penalty in my proposed bill is a warning. Only if an individual refused to comply with a warning, only then would a citation be issued. Second, the bill clearly contains an exemption for viewing parades. Finally, I plan to amend my measure in committee to remove the provision regarind 'sitting.'

27. **Campin Sam:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:15 pm

Can the homeless people who get swept off the sidewalk come camp in your front yard in swanky Kahala?

28. **Natalie Chau:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:17 pm

My family hates the traffic situation from Kapolei to town - as it takes away nearly 2-3 hours of our time each day that could be meant for the family. Rail is our only hope in mass transportation really working to move a significant amount of people from West Oahu to Honolulu without use of cars, carpool lanes, carpool programs and busses that ALL add to the traffic burdon. For anyone who can reasonably think, an elevated system removes the transit rail system from traffic, accidents and pedestrian activity below. Noting that other cities like Houston and Phoenix have had greaaaat problems with motor vehicle accidents with thier rail systems, why in God's name would you propose a street level system that is handicapped in speed and reliability and has to mix with traffic and pedestrians on one single level? What about the accident lawsuits? Who pays for that? News reports in Phoenix report that most of the transit accidents are from motorists who don't pay attention to the Street level trains and Boom!

29. **Bob W.:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:18 pm

Charles, why did you fire your long-time loyal staff members just before Christmas of last year?

30. **Joe:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:19 pm

Aloha Councilmember Djou,

Thank you very much for taking a stand on increased taxes and for not sticking your nose in the trough of pork in the budget each year. Could you explain why you voted "no" on each and every budget that has come before the council?

31. **Charles Djou:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:19 pm

Haunani Kealoha:

September 23rd, 2009 at 12:56 pm

You have said that you support the will of the people and the pro-rail vote. Yet you continually criticize the rail project and throw up roadblocks, even as it gets close to groundbreaking. Why?

+++++

I have always consistently stated that while I did not support rail, I do respect the vote last year. Respecting the vote, however, does not mean writing the administration a blank check and completely abdicating my responsibilities as a fiscal watchdog. I will always fight to make sure taxpayer money isn't wasted and advocate for improving the system. I think the City administration gets frustrated whenever the public asks

them questions on how they are spending the people's money, but that is part of my responsibility as a Councilmember.

32. **Jeanne Mariani-Belding:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:19 pm

Here's one posted earlier from Kailuarensident:  
September 23rd, 2009 at 12:40 pm edit

Dear Councilmember,  
If you were the Governor right now, how would have handled the State budget shortfall? And why did the City seem to have an easier time dealing with it?

33. **GOPer Mike:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:21 pm

Councilman I am confused. you claim to be a died in the wool Republican but you have this creepy alliance with tax and spend Democrat hacks on the city council like Donovan Dela Cruz, Anny Kobayashi and Romy Cachola. What's up with that? Can't you get anything done without selling out to them? You even made a TV commercial supporting Kobayashi in her sneak attack run for mayor. Will you now support Dela Cruz as he runs for mayor? What do you have in common with these guys from an ideological standpoint? I don't get it.

34. **Bob W.:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:24 pm

What you say are your top three accomplishments as an 8-year city councilman? Two? One? Anything???

35. **joe:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:25 pm

You state that you are a fiscal watchdog and you will fight to make sure taxpayer money isn't wasted. Why not identify the issues and help solve the problems instead of criticizing and throwing up roadblocks?

36. **Herman:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:25 pm

Why on earth did you fire your whole office staff right before Christmas?

37. **Charles Djou:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:27 pm

Bongo:

September 23rd, 2009 at 12:57 pm

Councilman, since you have voted for every city budget during your eight years on the council, could it be fairly said that you have done NOTHING for your district?

Bongo:

September 23rd, 2009 at 12:59 pm

Oooooops...I meantn voted AGAINST every city budget. Since no funding equals no improvements in the district what's your contribution?

+++++

Thank you Bongo for your question which is exactly what the Hannemann spokesperson seems to always say when criticizing me.

I have always stood on principle. When I first ran for the City Council I promised my constituents that I would not vote for a budget that increased government spending by more than inflation plus population growth. While I can understand that there may be times when the government may need to temporarily increase spending by double inflation for one year, what the current administration has done is simply reckless. The City budget has exploded from \$1.5 Bil. in fiscal year 2005 to a whopping \$3.5 bil. for this current fiscal year. This is too much and a large part of the reason we have such a big fiscal mess. I am happy to stand as a consistent advocate for responsible fiscal spending. Spending taxpayer money isn't the only way to serve the public and my record of successfully passing lower spending, recycling, alternative energy and ethics reform clearly bears this out.

38. **Jeff:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:28 pm

The Mayor recently revised the lighting plan on Lunalilo Home Road. He said that the remaining lights will not be changed on the other streets (sorry could not recall the street names).

Can you clarify if the intent is to not do anything at all and leave it as is OR will the existing lights be changed and kept at the 300 foot distance between each?

Thank you

39. **Bob W.:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:28 pm

He's only answering softball questions from his own staff...

40. **Miki:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:29 pm

please please please answer the one about why didnt you vote for the airport train route in the first place, thank you.

41. **Leonard:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:29 pm

Most people who sleep on side walks don't subscribe to our dailes, watch news on t.v or listen to the radio. They have no clue about your proposed ban. What do you plan to do with with them? Most of these people are homeless and you want to turn their situation into a crime? Come on Charles. Think of the consequences before you mouth off!!

42. **Pua:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:31 pm

Just a general question, how come this interview wasn't televised?

43. **Bob:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:31 pm

Charles, There are articles being written that opposition to President's Obama's health care plan, and some of his other policies, is considered uncivil and disrespectful. As someone who has openly spoken out against administrations in the past (the Mayor, the former Governor), do you think that the current vocal opposition--as show in town hall meetings, on talk radio, etc--is uncivil or do you think it's a good thing to have people showing their passion about their political ideas?

44. **Pua:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:32 pm

I'm sorry, I meant live streaming...

45. **Jeanne Mariani-Belding:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:32 pm

Please be civil. Thanks, all.

46. **Bongo:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:33 pm

Nice try, Councilman. You even voted against the Harris budgets when they were seriously UNDERSPENDING our way into a sewer infrastructure crisis! Is it your position that we should continue to defer ALL maintenance and replacement of vital city infrastructure?

47. **Jeanne Mariani-Belding:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:33 pm

Aloha Pua,

We live stream the Hot Seat on the first Wednesday of each month.

Jeanne

48. **Mark:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:34 pm

A little disappointed in the negative attacks on this blog. Seems a little hypocritical! I hope to see Bob W.'s name on the ballots next year since he thinks he has all the answers and can do a better job!

49. **Charles Djou:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:34 pm

matrchu:

September 23rd, 2009 at 12:58 pm

Rail construction is the quickest way to get thousands of unemployed Hawaii residents back on the job. Will you pledge to support rail construction starting next year?

+++++

Of course if the administration does not stonewall the the public or the City Council and the taxpayers are assured that this is the most cost effective system possible.

+++++

Railroaded:

September 23rd, 2009 at 12:58 pm

Councilman, after voters approved rail transit in November, you led the charge to switch the route to the airport. So why didn't you vote for the airport route when it was before the council in the first place? It seems like you just wanted to be an obstructionist and hurt the project, then tried to jump on the bandwagon after you caused lots of damage and wasted lots of taxpayer money by forcing them to study a route that has now been abandoned. Are you serious about your support for rail, or this all just a political game for you? Why should anyone believe you?

+++++

I think you should check the record - your question comes straight out of the Hannemann administration's preferred version of history. I clearly voted for the airport route and I was the Councilmember who offered a motion to reconsider when the airport route was originally dropped. I am the ONLY member of the council who has always consistently voted for the airport route. Almost every other member of the council has at least one vote for and against the airport route.

+++++

Ching Wu Gun:

September 23rd, 2009 at 12:59 pm

Traffic is the number one quality of life issue on the West side. Why don't you support rail when it will give us a traffic alternative and reduce congestion?

+++++

The City administration itself its own analysis states that the rail system will NOT reduce current traffic congestion. I opposed the rail system because it costs too much. If the system were "only" \$500 mil. or \$600 mil., I would probably have voted for it, but at \$6 bil., this is by far per capita the most expensive system in U.S. history and spending money that the people simply do not have.

50. **Miki:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:35 pm

answer to the one about firing you staff and Christmas, thank you

51. **concerned:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:36 pm

I have concerns about keeping East Oahu's last agricultural valley thriving in Kamilonui Valley.

Is your office doing anything currently to support the farmers as they face the threat of the loss of their livelihood?

52. **Natalie Chau:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:37 pm

Please answer my question on why you'd support a street level rail system than elevated considering the potential for accidents and lawsuits... Don't avoid providing us with a concrete and decisive response, please.

53. **Charles Djou:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:38 pm

This one, posted earlier, is from Pua:  
September 23rd, 2009 at 10:26 am edit

Aloha Councilmember Djou,  
Mahalo for all that you do. With all the seats likely to be available in the 2010 election cycle, why have you chosen to run for Congress?

+++++

Hawaii needs an independent voice and Washington needs fiscal restraint. I am proud of my reputation for speaking out for my constituents and my record of as a fiscal watchdog. These are exactly the qualities Hawaii and our nation needs for the future. We need to restore a sense of accountability and responsibility to Congress. I hope to bring my record for independence, fiscal responsibility and ethics reform to represent the people of Hawaii in D.C. It has been an honor to serve on the Honolulu City Council and I look forward to continuing to serve the people of Hawaii as a congressman.

54. **joe:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:39 pm

Councilman, I appreciate the opportunity to hear your responses to these faceless questions. I would also like to hear your response without reference to "Hannemann administration". Realizing that you are trying to use this to distance yourself, I'm looking to hear original ideas from you.

55. **Bob W.:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:40 pm

Why do your supporters categorize questions that you don't want to answer as "negative attacks."

56. **Tumuchtudu:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:41 pm

You seem to have a weird fascination about attacking the mayor. Are you paranoid?

57. **MD:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:41 pm

Charles, stop cherry picking the questions from your "supporters" and answer the real questions:

Why did you fire your entire staff right before Christmas?

How is at grade rail safer and more reliable than elevated?

What exactly have you done for us over the past 8 years?

58. **Charles Djou:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:42 pm

Here's one posted earlier from Kailua resident:  
September 23rd, 2009 at 12:40 pm edit

Dear Councilmember,

If you were the Governor right now, how would you have handled the State budget shortfall? And why did the City seem to have an easier time dealing with it?

+++++

The City has an easier time right now because the largest source of our revenue comes from real property taxes. Because real property valuations are only set once a year, the City has a stable revenue source for a year. In contrast, the State gets most of its revenue from the excise tax and income tax. As the economy declines, these revenue sources immediately decline, making the fiscal situation more immediately challenging for the state. The City, however, will have a very difficult year in 2010 when we recalculate property values later this year and we will see a dramatic drop in revenues.

I think the governor has taken a reasonable approach to handling the State's shortfall through a combination of spending cuts and offering furloughs. Raising taxes in a recession would only deepen and prolong our economic downturn. While no one likes furloughs either, this is preferable to layoffs.

59. **Tim:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:43 pm

Thanks for standing up to the Hannemann Administration. Why do you support a ban on sleeping on the sidewalks?

60. **Natalie Chau:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:43 pm

Yes, I agree...stop defacing the Hannemann administration to make your point. If you want to be taken seriously as a contender for higher office...answer the questions without passing the name buck on someone else's record or position. Again I ask myself and voters in the district that you will be running -- why should we vote for you? Give us some substance, please.

61. **MD:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:43 pm

This guy is ridiculous!! He doesn't even answer our questions. Maybe his supporters can answer this one...Why is Charles being such a coward and ducking the real issues?

62. **Johnny:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:44 pm

Do you support the property tax increase? Why or why not.

63. **Charles Djou:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:44 pm

Jeff:

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:28 pm

The Mayor recently revised the lighting plan on Lunalilo Home Road. He said that the remaining lights will not be changed on the other streets (sorry could not recall the street names).

Can you clarify if the intent is to not do anything at all and leave it as is OR will the existing lights be changed and kept at the 300 foot distance between each?

Thank you

+++++

As I understand current plans, the administration plans to do nothing with replacing any street lights in Hawaii Kai beyond those that have already been replaced and leave this issue to the next mayor.

64. **Jeanne Mariani-Belding:**  
September 23rd, 2009 at 1:44 pm

Once again, please be civil. Councilman Djou has answered several questions on rail, we're also trying to get to other topics. He's working on it. Thanks, all!

65. **Tumuchtudu:**  
September 23rd, 2009 at 1:47 pm

I like the one about the alliance with Dela Cruz et al. What's up with that. Please answer. Thank you

66. **Charles Djou:**  
September 23rd, 2009 at 1:47 pm

Bob:

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:31 pm

Charles, There are articles being written that opposition to President's Obama's health care plan, and some of his other policies, is considered uncivil and disrespectful. As someone who has openly spoken out against administrations in the past (the Mayor, the former Governor), do you think that the current vocal opposition--as show in town hall meetings, on talk radio, etc--is uncivil or do you think it's a good thing to have people showing their passion about their political ideas?

+++++

In a democracy the people should always be free to voice their opinions. Elected representatives of the people should also never fear meeting or speaking with the voters. I of course would much prefer a civil discourse. Nevertheless, I respect that in a democracy people can get very passionate about their opinions such as healthcare. The alternative is a form of government that insures civility, but supresses dissent.

67. **concerned:**  
September 23rd, 2009 at 1:48 pm

Aloha Councilman Djou,

I'm wondering what support your office can provide the community in regards to the illegal filling of East Oahu's only wetland alongside the Hawea Heiau in Hawaii Kai. The developer was cited 3 years ago and in June did it again.

68. **Copius231:**  
September 23rd, 2009 at 1:48 pm

Is the city council working on solutions that will address our homeless problem? These sleeping bans, etc., seem to be a temporary solution to the homeless issue. In your opinion, what kind of radical change/solutions are needed to address our homeless problem on Oahu? This should be different from low income houseing, IHS related, etc. A radical solution is needed to address the core issues versus "band-aid" type solutions like the sleeping ban.

Thanks...

69. **BantamWeight:**  
September 23rd, 2009 at 1:51 pm

If you're such a fiscal conservative and watchdog and what not, why do you collect checks from positions with the federal, state and city government? Most government slugs only get one check. And why don't you start a business if privatization is your game?

70. **Charles Djou:**  
September 23rd, 2009 at 1:51 pm

joe:

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:12 pm

Councilman, I understand that you did not vote in support of rail. But why support an at grade system. You may save money initially, but what

about easing traffic and the additional hazardous it will cause. At grade system will cause more traffic on surface roads and significantly more at intersections. Please also consider the fact that at-grade systems have significantly more train/pedestrian accidents than elevated systems. Saving money now and paying for it with lives is not a trade-off I would like to make. Don't at grade systems on the west coast average between 1 and 2 pedestrian accidents per month. Some are suicide, others are accidents that could be avoided with elevated systems.  
+++++

I think an at-grade might make sense for a portion of the rail system, but we should have a public hearing to air the potential cost savings and the points you raise. It is disappointing that the administration is so hostile to publicly discussing an at-grade rail system. If an all elevated system makes so much sense there is no reason to oppose a public hearing.

71. **Chuckles:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:52 pm

So many questions...so few straight answers.

72. **Miki:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:53 pm

you never answered teh one about firing your staff at Christmas

73. **MD:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:54 pm

Miki - I don't think he wants to!

74. **Charles Djou:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:55 pm

Bob W.:

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:24 pm

What you say are your top three accomplishments as an 8-year city councilman? Two? One? Anything???

+++++

Just to name a few things I'm proud to have accomplished:

- 1. Cleaning up the corruption at the Honolulu Liquor Commission;
- 2. Pushing the Hannemann administration to enact a comprehensive curbside recycling program;
- 3. Enacting civil fines for violations of the ethics code;
- 4. Consistently opposing all tax increases;
- 5. Advocating for restraining public spending;
- 6. Exacting alternative energy tax exemption;
- 7. Establishing reporting requirements on City energy usage;
- 8. Clarifying park camping rules;
- 9. Improving military relations with the City and enacting a tax holiday for deployed soldiers;
- 10. Always being open and accessible to my constituent.

75. **Bob W.:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:55 pm

Isn't your support for more "hearings" just another delaying tactic to obstruct rail. If someone suggested making the rail cars look like beer cans you'd support a long protracted hearing on that too, right?

76. **Charles Djou:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 2:00 pm

GOPer Mike:

September 23rd, 2009 at 1:21 pm

Councilman I am confused. you claim to be a died in the wool Republican but you have this creepy alliance with tax and spend Democrat hacks on the city council like Donovan Dela Cruz, Anny Kobayashi and Romy Cachola. What's up with that? Can't you get anything done without selling out to them? You even made a TV commercial supporting Kobayashi in her sneak attack run for mayor. Will you now support Dela Cruz as he runs for mayor? What do you have in common with these guys from an ideological standpoint? I don't get it.

+++++

To me it is always more important to move good policy legislation than play partisan politics. My party label will never stop me from being an advocate for my constituents. Improving our community is simply much more important. I have no problem working and collaborating with other Democrats and working in a bi-partisan fashion for positive results for our community.

I have not endorsed any candidate for mayor.

77. **Jeanne Mariani-Belding:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 2:01 pm

We're about out of time. Thanks to all who participated. A special thanks to Councilman Charles Djou for taking the time to answer questions from our readers. Be sure to watch for excerpts of this community conversation in Sunday's Focus section of The Advertiser.

See you next week, on The Hot Seat.

78. **Charles Djou:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 2:02 pm

Mahalo for participating. This is a great experience and not hesitate to contact me at Honolulu Hale if I can be of any help to you. Please feel free to contact my office at (808) 768-5004 or email me at [cdjou@honolulu.gov](mailto:cdjou@honolulu.gov). Best wishes!

79. **AirRescueFF:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 2:05 pm

Cherry picking?

To be fair, reference Mufi's Hot Seat answers for cherry picking.

80. **Kailuaresident:**

September 23rd, 2009 at 2:06 pm

Charles - you never answered the question from the beginning part about why you fired your entire staff before christmas? Please stop ducking...

### Leave a Reply

Lei M  Name (required)

[shoppinglei@yahoo.com](mailto:shoppinglei@yahoo.com)  Mail (will not be published) (required)

Website

### About the author



Jeanne Mariani-Belding is The Advertiser editorial and opinion editor.

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## LETTERS

# Mellow velo

SEP 23, 2009 | 

In regards to the article, "Oahu Bike Plan" (9/3), there are a couple of things that really ground my gears. The plan looked well thought-out, however, there is no bike path proposed around the Makai side of Diamond Head Crater. I work at one of the larger bike shops in the city, and can tell you from personal experience and interaction with the cycling community that we would be at a great loss without a dedicated lane there. Ask any casual or avid cyclist how dangerous it is now, and I think you'll get an earful.

After reading your blurb from Frank Smith in the "Spokes-People" section, I was a little PO'd. I have been a bike mechanic, Street BMXer, DH MTB racer, XC MTB racer and daily commuter for nearly 20 years now.

I agree that sometimes bike lanes confuse drivers. However, Frank, what about the lady I know who takes her son to school on a Trail-a-Bike before work, or my friend Katie who can't walk but can ride a three-wheeled trike? What about all the elderly who want to ride at a leisurely speed, or the grade-school kids riding to school? I know you have had a hell of a time with the city budgeting bike lanes but a bike-shop owner should rethink saying bike lanes are "passé" or a "waste of time." Not everyone can ride at the speeds we do, on commuter specific bikes through traffic at 20 mph plus.

The majority of Honolulu's cyclists can only afford mass-produced, \$150 bikes from superstores that, if they don't break down, might make 8mph. Many people might never have the skills or have the desire to blow by



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cars like us. Just because you can't ride like we do does not mean you don't deserve your spot on the road. Bike lanes do work with proper driver education.

In addition to new bike lanes, the DMV needs to add better and more stringent driver awareness testing for acquiring a license. Public service announcements on TV and the radio wouldn't hurt either. Driving is a privilege, bicycling is a right, and I think many of us have forgotten that. The next time you're in your air-conditioned vehicle listening to whatever, on your cell phone, eating your manapua, sipping your latte on your way to the beach, remember that one of us is sweating it out on two wheels in the sun, rain, and filth, in your exhaust fumes on our way to school, work or maybe even home to you! Good work, *Weekly*!

*Lucas Hussy*

*Kaimuki*



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## LETTERS

# TheBus stops here

 SEP 23, 2009 | [SHARE](#)

Riding the bus should be a pleasant experience. Highly offensive odors that create a disruption and make people physically queasy creates an unhealthy and unsafe environment for passengers. Chicago libraries, for example, have a rule that patrons “should not enter if they have neglected their bodily hygiene so that it gives offense and constitutes a nuisance.”

Ruth Lednicer, Chicago libraries spokeswoman said, “If they do and it gets to the point where it’s offensive to others and becomes a disturbance, we will ask them to leave.”

An exception should be made for those who have a debilitating condition certified by a physician that prevents them from tending to their personal hygiene.

Honolulu Councilman Rod Tam has a long-standing record of listening to his constituents and supporting their legitimate concerns. Tam is a man ahead of his time. For example, he once supported a “naps” bill that would allow workers to take a short nap on their lunch hour or during a coffee break.

Research, including a Harvard University study, shows that a “power nap boosted performance back to morning levels.” I applaud Councilman Tam for his courage in representing his constituents’ wishes as far as protecting the right to breathe Hawaii’s pure, fresh and clean air while



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riding buses!

*E. Kam*

*Honolulu*



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Pacific Business News (Honolulu) - September 24, 2009  
[/pacific/stories/2009/09/21/daily40.html](#)

## PACIFIC BUSINESS NEWS

Thursday, September 24, 2009, 10:08am HAST

### 'Clunkers' spikes Hawaii car sales 9%

Pacific Business News (Honolulu) - by [Randi Petrello](#)

New-vehicle registrations in Hawaii were up 9.2 percent in August thanks to the "Cash for Clunkers" program, according to data from the Hawaii Auto Outlook.

Hawaii auto dealers sold 3,686 cars last month, compared to 3,374 in August 2008. Of those sales, 55 percent were cars and 45 percent were trucks.

Kia registrations saw the biggest increase in August, up 110.6 percent with 99 sales, compared to 47 a year ago. Audi followed, up 110 percent from 10 cars last August to 21 this year.

The biggest declines were registrations of Hummers, down 89 percent; Land Rovers, down 71 percent; and Lincolns, down 65 percent.

Year to date, Hawaii new-vehicle registrations are down 27.3 percent from 31,294 a year ago to 22,741 this year.

Trucks are still more popular in Hawaii, making up 52 percent of the market share year to date, compared to 48 percent of cars.

The vehicle information was released Thursday by the [Hawaii Automobile Dealers Association](#).

The Hawaii Auto Outlook is compiled by AutoCount, an Experian Company.

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## Letters to the Editor

For Thursday, September 24, 2009

### Let's hope rail aids city center

I hope that our rail system can do for downtown Honolulu what Phoenix's rail has done for its city center.

Over the past few years, our downtown has started to tap its potential as a cultural and nightlife hub. Events like First Friday and the Hoolaulea show that downtown can be a vibrant, fun destination for families and young people. But downtown Honolulu is stifled by the lack of cheap parking and small, congested streets that are overrun by cars. Unless you work downtown and pay for a monthly parking stall, there is no easy access there.

That should change with our rail system, because it has stops at Aloha Tower and in Chinatown. Like Phoenix, people will be able to hop on a train and travel quickly and cheaply to downtown, where they can have fun and spend money at local restaurants and shops. Phoenix has shown us that rail is the way to truly bring a downtown area to life.

Kimberly Kalilimoku  
Nuuanu



## ISLAND COMMENTARY

# Is rail transit really the best use of our scarce dollars?

By K. S. Kimura

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Sep 25, 2009

For years, debate has raged over whether Honolulu's mass transit problem can be solved by answering the question, "Rail or no rail?"

However, the fixed-rail system approved last year essentially applies only to those living in West Oahu. This fails to address the longer-term and larger problem of solving traffic gridlock for the entire City & County of Honolulu.

The 20-mile fixed-rail system will likely be inaccessible to most residents of Honolulu. Ridership for those in windward, central and east Honolulu areas will likely be nil. Thus, the real question should be how we solve both the immediate problem of commuters from Kapolei as well as the longer-range problem of traffic congestion from other parts of Oahu.

The estimated \$5.4 billion cost is a huge commitment of our scarce dollar resources, with no clear plans to provide traffic-congestion relief from elsewhere on the island by the completion of the rail project in 2019.

Further, the lack of transparency in developing this project remains troublesome. If bids are to be solicited in December as the first increment for the elevated rail system, we must be mindful of some caveats:

- » How will the \$500 million tax revenue shortfall be remedied before contracts are signed?
- » If the Federal Transit Administration reports an average 40 percent cost growth for other rail projects, should we remain optimistic that ours will be at or under our estimated cost?
- » The \$4,000 per capita cost calculated was based upon the entire Honolulu population instead of those accessible to the rail system. Eliminating those unable or unwilling to ride the rail system, the per capita cost will exceed \$14,000.
- » The 4,100 parking spaces planned for the rail system may prove inadequate to motivate maximum ridership of the rail system.

» Extension of the rail system, beyond the 21 approved stations, to Waikiki and UH-Manoa will add to the \$5.4 billion cost.

» If the \$1.4 billion federal funds do not materialize, do we have contingency plans?

» Should the project commence from East Kapolei inward or Ala Moana outward?

In addition to the islandwide transit issue, other urgent concerns require commitment of our scarce budget funds. These include: repair and upgrading of our critical infrastructure; energy sustainability initiatives; catastrophic disaster response preparedness; actions to revitalize tourism as well as the Honolulu economy overall; efficient waste disposal; and improvement of our quality of life.

How do we ascertain the priorities to commit finite dollars to the most deserving projects serving the people of Honolulu?

K. S. Kimura, a resident of East Oahu, is a retired U.S. Army colonel who researches security issues for a nonprofit group.

**Find this article at:**

[http://www.starbulletin.com/editorials/20090925\\_Is\\_rail\\_transit\\_really\\_the\\_best\\_use\\_of\\_our\\_scarce\\_dollars.html](http://www.starbulletin.com/editorials/20090925_Is_rail_transit_really_the_best_use_of_our_scarce_dollars.html)

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

September 26, 2009

## **Rail transit**

### **Elevated system was also rejected**

In Monday's (Sept. 21) Advertiser, Parsons Brinkerhoff's Mark Scheibe disparages a partially at-grade light rail system proposed by Kamehameha Schools, citing past studies by the city that rejected it as a viable alternative.

What he failed to mention in his reference to the most recent study ("Primary Corridor Transportation Project," circa 2000-2003) is that an elevated rail system was also rejected in favor of an at-grade bus rapid transit system. Parsons Brinkerhoff was also the lead consultant on that project.

In the final environmental impact statement (July 2003), it was stated "Grade separation of a transit system in the primary transportation corridor could be achieved with an elevated guideway, an underground subway, or some combination of the two. The concerns that led to the rejection of the most recently proposed elevated rapid transit system were primarily two: (1) its high cost and (2) its physical and visual impacts."

These are precisely the reasons that prompted Kamehameha Schools and the American Institute of Architects to propose a hybrid guideway system.

Richard Ubersax | Waimanalo

## Letters to the Editor

For Saturday, September 26, 2009

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Sep 26, 2009

### **Elevated rail is logical solution**

A picture really does tell a thousand words. I didn't really understand why an elevated rail would work in Honolulu until I saw the photo of the Phoenix rail in last Sunday's paper.

In the picture, Phoenix's train runs on a surface street with an eye-popping six traffic lanes, plus an extra-wide lane for the train. That is a total of about 7.5 traffic lanes. I tried to visualize any place on Oahu where we have the available space to build a train like that. I couldn't, especially in particularly crowded areas like Pearl City, Kalihi and downtown.

That's when I realized that the train needs to be elevated because we don't have the roadway area needed for a surface street train. We're a small island, and we have to use our land wisely. That means an elevated rail system.

Chrissie Kapua  
Honolulu



September 27, 2009

## Let's move off the dime, and on with rail

Honolulu has wasted so many years ruminating over rail transit that there's no need to dither further before coming to the point: It's time to take off the wheel blocks and get rolling with this thing.

The latest distraction is over the decision to construct an entirely elevated system, rather than running portions of the line at-grade. Comments from a group of Honolulu architects and from landowner Kamehameha Schools have urged a second look at bringing the train down to street level along portions of the route.

That option is neither cost-effective nor the right choice for Honolulu. Point by point, here's why this is more of a distraction than a productive discussion:

**Cost:** Advocates of a system that runs partly at-grade estimate that it could save a significant share of the projected \$5.3 billion cost. But as planners and engineers correctly observed, the at-grade segments would require far more land acquisition and extensive excavation to lay the foundation for the rails — unearthing utilities and disturbing burial sites that are known to be numerous in the midtown district. The additional land acquisition costs, relocating utilities and sewers, as well as costs and delays associated with buried iwi are sure to be expensive and pose far more disruptions than installing the concrete support piers at intervals for the elevated system.

Taxpayers cannot afford the additional land condemnation, in the pricey Downtown area, that at-grade segments would require.

**Capacity:** Bringing the train down to street level would defeat the purpose of building it in the first place: transporting large numbers of O'ahu commuters quickly and reliably between the west side and urban Honolulu. The at-grade train cars with the capacity to do that are longer and wider than can be readily accommodated on existing streets.

**Speed and reliability:** At-grade systems also must operate at much slower speeds and mesh with cross traffic at busy intersections, a fatal blow to reliability and ultimately ridership. Allowances for private vehicles to enter and exit driveways would have to be made, and the train would be prey to the same in-town traffic jams that its riders are hoping to avoid.

Why bother? With this approach, the city would be unable to deliver trains every three minutes as hoped, drastically reducing the numbers who could ride and making the commute far less reliable.

**Federal approval:** Ultimately, a change in technology would mean the city is redefining its entire mission, which would force the entire process of federal review to begin again from square one. The project would be greatly delayed — if not entirely defeated.

That's something we simply can't afford to let happen. Staying on track and starting construction this year would immediately create much-needed jobs and a financial infusion our economy can ill-afford to lose.

This isn't Phoenix or San Diego or San Jose whose at-grade systems function more as people movers. Our needs are entirely different, not to mention our higher land costs and our linear urban core.

So here are the facts.

Honolulu has spent decades talking about and studying a rail system. This one is well planned and has received accolades from transit planners and engineers here and in other cities, and federal transportation officials say the project makes sense and is worthy of support. The city has worked diligently on behalf of taxpayers to meet all the stringent federal requirements thus far.

What's more, a roundtable of some of Hawaii's top business professionals did an independent analysis of the city's financing plan and found it to be solid and prudent. The group made its own adjustments — taking into account lower tax revenues brought on by the economic slump, as well as lower construction costs that would benefit the project — and has given the project high marks. In addition, the financing plan includes a wide allowance for cost overruns. These experts also say we could receive a greater-than-budgeted share to come from the federal government. By all accounts, it's well positioned to receive funds as a transit "new start."

So let's start, already.

The city has done its homework, and the will to proceed is there at last. Let's not waste time and precious dollars with this political paralysis.

The decision is made, and it's high time for the follow-through. Let's move on and make rail happen for Honolulu.

---

September 28, 2009

## City breaks ground for Middle Street transit center that will be a bus stop

The city broke ground this morning on a \$8.2 million transit center at Middle Street.

Expected to open in October 2010, the portion being constructed is primarily a bus transit stop.

The transit center will include bays for staging buses and an expanded transit center to replace an existing bus service center just mauka at the headquarters of Oahu Transit Services, operators of TheBus. It will also include an electronic informational billboard, a customer service center, two restroom buildings, a utility building and security office.

Eventually, it is expected to connect via a bridge with the future mass transit line, as well as a 1,000-car parking facility, as part of a Middle Street Intermodal Center that will take up a large portion of the Middle Street-Kamehameha Highway Intersection.

---



September 29, 2009

## Ground broken for new transit facility

Completion likely in October 2010; will link bus, rail systems

*By Gordon Y.K. Pang  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

City officials broke ground yesterday morning on an \$8.2 million transit center at Middle Street.

Expected to open in October 2010, it will serve as one of the bus system's main transfer hubs and will eventually link commuters to O'ahu's planned rail transit line.

The transit center will include bays for staging buses and an expanded transit center to replace an existing bus service center just mauka at the headquarters of Oahu Transit Services, operator of TheBus. It will also include an electronic information billboard, a customer service center, two restroom buildings, a utility building and security office.

Eventually, it is expected to connect via bridge with the future mass transit line, as well as a 1,000-car parking facility, as part of a Middle Street Intermodal Center that will take up a large portion of the Middle Street-Kamehameha Highway intersection.

"Intermodal" means a system that will incorporate TheBus, HandiVan, bicycles, cars, walking and rail, Mayor Mufi Hannemann said.

The project not only provides a critical facility for transit riders, it also also means jobs for construction workers during the economic downturn, the mayor said. "Now, more than ever, we've got to create jobs," Hannemann said. "Now, more than ever, we've got to stimulate the economy."

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September 29, 2009

## Honolulu rail's PR effort costs \$5.6M

More than half spent since June 2008 on public education

*By Sean Hao  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

The city has spent more than \$5.6 million on a public information campaign for Honolulu's planned rail project since August 2005.

The bulk of that money — \$3 million — was spent since June 30, 2008, and includes a ramped-up rail campaign ahead of last November's vote on the project.

The spending was disclosed late last week in response to a Freedom of Information Act request filed by The Advertiser on Aug. 27.

The city has said its informational campaign is part of a federally required public involvement effort. However, critics have said the effort, which includes an "I Love Rail" logo, goes beyond public information by attempting to advocate and lobby for the project.

From June 30, 2008, to July 31, 2009, the city spent nearly \$1.97 million on community outreach efforts, which include a speakers bureau, rail station workshops, a public television show and other community events.

The city also spent \$738,500 on printed material, which was the second-largest expenditure category. That amount includes community event materials, a monthly newsletter and postage.

About \$176,000 was spent on a glossy brochure that was inserted into Honolulu newspapers heading into the November general election.

Voters last November approved the East Kapolei to Ala Moana rail project by a 51 percent to 46 percent margin.

Other major expenses include \$192,375 spent on online outreach efforts, including a Web site and DVDs.

Separately, city officials also reported spending \$46,896 on a June 23 transit symposium, which included \$12,389 spent on airfares and hotel rooms for speakers that appeared at the symposium.

City Transportation Director Wayne Yoshioka was not available to comment on the spending yesterday.

In a letter to The Advertiser, Yoshioka wrote that the city initially budgeted \$85,000 for the rail symposium event, which had 509 attendees. The agency was able to cut costs by reducing advertising, he said.

Some of the city's public outreach efforts are required by the federal government, which is expected to pay for \$1.4 billion to \$1.7 billion of the mass transit system's \$5.3 billion cost.

The disclosure of spending on public education comes at a time when tax collections needed to build the train are failing to meet projections.

During fiscal year 2009, which ended June 30, transit tax collections fell short by \$27.1 million. During the current fiscal year, the city projected tax collections to average \$16.5 million a month. However, the average collection in July and August was \$14.9 million a month.

Yesterday, four City Council members introduced a resolution calling on the city administration to disclose details concerning how much has been spent on the public information campaign including which firms were paid, how much they received and what they were paid to do. The resolution was signed by members Ann Kobayashi, Romy Cachola, Donovan Dela Cruz and Charles Djou.

The city should have cut spending after the November election settled the question of whether the public wanted rail, Kobayashi said. Instead, spending seems to have accelerated, she said.

"This isn't the time to be spending money on this kind of stuff when the vote has already been taken," Kobayashi said. "I think the public, rather than hearing more of the same, would rather know how their money is being spent."

## Additional Facts

Rail Online

See our transit coverage at  
[www.honoluluadvertiser.com/rail](http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/rail)

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## OUR ISLAND

# Transit Center gets rolling

The \$8 million facility will house TheBus and serve nine major routes

[By Rosemarie Bernardo](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Sep 29, 2009

A groundbreaking ceremony was held in Kalihi yesterday for a new bus facility.

The city will relocate TheBus headquarters to the new \$8.2 million Middle Street Transit Center at Middle Street and Kamehameha Highway. If all goes as planned, the bus facility is slated to be completed in October 2010.

The new bus facility will be one component for the Middle Street Intermodal Center. A pedestrian bridge will be built to connect the center to the adjacent rail transit line. A 1,000-stall parking structure to cost an estimated \$50 million will also be part of the intermodal center.

During the ceremony, Wayne Yoshioka, director of the city Department of Transportation Services, said the Middle Street Transit Center will be a "state-of-the-art facility" to include bays for staging buses, electronic informational boards to display bus schedules, a customer service center, two restrooms, a utility building and a security office where the site will be monitored at all times.

Based on current service figures, the Middle Street Transit Center would serve nine major bus routes. It would also connect to six bus routes that travel on Kamehameha Highway. More bus routes will likely be added once the project is completed, said Roger Morton, president and general manager of Oahu Transit Services, the company that operates TheBus.

The city will continue to use the existing bus center as parking space.

The Middle Street Transit Center is estimated to create 5,000 construction jobs over the course of the project.

"This is a beneficial project that will help Hawaii, help Honolulu," Yoshioka said. "It's certainly a stimulus that we would need for the economy right now."

At the ceremony, Mayor Mufi Hannemann noted that for fiscal year 2009, the tax revenues for the rail transit project increased to \$12 million, a figure that was more than the city expected. Hannemann projected an additional \$200 million in tax revenues for the rail transit through fiscal year 2023 if the current trend continues along with the increase in state tax revenues projected by the Council on

Revenues.

**Find this article at:**

[http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20090929\\_Transit\\_Center\\_gets\\_rolling.html](http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20090929_Transit_Center_gets_rolling.html)

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.



September 30, 2009

## \$150 million in road work planned for next 18 months

City officials have scheduled \$150 million worth of roadwork during the next 18 months, Mayor Mufi Hannemann said yesterday.

Hannemann and other government officials held a Road Work Symposium at the Blaisdell Center. More than 200 contractors and consultants had registered for the event, which provided information on city road projects, including costs, schedules and locations.

"We're looking at providing a boost to our construction industry at a time when it is most needed," Hannemann said in a written statement.

The event included a discussion of new technologies and products.

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## Letters to the Editor

For Wednesday, September 30, 2009

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Sep 30, 2009

### **Fund education rather than rail**

Let me be right up front by saying I am not a proponent of rail. This tiny island needs at this place in time a \$5 billion to \$10 billion rail system as much as Babe Ruth needs a colonoscopy.

What Hawaii does need is a better education system, a genesis of thought and new ideas as a ways and means of pulling itself up by its own bootstraps. One does not have to have kids to understand that a child's right to a good education, a thorough education, far surpasses in importance the right to less traffic.

Some think procreation is building rail, and some believe procreation is allowing our children to be smarter than we are. Neither is easy. Only one is necessary for the future of these islands.

One does have to have an education to understand the consequences of not knowing which is more important. The Hawaii government slapped Oahu with an increase in the general excise tax. Can someone tell me how rail and Hawaii's traffic is more important than our children and giving them a better education? Someone? Anyone?

Jim Cone  
Honolulu



# Honolulu On The Move

THE HONOLULU HIGH-CAPACITY TRANSIT CORRIDOR PROJECT NEWSLETTER

## Seattle Is The Nation's Newest Rail System

Joni Earl, CEO of the Seattle Sound Transit public transit system, can relate to what Honolulu is going through in its effort to get rail up and running.



Joni Earl

Following four decades of public debate, Seattle opened up its 14-mile, \$2.3 billion Light Links rail line on July 18.

"It was quite a push in the final weeks to make

the grand opening, but the opening weekend was nearly flawless," said Earl, who was a guest speaker at the Honolulu Rail Transit Symposium in June. "It was very fun."

Seattle voters last fall approved an \$18 billion expansion to connect the rail line with the city's suburban area. Annual ridership of the system is expected to grow to about 280,000 passengers in the year 2030.

The Seattle rail project has also created thousands of jobs and helped the local economy despite the recent recession. Earl estimates that rail construction created more than 16,000 jobs over a five year period. "We know that every one of those family wage jobs on the project was spending money in the community. So we absolutely believe there was a strong spillover in the local economy."

Watch an interview with Joni Earl at our YouTube channel: [www.youtube.com/honoluluonthemove](http://www.youtube.com/honoluluonthemove).

## FAQ on the Environmental Impact Statement

**Aloha!** The City and County of Honolulu and our partner, the Federal Transit Administration, will publish the Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS) for the Honolulu rail transit project this fall.

The Final EIS is an essential part of the rail project that discloses benefits and potential impacts. The Final EIS proposes solutions for many of the potential impacts. It also responds to more than 600 comment submissions that we received about the Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Once the Final EIS is published, we expect to receive a Record of Decision from the Federal Transit Administration later this year. Following that anticipated approval, we plan to break ground on the project at the end of the year.

Following is a list of questions and answers on the EIS process:

### What is an EIS and why is it needed?

An EIS is meant to define purpose, need and goals of the Project. It is required by federal and state law to include economic, social and environmental considerations and concerns into the decision-making process for a project of this magnitude.

The document provides a clear assessment of the potential impacts of a proposed project. For rail transit, the EIS discloses impacts to a diverse array of factors, including traffic delay along the congested H-1 corridor, air quality and water resources. It also includes operating

details of the rail system and projections for ridership, construction budget, and operating and maintenance costs, among others.

The EIS also defines potential solutions for negative impacts.

### What is the difference between the Draft EIS and Final EIS?

The draft version of the EIS was a preliminary document, meant to prompt public comments related to the project and its potential impacts. The final version focuses on the preferred alternative and has more detail on the potential impacts; it also responds to the Draft EIS comments from the public and interested agencies.

### What were some of the governmental organizations involved in the process?

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the City and County of Honolulu worked together as the lead agencies for the report.

Cooperating and participating agencies included the State Historic Preservation Division, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, state and federal Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Hawaii Office of Environmental Quality, and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, among many.

The final group involved in the EIS process is the public.

- continued on back

SEPTEMBER 2009



# Honolulu On The Move

## Contact Us

You can reach us by calling the project hotline at 566-2299 or by submitting your comments to [www.honolulustransit.org](http://www.honolulustransit.org).

Call or email us if you would like to receive an electronic version of this newsletter or would like be removed from our mailing list.

— continued from front

Coordination with agencies and the public began with the planning stages of the Alternatives Analysis and has been ongoing through the Final EIS process.

Some of the areas covered are associated with the natural and man-made environment such as air quality, noise and vibration, land use, visual impacts, and water resources, and transportation. The EIS also covers impacts to the social aspect of the environment, such as cultural resources, historic resources, archeology, and environmental justice.

### Where will the final EIS be made available for public viewing?

The document will be made available for viewing at all state public libraries, at Honolulu Hale, and the offices of the City's Department of Transportation Services and Rapid Transit Division. The report will also be available to the public for free on the project website at [www.honolulustransit.org](http://www.honolulustransit.org) and on DVD by request.

## West O'ahu Residents Wrap Up Station Design Workshops



Photo: Rendering of the planned East Kapolei Station.

The West O'ahu rail design station workshops wrapped up this month with ideas and concepts from the surrounding communities for their planned rail stations.

The third and final rail workshop in Kapolei unveiled final drawings for the rail stations at the future Department of Hawaiian Homelands and UH-West O'ahu Campus developments. Preliminary drawings for the rail station at the proposed Ho'opili development were also displayed at the final workshop.

The entry buildings and lobby areas for two West O'ahu stations were based on residents' input for designs that reflected the mauka and makai views of the surrounding area along with the Hawaiian and geographical history behind the 'Ewa Plains.

The canopy or roofline for all train stations along the 20-mile route will have a standard design

based on the ship masts of the Hōkūle'a canoe. The station canopy will also be made of cooler industrial fabrics such as canvas instead of plastics or metal that can absorb more heat.

To view more drawings of the West O'ahu train stations, check out our website at [www.honolulustransit.org](http://www.honolulustransit.org). For more information on future workshops, please contact the project office at 566-2299 or at [info@honolulustransit.org](mailto:info@honolulustransit.org).

# Honolulu Rail Transit Project



# 20-Mile Route Kapolei to Ala Moana Center



# Operating Details

- **Hours**
  - From 4 a.m. to midnight
- **Ticket cost**
  - Same as TheBus, can use a transfer from one to the other
- **Catching a train**
  - Integrated with TheBus, bike and walking paths, and park-and-ride at some stations

# Recent News

- Initial review of construction proposals for first 6.5 miles lower than expected
  - Could save project hundreds of millions of dollars
- Federal funds:
  - \$4M in federal stimulus funds awarded
  - \$30M allocated by U.S. Senate

# General Excise and Use Tax

- GET surcharge spread over 16 years
- Takes the middle ground of economic “boom & bust” cycle
- GET revenues follow the economy; when economy rises, so will GET revenues

# Travel Times From Ala Moana Center Station

To:	Time:
Downtown Station	4 minutes
Chinatown Station	5 minutes
Airport Station	16 minutes
Pearlridge Station	24 minutes
Waipahu Station	10 minutes
East Kapolei Station	42 minutes

# Elevated Rail

- Fast, frequent and reliable
  - Top speed more than 55 mph
  - Trains every 3 minutes in AM and PM rush hours
- Capacity – over 100,000 rides per day
  - Peak of more than 12,000 riders per hour in each direction
- Land Use – elevated rail has smaller footprint

# Street Rail

- Slower
- Stuck in traffic congestion
- Higher long-term operating costs
- Less frequent trips
- Fewer riders
- More construction and land use impacts

# Street Rail Construction in Phoenix



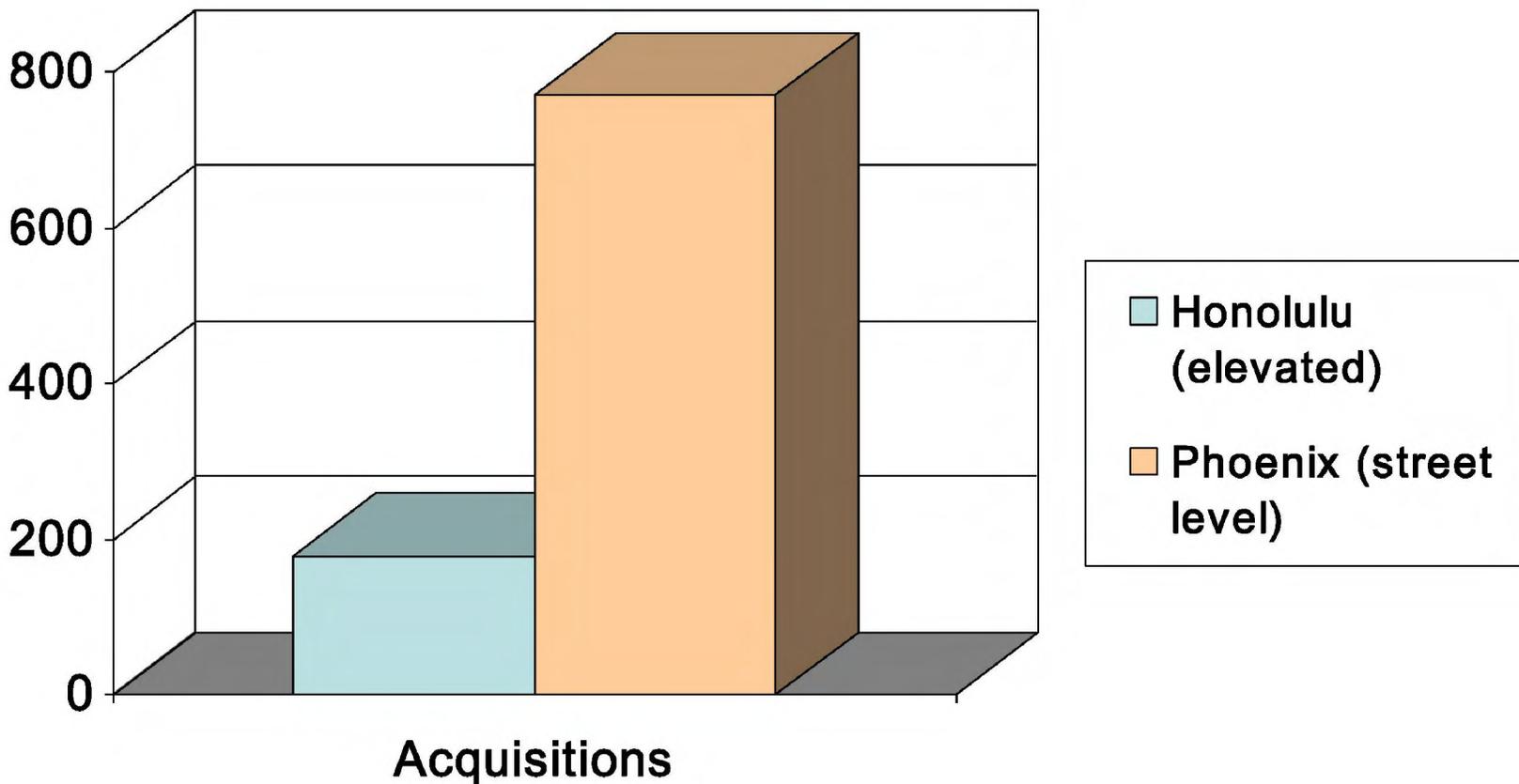
Trench along entire route for trackbed; relocate all underground utilities

# Street Rail Construction in Phoenix



Road widening and right of way acquisitions

# Comparing Right of Way for 20 mile routes





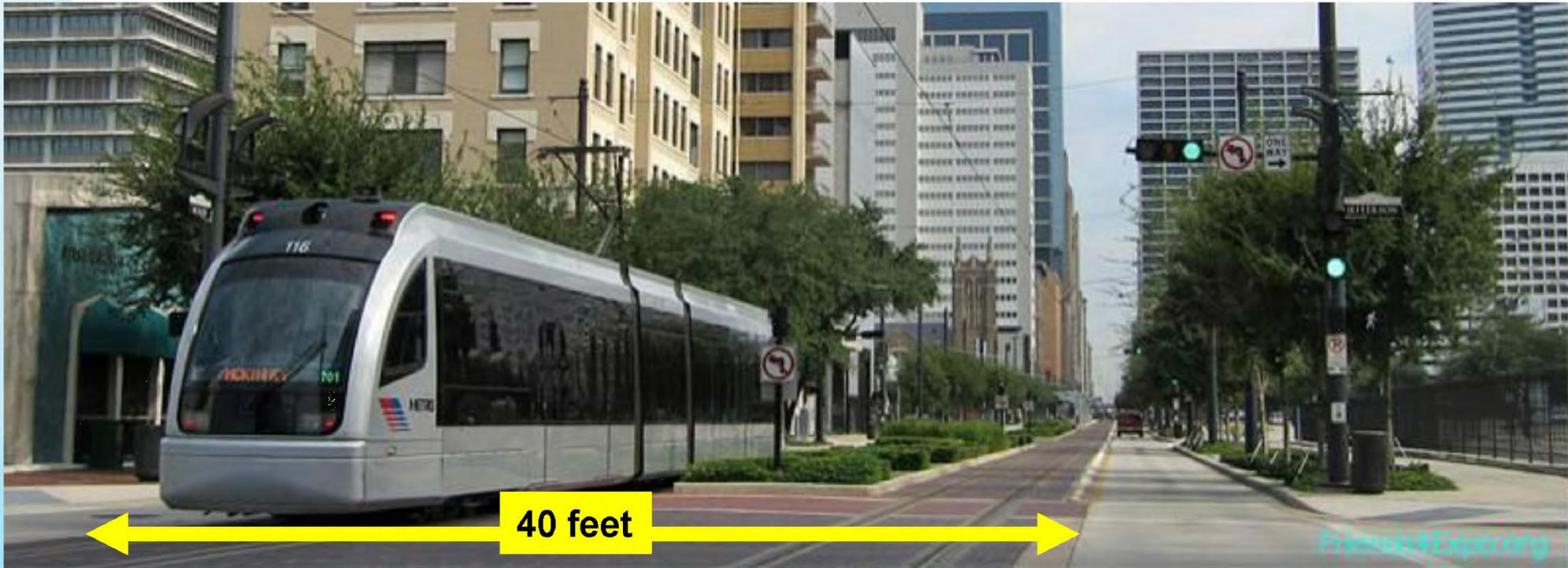
**At-grade train needs a 12-foot wide traffic lane**

Phoenix



Phoenix

At-grade train in Phoenix, a spacious and sprawling city



Houston

**At-grade trains can take up to 3 traffic lanes from cars and trucks**



**At-grade train: a two-lane road becomes a one-way street for cars**

Houston



**Walkers and bikers must cross in front of an at-grade train**



**At-grade train stations require wide sidewalks  
that downtown Honolulu lacks**

Houston



**Walkers and bikers must cross in front of an at-grade train**

# What Could Elevated Rail Look Like in Honolulu?

# Kamehameha Highway at Ka'ahumanu Street



# Kamehameha Highway near Radford Drive



SIMULATION

# Crossing Nu‘uanu Stream



# Halekauwila Street at Mother Waldron Park



SIMULATION

# Rail Station Designs

# East Kapolei Station



# UH West O'ahu Station



# West Loch Station



# West Loch Station



# Waipahu Transit Center Station



# Waipahu Transit Center Station



# Leeward Community College Station



# Leeward Community College Station



# Canopy Design for Stations

## Ground level view



# Canopy Design for Stations

## Aerial view



# Canopy Design for Stations



# Canopy Design for Stations

evening view



# Canopy Design for Stations



# Project Schedule

- Fall 2009: Release of Final EIS
- Fall 2009: FTA issues Record of Decision
- December 2009: Groundbreaking
- Late 2012: Service opens in phases, beginning in Waipahu
- Spring 2019: Start full service

# Stay Informed

- Sign up for monthly newsletter
- Watch “Honolulu on the Move” on ‘Olelo Channel 54, Mondays at 6:30 pm
- Visit [www.honolulustransit.org](http://www.honolulustransit.org)
- Visit [youtube.com/honoluluonthemove](http://youtube.com/honoluluonthemove)
- Follow our Tweets at [Twitter.com/hnl\\_rtd](https://twitter.com/hnl_rtd)
- Find us on Facebook

*Mahalo!*

