

## Public Involvement Overview

August 2009

	Month
Hotline Calls*	25
Comment Sense Submissions/Inquiries**	42
FOIA requests	0
Speakers Bureau	
Presentation/Events	14
Neighborhood Boards	13
TAC	0
Community meetings	2

\*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.

## August 2009 website and hotline comments

<b>August 2009</b>		
<b>Submission Method</b>	<b>Submission Date</b>	<b>Submission Content/Notes</b>
Website	08/03/2009	What are the street names, in Kakaako, where the rail will pass through? Do you have a map of that area? Mahalo
Email	08/04/2009	Wanted Waipahu station presentation pdf
Website	08/04/2009	Like any heavy rail system you will need to burry the line, not raise it above ground where it will be unsightly, noisy and ruin any viewplanes that it crosses. Please look at BART, Hong Kong or even the NY subway lines and notice that when trains travel through densely populated areas it goes BELOW the surface not on or above it. If you are going to put in something this costly then you should do it right the first time. There have been too many half baked public works projects in our states short history already. I would hate to see another H-1 viaduct that empties back into the Monalua Fwy., a reason why traffic is so bad from the West side. Why wasn't the H-1 completed through Sand Island all the way through downtown? If done right, we probably wouldn't need to be discussing a train right now.
Website	08/04/2009	I'm the C&C of Honolulu consultant for Verizon Wireless. I attended the 2009 Rail Symposium and really enjoyed it. Looking forward to working with the City!
Website	08/04/2009	My biggest concern is I hope with all the efforts and constructive thoughts on design and functionality that we do not over look our worst enemy on this land of paradise {TAGGERS!!} We all know this project will be the goal of all TAGGERS to show who is numero uno
Website	08/05/2009	The route is wrong! The rail should go from Waianai to Honolulu, and from North shore to Honolulu. Wainanai is like 40 miles from Honolulu why not service those people. Many workers(tax payers) transit from The farthest Eastern point and from the farthest Northern point to Honolulu everyday. The current route doesn't service them. Why? Until the route changes I will not support this project. Until the project is completed traffic is going to be in crisis. Please consider other options.
Website	08/05/2009	I'm concerned about noise both during construction and when regular operation begins. I can see across Kam. highway from my home. It's normal to hear car radios and sirens from the highway all day long. So, I have a few questions. First, exactly where is the train going to be running between the Pearl Ridge Mall and the Stadium? I'm guessing it will be the south side of Kam. highway. If so, what will be done about noise abatement for the residences of the area? I am concerned for myself and I want to inform our housing management folks of the situation. Thanks for your time.
Website	08/14/2009	Eastern Rail has developed a Green certified, recycleable thermoplastic technology for the Miami-Dade Transit Authority that is used to protect and secure the contact rail system from hurricanes. We have also developed an ultraviolet resistant coating for all of our products that has a matinance free life warrinty of 25 years. We would appretiate an opprotunity to present our products to your engineers for your future transit system.

Website	08/20/2009	QUESTION: I noted in the recent presentation at LCC that there were no restrooms at the station. Is the case for all stations? If there are plans for restrooms is that amount within the existing budget or is to be added later. When will floor plans for the stations be available? The devil is in the details as all engineers know.
Website	08/20/2009	Where can I get a map that clearly shows the proposed route, including street names? The color map on this site is too general, and the maps on the right-of-way document don't include enough street names for me to really be able to see what neighborhoods will be affected. I'm a realtor, and as you can imagine, this is important information to have in my business. Thank you.
Website	08/20/2009	I am very much in favor of the rail system being built as quickly as possible while maintaining the quality of construction and staying within budget. Has there been any consideration of utilizing the existing HOV center lane of the elevated H1 airport viaduct (which does not seem to be very heavily used by cars) for the rail to run along as an alternative to having to build another parallel elevated path for the sections that pass by the airport. After all, train cars are also High Occupancy Vehicles!
Website	08/21/2009	Is there a proposed timeline for upcoming design/build or construction bids?
Website	08/21/2009	I deeply resent your characterizations of recent newspaper reporting as "misleading and irresponsible." Whose information is TRULY misleading? Those who are making apples-and-oranges comparisons to other metropolitan areas' transit systems. Who is being TRULY irresponsible with taxpayers' hard-earned money? Those who are hell-bent on ramrodding elevated light rail through to completion, ignoring other more sustainable (and less financially catastrophic) alternatives.
Website	08/24/2009	Hello, I was wondering where I can find information related to phase 1 of this project. Also, can you tell me when the first phase will be awarded? thanks for your help.



August 1, 2009

## Airport parking rates rising as much as 30%

*Advertiser Staff*

Some people will pay as much as 30 percent more to park at state airports, while drivers making a quick stop might not pay at all, under new rates announced yesterday by the state Department of Transportation.

The daily parking rate at Honolulu International Airport will go up from \$10 to \$13 a day on Aug. 17.

However, people who park for two days or more can still pay the old \$10 rate at a new "economy lot" at Lot J, an at-grade parking lot between the new parking structure and the main terminal parking structure. That lot has a two-day minimum.

Daily rates at Neighbor Island airports will increase from \$7 to \$9 a day.

They are the first parking rate increases at Hawai'i airports since 1993, the state said. The rate hikes are meant to help pay for the parking improvements at airports statewide, Airports Division Deputy Director Brian Sekiguchi said in a news release.

The good news for travelers is that the DOT will implement a grace period at all airports, allowing people to park for free for the first 15 minutes.

The state said it will have spent \$67.3 million for parking improvements at all state airports in the four-year period ending June 30, 2010. The state built an 1,800-stall parking structure at Honolulu airport, three new surface lots at Kona (adding 880 spaces), a new surface lot at Kahului (1,800 spaces) and expanded lots at Hilo (450 spaces) and Lihu'e (786 spaces).

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August 1, 2009

## Cash For Clunkers program boosts Hawaii auto sales

*By Taylor Hall  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

Buyers flocked to car lots in Hawai'i this week to take advantage of the federal "Cash for Clunkers" program, giving a shot in the arm to the state's struggling auto dealers.

Hawai'i dealers have sold an estimated 1,100 cars within the first week of the program, said Dave Rolf, executive director for Hawai'i Automobile Dealers Association.

"We anticipated that each dealer would sell around a dozen (cars) each, and we think that most of the dealerships have done that," Rolf said.

The program, which gives consumers as much as \$4,500 each to put toward fuel-efficient cars when they trade in gas guzzlers, proved so popular that the initial \$1 billion set aside by Congress was exhausted this week, well before the Nov. 1 expiration date of the program. The U.S. House of Representatives approved \$2 billion in additional funding for the program yesterday, but the measure must still win Senate approval next week.

Mark Caliri, general manager of Honolulu Ford, called the program "very successful." Honolulu Ford has already accepted 15 trade-ins, and the car buyers have already driven their new vehicles off the lot.

"It certainly did ring a bell with consumers; if you're thinking about it, don't wait. It won't last until November," Caliri said.

Honolulu Ford has yet to dispose of any of the trade-in vehicles as it is awaiting instructions on how to disable the engine on the dealership grounds. Under the program, the dealers must scrap the "clunkers" and are not allowed to resell them.

The stimulus provided by the clunkers program is welcome news for Hawai'i auto dealers, who are enduring their fourth straight year of declining sales.

Rolf said the flurry of sales spurred by the program won't reverse the trend, but should help blunt the decline. In a forecast released before the program was unveiled, HADA had predicted sales of cars and light trucks would decline by 19.9 percent this year to 34,308. Hawai'i car sales peaked at 70,268 in 2005.

"If it continues at the rate we've experienced and if the Senate passes it as is, it's possible we could do 3,300 (cars sold) on that program if it's passed between now and Nov. 1. That's 10 percent of what we expected to sell in the whole year, from just that program," Rolf said.

### rules unclear

As popular as the program is, dealers are having to cope with its complexities. Rolf said that he received an additional 120 pages of rules nearly a week after the program started on July 24.

The program was briefly suspended on Thursday, and dealers are unclear on specific rules and don't

want to risk having to bear the cost of a trade-in that doesn't meet program requirements.

Damien J.K. Farias, general manager of Maui Toyota, said that disposing of the engine on site is one of around 22 requirements that a dealer has to submit proof of to receive reimbursement. There are also title issues to contend with.

"In our case, customers are reluctant to give away the title before they know they're approved, but we can't get the car approved unless we have the title. It's the chicken and the egg thing."

Karl Brauer, editor-in-chief of Edmunds.com, said that while the rumors of the program's problems may be true, they are also exaggerated.

"The rules were complex, but ultimately pretty clear cut. You had to do a lot of reading, but it's rather easy to understand."

## Additional Facts

learn more:

More on the "Cash for Clunkers" program, including the eligible car makes, at [www.honoluluadvertiser.com](http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com)

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August 1, 2009

## Hannemann ahead in fundraising for Hawaii governor's race

*By Derrick DePledge  
Advertiser Government Writer*

Putting an early stamp on fundraising, Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann raised \$583,000 in June for a potential run for Hawai'i governor, surpassing rival U.S. Rep. Neil Abercrombie, who brought in \$486,000 since he announced his campaign in March.

The state campaign-finance reports for the first half of the year provide the first measure of fundraising strength between Hannemann and Abercrombie, who could face each other in the Democratic primary next year.

Hannemann said in June that he was exploring a run for governor and held one major fundraiser. The mayor also transferred \$659,000 left over from his mayoral campaign last year to his governor's campaign, bringing his fundraising total to \$1.2 million.

Abercrombie held eight fundraising events before the campaign-finance reporting deadline at the end of June. The congressman launched early by Hawai'i standards in part to get a start on raising the estimated \$3 million it will likely take for a competitive campaign. He has also asked the state Campaign Spending Commission to allow him to move nearly \$1 million in his federal campaign account to his governor's campaign, which would put him on even financial footing with Hannemann.

The commission is expected to make a decision later this month.

Lt. Gov. James "Duke" Aiona, a Republican candidate for governor, raised \$308,000 during the first six months of the year and has collected \$1.9 million overall.

Candidates often press for donations in advance of campaign-finance reporting deadlines because the figures are used by political analysts and the news media to help determine momentum and fundraising prowess.

"Everybody wants to have the most money," said Dan Boylan, a political analyst and University of Hawai'i-West O'ahu history professor. "Anybody who is running with the blueprint of (President) Obama," he said of Abercrombie, "wants to have the most money. Obama did indeed do a tremendous amount of grassroots campaigning, but he also raised more money and spent more money than anybody has ever spent for the presidency."

### different tactics

Hannemann, as a mayor presiding over the state's biggest city and the largest public-works project in state history with rail, may have a broader network of potential donors in local business and contractor circles than Abercrombie.

"When we started our work, our intention was to raise funds and create a broad-based network of supporters statewide and we've been successful in doing both. Across Hawai'i, people understand that Mufi Hannemann is the best person to lead our state," David Carey, the president and chief executive officer of Outrigger Enterprises who is part of Hannemann's campaign team, said in a statement.

Abercrombie, according to the Center for Responsive Politics, has collected more money over his two decades in Congress from political action committees than individual donors. In more recent campaigns, he has benefited from large contributions from transportation unions and defense, aerospace, legal and maritime interests.

Abercrombie and his advisers have been concerned about his ability to transfer his federal campaign money to his governor's campaign and also a state law that restricts donations from the Mainland to 20 percent of all contributions.

The congressman said his fundraising is on track. He said he is enthusiastic about the number of smaller donations of \$100 or less that he has received and described his grassroots outreach as "Obama lite." The Hawai'i-born Obama was successful at tapping a lucrative vein of fundraising from small donors in Hawai'i and across the country.

"The main thing is I made my goal," Abercrombie said by telephone from Washington, D.C.

Bill Kaneko, Abercrombie's campaign manager, said in an e-mail to supporters that Hannemann raised his money in two weeks with the help of large donors. "The contrast couldn't be more clear," he wrote. "Neil believes we need to change the status quo in Hawai'i, and that's not always popular among big money donors. In this campaign, Neil will not be able to raise a half million dollars from a small group of people in 15 days."

Elisa Yadao, a Hannemann volunteer, described the mayor's report as a "snapshot in time" that covered two weeks of active fundraising while the congressman's report covered four months.

"We fully expect that what people will see is a network of support that will reflect the diversity of the people of the state of Hawai'i," she said.

## **It. governor's race**

In the lieutenant governor's race on the Democratic side, Brian Schatz, the chairman of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i, has raised \$155,000, including a \$50,000 loan from his father.

State Senate Majority Leader Gary Hooser, D-7th (Kaua'i, Ni'ihau), has collected \$62,000.

State Rep. Jon Riki Karamatsu, D-41st (Waipahu, Village Park, Waikele), raised \$29,000 this year and moved money from his House account for about \$49,000 in total fundraising.

Donovan Dela Cruz and Rod Tam both Honolulu City Council members, reported no or minimal fundraising so far this year but had money available from their council accounts.

Schatz said he would not make a decision on a campaign until the end of the year. "While I've set up a committee that fundraises for a possible candidacy, part of our decision-making process is determining the support we have for a statewide campaign," he said in a statement.

Hooser announced his campaign for lieutenant governor in February and had hoped to raise \$100,000 in the first 45 days.

"I'm pleased at the number of donors and the amounts that we have raised early," he said. "We're going to continue working hard and I'm confident we're going to be very competitive."



## Hannemann leads political fundraising

[By Star-Bulletin Staff and News Services](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Aug 01, 2009

The major politicians expressing interest in running next year for governor have raised more than \$2 million so far.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann, a Democrat, led the pack with \$1.17 million as of June 30, while fellow Democrat U.S. Rep. Neil Abercrombie could have \$1.15 million, if he is allowed to transfer \$900,000 from his federal campaign accounts.

Meanwhile, Republican Lt. Gov. James "Duke" Aiona reported having \$871,000.

Yesterday was the deadline for candidates to file reports with the Campaign Spending Commission for the first half of this year.

While Aiona and Abercrombie have announced their plans to run for governor, Hannemann has not yet. But he has formed a committee to explore the option.

The deadline to file for governor is next July.

Hannemann raised about \$580,000 of his total in June, apparently at a fundraiser on June 29.

The rest was already in his campaign chest before this year.

Abercrombie raised \$486,000 over the same period and spent about \$97,000, with a debt of \$141,000.

The Campaign Spending Commission will discuss Abercrombie's request to transfer the \$900,000 on Aug. 11, Abercrombie campaign officials said.

Aiona raised \$309,000 during the first half of this year.

In an e-mail, Bill Kaneko, Abercrombie's campaign manager, said Abercrombie's fundraising shows a more diverse group of supporters than Hannemann's.

Hannemann's exploratory committee disputed that.

"There are many miles to go," said Elisa Yadao, spokeswoman for Hannemann's exploratory committee. "We are confident that the support for a Hannemann candidacy is going large and wide and will encompass a diversity of people."

Announced gubernatorial candidate John Carroll, a Republican, raised less than \$10,000.

The race for lieutenant governor showed smaller candidate totals.

Democratic Party Chairman Brian Schatz garnered the most this period out of announced candidates, with \$141,700, and had \$104,000 left.

Democratic state Sen. Gary Hooser garnered about \$50,000 but spent about \$40,500, several thousand going to advertising and \$9,000 on a poll.

State Rep. Jon Riki Karamatsu, a Democrat, raised and still had about \$30,000.

City Councilmen Donovan Dela Cruz and Rod Tam, both Democrats, and Republican Charles Djou said they did not raise any money or little money for the race so far this year. Dela Cruz had \$38,000, Tam had \$25,000 and Djou had \$133,000.

If Hannemann runs for governor, that would open up the mayor's office for election. Honolulu Prosecutor Peter Carlisle, who announced his plans last month for a run for mayor, had a surplus of about \$12,000.

Honolulu Managing Director Kirk Caldwell has not announced whether he plans to run for mayor and did not file any mayoral campaign report, but has a surplus of \$57,000 in his City Council report.

**Find this article at:**

[http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20090801\\_Hannemann\\_leads\\_political\\_fundraising.html](http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20090801_Hannemann_leads_political_fundraising.html)

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

## Letters to the Editor

For Saturday, Aug. 1, 2009

### **Rail system will be too pricey in the future**

I am sick and tired of people saying how the elevated rail transit will alleviate traffic. It has to be elevated because there is no space to build it on the ground. We live on an island and I guess there's nowhere to go but up.

Traffic on this island will never be resolved, no matter what we do. Face it, as long as our island doesn't somehow magically increase in size, and with population growth and cars, traffic will be a routine thing for the rest of our over-taxed lives.

Think of the years to come of nightmarish congestion and re-routing as this project is being built. Think of the soon-to-be-displaced business people and residents who will be affected as this monster comes through their town.

Mayor Hannemann, why not use some of the funds and fix our existing pothole-infested roads and freeways? After all, wasn't that one of your campaign promises you made while running for mayor? Why build a multibillion dollar project when you can't even maintain what we already have?

Paul Meacher  
Aiea



August 4, 2009

## \$2B more needed for 'clunkers' rebates to keep rolling

U.S. car sales get a boost from popular trade-in program

*By Ken Thomas  
Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — The popular but overwhelmed "cash for clunkers" program is zooming toward a quarter-million trade-ins with the initial \$1 billion in rebates, but the White House warned yesterday that the special deals could sputter to a stop by Friday unless the Senate quickly approves \$2 billion more.

The Obama administration pointed to environmental gains made during the first week of the program, which gives rebates of as much as \$4,500 to motorists who trade in gas guzzlers for more fuel-efficient vehicles. The White House also highlighted recovery news from Ford Motor Co., which reported its first U.S. sales increase in nearly two years.

That won over some Democrats who had grumbled the program wasn't wringing out enough fuel efficiency. They complained that smaller rebates of \$3,500 were going to people buying new cars that get as little as 4 more miles per gallon than the gas-guzzling clunkers they traded in.

But many Republicans remained skeptical, and Democratic leaders were uncertain they could get a favorable vote on a House-passed \$2 billion extension by week's end, when the Senate begins a four-week recess.

If it doesn't happen this week, "it's unlikely that we'll make it to the weekend with a program that can continue," President Obama's spokesman, Robert Gibbs, told reporters. He estimated the additional \$2 billion would allow consumers to take advantage of the incentives through September.

"I hope we can get it done," said assistant Senate Majority Leader Dick Durbin, D-Ill.

### **fuel requirements**

New figures showing that vehicles purchased so far with the rebates are averaging nearly 10 mpg better in fuel efficiency than their scrap heap-bound trade-ins won over some Democrats who wanted even tougher mileage requirements.

"The best solution is to continue and extend the program as it is," said Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif. "The program appears to be running very well."

While the House approved the funding by a nearly 3-to-1 margin Friday, conservatives who have criticized it as another taxpayer bailout for the auto industry have much more leverage to block it in the Senate.

Under Senate procedures, Republicans can delay the bill until at least Thursday, and perhaps longer, even if senators are able to cut off a filibuster.

"This is just mass chaos, so to extend it with 2 more billion dollars without stopping and seeing what we've done would be crazy," said Sen. Jim DeMint, R-S.C.

Despite the assurances from the White House, many dealers said they were concerned they could be on the hook for some of the money if the Senate fails to approve the \$2 billion.

John McEleney, chairman of the National Automobile Dealers Association, said his organization was warning dealers there were no guarantees they would be reimbursed for sales they make under the program this week. McEleney said he has stopped offering cash-for-clunkers deals at his own Iowa dealerships.

The administration has been coy about just how long dealers would be reimbursed for rebates, after saying Sunday that the program would have to be suspended if the Senate failed to act.

## rebates vary

Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood said the average mileage of new vehicles purchased through the program is 9.6 miles per gallon higher than for the vehicles traded in for scrap. Buyers of new cars and trucks that get 10 mpg better than their trade-ins get the \$4,500 rebate. People whose cars get between 4 mpg and 10 mpg better fuel efficiency qualify for a \$3,500 rebate.

LaHood said some 80 percent of the traded-in vehicles are pickups or SUVs, meaning many gas-guzzlers are being taken off the road. The Ford Focus is a leading replacement vehicle; General Motors Co., Chrysler Group LLC and Ford Motor Co. accounted for 47 percent of the new vehicles purchased.

Ford said its July sales rose 2.4 percent from the same month last year, its first year-over-year increase since November 2007, while Chrysler Group LLC posted a smaller year-over-year sales drop compared with recent months, helped by "clunkers" deals. Other automakers showed gains, giving ammunition to supporters of the car rebate program.

Senate Republicans appeared to be in no hurry.

"We were told this program would last for several months," GOP leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky said. "It ran out of money in a week, prompting the House to rush a \$2 billion extension before anybody even had time to figure out what happened to the first billion."

McConnell said, "It's not a bad idea to look for a second opinion. All the more so if they say they're in a hurry."

## LOBBYING EFFORT

Making its case for more funding, the administration collected information on 80,500 vehicle transactions logged into the government's operating system through Saturday afternoon. Gibbs said the fuel efficiency improvements would save a typical customer \$700 to \$1,000 a year in fuel costs. The new vehicles were getting 25.4 miles per gallon on average, a 61 percent increase over the models traded in.

The data helped appease lawmakers such as Sens. Susan Collins, R-Maine, Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., and Feinstein, who had questioned whether the program's environmental benefits go far enough.

The lawmakers said administration officials told them that 120,000 new vehicle sales had been processed through the program and an additional 100,000 to 130,000 were expected to be processed to reach the \$1 billion set aside.

LaHood said on MSNBC, "We're encouraging senators to listen to their car dealers and the people

they represent. If they do that, it will pass the Senate."

Fierce lobbying for the program came from other quarters: The National Automobile Dealers Association and the American International Automobile Dealers contacted thousands of dealerships, telling them to bombard the Senate with phone calls and e-mails.

"This is the one true stimulus that seems to be working out of all the things that have been tried in the last few months," said Cody Lusk, president of the international group.

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August 4, 2009

## Hawaii highway patrol effort aids hundreds

Pilot program has assisted more than 1,300 drivers since starting June 16

By *KATIE URBASZEWSKI*  
*Advertiser Staff Writer*

Frank DeRego was driving a company pickup full of equipment for Jack Endo Electric Inc. last week when his tire suddenly blew out on the H-1 Freeway, forcing DeRego to pull over by the 12th-mile marker, within the area covered by the Freeway Service Patrol.

Scott Yette, driving a still-new service patrol tow truck, was looking for exactly that kind of trouble when he drove by half an hour later and pulled over to help DeRego, ready to do the patrol's 237th tire change since the program began June 16.

Yette's truck actually was the second service patrol truck to stop to offer assistance. DeRego had no spare and opted to wait for someone from his company rather than be towed to an off-road site, but he still appreciated the concern of the patrol.

"This is a good thing you guys are doing," DeRego told Yette.

The 14 patrollers have been busy since the federal- and state-sponsored program began a month and half ago. Six tow trucks roam the Moanalua and H-1 freeways between Kamehameha and Likelike highways from 5 a.m. to 7 p.m. Mondays through Fridays, stopping to aid any stalled vehicles.

Rarely do the patrol drivers go a single 6 1/2-hour shift without stopping to investigate at least one problem.

In more than 1,300 vehicle assists so far, the most common by far are tows (21 percent), followed by tire changes (17 percent).

Usually Yette would have noticed the neon-pink card the last patroller attached to DeRego's truck to let patrollers know he had already been helped, but project manager Harvey Heaton said it's still common for patrollers to stop for those who don't need help or for false alarms.

The rules are that they stop for anyone on the side of the road.

Since July 1, they've additionally been stopping to find people parked on the shoulder using their cell phones.

"We recommend for their own safety they not do that," Heaton said. "The shoulder is an emergency parking lane."

Honolulu Police Department spokeswoman Michelle Yu said the law requires that the shoulder lane be used only for emergencies, and she urged people not to use it just to take a call.

"We do advise people to get out of traffic and pull into a safe and legal parking area," she said.

Still, Yette, who found the Freeway Service Patrol job through an ad in the paper after being laid off from a trucking position, said he doesn't mind stopping just to make sure people are OK.

As part of his duties, he stopped at a car accident site Thursday afternoon, waiting until a police officer arrived and calling Emergency Medical Services when a woman was worried about neck pain.

"I've helped some drivers, and they'll see me pulled over on the road and honk," Yette said. "I've even had people come up to me during lunch hour who've never even been helped, and they thank me for what I'm doing."

Patrol drivers hand out mail-in surveys to everyone they help, but only about 3 percent have responded. Out of the 34 responses, no one has given a bad review, with 33 rating their service "excellent" and one rating it "good."

"Moe was extremely helpful and friendly," said one comment. "This could have been a very distressful situation without Moe's assistance, and I truly appreciate his help as well as the Freeway Service Patrol."

Heaton said the patrolmen were selected based on their communication and people skills as well as their driving record and experience. During their 2 1/2-week training, they were taught stress management in addition to the towing, auto repair, first aid and highway safety training.

"They're just ecstatic to see us when we come up," Yette said. "They're not in their comfort zones."

The most dangerous accident Yette has encountered in his 35 days on the job was a few weeks ago by the Ka'amilo overpass while it was drizzling. A man spun around in his pickup truck and was facing traffic just as Yette was driving up.

Yette stopped, put up his hazard board — arrow alert lights that pop up from the roof of the truck — directed traffic to one side and notified police. Together, they were able to halt traffic for five minutes and turn the man around.

"The whole thing took about 10 to 12 minutes," Yette said.

Driving for 6 1/2 hours every weekday along the freeway has helped Yette notice traffic and accident patterns on the road.

"On the downslope, that's where a lot of accidents happen," he said, pointing to the lower end of a decline on H-1. Yette watches east-bound and west-bound traffic when he's patrolling and radios other patrol trucks if he sees a car pulled over on the other side. The program's home base tracks all its drivers through a GPS and records their assists and activities in a daily log compiled via radio and personal digital devices.

Heaton said people have told him they appreciate the service because they see their tax dollars at work in front of their eyes.

"It's tangible," he said. "Their taxes pay for everything — lights, roads — but this is someone personally helping them in a time of crisis."

The two-year cost for the program is about \$3.9 million, with \$3.51 million coming from the federal government and the remaining \$390,000 from the state.

Yette, who would lose his job if the two-year pilot program (with the option of a three- or four-year extension) is not expanded into a permanent service, said he hopes it continues for more reasons than just his own.

"Some people think it's a waste of money, but if your grandmother, mother or sister was on the side of the road and I helped them, you'd think twice about calling it a waste," he said.

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August 5, 2009

## 'Clunkers': Not so green, after all

*By Gwen Ottinger*

Want to be green? Consider keeping your "clunker."

The wildly popular "Cash for Clunkers" program is one of a number of policies funded by this year's stimulus package that encourage consumers to make major purchases in the name of the environment. The program offers incentives for car owners to trade in automobiles getting fewer than 18 miles per gallon for more fuel-efficient vehicles. State-run rebate programs for Energy Star appliances operate similarly, encouraging consumers to replace their washers, dryers and refrigerators with new models that meet efficiency standards set by government agencies.

These programs presumably benefit the economy and the environment in two ways: Increased consumer spending helps manufacturers and retailers, while increases in fuel efficiency reduce the amount of fossil fuels consumed and greenhouse gases generated. But these consumption-promoting policies are not necessarily a boon to the environment.

First, even when new cars and appliances are more efficient than the ones they replace, the act of replacing them entails environmental costs not accounted for in the stimulus programs. Building a new car, washing machine or refrigerator takes energy and resources: The manufacture of steel, aluminum and plastics are energy-intensive processes, and some of the materials used in durable goods, especially plastics, use non-renewable fossil fuels as feedstocks as well as energy sources. Disposing of old products, a step required by most incentive and rebate programs, also has environmental costs: It takes additional energy to shred and recycle metals; plastic components often cannot be recycled and end up as landfill cover; and the engine fluids, refrigerants and other chemicals essential to operating products end up as hazardous wastes.

Policies that encourage purchases of energy-efficient products may also increase, rather than decrease, energy use by confusing efficiency with consumption. For example, Energy Star refrigerators, which now qualify for rebates in many states, are certified to be 10 to 20 percent more efficient than "standard" models. Yet the Energy Star rating is awarded overwhelmingly to refrigerators far larger than would have been the norm two decades ago, and smaller models of refrigerator, which use less energy simply because they have a smaller volume of air to cool, were not even included in the Energy Star program until 2002.

Beyond these concrete environmental drawbacks, product-replacement policies also send a message that old things are dirty and inefficient, while new ones are necessarily green and efficient. Under the Cash for Clunkers program, for example, old cars must be traded in for new ones. Yet plenty of used cars exceed the required 22 mpg. By assuming that only new products can be environmentally friendly, these policies lead us to discount the environmental gains that could be made through well-established and low-tech means.

Cash for Clunkers and related incentive programs have stimulated consumer spending and might well be deemed successful economic policies. They have certainly also pushed some consumers toward more energy-efficient products than they might otherwise have bought. But that in itself does not make them successful environmental policies. The environmental issues surrounding durable goods are too complex to be reduced to consumer-level measures of environmental efficiency.

If policymakers sincerely want to use stimulus money to further environmental goals, they need to look past narrow definitions of efficiency, incorporate environmental analyses of product lifecycles

from manufacturing through disposal, and refuse to broadly equate "old" with "obsolete." Only then can they craft policies that will serve both the economy and the environment.

*Gwen Ottinger is a program researcher in environmental history and policy at the Chemical Heritage Foundation's Center for Contemporary History and Policy in Philadelphia. She wrote this commentary for The Washington Post.*

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August 5, 2009

## Train stations designed to reflect communities

Drawings are themed to blend into scenery; foes call them misleading

*By Sean Hao  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

They're expected to be about 300 feet long, 50 feet wide and most will be more than three stories tall. To critics, they're aircraft carriers in the sky. Proponents argue that the massive elevated train stations will be the most efficient way to move an estimated 95,000 people a day to and from urban Honolulu.

So far much of the debate about the aesthetics of the commuter train has focused on the 30-foot-wide by 20-mile-long elevated track. Now a debate about the visual impact of 21 planned train stations along the Kapolei to Ala Moana route is taking form.

The city has released conceptual drawings of four stations at the 'ewa end of the route. The drawings, which were developed with the aid of architects and community input, have gotten favorable reviews, the city said.

However, the drawings haven't quelled opposition to an all-elevated \$5.29 billion train from groups such as the Hawai'i chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

The city's drawings, which show the stations blending into surrounding scenery via landscaping and architectural designs, are being displayed at a series of community meetings, including one tonight in Kapolei. Though conceptual in nature, the drawings reflect much of the final look and feel of the stations, city officials said.

"No matter where I travel in the world, I would be very proud and point to our station designs and say it's nice as anything I've seen anywhere," said city managing director Kirk Caldwell. "I can't believe anyone who loves their city would say let's design an ugly station or system.

"If you're going to do it, you're going to make it as beautiful as possible."

Upper-level station platform designs, dimensions and layout will be standardized across the entire system. Station entrances and related ground-level structures will be tailored to fit each surrounding community. For example, a station planned on Farrington Highway at Mokuola Street in Waipahu has a corrugated roof reflective of the town's plantation history.

Similarly, designs for two East Kapolei stations are meant to reflect a local sense of place, said James Stone, a principal of Group 70 International, which was hired by the city to design stations that will be near the Kroc Center and the planned University of Hawai'i-West O'ahu campus. Both stations have their own theme and are characterized by their own designs and materials.

The envisioned UH-West O'ahu station has a mauka theme illustrated by a tiered building design, weathered lava rock walls and a vegetated roof planted with indigenous plants such as red 'ilima. The Kroc Center station's makai theme is illustrated with coral walls, canoe-sail-inspired design features and other ocean motifs.

## Major blank spots

Preliminary drawings of a station for the future Hoopili master-planned community may be released next week, according to the city. That proposed development still needs approval from the state Land Use Commission.

There currently is no date for the release of a drawing of a park-and-ride lot and station planned for the area where the H-1 and H-2 freeways merge.

About 55 or so residents of the area known as the Banana Patch will need to move to make way for the park-and-ride lot. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and other groups have urged the city to alter the train's route to avoid displacing the small Waiawa neighborhood.

For now the city is focusing on designing the other five stations that will sit along the initial six miles of track that are scheduled to open between 2012 and 2013. That means there are no comparable designs available for stations for the Downtown area.

Some critics of an elevated train contend that the city is understating the potential visual impacts of the train stations with its colorful drawings.

"I never trust the renderings," said Honolulu architect Scott Wilson, chair of the AIA's transit task force. "These renderings are like (public relations) jobs to make people feel good. You can always draw in lots of colorful flowers and palm trees to hide things."

The AIA, Kamehameha Schools, the Outdoor Circle, the Sierra Club Honolulu and other groups have expressed varying levels of concern about the visual impact of an entirely elevated train system.

A ground-level train, they say, would not block views. It could also shave millions of dollars off the cost of the project — and that could allow the city to build a longer train system.

The city eliminated the ground-level transit option long ago on concerns that a ground-level train would interfere with road traffic, operate at slower speeds and have lower ridership and higher long-term costs.

## Different scenario

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 elevating the train affect the outcome of an ongoing environmental impact review. However, switching to a ground-level, or at-grade, system at this stage would require additional environmental and engineering studies and would likely delay the city's plan to begin construction in December.

The AIA-Hawaii's goal is to rally support for an alternative train system that could be built at grade along Honolulu's waterfront and in other areas. Last week, the group released its own rendering of a planned Chinatown station, based on drawings in the project's draft environmental impact statement.

The rendering, which is placed over an actual picture of the surrounding area, is meant to show the true impact of the station on Honolulu's scenery.

"When you're 30 feet in the air that's a great view," the AIA's Wilson said. "What we're trying to show is that down on the street, where most people are, these things are gigantic.

"It's hideous."

City transportation director Wayne Yoshioka acknowledged that the stations are big. However, the AIA's drawing represents a rough estimation of what the stations will look like. Landscaping and architectural design elements should soften the impact of stations built in urban Honolulu, he said.

"No one can accuse us of sugar-coating what an elevated station could look like, because I think the (draft environmental impact statement) ... probably represents the worst-case scenario of what an elevated station could look like," he said.

Actual station designs will be done by whichever contractor the city chooses to build stations. Still, those designs are expected to be heavily influenced by the renderings now being produced by the city, Yoshioka said.

"I think there would be a high probability it would be like that," he said.

## Additional Facts

station workshops

The city will hold a train station design workshop today from 6:30 to 9 p.m. in the Kapolei High School cafeteria, at 91-5007 Kapolei Parkway.

Another workshop is scheduled for Aug. 18, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the student lounge at Leeward Community College.

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## LETTERS

# How to get the grease

AUG 5, 2009

When I read ridiculous anti-rail letters in *Honolulu Weekly* like Charles Ferrell's (Letters, 7/8), my first reaction is to be irritated that the *Weekly*, a supposedly progressive and forward-looking publication, would give someone a forum to bash rail, which has proved to be an energy-efficient form of mass transit that encourages smart growth.

But then I think, the *Weekly* only prints letters that they receive, and it's entirely possible that the silent majority of rail supporters like me are entirely too silent. So here is my open letter to the *Weekly*: I support rail and think it will be one of the best things to ever happen to our island. I ride trains whenever I visit the mainland and am almost always impressed with how convenient they are. On the mainland I see business people, working people, students, parents with children and elderly people all taking trains.

The San Francisco BART is a particular favorite, since they have a spur that goes to the airport like Honolulu's train will. That means that I can pay just \$3 for a train ride directly to downtown or midtown, and avoid a far more expensive cab ride.

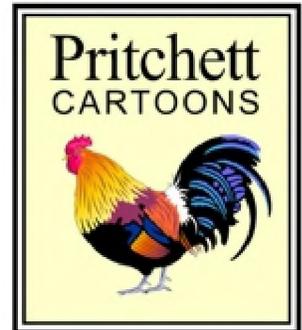
I voted for rail. I will ride rail. I want it to be built, and built soon. Now print this, *Weekly*.

*Haunani Kealoha Waipahu*

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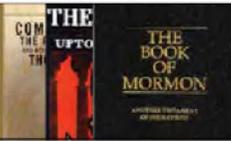


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## OPINION

Posted on: Thursday, August 6, 2009

# Sharing public bikes — now that's a plan

Share



By Peter Rosegg

If you ever travel by bicycle on O'ahu — or if you're a motorist who hates cyclists — grab your chance to comment on the draft O'ahu Bike Plan at [www.oahubikeplan.org](http://www.oahubikeplan.org). You have until Aug. 31.

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It's a thoughtful, competent draft, and, it seems to me, very cautious. It lacks more far-seeing, "disruptive" (in the good sense) proposals.

Take one example, bike sharing. Also called a public or community bike program, it is increasingly popular around the world.

Municipal governments, community groups and businesses partner to give people access to free or affordable public bikes as an alternative to motorized transportation for short, one-way trips around a city.

The goal of encouraging bicycles for short trips is to reduce traffic congestion, noise, gas consumption and air-pollution, including carbon emissions. Often ignored are the benefits to commerce and civic life of making it easier to move around the city.

Bike sharing lets you pick up a bike, ride it somewhere and leave it. On the return trip you may take a different bike and leave it where you started.

Bike sharing comes in two flavors. On the community level, used bikes are restored, painted white or yellow and left unlocked to be taken and returned on the honor system.

The commercial, high-tech system uses specially built bikes, sturdy but not attractive, racked around the city at electronic stations often powered by solar energy. After on-line registration, you use a card to release a bike for a nominal sum, ride it and return it to any rack. Pricing can be used to encourage short trips rather than all-day use.

The bike sharing can be worked with a credit card, but imagine a single card good on TheBus, TheTrain (if and when) and at bike stations. Visitors could buy a short-term card for the length of their stay, but residents could have permanent cards linked to bank accounts. Electronically, it would be possible to give a discount on bus trips for using bike share more often and vice versa, encouraging bus riding and bike sharing to the max.

Imagine a safe, well-marked bike route separated from traffic connecting Waikiki to Downtown via Ala Moana and Kalakaua Avenue, with bike-share stands along the way.

You could borrow a bike Downtown to ride to Ward Centre, Restaurant Row, Ala Moana or Waikiki and leave it while you eat lunch, attend a meeting or shop. Think of the time it takes to get from office to parking structure, to exit the structure by car,

drive and park in Waikiki —

**“My Kapi‘olani story involves 7 major surgeries.”**  
*~ Taylor, age 15*



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then reverse the process to get back to work, which is worse given the traffic nightmare of getting out of Waikiki. Many of us would find cycling faster and healthier. What better way to justify a calorie-laden lunch than riding to and from the restaurant.

Or imagine a visitor biking from Waikiki to Ala Moana or Ward Centre, Aloha Tower Marketplace, or the shops, galleries and museums of the Downtown cultural district. When it's time to return to the hotel, the visitor could choose between bike and bus, depending on how many shopping bags are in tow.

Wikipedia lists bike-sharing programs in at least two dozen cities around the world from Barcelona to Beijing and Rome to Rio (where it is called SAMBA). In the U.S., Atlanta, Boston, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, Fort Collins, Colo., Washington, D.C, and Salt Lake City are listed, and there are probably more.

As a society, we provide roads and parking opportunities for motorists and public transportation, in part to encourage commerce and social opportunities. Government and the private sector could work together to encourage take-ride-and-leave bike racks in communities and support incentives for advanced bike-sharing systems easily copied from other cities.

According to the O'ahu Bike Plan draft, we are at an important juncture, with an opportunity to make O'ahu more livable. We can help deal with traffic, dependence on imported oil, greenhouse gas and a growing obesity crisis. It will take adding miles of bike lanes and bike parking, as the bike plan says, and encouraging motorists and cyclists to be nice to one another.

But I think it will take a larger vision of what our transportation future can be and for all of us to ask, "Why not?"

*Peter Rosegg is an occasional bike and more frequent bus commuter. He wrote this commentary for The Advertiser.*

- Sharing public bikes — now that's a plan (1)
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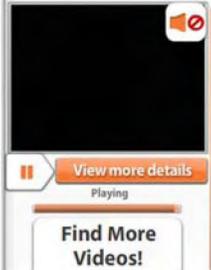
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# Star Bulletin

## **Rail will benefit all Oahu residents**

I am a 21-year-old college senior who resides in town and rarely visits the west side of Oahu. I understand that the probability that I will use the future Honolulu rail transit system daily is low, but I still support the rail effort.

Even though I may not ride the train often, I will benefit from the system because I will use it whenever I travel out to West Oahu, and there will be fewer cars on the roads in town as well. My support for rail is less about me as an individual, however, and more importantly about the positive impacts on the quality of life that rail will bring for Oahu's future.

Honolulu rail transit will better the lives of Oahu's future residents, especially those living on the west side. In addition to the environmental and economic benefits, the rail system also offers a reliable, cheap, convenient, long-term form of transportation at a time when Hawaii is faced with a very uncertain future. The rail will give people another great transportation option that will allow them to spend less time on the roads and more time enjoying life spent with family and friends.

I urge my fellow Honolulu residents to understand that just because many will not directly benefit from this project doesn't necessarily mean we don't need it or should not support it. The fact is that many others will benefit from it. At a time when our society is extremely egocentric and focused on the individual self, perhaps Oahu's citizens can be different and support what's right for others. They should support rail because it's good for the overall future of Oahu and its people as a whole.

Kawika Shoji  
Manoa

# Star Bulletin

## **Rail transit system deserves support**

We must support the Honolulu city and county's rail transit initiative.

As a native Hawaiian and Waianae resident, I can tell you we have been waiting for a viable transportation option to help us save money and time. I am a business owner with offices located near the airport and I can tell you that I will be the first in line to use rail in place of driving to and from Waianae.

Rail will create jobs and an affordable and reliable means of transportation to and from the west side. Our native Hawaiian community must support rail. It's good for all of us.

Aimoku McClellan  
Waianae

August 8, 2009

## Kobayashi wins election to return to Honolulu City Council

### Reclaims 5th District seat she first won in January 2002

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

Ann Kobayashi last night won the special election for the Honolulu City Council 5th District seat left vacant by the death of Duke Bainum and will return to the seat she gave up last year in an unsuccessful bid for mayor.

Kobayashi, 72, beat out 13 other candidates in the mail-in election that also included former state Sen. Matt Matsunaga and labor attorney Nathaniel Kinney, a newcomer who launched a sizable media campaign.

Kobayashi won with 7,658 votes, or 37.56 percent, according to final results that still need to be certified. Matsunaga had 6,284 votes, or 30.82 percent, and Kinney got 3,822 votes, or 18.74 percent.

In all, 20,444 people, or 41.01 percent of the 49,851 eligible voters, cast ballots.

The 5th Council district seat was left vacant when Duke Bainum died June 9 after suffering an aortic aneurysm.

Kobayashi will serve the remaining three-plus years on Bainum's term, and is eligible to run for two more consecutive four-year terms.

The 5th District includes Manoa, Makiki, Ala Moana, McCully-Mo'ili'ili, Kapahulu, St. Louis Heights and Palolo.

A jubilant Kobayashi celebrated her return to Honolulu Hale with several dozen supporters at her headquarters in the heart of the Ke'eaumoku business district.

Kobayashi acknowledged name recognition helps in a short-period campaign, but said her accomplishments also aided in the victory.

She also pointed out that even when she was out of office, she continued to be involved in the community's affairs, including volunteering with the Meals on Wheels Program and attending neighborhood board meetings.

"It's because I care about the district," she said.

Council Chairman Todd Apo anticipates Kobayashi will be sworn in to office Aug. 28, with a ceremonial swearing-in scheduled for Sept. 16.

## council experience

Apo said Kobayashi's election is a boon because her experience will allow her to "hit the ground running."

Kobayashi, meanwhile, said she expects to support Apo's continued leadership of the council.

Bainum's death left the council without a chairman of the council's Public Infrastructure Committee. Kobayashi said she would be interested in heading the committee.

"I hadn't really thought about it, but I'd like to look at public works because the infrastructure in our district is aging," she said, noting that she is also interested in public safety issues.

Kobayashi regains the seat she first won in January 2002, also during a special election when then-Councilman Andy Mirikitani was convicted of felony public corruption. That election also featured 14 candidates.

Kobayashi chose to forgo a re-election bid last year and instead ran for mayor against incumbent Mufi Hannemann.

The long-running rivalry between Kobayashi and Hannemann, fueled largely over her opposition to the administration's \$5.6 billion transit project, likely will be renewed with Kobayashi back on the nine-member council.

Last night, Kobayashi said she's not so much a critic of the mayor as "I'm an advocate for transparency and how the money is being spent."

One notable distinction between Kobayashi and her major competitors is that Kobayashi has said that while she supports mass transit, she has strong concerns about Hannemann's plan. Matsunaga and Kinney have been mainly supportive of Hannemann's plan.

Last night, Kobayashi said she accepts that voters chose to support a steel-on-steel rail project. But she pointed out that such technology could still allow for a light rail project that may be less bulky and expensive.

## second election

This was the second special election for a city council seat this year. In the spring, Ikaika Anderson won over a field of 10 other candidates to determine who would replace District 3 Councilwoman Barbara Marshall, who died in February. In that race, the relatively unknown Anderson, a Marshall aide, easily beat out a field that included former council members John Henry Felix and Steve Holmes.

Kinney, Kobayashi and Matsunaga raised the most money and received the bulk of endorsements in the race.

Preliminary spending reports through July 23 showed Kinney reported having received \$109,910 and spending \$99,969. A lawyer for the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades, his report showed \$30,000 of his money came via a loan from his father, Painters Union chief Lynn Kinney.

Kobayashi was second in fundraising and spending. She reported receiving \$96,616, including \$7,400 in contributions from herself, and spending \$82,406.

Matsunaga reported receiving \$60,790 and spending \$54,396. His receipts included \$38,400 in loans from himself.

Kobayashi's endorsements included the State of Hawaii Organization of Police Officers, ILWU Local 142, Local 5, the Hawai'i Women's Political Caucus and the Sierra Club Hawai'i Chapter.

Kinney's endorsements included the Hawaii Government Employees Association, the Hawaii State AFL-CIO, the Hawaii Carpenters Union, the Operating Engineers of Hawai'i, the Hawaii Fire Fighters Association and the Hawaii Building and Construction Trades Council.

Matsunaga's endorsements included the Hawaii Laborers International Union and The Advertiser.

City Clerk Bernice Mau said the election cost about \$150,000.

# No More Waiting For City Bus, Track it Online

Written by KGMB9 News - news@kgmb9.com

August 08, 2009 05:20 PM



With thousands of students going back to school soon, there's a new tool for Oahu commuters. The city just launched the service so bus passengers won't have to wonder when their ride will show up. A little technology can go a long way. That's the idea behind a new city website. "The bus HEA" allows you to track the bus online, so you know exactly when the next one will arrive.

"This is going to be big for bus riders," said Director of Planning and Service Development for TheBus, Jon Nouchi.

HEA stands for Honolulu Estimated Arrival, but the word "Hea" is also Hawaiian for "where." The service works through global positioning system devices. Every bus is equipped with GPS, which feeds back information updated every two minutes.

"The HEA system will allow us to give all of our passengers accurate, real time arrival predictions for when their bus is going to come,"

Nouchi said.

To see when the next bus is coming, go to the HEA website; which can be accessed through any computer or cell phone with web browsing capabilities. type in your bus stop or bus stop number and the next 25 busses for that stop along with their up to-date times will show up. but what about unpredictable traffic? the city says its got that covered.

"Even if traffic and roadwork conditions affect our scheduled operations, HEA will report back the accurate arrival times for a of our routes out there on the streets," said Nouchi.

The feature is also integrated in the popular application "Google maps." It'll show your stop number and a link to HEA's website. Bus riders agree, the new service can be a useful tool.

"It'll be great to know where they're at," 21-year-old bus rider Adam Hull said. "Especially when I'm running late or a bit early."

"The biggest question is when is the next bus going to show up? And do I have time to do this? Department of Transportatio Director Wayne Yoshioka said. "By checking this, I can look and see, oh ok, the next bus is not coming for another 10 minutes, I have time, I can go and do this, and I'll be back for the bus."

For more information, click here: <http://hea.thebus.org/>



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# Kobayashi a clear winner in Council special election

By [B.J. Reyes](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Aug 08, 2009

A year after giving up her seat on the City Council to pursue higher office, Ann Kobayashi is headed back to Honolulu Hale.

Kobayashi emerged the winner yesterday in a special election to fill the vacancy created by the death of Duke Bainum in June.

She garnered 7,658 votes, or 38 percent of ballots cast, in the mail-in election held over the past six weeks. Matt Matsunaga, former state senator, finished second with 6,284 votes, followed by political newcomer Nathaniel Kinney, 3,822 votes.

Kobayashi returns to the Council after a spirited but unsuccessful campaign against incumbent Mayor Mufi Hannemann -- a race that hinged largely on the issue of rail transit.

Although she had opposed the rail project, it was approved by voters in November, and Kobayashi said she will work to make sure the dollars are spent wisely.

"We're looking forward to finishing a lot of projects we started working on ... especially the transparency of the transit funds -- look at how the money has been spent and why."

A message left with a Hannemann spokesman seeking comment was not returned last night.

Council Chairman Todd Apo said he does not expect the dynamics of the Council to change with Kobayashi returning to her old seat.

District Five election results



The results are in for the special city council election to represent Manoa and Makiki.

[ [Watch](#) ]



"I feel like I had a good relationship with Ann while she was on the Council, and while she wasn't on the Council, I've continued to talk to her on some issues," Apo said.

"The important thing for the city and county overall is that we have someone who can hit the ground running on issues," he added. "The experience is going to be helpful."

He said a reorganization of committee assignments is expected by the end of the month, after Kobayashi is sworn in Aug. 28 and before committee meetings scheduled for early September.

Kobayashi beat out 13 other challengers for the City Council vacancy.

The mail-in election generated a turnout of 41 percent, with 20,444 returned ballots from the 49,851 that were mailed. Ballots also were accepted by walk-in vote at City Hall.

In April a mail-in special election to fill a vacancy in District 3, representing Windward Oahu, resulted in a 45 percent turnout.

Kobayashi will serve out the remainder of Bainum's term, which ends in 2012. She will be eligible to run for two more terms after that.

District 5 runs from Manoa Valley to the Ala Wai Canal and includes Manoa, Palolo, Moiliili and Kapahulu.

## **City Council District 5 election results**

- » Ann Kobayashi: 7,658 votes
- » Matt Matsunaga: 6,284 votes
- » Nathaniel Kinney: 3,822 votes
- » Heidi L. Bornhorst: 858 votes
- » George "G.W." Waialeale: 502 votes
- » Wendell S.L. Ching: 338 votes
- » Phillip D. "Rocky" Rockwell: 235 votes
- » James O. Quimby: 193 votes
- » Michael Cain: 179 votes
- » Philmund "Phil" Lee: 91 votes
- » Gladys Gerlich Hayes: 73 votes

» Keolu Jacob Peralto: 72 votes

» Earl Winfree: 54 votes

» Butch Sims: 32 votes

## TURNOUT

20,444 ballots returned of 49,851 mailed (41 percent)

### Find this article at:

[http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20090808\\_Kobayashi\\_a\\_clear\\_winner\\_in\\_Council\\_special\\_election.html](http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20090808_Kobayashi_a_clear_winner_in_Council_special_election.html)

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# Beat the Traffic; Commuter Choices

Written by KGMB9 News - news@kgmb9.com

August 09, 2009 07:00 PM



As Hawaii students head back to school, drivers have to deal with more traffic. But the city hopes commuters will consider other choice for a smoother commute.

This month, more than 250,000 students will be going back to school statewide; 150,000 in Honolulu alone. So how are you going to beat the traffic?

"I just got to get up early in the morning," UH student and TheBus rider, Nobuhisa Morimoto said. "Sometimes two or three busses come together, and you just can't get on because the busses are full of people."

Carpooling is encouraged. But if you can't fit everyone in your vehicle Vanpool Hawaii might suit your needs.

"We pay for all of the insurance on the vehicle, we provide you with vehicle, we pay for all the maintenance on the vehicle, there's nothing that comes out of your pocket, except for the monthly seat fee," Vanpool Hawaii's Vicky Harris said.

The U-Pass is another option for college students. It's a discounted bus pass that costs \$100, and is valid from August until the end of the year.

"Now that UH is starting again, all our express routes that go to UH, will start to extend there again," Department of Transportation Director Wayne Yoshioka said.

Experts also recommend leaving earlier and being more prepared. Before you step outside, you can check more than 90 traffic cameras from Honolulu to Ewa on the city's website. But in the end, beating the back to school jam, is still up to you.

"At the end of the day it's really going to take John Q Public stepping up to the plate and doing their part," Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann said.

And for cyclists, the city released a new master bike plan in July, to make Oahu roadways more bike friendly.



Last Updated ( August 09, 2009 07:00 PM )

[Close Window](#)

# Star Bulletin

8/9/09

## Road conditions a threat to cars

Better than gravel.

That's how I look at the positive side of the shape our roads are in.

My thoughts on our roads came as I was driving on Wilikina Drive at Schofield base. I was in the left lane of the road that turned into the freeway entrance. I thought the front end of my vehicle was going to fall off -- I slowed down and drove only up to 50 mph for fear my car would vibrate again.

When I told an acquaint-ance what happened, she said, "It's the roads," adding that she knew exactly the location I was referring to.

Driving back home, I paid particular attention to the condition of the roads.

But how long before my rusty car disintegrates from the jarring, rocky roads of the North Shore?

As broken as our roads are, they're better than driving over gravel.

Suzanne Westerly  
Haleiwa

August 11, 2009

## Gas costs for Hawaii drivers jump 50 percent in two years

Hawaii drivers saw a more than 50 percent jump in what they pay annually at the pump between 2006 and 2008, a study by the National Resources Defense Council showed.

The group found the average Hawaii driver spent \$2,102 on gasoline last year, or 56 percent more than the \$1,349 they paid just two years prior.

The study was done to determine which state's drivers are most vulnerable when it comes to average gasoline expenditure compared to income. Hawaii motorists typically pay the highest average price for gasoline in the nation but at the same time drive less than their Mainland counterparts.

In Hawaii drivers paid 5.2 percent of their income in 2008 for gasoline; that ranked 31st among states. That was up from 3.8 percent of income paid out in 2006, according to the report.

The group found Mississippi drivers paid the highest percentage of income for gasoline, spending 9.1 percent, or \$2,702 annually. The average Connecticut driver paid the lowest at 3.24 percent of their income, or \$1,825 annually.

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August 12, 2009

## Massive development planned for Ewa Plain could have big impact

'Ewa Plain housing project may ignite battle over region's future

*By Andrew Gomes  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

Looking makai from H-1 Freeway just west of Waipahu is a tranquil view: rows of green and resting fields of fertile dirt covering 1,600 acres.

Hot weather and cool irrigation make these former sugar cane fields optimal for growing food, including broccoli, cucumbers, daikon, lettuce, melons, onions, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, won bok, zucchini and more.

But nearly 20 miles away in a Downtown Honolulu state office tower, a battle is shaping up over the future of the area that is known as O'ahu's golden triangle of agriculture but also has long been designated by government planners as the island's primary urban growth outlet.

This vast section of the 'Ewa Plain is the site of the proposed 11,750-home Ho'opili community, a long-range development plan on the scale of Mililani or Hawai'i Kai, including parks, schools and commercial complexes.

The plan is eliciting passionate and divisive views — from residents, trade associations and government entities — on urban growth, the importance of prime agricultural land and transportation that when decided will affect residents from Wai'anae to Waipahu and beyond for decades.

"It's a highly significant project due to its scope and location," said Orlando "Dan" Davidson, executive officer of the state Land Use Commission.

The estimated \$4.6 billion project by the local Schuler Division of Texas-based homebuilder D.R. Horton Inc. initially came to wide public attention three years ago as a conceptual plan. But despite its massive scope and acute effect on traffic, farming and the city's rail plan, relatively few public comments were submitted as part of an environmental impact statement completed a year ago.

Early this year, the Land Use Commission began hearings to consider reclassifying the Ho'opili site from agricultural to urban use. Reclassification is the first of two major regulatory hurdles the project faces. The second is county rezoning decided by the City Council.

The hearings before the commission's nine members are expected to last to the end of the year.

Through April, almost all submitted public testimony supported Ho'opili. But since June, public testimony has mostly opposed the project.

Overall, testimony received to date by the LUC is split roughly 45 in favor and 35 against.

More testimony is expected to be submitted at LUC hearings scheduled for tomorrow and Friday and later this year.

## Additional Facts

Get involved

Next Land Use Commission hearings on Ho'opili:

**When:** Tomorrow, 9:30 a.m. and Friday, 9 a.m.

**Where:** 235 S. Beretania St. conference room 405

**What's at stake:** A no vote by the commission could kill the project.

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## Developer plans 12,000 homes on 'the best ag land' on Oahu

By [Susan Essoyan](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Aug 12, 2009

A proposal for building 12,000 homes on what is described as the best agricultural land on Oahu goes back before the state Land Use Commission tomorrow.

D.R. Horton-Schuler Division is planning a development known as Ho'opili on 1,500 acres makai of the H-1 freeway, between Waipahu and Kapolei, and is petitioning the state to change the land's designation from agricultural to urban use. The developer, which has been presenting its case over several months, expects to wrap up its arguments tomorrow, and the opposition will soon get its turn at bat.

"This is the highest-producing agricultural land in the state, which we're going to need for our future survival," said Kioni Dudley, president of the Friends of Makakilo, who heads the opposition as an intervener in the Land Use Commission case. "Even without Ho'opili, 33,000 homes have already been zoned and are ready to be built in the Leeward area. The traffic that Ho'opili is going to cause is going to be like a parking lot. There's no way to solve that problem even with rail."

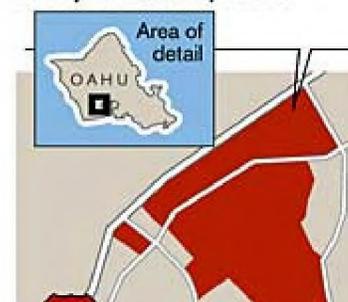
The Ho'opili project calls for creating a community the size of Hawaii Kai or Mililani to complete the build-out of the Kapolei-Ewa area as the "Second City." Although the land is designated agricultural by the state, it falls within the urban growth boundary of the city's Ewa Development Plan, and the city rail transit project is slated to run through the community.

The land is now used for farming by three tenants, including Aloun Farms, which provides a substantial amount of the local supply of crops, including sweet corn, beans, melons, pumpkin and lettuce. Bob Bruhl, vice president of development for Horton-Schuler, said the project will be built over 20 years and that "farming can continue during the incremental build-out of Ho'opili."

Bruhl acknowledged that traffic was a big concern, but said it will be alleviated by road improvements now under way and the fact that many residents will work where they live in the community. He said the goal is to develop "an urban place, not a suburban source of commuters." Higher-density development will be clustered along the rail line, which bisects the property. Mixed-use development will create jobs and include options for upstairs-downstairs homes and businesses, he said.

Along with the 12,000 homes, plans call for three elementary schools, a middle school and a high school, and substantial open space, parks and bikeways, Bruhl said.

*D.R. Horton-Schuler property. Site of proposed Ho'opili development.*



"There are several major regional roadway, highway and freeway improvements that are under construction now and will be completed prior to the first mom-and-pop store opening for business or the first new family taking the keys to their new home," he said.

Horton-Schuler bought the property, formerly Oahu Sugar Co. farmland, from Campbell Estate in 2006 and has been working with community leaders to chart the project. Maeda Timson, chairwoman of the Makakilo-Kapolei-Honokai Hale Neighborhood Board, served on that task force.

The neighborhood board, of which Dudley is a member, has not formally considered the project and has no position on it yet. But speaking personally, Timson said it ties in well with other plans for the area, including the expansion of the University of Hawaii-West Oahu, the rail line, the Kroc Community Center in Kapolei and a large shopping and office complex.

"It isn't a project that's sitting by itself -- they are all linked together," Timson said. "They all complement and support one another. ... You see a lot of the agriculture on the North Shore. That's where it belongs. Kapolei, west side, was designated to be a city."

But there is broad concern about the project's impacts. While construction unions usually support housing projects, the Hawaii Building and Construction Trades Council asked the commission to hold off on Ho'opili.

"Our Council is comprised of 16 construction unions and a membership of 56,000 statewide, many of whom reside in the Makakilo Kapolei area," William "Buzz" Hong, executive director of the Trades Council, said in written testimony. "Our members are requesting that (the proposal) be deferred until community concerns are rectified."

Economist Paul Brewbaker, principal of TZ Economics Consulting, will be a witness for the opposition. He said the state Constitution calls for protection of prime agricultural land, and that mission becomes more important in an environment of fluctuating oil prices and possible technological breakthroughs in biofuel.

"It's the best ag land on the island," he said. "The problem is that if you pave it over, you irreversibly extinguish the option."

"We are at a fork in the road with respect to patterns of urbanization, energy alternatives and agricultural futures," he said. "It is difficult to predict the outcome. I can guarantee you if you pave over the best place to grow anything, you won't have an ag option. It doesn't cost us anything today to leave it as it is."

## **PROPOSED HO'OPILI DEVELOPMENT**

- » 1,500 acres
- » 12,000 homes
- » Five schools
- » Rail transit station
- » Hundreds of acres of mixed-use and commercial property

» Parks, bikeways and open space

Source: D.R. Horton-Schuler Division

**Find this article at:**

[http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20090812\\_Developer\\_plans\\_12000\\_homes\\_on\\_the\\_best\\_ag\\_land\\_on\\_Oahu.html](http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20090812_Developer_plans_12000_homes_on_the_best_ag_land_on_Oahu.html)

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

## Letters to the Editor

For Wednesday, Aug. 12, 2009

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Aug 12, 2009

### **Best rail option is already in play**

I attended all three city workshops for the three Kapolei transit stops and learned more about the plans for rail. The designs for the transit stations look good, and the designers took our suggestions. But more important, rail will serve our community well.

The project's planners explained the reasons for an elevated system rather than one running at street level. The most important aspects are speed, efficiency and reliability, and the train needs to move lots of people and do it quickly to be effective. You do not get that with street-level rail.

I challenge opponents to the elevated system to go to where the stations will be and let business owners know they will either need to relocate or lose their business. That instead of having a lot of new foot traffic in front of their business because of their opposition.

We residents of the west side have had to endure hours of traffic delays, and it affects our families and our quality of life. But soon this will change and we will all have better transportation choices.

Mahalo to the city for coming out to our community to share information and for giving us a chance to express our ideas. Rail is finally real and it's coming.

Michael J. Golojuch Jr.  
Kapolei



August 13, 2009

## Better technology can boost public transit

For those who ride TheBus, it's a universal experience: Peering up the street, wondering when your bus will arrive.

Until now, wondering was pretty much the only option. The published schedule can't take into account the unexpected — heavy traffic, road conditions, mechanical failures, a full bus — things that can't be seen from a bus-stop bench.

But Oahu Transit Services and the city are moving to take some of the uncertainty out of bus arrival times, using global positioning system technology and the Internet to provide riders with real-time — and hence, more accurate — information.

It's a step in the right direction. As O'ahu's roads grow more crowded, it's smart public policy to expand the use of the latest information technology to keep commuters informed about traffic conditions. For drivers, the city's traffic camera feeds, ubiquitous on city and news Web sites and on television, give them easily accessible real-time information. Bus riders deserve the same, especially with ridership up by 11 percent this year.

After all, convincing more people to use public transportation is crucial to keeping gridlock at bay, and this requires a system that can compete with the convenience of using a car. This means reliable information that bus riders can count on to plan their commute.

OTS's system, accessible at [hea.thebus.org](http://hea.thebus.org), provides GPS-based estimated arrival times for virtually every bus stop and bus in the 531-vehicle fleet. It's simple to use from a computer or Web-enabled mobile phone.

The next step should be to make the data available for bus riders who don't have, or can't afford, daily Internet access. That means adopting more accessible technology, such as Interactive Voice Response, which works with regular cell phones.

It also means electronic signs at bus stops to provide the real-time information on the spot — useful for those less familiar with TheBus, such as tourists. The city has contracted to install about 40 signs at selected bus stops, but they're expensive. The city should be alert to technological advances that can bring the costs down, and install more when it's feasible.

O'ahu's daily commute will get more onerous with University of Hawai'i-Manoa resuming classes on Aug. 24. Taking full advantage of alternatives — TheBus, carpooling, off-peak driving — can make that daily trip less stressful. And technology, properly deployed, can make it a more attractive choice.

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# \$40 Million for Rail & Buses in Honolulu



Written by KGMB9 News - news@kgmb9.com

August 13, 2009 09:35 AM

Honolulu will receive more than \$40 million to buy 20 new buses, build transit facilities and conduct preliminary engineering for a segment of the rail transit project, U.S. Senator Daniel K. Inouye announced today.

Through a grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Honolulu will receive \$40,649,148.

"The transportation of our citizens and visitors is critical to the maintenance of Honolulu's economy. More than 70 percent of the state's residents live and work on Oahu," said Senator Inouye. "These funds will increase alternatives to driving and hopefully lessen the traffic burden experienced by Oahu commuters. Additionally, these projects will create jobs and work for a construction industry struggling with the current recession."

The funds requested in this grant will be expended on the following projects within the City and County of Honolulu:

- Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project (\$4,000,000) - Conduct New Starts Preliminary Engineering on the preferred Airport Alternative. This is a local high priority project.
- Middle Street Inter-modal Center (\$3,104,793) - Construct an interim 100 stall parking lot to support the transit center's planned 1,000 stall parking facility for tenants and park-and-ride commuters.
- Wahiawa Transit Center (\$4,300,000) - Construct, inspect, relocate, and fund project contingencies to establish a community transit center for express, trunk, and circulator bus services.
- Bus Acquisition Program (\$19,345,207) - Purchase (20) 60-ft articulated replacement buses, which will be assigned to high-passenger volume routes in both urban and suburban areas.
- Bus Stop Pad Improvements (\$2,000,000) - Rehabilitate and renovate existing concrete bus pads at various locations for enhanced delivery of public transit services and to improve roadway conditions for drivers and pedestrians.
- Pearl City Bus Facility, Bus Parking Expansion (\$7,899,148) - Expand the existing bus parking lot, relocate perimeter sound barrier fencing, and install new lighting fixtures.



Last Updated ( August 13, 2009 09:35 AM )

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## EDITORIAL

# Caution needed in Ewa Plain development

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Aug 13, 2009

City boundaries drawn in 1997 for urban growth on the Ewa Plain include a large undeveloped segment between Kapolei and Waipahu, but the issue of whether to go forward with housing construction is hotly contested. If the state Land Use Commission agrees to allow housing on what is called Oahu's best agricultural land, it should delay the start-up until transportation infrastructure, including the rail line planned to run through it, is in place.

The Schuler Division of Texas developer H.R. Horton plans to begin construction of what it calls Ho'opili in 2012, according to its Web site. Over a period of 20 years, the company plans to complete high-density development, including nearly 12,000 homes, on more than 1,500 acres.

Prominent economist Paul Brewbaker of TZ Economic Consulting warns that allowing Horton to pave over "the best ag land on the island" would be irreversible. "It doesn't cost us anything to leave it as it is," he told the Star-Bulletin's Susan Essoyan. The land now is farmed by three tenants, growing crops such as sweet corn, beans, melons, pumpkin and lettuce.

In an emerging era of sustainability, with calls for balance in protecting the environment while growing stable businesses, the permanent loss of prime acreage deserves a renewed look.

Kioni Dudley, president of the Friends of Makakilo, opposes the development, pointing out that 33,000 homes in the Leeward area have been zoned and are ready for construction. Since the "Second City" in Ewa was launched, adequate roadways have been put off until the housing was in place, to the chagrin of commuters.

Bob Bruhl, vice president of development for Horton-Schuler, acknowledges that traffic is a legitimate concern, but he maintains that problems will be alleviated by current road improvements. Indeed, various belated improvements to the H-1 freeway and other road widening in the area may alleviate traffic congestion as early as next year.

However, the rail transit line between Kapolei and Ala Moana is not forecast to be completed until 2019, and that will happen only if all goes as planned. Dudley maintains that "there's no way to solve that problem even with rail," but that is disputable. Conversely, the area's burgeoning population could assure the rail's early success.

In addition, Bruhl predicts that many residents will work in the community where they live. That has been true in Kapolei, but traffic has been a growing problem nevertheless, and improvements are made long after they should be.

Significantly, while Hawaii's 16 construction labor unions generally support housing projects, the AFL-CIO's Hawaii Building and Construction Trades Council is asking that the Land Use Commission defer action on the issue "until community concerns are rectified." Many of the unions' 56,000 members statewide live in the Makakilo-Kapolei area.

**Find this article at:**

[http://www.starbulletin.com/editorials/20090813\\_Caution\\_needed\\_in\\_Ewa\\_Plain\\_development.html](http://www.starbulletin.com/editorials/20090813_Caution_needed_in_Ewa_Plain_development.html)

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

## Letters to the Editor

For Thursday, Aug. 13, 2009

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Aug 13, 2009

### Too much given to development

Even as D.R. Horton-Schuler plans a new 12,000-home development on agricultural land in Kapolei, I cannot help but feel that Oahu has already been horribly overdeveloped.

For a state so reliant on tourism and its reputation for natural beauty, we in Hawaii always seem eager to permanently despoil the unique gifts nature has provided us with. One cannot help but be shocked after seeing pictures of Waikiki from only 50 years ago; it seems a completely different world from the concrete jungle and filthy beaches that now sprawl across Oahu's south shore.

Even in the short time I have grown up and lived in the islands, I have seen my home change in ways that can never be reversed. There are plenty of options for creating jobs and spurring economic growth that do not sacrifice everything that makes Hawaii the paradise that it is; if these avenues are not pursued, however, future generations may very well grow up in a land of asphalt and steel without ever realizing what they have lost.

David Jaress  
Kaimuki



August 14, 2009

## Gas leak disrupts traffic, business

Downtown workers, condo residents affected as crews trace and repair faulty line

*By Mary Vorsino*  
*Advertiser Urban Honolulu Writer*

A gas leak on Beretania Street triggered a 15-hour repair job that backed up traffic for miles yesterday morning, prompted the closure of a state building whose 300 workers couldn't get to their offices and left several Downtown buildings and a condominium without power.

The leak is also believed to be to blame for a small explosion in a communications room at the Leiopapa o Kamehameha Building, also known as the State Office Tower, at 12:40 a.m. yesterday. Firefighters were in the building at the time, investigating reports from workers that they smelled gas.

No one was injured, but the explosion damaged the room.

"It blew out the door and the windows," said Capt. Terry Seelig, Honolulu Fire Department spokesman. Yesterday, equipment with wiring was seen hanging out of one of the room's windows.

The explosion didn't cause a fire but did kick off a frantic search for the source of the gas leak. Firefighters sealed off the area, closing Beretania and Alakea streets, while Gas Co. crews looked for the leak. They found it at about 8:30 a.m., and spent much of the day on repairs.

For morning commuters, the road closures in the heart of Downtown Honolulu set off a traffic headache that still wasn't resolved well into the afternoon. The Vineyard Boulevard off-ramp from H-1 town-bound was backed up for nearly a mile yesterday morning, and traffic was also slow on the Likelike and Pali highways. Some people reported getting to work late, while others — fed up with inching along — parked their cars where they could and walked.

Sandra Theunick, the head of St. Andrew's Priory School, which is not in session, said her husband dropped her off several blocks from the school because she could walk faster than cars were moving. The gas leak was in front of St. Andrew's Cathedral, which is next to the school.

"A lot of people parked and walked," Theunick said.

## Crews to return

Though there no longer is a leak, crews will return today for more work on the pipeline.

Officials say the work will be done after this morning's rush hour, and will only require closing some lanes.

The State Office Tower will remain closed this morning while crews check again for any gas problems and restore power to the building. The tower could reopen by this afternoon, though workers are being told not to report until they get the go-ahead from their supervisors.

In addition to causing a traffic nightmare, the gas leak disrupted state business.

The Capitol building was open yesterday, but workers had difficulty getting there.

Meanwhile, the 16-story State Office Tower that was closed is home to a number of departments, including the Department of Human Resources Development. About 300 state workers who have offices in the building couldn't get to work, so many of them ended up going home.

Some worked from other offices or were able to do their work from home computers.

## work interrupted

All of the employees will be paid for the day and for any portion of today they miss. Officials said they did not know how much the tower closure cost the state.

Marie Laderta, human resources development director, said about 60 percent of her employees can work from home.

The department has about 150 employees. "We continued to work," she said.

The tower also is home to the state Land Use Commission, which was scheduled to meet yesterday on the Ho'opili development for West O'ahu. The meeting, which probably would have been well-attended, was canceled. A meeting on the project set for today also was canceled.

Makakilo resident Nada Mangialetti was trying to get to the meeting yesterday. Frustrated by traffic, she parked a few minutes away and walked. When she got just past the Capitol, she was blocked by police tape and several state deputy sheriffs.

"It's like a ghost town," she said of a traffic-free Beretania Street. "Everything is closed down."

Beretania was closed until about 2 p.m. yesterday, when crews opened three lanes.

All lanes were open in time for the afternoon commute.

Alakea Street, which had been closed from Beretania to Hotel streets, was reopened earlier.

The explosion at the State Office Tower was still under investigation, but firefighters said the gas was from elsewhere and had likely leaked in through conduits, creating a gas buildup in the room. There are no gas lines in the tower, though some nearby buildings have gas lines.

The explosion was on the mezzanine level of the tower. The fire department spent hours yesterday checking the building for other gas pockets and found none. Two nearby buildings were also checked as a precaution. Fire crews left the scene about 2:30 p.m.

## Potential danger

Gas Co. spokeswoman Stephanie Ackerman said the leak was "Grade 1," meaning it posed a potential danger to people. There are about 170 such leaks each year that the Gas Co. responds to at buildings and homes, and most are caused by people accidentally damaging a line. It's unknown what caused the leak on Beretania, she said.

The leak prompted Hawaiian Electric Co. to cut off power to about 50 customers to reduce the potential for spark ignition. Buildings whose electricity was cut off included Washington Place, the Hawai'i State Art Museum and Pinnacle Honolulu, a 35-unit condominium. All of them had power again by 1 p.m. Part of Central Middle School also was without power briefly.

Yesterday morning, Pinnacle Honolulu site manager Diane Romero fielded calls from residents, also trying to make sure the building's equipment didn't short-circuit once the power came back on. She said the condominium was without water, and some residents were running out of patience. "A lot of them are booking hotels," she said.

## Additional Facts

State building still closed

The Leiopapa o Kamehameha Building, aka the State Office Tower, will remain closed this morning so crews can check for other potential gas problems and restore electricity to the building.

Workers who have offices there should be prepared to return to work in the afternoon.

The closure means the cancellation of a state Land Use Commission meeting at the tower on the Hoçopili development project.

The parking lot in the tower will be open tomorrow morning.

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August 14, 2009

## **Letters to the Editor**

### **Governor's race**

#### **Will job of running city be abandoned?**

Does anybody still think Mufi Hannemann is not going to abandon his job as mayor to run for governor? First he transferred all his money into his gubernatorial war chest, then he sent his lawyers to block Neil Abercrombie from doing the same. It's typical for politicians to say one thing and then do another, but as an O'ahu taxpayer, I think this is more serious than usual. What is going to happen to rail transit, our solid waste and sewage issues and the city budget if no one is fully concentrating on running the City and County of Honolulu?

Pua Auyong | Honolulu

# Hawaii D.O.T., congressman at odds over pace of road work

## THE ECONOMY

BY KENT HOOVER  
PBN WASHINGTON BUREAU

More than 6,000 road projects have been funded by the economic stimulus bill, but some states are doing a much better job of getting this money out the door than others, according to the chairman of a House committee.

Wyoming, for example, has begun construction on projects accounting for 76 percent of its share of stimulus highway funding, while Florida has begun work on only 2 percent of its stimulus-funded projects. That's according to the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, based on progress reports filed last month.

Committee Chairman James Oberstar, D-Minn., sent letters to the governors of Wyoming, New Hampshire and Oklahoma, praising them for quickly spending the stimulus funds.

Oberstar also sent letters to the governors of Florida, Hawaii and South Carolina, reportedly the slowest states on stimulus highway spending. He urged these governors "to refocus their efforts" on implementing the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

The Hawaii Department of Transportation took issue with Oberstar, saying his conclusions are misleading.

"To imply that Hawaii has not broken ground on any construction project is simply false," the D.O.T. said in a prepared statement. "In point of fact, the state of Hawaii... has broken ground on three projects for a combined total of \$2.63 million."

Those projects involve a seismic retrofit on the H-1 freeway on Oahu and two resurfacing projects on Kauai. Ground will soon be broken on a bridge project on the Big Island, the D.O.T. said, noting that it has awarded nine of the 10 projects totaling \$63 million submitted to the federal government as part of the stimulus package.

"Hawaii is not only on track to meet all federal timeline requirements, but will continue to meet the goals we have set for ourselves as a state by applying much more stringent timelines than what [was] required under the [stimulus bill]," the D.O.T. said.

Nationwide, the economic stimulus bill appropriated \$26.7 billion to states and the District of Columbia for highway infrastructure and related transportation projects. As of July 17, almost \$17 bil-

lion of this money had been obligated.

The U.S. Department of Transportation announced Aug. 3 that the widening of U.S. 60 northwest of downtown Phoenix marked the 6,000th road project funded by the stimulus bill — "a major milestone," according to Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood.

Road-widening projects account for about 17 percent of stimulus highway funds that have been obligated so far, according to the Government Accountability Office. Almost half of the money has gone toward resurfacing roads and other paving projects. That's because these types of projects "did not require extensive environmental clearances, were quick to design, could be quickly obligated and bid, could employ people quickly and could be completed in three years,"

said Katherine Siggerud, GAO's managing director for physical infrastructure issues.

About 12 percent of stimulus highway money has gone toward bridge construction and repairs, according to GAO.

All states met the stimulus bill's requirement to obligate at least 50 percent of their highway funding within 120 days of receiving it, but it can take months for these projects to be awarded to contractors and get under way. Because of the emphasis on funding projects quickly, states paid less attention to another requirement in the bill: giving priority to projects in economically distressed areas. The GAO concluded that D.O.T. needs to provide states with clearer guidance on this requirement.

## SOCIAL SECURITY TO AWARD \$24M IN HEALTH I.T. CONTRACTS

The Social Security Administration plans to award \$24 million in contracts for the use of electronic medical records in its disability programs.

Health-care providers and health-information exchanges that win the contracts will send patients' medical records to Social Security electronically, with the patients' permission. This will make processing disability applications much more efficient, according to the agency.

That's important because applications for disability benefits are booming due to the recession. The agency expects to receive 3.3 million disability applications in fiscal 2010, a 27 percent increase over fiscal 2008.

khoover@bizjournals.com



Road Test drives wrong cars

It's not often I get to use the word "anachronism" but it applies perfectly to your weekly column Road Test written by Cathy Luebke.

It's hard to believe that this column promotes — and that's all it does — flashy vehicles that get pathetically low gas mileage, typically averaging around 20 mpg. This is hard to understand, since all autos and light trucks

sold today in the United States must meet an average standard of 25.3 mpg.

This number is embarrassing in itself, since it is even less than the standard of a decade ago and far away from the 35.5 mpg average standard which will be required in this country by 2016.

My point: Does any modern, thinking person seriously consider buying a vehicle that only gets an average 20 mpg? And my suggestion to PBN: Get into the 21st century. Dump this anachronistic column and replace it

with one about vehicles that are trying to help our planet become more sustainable.

John Kitchen  
Kona

Downtown parking 'insane'

Downtown parking rates have officially become insane. Even in a recession-wracked economy, when the cost of most goods and services is dropping, I am paying over \$200 a

month to park in downtown Honolulu. That's more than I paid four years ago when the local economy was booming.

I shudder to think what parking rates will be in five years, let alone 10. The people who run our island need to encourage more convenient, car-free commuter options like vanpools, The-Bus and the new rail system.

Otherwise, no one will be able to afford to work downtown.

Joe Lee  
Hawaii Kai

### Road Test drives wrong cars

It's not often I get to use the word "anachronism" but it applies perfectly to your weekly column Road Test written by Cathy Luebke.

It's hard to believe that this column promotes — and that's all it does — flashy vehicles that get pathetically low gas mileage, typically averaging around 20 mpg. This is hard to understand, since all autos and light trucks

sold today in the United States must meet an average standard of 25.3 mpg.

This number is embarrassing in itself, since it is even less than the standard of a decade ago and far away from the 35.5 mpg average standard which will be required in this country by 2016.

My point: Does any modern, thinking person seriously consider buying a vehicle that only gets an average 20 mpg? And my suggestion to PBN: Get into the 21st century. Dump this anachronistic column and replace it

with one about vehicles that are trying to help our planet become more sustainable.

John Kitchen  
Kona

### Downtown parking 'insane'

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Joe Lee  
Hawaii Kai

## Gas leak and explosion create a downtown traffic nightmare

[By Gregg K. Kakesako](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Aug 14, 2009

A small explosion in a state office building yesterday followed a break in a 4-inch Gas Co. pipe that snarled downtown traffic for most of the day.

The blast at 12:48 a.m. blew out a window on the empty second floor of the Leiopapa State Office Tower on Beretania Street. There were no injuries, but a statement from Gov. Linda Lingle said the building would remain closed today.

An explosion in a downtown Honolulu office building early this morning shut down several roads and caused a mess with traffic.

The disruption downtown today due to the gas leak caused buildings to shutdown and could last until tomorrow.

The explosion occurred in a utility room that houses communications equipment.

Fire crews determined that gas from a 4-inch synthetic natural gas line outside the building had likely leaked into conduits and created a buildup in the room. Synthetic natural gas is used to heat boilers, stoves and ovens.

"There was no one in the building at the time," said Honolulu Fire Department Capt. Terry Seelig. "There was no fire. The blast did blow out the door and the window." He said workers in the building at 235 S. Beretania St. reported smelling gas at about 10:20 p.m. Wednesday.

Firefighters using meters detected no gas outside the building, and the gas is not used in the building.

At 5 a.m. yesterday, at the request of the Fire Department, Hawaiian Electric Co. cut power to about 50 customers in the area of Queen Emma, Alakea and Beretania streets. It was restored at

12:30 p.m. after Gas Co. crews placed a temporary patch to fix the break in the pipe. They will return today to complete the job.

Power remained out in the State Officer Tower at 4:15 p.m. yesterday, and Lingle said crews will inspect it this morning and make sure it is properly ventilated before deciding whether workers can return this afternoon.

State workers at the Capital Center on Alakea Street also were told not to report to work yesterday because of the power outage, but those offices will reopen today.

Unaffected by the outage were the state Capitol, St. Andrew's Priory, District Court, Hemmeter Building, and Central Intermediate School.

Beretania between Punchbowl and Alakea streets was closed until 3:30 p.m. Part of Alakea Street between Hotel and Beretania streets was closed until 1:30 p.m.

The closures created a nightmare for downtown commuters as traffic was rerouted for safety reasons and to accommodate gas and fire crews.

Even a partial closure of Beretania Street proved a major headache for TheBus because it is the major bus route through town, said Roger Morton, the company's executive director. "We had to use Queen Street as an alternative for all our urban buses," Morton said.

He said his staff "worked very hard being creative to maintain the schedule," at times re-routing buses to keep them moving. "It was a very hard day and a hard morning for us."

Stephanie Ackerman, spokeswoman for The Gas Co., said the underground leak in the synthetic natural gas pipe was in front of the State Office Tower. More than 15 Gas Co. workers were sent to the scene to assess the situation and repair the line.

Ackerman said the only commercial customer affected was the YWCA on Richards Street. The Gas Co. supplies synthetic natural gas to 40,000 Oahu customers.



## Stimulus funds boost rail transit engineering

By [B.J. Reyes](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Aug 14, 2009

The city has been awarded more than \$40 million in federal stimulus funds for transportation projects, including \$4 million for preliminary engineering work on the initial segment of the \$5.29 billion rail project.

"These funds will increase alternatives to driving and hopefully lessen the traffic burden experienced by Oahu commuters," U.S. Sen. Daniel Inouye said yesterday in a news release. "Additionally, these projects will create jobs and work for a construction industry struggling with the current recession."

About half the money, \$19.3 million, will be used to buy 20 60-foot articulated replacement buses for high-passenger routes. Almost \$8 million will be used to expand the parking lot at the Pearl City Bus Facility; \$4.3 million for the Wahiawa Transit Center; \$3.1 million for the Middle Street joint transit center; and about \$2 million for bus stop improvements, according to Inouye's office.

A federal report released last month indicated that the rail project was fiscally sound and should proceed to the next step, preliminary engineering.

The report by Jacobs Engineering Group, a Dallas-based consulting firm, puts the cost of the 20-mile rail route from East Kapolei to Ala Moana Center at \$5.29 billion. That is about \$117 million more than the most recent estimate of \$5.17 billion derived in the past year by the city administration.

City Transportation Director Wayne Yoshioka said the administration appreciated Inouye's help securing funds for Honolulu's rail project -- about \$35 million, to date. "As we move into the preliminary engineering ... we're going to be able to access this pile of money and use it to really bring this project to fruition."

The total grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation, funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, is \$40,649,148.

### Find this article at:

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August 15, 2009

## Dealers have yet to see cash for their clunkers

*By Stephen Manning  
Associated Press*

WASHINGTON — Auto dealers say they still haven't been repaid for the majority of Cash for Clunkers deals they have made, creating cash crunches for many as they wait for the government to reimburse them under the popular \$3 billion vehicle trade-in program.

Some dealers report they have hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of rebates they have submitted to the federal government for repayment that are still outstanding, including deals that were made in the first days of the program nearly three weeks ago.

As of Tuesday, Hawai'i car dealers hadn't received any payment for the clunkers they had taken in, said Dave Rolf, executive director for Hawai'i Automobile Dealers Association.

Rolf was quick to add that dealers are "very happy" with the program and expect the payment delays to be solved soon.

"It's a very successful program bogged down by its own success," Rolf said.

Duane Paddock, who owns a Chevrolet dealership near Buffalo, N.Y., said dealers may stop accepting clunkers under the program because of the funding lags.

"I've got dealers who are reporting to me that they've got over \$3 million that they've fronted and they haven't been paid anything. It's just killing dealer cash flow right now," said Paddock, who serves as co-chair of GM's northeast region dealer council.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the federal agency overseeing the program also known as NHTSA, said yesterday that dealers have submitted requests for rebates that total \$1.5 billion — half of the money allocated to the program — through the online system set up to process and pay the claims. But NHTSA did not provide a dollar figure for the total amount that has actually been paid since the program began July 27.

There are indications that not much of that money has actually flowed to dealers. A survey of about one-fifth of Virginia's 519 dealerships done this week by the Virginia Automobile Dealers Association found that only 2.8 percent of the roughly 4,000 Cash for Clunkers deals submitted to the government have been paid.

The program also has been plagued by heavy demand that has overwhelmed the computer system and review process NHTSA set up. The agency has since hired more staff to process claims and has increased the capacity of the computer network.

Under Cash for Clunkers, car buyers are eligible for discounts of \$3,500 or \$4,500 depending on the fuel economy of the vehicles they trade in and buy. Dealers take the amount of the rebate off the sale price, then submit paperwork to the government proving the sale and that the trade-in will be scrapped.

Data released yesterday shows the Toyota Corolla is the best-selling vehicle under the program.



August 15, 2009

## Honolulu has plans, lacks funds to add 40 miles of bike paths

No funds available now, but backers remain hopeful

*By Mary Vorsino  
Advertiser Urban Honolulu Writer*

Bicycling advocates are applauding an ambitious new city bike plan that calls for 40 new miles of bike pathways by 2020, better connectivity of bike paths from urban Honolulu to bedroom communities on O'ahu and incorporating bikes into transit development.

A lack of money has hampered previous plans, and the city is already saying there's no funding immediately available to finance this one.

Still, advocates contend that though this plan is pricey, it has a better chance of becoming reality because of a number of converging factors, including volatile gas prices, the planned addition of rail transit and more emphasis on making sure capital improvements to streets include some consideration for bikers — whether through bike lanes or new signage.

"What we have seen is a broader acceptance from the community of sharing the road," said Mitchell Nakagawa, executive director of the Hawaii Bicycling League, which has about 1,000 members. "We have a lot more engineers and planners now who are asking, 'What should we do about biking?'"

The city is also more confident that its new bike plan, released recently in draft form, will be more of a to-do list and less of a wish list. Though the plan will require more than \$57 million over the next two decades, city officials say it emphasizes practicality and projects that can improve bike safety and bike pathway connectivity without expensive infrastructure upgrades.

One example of that could be adding striping to roads that doesn't follow the strict requirements of bike lanes, but still alerts drivers that they're sharing the street with bikers.

"It may not be the Cadillac that we would like ... but we've really got to focus on the doable," said Wayne Yoshioka, city Department of Transportation Services director. "We're looking at some of the inexpensive things" that can improve bike safety.

Advocates say they'll take what they can get.

And they add that inexpensive improvements aren't necessarily a bad thing.

Justin Fanslau, of Hawaii Pedal Power, said simply making the right lane on streets a little wider to accommodate bikes would make a big difference. He added that's the kind of thinking he's seeing among city and state engineers. But he also said the island still has a long way to go to being bike-friendly.

"For 70 years, all over this country, we've been building communities to suit the automobile," he said. "I would say the biggest, saddest thing to me as a bicyclist is that you can't bike safely everywhere in a state that is sunny all day, almost every day."

## exploring funding

There is no immediate new funding for projects in the plan, given the tight fiscal picture.

But officials are hopeful some of the work can be funded through roadway capital improvement work or will be put on a fast-track for money.

The bike plan updates a 1999 document, which Yoshioka said was "a great plan in terms of vision" but "lacked practicality."

The 1999 plan only looked at bike paths from Kahala to Pearl City, and recommended the installation of some 92 miles of new routes estimated to cost \$77.5 million. The city did not have a complete accounting of how many of those routes were built, but officials said it was only a fraction given that spending on bikeway improvements has remained mostly steady at \$1 million a year over the past several years.

Today, there are 66 miles of existing city-owned bikeways on O'ahu, and 53 more miles of bikeways on state highways or private property.

One of the major goals of the new plan is to add 181 miles of city bikeways by 2030. Within the next decade, the city hopes to have completed about 40 miles of that network. An additional 112 miles are planned in so-called "priority 3" projects, which are scheduled beyond 2030.

The projected cost of all the improvements is about \$100 million, but not all of that will be city-funded.

Developers could be required to add bikeways, Yoshioka said, and some projects could be done in partnership with the state.

Some of the "priority 1" projects in the plan include adding bike paths at Central O'ahu Regional Park and Lanikuhana Avenue in Mililani.

Bike lanes are planned for thoroughfares in Kailua, 'Ewa and Downtown.

Bike paths generally take bikers away from traffic, while bike lanes are on the street.

Pattie Dunn, who started commuting to work at the University of Hawai'i-Manoa from Kahala every day by bike a year ago, said the new plan is worth getting excited about. "I know a lot of people are discouraged and look at this plan as, 'Well, here's another one that's probably not going to be carried through.' But I'm hopeful," Dunn said.

Part of that optimism comes from being involved in the community meetings — held over the course of a year — to put the plan together.

"A lot of people were involved in this and the city did ask for a lot of input," Dunn said.

Yoshioka said in the short term, more funding for the planned bikeway improvements probably won't be possible.

But he's hopeful that spending will increase in the future, especially as bikeway improvements are wrapped into street rehabilitation projects.

Yoshioka added that incorporating bikeway upgrades into other improvement projects is a dramatic shift — and one that makes more fiscal sense.

"The tremendous emphasis right now is the 'complete streets' movement," he said. State lawmakers, for example, recently passed a law requiring the Department of Transportation to keep bikers and pedestrians in mind when they make road improvements. The city also updated its charter in 2006 to

include bikes as a priority in roadway planning.

"The way I look at it, it's an evolution in how we're planning," Yoshioka said.

Advocates agree, but they're also tempering their optimism about the plan, saying the city has a long history of overlooking bikers.

They say the major shortcoming of previous plans, including the 1999 plan and a 2006 state document, has been a lack of funding.

"Plans are exactly that — plans. Implementation is obviously where the rubber meets the road," said Fanslau, of Hawaii Pedal Power.

He added that government officials have made significant strides in incorporating bikes into their streets planning. He attributes that in part to more people getting on bikes to ride to work. When gas prices soared last summer, bike shops reported 25 percent increases in sales, and Fanslau said that many of those who turned to bikes for their commutes are sticking with them. The 2000 Census estimated about 1.2 percent of commuters in urban Honolulu and 0.9 percent of commuters islandwide traveled to work by bike. The national average is 0.4 percent.

Fanslau added that rail transit provides a perfect opportunity for integrating bikes into the transportation network.

## moving forward

The city has pledged that the rail project will be bike-friendly, and Fanslau said that's key to making the project work.

Hawai'i ranks behind about half of the country on bicycle-friendliness, according to the League of American Bicyclists.

In May, the nonprofit ranked Hawai'i 22nd out of the 50 states. That was a drop from the previous year, when Hawai'i ranked 14th.

Advocates weren't sure whether the drop was a signal that Hawai'i was getting worse, or that other states were improving faster.

But League spokeswoman Meghan Cahill said the new city plan is a key step forward for O'ahu.

"That's a stepping stone," she said, adding, "22 out of 50, it's not the worst ... but there's definitely room for improvement."

The ranking took the state's infrastructure for bikes into consideration, along with biking laws, education and enforcement.

Frank Smith, the owner of Island Triathlon and Bike and a licensed road safety bike instructor, said he thinks O'ahu streets are "actually not that bad" for bikers.

But he said what can get people into trouble is a lack of education. Not all cyclists or drivers know the rules of the road, and some cyclists get onto streets without the proper equipment and focus. He said it's imperative that a biker riding with traffic be wearing something that can be seen easily. He also said it's important as a biker to pay close attention at all times to traffic and anticipate what cars will do.

Smith said he hadn't seen the new city plan, but he wasn't convinced it will change things by much.

"This stuff goes around again and again and ... it always seems like kind of an excuse to not really do anything," he said.

But he did agree that relatively cheap fixes can mean big improvements for bicyclists.

A well-paved street, he said, can make for a smoother drive for cars and a safer ride for bikes.

"Fully half of all cycling crashes involve you and the road," he said, because of potholes, ruts or debris in the street.

That's one of the reasons Smith isn't a fan of designated bike lanes.

He said the lanes collect debris because cars — which he calls "street sweepers" - steer clear of them.

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## Letters to the Editor

For Saturday, August 15, 2009

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Aug 15, 2009

### Ho'opili development will help area residents

In response to the D.R. Horton Ho'opili project, I would like to share my perspective as a long-time member of the Ewa Beach community.

I have been following this project for quite some time, and I feel it is a great opportunity for both current and future residents of the Ewa and Kapolei area. What people have to keep in mind is that Ho'opili is unlike any other development we've seen in the past. It is a mixed-use, master-planned community that brings not only new housing but thousands of much-needed jobs to West Oahu. It won't be just another bedroom community as residents will be able to live and work in the same area. Each job created in Ho'opili basically means one car off the road to and from Honolulu. Also with one of the rail-station stops being planned within Ho'opili, even more cars will be taken off the road, further helping to significantly improve traffic conditions on our roadways.

Rodolfo Ramos

Ewa Beach

## Letters to the Editor

For Saturday, August 15, 2009

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Aug 15, 2009

### Project may not be all that is promised

I'm from Los Angeles and laughed out loud when reading the developer's comments about how most people were going to work in the new Ho'opili development.

We heard the same thing about the development in Irvine, Calif. All one has to do in California is to look at rush-hour traffic on the I-405 to and from Irvine to realize that "Work in Irvine" was little more than developer-speak. Where we come from, developer-speak is also known as "Road Apples" or "Used Oats" in polite circles.

Rich Flynn  
Huntington Beach, Calif.



August 16, 2009

## Honolulu's per-capita cost for rail: \$4,000

So far, typical family in Honolulu has paid \$1,000 to fund system

*By Sean Hao  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

The typical Honolulu household has already paid more than \$1,000 in taxes toward building the city's new commuter rail system.

That's the first down payment on what will be the most expensive rail line built in the U.S. in at least the past decade.

The \$5.3 billion Honolulu line has a per-person cost of about \$4,000. The second most costly is the Metrorail in northern Virginia, at \$1,300 per person.

The relatively high household and per capita cost estimates are products of the effort to build an entirely elevated track on an isolated island that has expensive land and a relatively small population.

Most of the cost will be borne by Honolulu taxpayers.

The federal government is expected to pay \$1.4 billion, or 26 percent, of the Honolulu project. That compares with 80 percent federal funding of rail projects in Salt Lake City, Chicago and Pittsburgh and 21 percent in Seattle.

"The cost may be thousands per person, but the savings in transportation costs, if this thing is effective, would more than make up for that," said Honolulu City Councilman Gary Okino. "It would be shortsighted to try to do something cheaper, which may not turn out to be cheaper" in the long run.

"That's what government is for — big capital projects," added Okino, chairman of the council's Transportation and Planning Committee. "Nobody else can afford it, but somebody has to do it."

Voters approved moving forward with the rail project in November, but that hasn't quieted the debate over the cost of the project.

The city could shave costs by building portions of the train at street level instead of elevated, said City Councilman Charles Djou.

"This is way too much money that the people don't have," Djou said. "I understand, the (November) vote (for rail) is the vote, but if we're going to do this, let's try to be transparent and keep the costs down."

## Drain on taxpayers

The American Institute of Architects and Kamehameha Schools have also expressed concerns about high cost and visual impacts of an entirely elevated train system.

The city argues that an elevated train will be faster, more reliable and cheaper to operate.

Others say it's a costly system that comes at a time when taxpayers can least afford it.

Eventually, the project is expected to generate thousands of construction jobs while leading to economic development for outlying communities. But until construction begins, the transit tax is a net drain on city households.

"For most working families here, a thousand dollars is a significant amount," said Leroy Laney, a Hawai'i Pacific University economics professor. "It would take something out of a household budget, if they're paying that much.

"As a public investment project it's probably a good thing, but right now, until we ... actually build the project, we're having money taken out of the economy that is not getting pumped back in to the economy."

From January 2007, when a half-percent excise tax surcharge for rail took effect, through last month, the transit tax generated more than \$434 million in revenue, or about \$1,000 per O'ahu household once the share paid by tourists is subtracted.

## less federal money

Overall, the half-percent transit tax is expected to generate an inflation-adjusted \$4 billion or so before it sunsets at the end of 2022. That, combined with the \$1.4 billion in federal funds are expected to provide all funding needed to build the 20-mile, 21-station elevated commuter train from East Kapolei to Ala Moana. The city plans to start construction in December and open for full service by 2019.

The 26 percent contribution from the federal government is less than the one-third the feds were planning to kick in for a previous Honolulu transit project that was killed in 1992.

At that time, the city was planning a \$1.9 billion fixed-rail system, and the federal government was to contribute \$618 million. The project died when the City Council refused in September 1992 to impose a half-percent excise tax increase to pay for the city's share of the system.

The tax burden of building the new rail line is shared islandwide, which has led to higher opposition in communities not served by rail, including Kailua and Kane'ohe.

Proponents say the communities not directly served by rail will benefit from growth policies that steer new developments to central and west O'ahu.

"Rail is going to accommodate that growth," said 'Ewa Beach resident Alicia Maluafiti, who's also a spokeswoman for pro-rail group Go Rail Go. "If we don't have something like rail transit to address those growth areas, we might as well go ahead and allow development in all O'ahu communities. If you've said no to development, then you've said development should occur in west and central O'ahu. That enables the people in these other communities to appreciate their quality of life."

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August 16, 2009

## Rail tax revenues fall short of target

*By Sean Hao*

So far, train tax collections aren't hitting their forecast goals.

Honolulu transit tax collections fell about 5 percent to an estimated \$160.9 million in the 12 months ended June 30 as the local economy weakened.

That was \$27.1 million below what the city had projected it would collect over the period.

In July, the tax raised \$12.3 million, an 8 percent improvement from July 2008.

The city is projecting tax collections during the fiscal year, which began July 1, to average \$16.5 million a month. Those figures account for the 10 percent the state takes off the top to pay for administering the tax.

The projection might be difficult to reach since local economists don't expect any marginal rebound in the economy until 2011. However, city officials maintain the shortfall is small compared with the project's overall \$5.3 billion price tag. Additionally, the city expects a slowing economy will lead to reduced labor and material costs. The project budget also includes more than \$1 billion to cover contingencies such as revenue shortfalls and cost overruns.

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## ISLAND COMMENTARY

# All eyes Ewa

Ho'opili's developer extols the master-planned project's virtues

By Mike Jones

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Aug 16, 2009

There's unfortunately been some misinformation about Ho'opili — O'ahu's first fully-integrated, transit-oriented, job-generating, "traditional" community that puts homes near jobs, schools, shopping and parks. Let me take this opportunity to set the record straight and to share some information I believe Oahu's residents will be happy to hear.

It's about more than just homes.

Ho'opili — which means "coming together" in Hawaiian — does propose building 11,750 new homes (which is a lower density than called for in the Ewa Development Plan) to be built over the next 20 to 25 years. While other Oahu developments are planned, Ho'opili will be the only community that will provide a significant number of affordable and competitively-priced homes in the area.

But Ho'opili is more than a bedroom community.

The real innovation of Ho'opili is that it will create thousands of new jobs in the area, which allows people to live where they work, thus helping to keep cars off the road.

Visionary, long-term planning pays off.

Back in the 1970s, Campbell Estate and the city created a vision for a second urban core on O'ahu — the new "Second City" — to help ease the pressure on growth in Honolulu. This was one of the most visionary land-use decisions in Hawaii's history.

Other major efforts now underway to complete the Second City include the build-out of downtown Kapolei, the UH-West Oahu campus, the Salvation Army's Kroc Center and Department of Hawaiian Home Lands' retail center and residential development. Ho'opili helps complete that vision, providing homes and jobs to make the dream of a Second City a reality.

Perhaps the most critical part of the Ewa Development Plan is not only did the city indicate where growth should occur, it wisely planned for where growth should not happen. The Ewa Development Plan, and Ho'opili's fit within it, is an open space "protection plan," limiting growth to certain areas.

Farming will continue at Ho'opili for years.

Currently, the site is being used on an interim basis for diversified agriculture. Accordingly, tenants were provided meaningful and substantial concessions at the outset given the temporary nature of their use.

The tenants' transition from the Ho'opili lands does not need to occur overnight, but should be ratable to accommodate the 20-year-plus build-out. When the time does come many years from now, we will work closely with the farmers in their relocation efforts to provide a smooth transition.

Contrary to recent claims, of the approximately 128,000 acres of agricultural lands on Oahu, roughly 40,000 acres have been classified as A, B or Prime, and much of these lands are outside of the urban growth boundaries.

The good news is that farming will continue at Ho'opili for many years, and it will continue well beyond that in key areas that have been set aside as agricultural lands in perpetuity by the Ewa Development Plan.

It is a community planned by, and for, local residents.

Over the last four years we've reached out to hundreds of residents, community leaders, local businesses, native Hawaiian cultural experts and others to help guide us in the planning and development process.

As a kamaaina company with deep roots in Hawaii, we welcome the community's input on our draft plans. We will continue to work closely with the community, keeping the community informed via our website ([www.hoopilioahu.com](http://www.hoopilioahu.com)), monthly newsletter, community presentations and other vehicles.

We hope we can count on your support for this new community that was designed by and for the people of West Oahu, and that represents the kind of smart-growth, people-friendly development that will ensure a brighter future for Hawaii.

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*Mike Jones is president of D.R. Horton-Schuler Division Hawai'i, the developer of Ho'opili.*

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## Letters to the Editor

For Sunday, August 16, 2009

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Aug 16, 2009

### **Rail is a move into modernity**

It does my heart good to open the newspaper in the morning and read positive stories about rail, like the article that we are receiving several million in stimulus funds for rail. I may not live on the rail route, but I believe that we need rail to put a dent in our traffic problem and make it easier to get around.

I write from personal experience. Whenever I visit a city with a rail system, I make it a point to ride the trains. I almost always come away impressed with how modern the trains are and the wide array of people on them: business people, blue-collar workers, families, students.

Our island should move into the 21st century with a modern rail system.

Jaxon Watanabe  
Nuuanu

## Letters to the Editor

For Sunday, August 16, 2009

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Aug 16, 2009

### **Think twice about overdevelopment**

Twelve thousand more homes on the Ewa Plain? This island is way overbuilt. What's wrong with the politicians? Is it only about padding your pockets with developers' money? What about us? We need agriculture, and don't want it moved to the North Shore.

What will be our legacy? Everything green will be cemented over except for the occasional tree planted by the developers.

Come on people, don't sit there and let this happen. Speak up.

Adrienne L. Wilson-Yamasaki  
Wahiawa

August 17, 2009

## Letter to the Editor

### **Ho'opili project**

### **Farms on acreage models of efficiency**

When a lot of money is involved the outcome is usually a done deal, and the Ho'opili project in 'Ewa is no exception. Despite the ag zoning, Campbell Estate knew what they had, as did Schuler when they bought the parcel. Oahu Sugar Co. operated on the most fertile piece of agricultural land in the state, with plentiful irrigation infrastructure (developed privately over many decades).

The farms that occupy the remaining open acreage today (that is, the acreage not already paved over) are models of efficiency, because they take advantage of that infrastructure, soil and plentiful sunlight, and because they are located on O'ahu, the market they primarily serve. It is a crime against the people of our island, our state, to develop this parcel. Enough! Self-sufficiency does not come from building more housing on the 'Ewa Plain. We foul our own nest in the name of progress.

Kevin O'Leary | Honolulu

## Letters to the Editor

For Monday, August 17, 2009

### Study resources before building

Mahalo for the editorial concerning growth on the Ewa Plain ("Caution needed in Ewa Plain development," Star-Bulletin, Aug. 13). Some of these developers should have their heads examined.

The housing problems on the mainland have caused the current recession but the development industry wants to build more homes. Foreclosures hit a record for Hawaii last month. Where are all these qualified home buyers?

Also, I think we need more reliable information on our water-usage here on Oahu before we build much more. If we eventually are going to desalinize on a large scale, then we need the cheap energy that nuclear energy would be capable of providing. Building too many homes got us into this mess.

**Phil Robertson**  
Kailua

August 19, 2009

## **Letter to the Editor**

### **Rail transit**

#### **Officials should learn from past**

They say hindsight is 20/20. Your article "Rail to cost us \$4,000 each" is yet another example of our elected officials' lack of vision.

In 1992, a fixed-rail system would have cost \$1.9 billion with a federal government contribution of 33 percent. The system would have been up and running, improving traffic, and giving people an alternate means of transportation. Now the system will cost \$5.3 billion and the feds will contribute only 26 percent. Sheesh!

Here are a few more examples:

- Aloha Stadium. Built with steel that will form a "protective coating of rust." It cost more to repair the stadium than it did to build it.
- The Hawai'i Convention Center. The lot where the center stands today sat vacant for years. When the center was finally built, it cost \$320 million. If it had been built in the late '70s, the cost would have been considerably less.

Our elected officials worry about today and the next election. I hope they learn from the past; if not, they are doomed to repeat it. Given their track record, they'll never learn.

Robert K. Soberano | Honolulu

August 19, 2009

## **Letter to the Editor**

### **Ho'opili**

### **Project will benefit 'Ewa, Kapolei areas**

In response to your article on the D.R. Horton Ho'opili project, I would like to share my perspective as a longtime member of the 'Ewa Beach community.

I have been following this project for quite some time, and I feel it is a great opportunity for both current and future residents of the 'Ewa and Kapolei areas. What people have to keep in mind is that Ho'opili is unlike any other development we've seen in the past. It is a mixed-use, master-planned community that brings not only new housing but thousands of much-needed jobs to West O'ahu. It won't be just another bedroom community, as residents will be able to live and work in the same area. Each job created in Ho'opili basically means one car off the road to and from Honolulu.

Ho'opili is also the first project of its kind in the state to include rail transit in its planning. With one of the rail station stops being planned within Ho'opili, even more cars will be taken off the road, further helping to significantly improve traffic conditions on our roadways.

Rodolfo Ramos | 'Ewa Beach

August 19, 2009

## **Letter to the Editor**

### **Carbon emissions**

#### **Transportation a big way to go green**

There are lots of good suggestions for going green and reducing your carbon footprint, such as changing light bulbs, opening windows rather than running the air conditioner and installing solar water heaters. But most of our energy consumption is for transportation.

One of the best ways to reduce carbon emissions and greenhouse gases is to walk, ride a bike or take public transit rather than use your automobile. Less auto use means less gasoline consumption and less air and water pollution. As a public policy, we must find ways to reduce our dependence on imported fossil fuels and we must find cleaner, less polluting transportation options.

This is another reason to support rail transit, and we should all get on board.

Jon Sakamoto | Honolulu

# MidWeek

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## Letters To The Editor

August 19, 2009  
By Midweek Staff

### Rail alternatives

For someone who loves Hawaii, it is disappointing that Bob Jones strongly supports the elevated train along the entire length of the proposed rail project. We continue to hear from overhead rail proponents that the rest of the island benefited from the H-3 project, which was built with mostly federal money. The two-lane highways (totaling 32 miles) include a mile-long tunnel and vast viaducts that were built for \$1.3 billion, one quarter of the proposed cost of the commuter rail project, which will run at a huge loss for most of the day. The H-3 project reduced traffic on the Pali and Likelike highways and did not incur the huge annual maintenance costs that the overhead rail project will inflict on the Oahu taxpayers.

The sad truth is that the city has been promoting the Vancouver overhead rail, which was built many years ago for a city twice the size of Honolulu. Since then, many cities much larger than Honolulu have determined that overhead rail is just too expensive, and that light rail at grade or managed traffic lanes are a better alternative. The city, however, continues on its Web site to erroneously misinform the taxpayer by promoting the Charlotte and Phoenix rail projects, which are light rail at grade and are nothing comparable to the Honolulu project.

It is time to pull the plug on this overpriced, ill-conceived project and start looking seriously at sensible alternatives that can be achieved in half the time and cost, and that will save our island home from the environmental and financial disaster that will result if the presently planned rail project is allowed to proceed.

*Geoffrey Paterson,*

*AIA Emeritus*

*Honolulu*

## Letters to the Editor

For Wednesday, August 19, 2009

### Ho'opili needed in West Oahu

Ho'opili needs to be reclassified to allow for urban development and uses. Ho'opili is part of a much larger community plan.

If it is not approved, will the rail transit station planned at Ho'opili sit alone in an agricultural field? Where will future students and employees of UH-West Oahu live? These people and their families will need housing, places to eat and relax, and they deserve the opportunity to belong to a community.

The current farming operations on the Ho'opili site generate a substantial amount of dust which is a real problem for residents who live in the Villages of Kapolei. The idea that Ho'opili will create more traffic is just not true. The bottom line is that rail -- along with other road improvements in Kapolei and Ewa -- will reduce traffic in the long run.

In the end we must ask ourselves a critical question: Where will our children live tomorrow if we don't carefully plan today?

**Leonard Leong**  
Honolulu

## Letters to the Editor

For Wednesday, August 19, 2009

### **Increase options for clean transit**

There are lots of good suggestions for going green and reducing your carbon footprint, like opening windows rather than running the air conditioner and installing solar water heaters. But most of our energy consumption is through transportation.

One of the best ways to reduce carbon emissions and greenhouse gases is to walk, ride a bike or take public transit rather than using your automobile. We must find ways to reduce our dependence on imported fossil fuels and find cleaner transportation options. This is another reason to support rail transit.

**Jon Sakamoto**  
Honolulu

## Letters to the Editor

For Wednesday, August 19, 2009

### **Potholes part of master plan?**

I would like to congratulate the city administration for its plan to add another 40 miles of bike paths in and around Honolulu. It takes great foresight to understand what the transportation needs of a community will be in future years.

Now, with both rail and more bike pathways in the works, even the mayor's strongest critics should be able to appreciate the careful thinking that went into his decision to allow our system of roads to continue crumbling into rubble, knowing that within a few short years after they become completely unusable, his alternatives will be available to us. Until that shining day, let's stop all this complaining about having to dodge potholes, and the supposed damage they're doing to our vehicles, and let's instead all look forward, like our mayor, to a society freed from the shackles of such personally convenient, go-anywhere-you-want-to anachronisms such as automobiles.

**Michael F. Ferguson**  
Honolulu



August 20, 2009

## City estimated that Oahu rail funding may fall \$500M short May 1 report with options to make up for shortfall not disclosed to City Council

*By Sean Hao  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

In a May 1 report, the city said transit-tax revenue will fall an estimated \$500 million short of what is needed to complete the proposed \$5.3 billion elevated commuter rail line from East Kapolei to Ala Moana.

The report and a follow-up July 15 e-mail outlined several options the city could pursue to make up for the lost revenue, including asking for more money from the state, the federal government, the military, private developers and the Honolulu International Airport.

The city also considered, but has since rejected, diverting federal funds intended for TheBus to pay for the rail project and extending the half a percentage point general excise tax surcharge beyond its original 2022 expiration date.

Toru Hamayasu, deputy director of the Honolulu Department of Transportation Services, said in an e-mail yesterday that the May 1 report was "an outdated and no longer accurate early draft financial plan."

The city sent a new draft last week to the Federal Transit Authority and "we'll make it available when it's finalized," Hamayasu wrote.

The failure of city officials to disclose in May that they knew of a potential \$500 million shortfall in projected tax revenue for the rail project upset City Council members, including those who had supported the project and those opposed to it.

A \$500 million shortfall is information the City Council and public should have, said City Council Chair Todd Apo.

"Five-hundred million dollars is definitely material. The question is, is there a plan that solves that gap?" he said. "That's going to be the question we'll have before we're willing to, at least for me, move forward with a bond issuance."

The council is considering issuing \$1 billion in transit bonds to help fund the rail project. "Clearly the council is not going to approve that bond issuance without that information," said Apo, a supporter of the project.

City Council member Romy Cachola said the council and public needs to know if the project is in financial trouble.

"We should be fully aware of all that — we want to be upfront, transparent and accountable," said Cachola, who supports the project. "I don't want to accuse them of hiding something, but that's exactly what it is. They're not being forthright and upfront with us."

City officials did not respond when asked why the May 1 report was not made public or shared with City Council members when it was first issued.

The report dated May 1 and titled "Financial Plan for Entry into Preliminary Engineering" was sent by the city to the Federal Transit Administration, the agency that will determine if Honolulu can get more than \$1 billion in federal money to help fund the rail project.

Cliff Slater, chair of [www.honolulutraffic.com](http://www.honolulutraffic.com), and Rich Ubersax, a local resident opposed to the project, obtained the report through the Freedom of Information Act and made it available to The Advertiser.

## yoshioka testimony

In City Council testimony in June, city transportation Director Wayne Yoshioka said the project didn't have a funding shortfall. Yoshioka also said there was no completed, updated financial plan for the project.

During the June 10 hearing, Yoshioka said an updated financial plan would be made public as soon as it was ready.

"There's one in the works right now, in fact it's undergoing revision to reflect these latest financial conditions," Yoshioka said under questioning from Cachola. "This thing is going through review, and when everybody feels it's a valid document based on all the revisions that it goes through — it goes through a lot of scrutiny — when it's gone through that scrutiny and everybody is satisfied that it is an accurate document, that's when it will be ready" to release, Yoshioka said.

Yoshioka said again in a July 27 memo to City Council member Charles Djou that there was no updated financial plan.

Yoshioka did not return messages left Tuesday and yesterday for this story.

The city plans to begin construction of the 20-mile train in December.

The \$500 million shortfall is the result of a drop in tax revenue due to the slowing economy. A half a percentage point surcharge was added to the general excise tax in Honolulu in January 2007 to fund the rail.

The city had anticipated tax collections during the 2009-10 fiscal year, which began July 1, to average \$16.5 million a month. In July, the tax raised only \$12.3 million. Out of the past 13 months, tax collections matched projections only once.

The near-term outlook for state tax revenues has worsened since the May 1 financial plan.

On May 28, the state Council on Revenues reduced the forecast growth rate for General Fund tax revenues for fiscal 2010 from 0.5 percent to 0.0 percent. Actual state tax revenues in fiscal 2009 fell 9.4 percent.

Overall, the transit tax was expected to generate an inflation-adjusted \$4.1 billion before it sunsets at the end of 2022. That, combined with the \$1.4 billion in federal funds, was expected to provide all funding needed to build the train.

The May 1 financial report is the first indication that has surfaced acknowledging the city may not meet its goal. The report estimates the transit tax to raise about \$3.6 billion, which will be combined with nearly \$1.6 billion in federal funds.

To make up the shortfall, the May 1 financial plan anticipated \$301 million of federal funds that otherwise would go to pay for buses and bus-related activities from 2011 to 2019.

That idea has been rejected by the city, said Hamayasu, with the city department of transportation

services. "The city will not use the bus funding if it would in any way compromise the quality of the city's bus service," he said.

The city has also rejected extending the general excise tax surcharge beyond 2022 to fill the shortfall, Hamayasu said.

"Mayor (Mufi) Hannemann strongly rejected the concept and it will not be examined further," he said.

## alternatives

According to the May 1 financial plan, the city hoped to make up some of the anticipated transit tax shortfall by seeking \$119 million more from the federal government.

The city also raised the possibility of new taxes, fees for development rights and the possible use of military and airport funds to pay for the train. The city also has raised the prospect of keeping some of the 10 percent transit tax administration fee that's being retained by the state.

Whether the city can get federal and state officials and private sector leaders to kick in more money to help pay for Honolulu's train remains to be seen. The May 1 report anticipates the city getting a total of as much as \$1.7 billion from the federal government, \$150 million from the airport and \$60 million in private investment.

However, Honolulu International Airport and state legislative leaders have said they're not likely to give the city more money to build the train.

State Sen. J. Kalani English, D-6th (E. Maui, Moloka'i, Lana'i), said the state is unlikely to reduce the 10 percent it takes off the top to administer the transit tax.

The May 1 report suggested having the state reduce its take from 10 percent to 5 percent.

"We are close to a billion (dollars) short," of balancing the state budget, said English, chairman of the Senate Transportation and International Affairs Committee. "It's almost impossible to extend (the transit surcharge), but it's more possible to get an extension than to give 5 percent back (to the city)."

The Honolulu Airport is also unlikely to chip in money for the rail project, said Brennon Morioka, state Department of Transportation director.

The airport does not have money to pay for the train, he said.

"Our position hasn't changed since the last time this came up," he said. "We do have our own airport modernization program that is based on a very aggressive financial plan, so right now all of the monies that we have available are slated for use."

The city will face challenges making up lost tax revenue, said local economist Paul Brewbaker of TZ Economics. However, that challenge could lead to a more taxpayer-friendly approach to financing the project "if the outcome is that a more active search for revenues sources that are directly transit related such as transit-oriented development, or for example, congestion fees on motorists coming in from outlying areas."

"There are a number of different ideas out there," Brewbaker said. "I mean, there was only one idea (for raising money) in the original plan."

The potential for a tax revenue shortfall could lead to renewed calls to build portions of the train at ground level to save money and reduce aesthetic impacts. It also could spur debate over whether construction of

the train should start in urban Honolulu rather than in East Kapolei should the project run short of funds.

According to the city's May 1 financial plan, the inflation-adjusted cost of the project is \$5.33 billion.

A July-dated report by project consultant Jacobs Engineering found that the project cost estimate was reasonable and acceptable for the project at its current stage. Jacobs Engineering is not the main consultant hired to oversee the finances of the project. They recommended that the project's financial management oversight consultant — Porter & Associates Inc. — review the city's financial plan to substantiate projected finance costs.

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## HOW REPORT WAS OBTAINED

The city's "Financial Plan for Entry into Preliminary Engineering" dated May 1 was obtained by Cliff Slater, chair of <http://www.honolulutraffic.com>, and Rich Ubersax, a local resident opposed to the project, through the Freedom of Information Act. They were given two different versions of the same report by the Federal Transit Administration and made them available to The Advertiser. The FTA confirmed the authenticity of the reports.

## REVENUE ALTERNATIVES

According to a July 15, 2009 e-mail from the city of Honolulu to the FTA the city has targeted several alternatives to deal with lower than anticipated transit tax collections:

- Reducing the amount of transit tax revenues retained by the state from 10 percent to 5 percent.
  - Using federal funds for bus operations to build the train.
  - Contributions from the airport.
  - Private financing to build up to three train stations.
- 
- Added federal money.
  - Reduced project costs through design modifications.
  - Extending the transit tax sunset date beyond 2022.

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 PDF:

<http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/graphics/pdf/railfinancialplan501.pdf>>Honolulu rail financial plan

Honolulu's Financial Plan for Entry into Preliminary Engineering dated May 1, 2009.

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 PDF: <http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/graphics/pdf/railftaemail.pdf>>Rail funding concerns tackled

July 15 email from an unidentified city official to the FTA attempting to alleviate the agency's concerns about the economy's impact on transit tax collections and the financial plan for Honolulu's transit project. Identity of city official was redacted by the FTA.

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 PDF: <http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/graphics/pdf/railslaterletter.pdf>>Djou seeks information

July 27 memo from city transportation Director Wayne Yoshioka to city council member Charles Djou. Yoshioka states that a June 16 meeting between Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann and FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff involved a discussion of the the federal contribution to Honolulu's transit project as detailed in the draft environmental impact statement that was released last year.

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 PDF: <http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/graphics/pdf/raildjouletter.pdf>>Feds respond to rail opponent

July 30 letter from the FTA to rail opponent Cliff Slater stating that the agency has an updated version of the city's financial plan, which was given to FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff by Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann on June 16.

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August 20, 2009

## Ho'opili: Much more than a housing project

Development would integrate homes, jobs as part of 'New City'

*By Mike Jones*

Does O'ahu need more growth? If so, where should growth occur and, more importantly, where should it not? What does smart, visionary growth look like? Will it look similar to what's been built in the past, or will it be something entirely different?

These critical questions were raised more than 20 years ago when Campbell Estate, state and city planners envisioned a new urban city in West O'ahu to accommodate growth and provide residents an alternative to an overcrowded and overstressed Downtown Honolulu. The Secondary Urban Center or "New City" was planned to be the focus of major economic activity, housing development and a center for government services.

This approach to control growth has proved to be one of the most visionary land-use decisions in Hawai'i's history and it was the basis for Ho'opili — a community that fulfills the master land plan for 'Ewa today, nearly two decades after it was originally conceived.

Today, the New City is well on its way to becoming a reality. Ho'opili is the last component of this comprehensive plan, providing homes and jobs, and complementing other major efforts already underway — including the build-out of downtown Kapolei, the University of Hawai'i-West O'ahu campus, the Salvation Army's Kroc Center for youth and the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands' retail center and residential development. Planned as a community where residents are able to live, work, play and learn through the commercial, industrial, educational, residential, recreational and governmental developments planned in or near it, Ho'opili represents the perfect opportunity to invest in the future of the area and fully realize the vision of West O'ahu as the New City.

We are in the midst of following through on the plan allowing growth to occur in West O'ahu. This is represented by the government's significant investment in infrastructure and commitment to relocating the DHHL headquarters and the development of UH-West O'ahu. In addition, the city's high-capacity transit system is a "growth management" tool, connecting areas identified for future growth.

Unlike other "bedroom community" residential developments of the past, Ho'opili will be dramatically different in many respects. It will be O'ahu's first fully integrated, transit-oriented, job-generating "traditional" community that puts homes near jobs, schools, shopping and parks. Four years in the planning, Ho'opili was designed by, and for, West O'ahu residents. Hundreds of local individuals and families, community leaders, local businesses, native Hawaiian cultural experts and others have all played a key role in designing this community that will be like no other in the state.

Ho'opili, which means "coming together" in Hawaiian, will create thousands of new jobs in the area, which allows people to live where they work, thus helping to keep cars off the road. Also, Ho'opili will be the only new community that will provide a significant number of affordable and competitively priced homes in the area. This is important for the hundreds of young families who dream of owning their own home someday. For them, Ho'opili represents an opportunity to experience the kind of traditional Hawai'i community — where people walked, got to know their neighbors and enjoyed a deep sense of place that used to exist in the Islands. It is designed for people (not cars) and makes walking everywhere easy and enjoyable.

Finally, a few individuals mistakenly believe that Ho'opili represents the end of farming in the area. It's simply not true. In fact, farming will continue at Ho'opili for many years. The lands were leased on an interim basis for diversified agriculture. The farmers in the area have always known that the land would eventually be transitioned into a new, integrated community. The development of the lands at East Kapolei allows for the protection of the remaining 128,000 acres of agricultural lands on O'ahu, of which approximately 40,000 acres is considered A, B or Prime.

As a kama'aina company with deep roots in Hawai'i, we welcome the community's input on our draft plans. We will continue to work closely with the community.

We hope we can count on your support for this new community that represents the kind of smart-growth, people- and environment-friendly development that will ensure a brighter future for O'ahu.

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# Report Shows Potential Money Problems for Rail

Written by Tina Chau - tchau@kgmb9.com

August 20, 2009 09:29 PM



Transit transparency; that's the cry from city council members who believe the city withheld information about a potential half a billion dollar shortfall for Oahu's \$5.3 billion rail system. The city says the numbers are misrepresented. The details of the money problems come from a report obtained by rail opponents and then given to KGMB9.

In the May 1st report, the city warns the federal government its tax collections for rail were expected to drop by \$520 million dollars.

But two city council members say they were never informed of that report and were told by the city's transportation director, Wayne Yoshioka, the project had enough money.

"This undermines the integrity of the process," said councilman Char Djou, who thinks the rail project is too expensive, "and it undermines public confidence in the rail system."

Council chair Todd Apo, who supports rail, also said, "this project must be done correctly and transparently."

But the city administration says the report didn't need to be shared because it was a draft.

"Normally this is not a public document," said Yoshioka, "it's an internal review draft that we work on. When we have a document we call final, that's when we go public."

The Federal Transit Administration backs the city saying the May 1st document is outdated and no longer reflects the city's financial plan for the project. That plan is expected to be released September.

Meanwhile, the city's transportation director maintains there is no shortfall.

"When you look at the GET revenue, certainly it's down. That should not be a surprise to anyone at all, but over the life of collection of GET, 16 years...it should even out," said Yoshioka.

The city administration says the project's total cost might even be lower because of cheaper construction costs. The city should know just how much it could save when construction bids come in at the end of the August.



Last Updated ( August 20, 2009 11:04 PM )

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## Controversy Among Honolulu's Rail Funding

Reported by: Gina Mangieri  
Email: [gmangieri@khon2.com](mailto:gmangieri@khon2.com)

Last Update: 8/20 6:54 pm

Some Honolulu city councilmembers are calling for more transparency on the multibillion-dollar rail project before they'll back a critical bond issuance. The council wants to know why it was told everything was okay on funding while the feds were informed of what was a half-billion dollar tax shortfall.

According to a report obtained through a community group's freedom of information act request, the city told the federal transit administration in May that tax funds were tracking 520 million dollars below last estimates.

But transportation services director Wayne Yoshioka told the council in June funds were sufficient.

"I am uncomfortable with what happened on June 10th regarding the testimony relative to this report," said Council Chair, Todd Apo.

Charles Djou, of Honolulu City Council says, "This undermines the integrity of the process and undermines public confidence in the rail system."

Yoshioka says he told the council more work was underway, quoting from testimony, Wayne Yoshioka says, "When it's gone through that scrutiny and everyone is satisfied that it is an accurate document that's when it'll be ready for release."

The FTA backs the administration's response, in a statement Thursday a federal official said the city's may financial plan is now outdated. The council still wants more transparency going forward.

"This project must be done correctly, it must be done transparently, and having a plan and knowing when information is going to be made public is a critical element to making sure that happens correctly," said Apo.

Numbers that show how the rail tax gap will be closed will be part of the final environmental impact statement due out next month.

Yoshioka says, "When we're all said and done we have the final that's presented we have a project that pencils out."

Among the ideas a city official shared with the feds this summer to close the gap more federal money, using bus funds, privately funding some stations, and designing a less costly project.

Also extending the rail tax surcharge beyond its 2022 sunset, cutting the state's rail tax handling fee from 10% to 5%, and getting state airport fund assistance.

The governor says taking anything from the state would have a consequence.

Governor Linda Lingle says, "I do think there's going to be a move to keep some of the transient accommodation tax at the state level again it's robbing Peter to pay Paul."

"I think it would be difficult to justify that the city is able to keep all their employees at the current rate and then turn to the state who are already sacrificing and ask us for more money."



The transportation director Thursday said the mayor does not back extending the rail surcharge beyond 2022. They're also hopeful that bids due next week will reflect lower than expected costs.

## KITV.com

### City Officials Square Off Over Transit

## 2 Councilmen Say Project Should Continue

POSTED: 1:35 pm HST August 20, 2009

UPDATED: 9:15 pm HST August 20, 2009

**HONOLULU** -- Mayor Mufi Hannemann's administration informed the federal government in May it is going to be short \$500 million it needs to build the rail transit system from East Kapolei to Ala Moana.

However, Hannemann officials did not tell Honolulu City Council about the 10 percent shortfall or inform Oahu taxpayers and that has council members mad.

The city plans to begin construction on the 20-mile rail transit line in December.

In a May 1 report to the Federal Transit Authority, the city reported tax revenues to pay for the project originally projected at \$4.1 billion. Now, with Hawaii's poor economy, revenues are estimated at \$3.6 billion with a \$500 million, or 10 percent, shortfall.

A month later, when council members asked if there was a projected shortfall, Transportation Director Wayne Yoshioka said there was not.



Councilman Charles Djou and Council Chairman Tod Apo discusses the reported \$500 million rail transit shortfall.

"I think he could have made far more frank and honest statements. Consequently I think this is troubling for all of us herein the public and on the city council," Councilman Charles Djou said.

Yoshioka said he did not tell council members about the shortfall because the May report to the Federal Transit Authority was a draft.

"It is really inappropriate to be talking about a report that is clearly a work in progress," Yoshioka said. "I think it is inappropriate to talk about a shortfall in that manner."

The Hannemann administration said the council and the public will get all the details about transit funding from the final report to the FTA in September.

Related To Story



**Video: City May Fall Short To Pay Rail Transit Bill**

KITV asked Mayor Mufi Hannemann about the report on Thursday morning. He would not do an interview, but he did give his opinion about the project's future while passing by during reporter Denby Fawcett's interview with Gov. Linda Lingle.

"Do you think this is kind of a signal maybe we shouldn't do transit?" Fawcett asked.

"We should," Hannemann said while passing behind Lingle.

"Well, that's a decision that the city will have to make of course," she said.

Gov. Linda Lingle said that the state does not have the funding to help out with the deficit.

"I think it would be unlikely that the state would be in a financial position to give the city help at this time because, as you know, the city employees are not being subject to the same impact as our state employees are," Lingle said.

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## Letters to the Editor

For Thursday, Aug. 20, 2009

### **Mix bike paths with rail system corridor**

I just reviewed the new bicycle plan for Honolulu and realized that we are missing a real opportunity to provide for bicycle commuters.

The new rail system should be required to have a built-in bikeway that runs on the elevated portion of the right-of-way with on-off capability at each station. Since we are going through all the expense of the rail, a simple bike path add-on should not be too expensive, and it would give a real option for bicyclists who want to move quickly along the Ewa-downtown corridor.

Nick Nagel  
Nuuanu



August 21, 2009

## City's statement in response to questions about rail funding

*Department of Transportation Services*

The following is the full text of a press release from the city:

In response to media inquiries, the Department of Transportation Services issued the following statement about a misleading and irresponsible article that appeared in (Thursday's) edition of The Honolulu Advertiser regarding funding for the city's rail transit project:

The fact that GET surcharge revenue for the rail transit project has been less than was projected before the current economic downturn is not surprising and is not new. The economy obviously has not fully recovered yet. The project will soon enter the Preliminary Engineering phase, and the city is working closely with the Federal Transit Administration and other officials to ensure the project's financial health.

It is important to understand that the surcharge is spread out over 16 years. Just because collections are lower today because of the bad economy does not mean collections will be lower a few years from now. Furthermore, construction costs may be substantially less than earlier projections, because of the poor economy and engineering refinements to the project.

As we explained to The Advertiser before (Thursday's) article was published, the information supplied to the newspaper by rail transit opponents in a May draft report is now obsolete. An updated financial plan will be included in the project's Final Environmental Impact Statement, to be released in about a month.

The Federal Transit Administration has indicated to us (Thursday) that it had also previously informed The Advertiser that the information in the report was outdated. The FTA's caution was selectively excluded from (Thursday's) article.

The city and FTA had clearly explained to The Advertiser that the May report was a draft, and that a revised final report would be released upon its completion. The city did not improperly withhold any information from the City Council or the public, as the article suggests.

The outdated report was supplied to The Advertiser by opponents of public transportation, who advocate instead for more freeways, including toll roads. The newspaper frequently relies on these opponents for information and provides their point of view. But the newspaper has been inconsistent in explaining to its readers who the opponents are, and what interests they represent.

In fact, the opponents include clear vested interests that depend on freeways and the use of private transportation for their profits, such as some taxi and tour bus companies and auto dealers. It's not surprising that they should have strong negative views about public transportation, but it's disappointing that the newspaper has neglected for so long to explain these interests and to give its readers a more complete picture to help them evaluate the motives and credibility of the opponents and their arguments.

The Advertiser article states that "In City Council testimony in June, city transportation Director Wayne Yoshioka said the project didn't have a funding shortfall. Yoshioka also said there was no completed, updated financial plan for the project. During the June 10 hearing, Yoshioka said an updated financial plan would be made public as soon as it was ready."

That testimony was truthful and accurate. The May 1 draft plan included several scenarios for filling the projected GET surcharge revenue shortfall. Thus, there was no funding shortfall. Yoshioka did not suggest that there was no GET surcharge revenue projection shortfall. Furthermore, the May 1 draft plan was just that — a draft. An updated plan will be included in the Final Environmental Impact Statement that should be released in about one month.

The article falsely states that "Yoshioka said again in a July 27 memo to City Council member Charles Djou that there was no updated financial plan."

That is simply not true. The July 27 memo made no such statement whatsoever. The memo accurately stated that "the project's financial plan can be found in the project's Draft Environmental Impact Statement," and that "An updated financial plan will be included in our Final EIS and that will also be available to the public."

The article states that "The May 1 financial report is the first indication that has surfaced acknowledging the city may not meet its goal."

That is quite a stretch. The Advertiser has repeatedly reported that GET surcharge revenue has been less than was earlier anticipated. In fact, The Advertiser reported as much just four days before (Thursday's) article appeared. On Sunday (Aug. 16), The Advertiser reported that "Honolulu transit tax collections fell about 5 percent to an estimated \$160.9 million in the 12 months ended June 30 as the local economy weakened. That was \$27.1 million below what the city had projected it would collect over the period."

(Thursday's) article states that, "To make up for the shortfall, the May 1 financial plan anticipated \$301 million of federal funds that otherwise would go to pay for buses and bus-related activities from 2011 to 2019. That idea has been rejected by the city, said (Deputy Transportation Director Toru Hamayasu."

Hamayasu did not say that the idea had been categorically rejected. He said that, "The city will not use the bus funding if it would in any way compromise the quality of the city's bus service." There are various opportunities available to fill any funding gaps for rail or bus service, and all options are being prudently explored.

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August 21, 2009

## Public needs transparency in rail planning

The people of O'ahu, by a majority vote, expressed their favor for a steel-on-steel transit system to help meet the needs of O'ahu's commuters. But that vote also represented a decision to invest — and entrust — \$5.3 billion in taxpayer funds with the city to design and build the system.

Keeping project financing projections under wraps, even if they're a moving target, was not the best way for city officials to respond to that trust. The most expensive public-works project in the state's history needs to move forward in the most transparent way possible, even amid frequently shifting economic circumstances. That duty rests squarely with the sitting administration.

The Advertiser's Sean Hao this week unveiled a May 1 report sent to the Federal Transit Administration, the agency weighing the city's bid to receive federal funds to help build the system. In it, the city projected that tax revenues for the local portion of the financing would fall about \$500 million short of what's needed to complete the project. The taxes accrue from a half-percent surcharge on general excise taxes paid on O'ahu.

Wayne Yoshioka, transportation director, said the report had not been released because it was considered preliminary. FTA officials also underscored that the data are already outdated.

But there was no reason the City Council couldn't have been clued in, at least in general terms, that project revenue projections were slipping. And the Council, often obstructionist in the past, should do its part to encourage such collaboration.

That said, it's important to keep the right perspective about budgetary projections. The shortfall should not be a surprise to anyone, as taxes have plummeted in the past year.

Additionally, course corrections can be made over the years of rail development. The report includes some of the city's suggested adjustments, which deserve consideration — particularly the proposal to reclaim the 10 percent of tax revenues still being siphoned off by the state for the administration of the separate county tax surcharge. That administrative fee has always been excessive and it needs to stop now. The added tax was specifically to finance the rail, not to plug holes in the state budget. The bottom line is that taxpayers should get what they paid for: financing for the rail project.

They also deserve to know about twists and turns in the emerging financial plans for the system, wherever they lead.

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## Dealers await reimbursements as Cash for Clunkers wraps up

By Ken Thomas and Stephen Manning / Associated Press

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Aug 21, 2009

WASHINGTON » The Obama administration will end the popular \$3 billion Cash for Clunkers program, giving car shoppers a few more days to take advantage of government incentives.

The Transportation Department said yesterday that the government will wind down the program Monday at 2 p.m. Hawaii time. Car buyers can receive rebates of \$3,500 or \$4,500 for trading in older vehicles for more fuel-efficient models.

The news was texted to a dealer during a board meeting of the Hawaii Automobile Dealers Association yesterday morning, said Dave Rolf, executive director.

By then, at least one dealer had already slammed the brakes on Cash for Clunkers deals. Servco Pacific Inc. issued a statement yesterday saying it suspended its participation following an announcement by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration that funding for the program would be depleted by Monday.

"We are disappointed that a number of pending transactions were not able to be finalized prior to termination of this federal program," said Rick Ching, Servco executive vice president.

"We sincerely regret the government's decision to terminate this highly popular program."

Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood said the program has been "a lifeline to the automobile industry, jump-starting a major sector of the economy and putting people back to work." He said the department was "working toward an orderly wind-down of this very popular program."

The White House has touted the program's success in providing a targeted boost to the sluggish economy since its inception in late July. Through yesterday, auto dealers had made deals worth \$1.9 billion, and incentives have generated more than 457,000 vehicle sales.

But the administration needed to put a halt to the program to avoid surpassing the \$3 billion funding level. Consumers were on pace to exhaust the program's coffers in early September and dealers have complained about long delays in getting reimbursed for the car incentives.

Hawaii's largest dealer sold hundreds of vehicles under the program and has yet to receive a single reimbursement, Rolf said, after taking a tally from HADA board members. Dealerships belonging to HADA directors have sold 1,100 vehicles, likely far shy of the statewide tally, and only a handful

received reimbursements for one or two deals.

Windward Dodge, Chrysler Jeep and Hyundai is continuing to sell cars under the program but also has not received reimbursement, said Don Mann, used car manager. It has submitted requests for 30 vehicles, for about \$120,000 outstanding.

"We need to get paid," he said.

The program definitely drove people into the dealership, "but if we don't get paid, then no, it wasn't successful at all," Mann said.

The dealership's reimbursement submissions, which are voluminous online documents, keep getting rejected and kicked back, which is happening to many dealers, he said.

*Star-Bulletin reporter Erika Engle contributed to this report.*

**Find this article at:**

[http://www.starbulletin.com/business/20090821\\_Dealers\\_await\\_reimbursements\\_as\\_Cash\\_for\\_Clunkers\\_wraps\\_up.html](http://www.starbulletin.com/business/20090821_Dealers_await_reimbursements_as_Cash_for_Clunkers_wraps_up.html)

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

## Letters to the Editor

For Friday, August 21, 2009

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Aug 21, 2009

### Time to move on from cars

Michael Ferguson has a point when he gripes about the state of our roads ("[Potholes part of master plan?](#)" Star-Bulletin letters, Aug. 19). There are too many potholes, too many streets that need repair. But to say that we shouldn't have forward-looking transportation plans for bicycles and rail is short-sighted.

One of the reasons that our roads need so much work is we have too many cars on the streets. We need to give people the option not to choose a car. TheBus is nice, but it can't do everything. Like any major U.S. city, we deserve more ways to get around than just by car.

**Jake Shinsato**  
Honolulu

August 22, 2009

## **Letters to the Editor**

### **Rail transit**

#### **Hope is for a higher quality of mobility**

A concern that permeates discussions about rail is that it will damage O'ahu's environment. The worry includes the assumption that rail will transform Honolulu to resemble Mainland cities.

It is important to differentiate between rail systems. They are as diverse as the people of the cities they move. Innovations and best practices are never the same thing twice. In the context of the rapidly globalizing world, needs and resources to address those needs are constantly changing. Policies are adjusted, adapted, and mitigated to the new environment and its individual circumstances. When Honolulu implements the High Capacity Transit Corridor Project, the project will be uniquely Hawai'i's.

O'ahu's car-to-person ratio is around 1-to-1. The rail will cause development but the alternative of the current car-(and fossil fuel-)dependent lifestyle is not sustainable and environmentally friendly either. The city is investing time and funds into the rail to create a higher quality of mobility and greater accessibility for a larger portion of the population. The hope is to attract those reliant on private automobiles to step out of their comfort zone and into public transportation.

Kara Takasaki | 'Aiea

## Letters to the Editor

For Saturday, Aug. 22, 2009

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Aug 22, 2009

### Tap into the rail fund

Everyone wants to get their hands on the Hurricane Relief Fund. Janis Akuna, member of the Board of Education, wants it for education; the Big Five public worker union heads want it so public workers don't have to be laid off or furloughed; Councilman Romy Cachola said he wants it, but only if it gets paid back.

Now I want it. I, like many other homeowners, paid into the fund when the insurance companies stopped issuing flood insurance. The state made a \$200 million profit off people who had nowhere else to go and who knows if the state could have ever paid the claims for the insured.

Homeowners are the only ones who deserve a share in this windfall profit.

If our "leaders" need money they should tap into the rail transit fund. It has more than twice the money the Hurricane Relief Fund has and is replenished continuously by the 0.5 percent increase in the general excise tax. Rail construction can be delayed without any harm to anyone while we go through this budget crisis.

Marge Akana  
Ewa Beach

August 23, 2009

## City's financing options for \$5.3B Oahu rail system may be limited

*By Sean Hao  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

 PDF: <http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090823/NEWS09/908230393/#memos>">Letters, memos and email pertaining to Rail Transit

The city has said next month is the earliest it will disclose how it plans to balance finances for the \$5.3 billion rail line in light of tax revenue shortfalls, but the viability of options that were being considered in a July e-mail to the Federal Transit Administration may be limited.

A report to the FTA in May projected a \$500 million shortfall in tax collections for rail.

Construction on the 20-mile train from Kapolei to Ala Moana is to begin in December, but the city is balancing finances for the project in a weakened economy marked by declining visitor arrivals and real estate values.

City transportation Director Wayne Yoshioka last week insisted that information from the report and e-mail, which were released by the FTA under the Freedom of Information Act, should not have been made public. Yoshioka said the documents were outdated by a new report that the city will not release or discuss until next month at the soonest.

Bill Brennan, a spokesman for Mayor Mufi Hannemann, reiterated yesterday in an e-mail the city's position that the numbers released by the FTA were outdated.

By the time the updated version of the city's May 1 "Financial Plan for Entry into Preliminary Engineering" report comes out, the outlook for tax collections may have worsened. On May 28, after that report was finished, the state Council on Revenues reduced the forecast growth rate for general fund tax revenues for fiscal 2010 from 0.5 percent to 0.0 percent. In July — the first month of fiscal 2010 — state revenue collections were off 3.9 percent.

The council could revise its forecast again at a meeting scheduled for Thursday.

### Outlook 'dour'

Lowell Kalapa, director of the Tax Foundation of Hawai'i, said it's unlikely the Council on Revenues will revise its tax collection estimates to reflect a near-term increase in tax collections.

"The outlook is still quite dour," he said. "I think we're looking at lower (estimates). What economic activity is going to boost (general excise tax) revenues? I just don't see it happening."

The FTA will determine whether Honolulu can get more than \$1.4 billion in federal money to help the project, and in the July 15 e-mail an unidentified city official outlined possible sources of revenue to close the gap.

"It's my understanding that some concerns remain at FTA about strength of the revenue side of our

financial plan and the effect that the slower economy will have on our excise tax forecasts," the first sentence read.

In that e-mail, the city mentioned extending the half a percentage point general excise tax surcharge beyond its original 2022 expiration date, but officials have indicated that avenue had been rejected.

In response to another option in the e-mail to divert more than \$300 million in federal funds intended for TheBus, the city said in a press release:

"The city will not use the bus funding if it would in any way compromise the quality of the city's bus service," attributing the quote to Toru Hamayasu, city Department of Transportation Services deputy director. The city also said in the release, "There are various opportunities available to fill any funding gaps for rail or bus service, and all options are being prudently explored."

The July e-mail indicates city officials were also considering other ideas, including: raising \$60 million in private investments to build three of the rail stations, getting \$150 million from the airport, boosting the federal contribution to the project to as much as \$1.7 billion, and lowering the amount of transit tax retained by the state.

After a Honolulu Advertiser story Thursday about the city's May projection and possible options, Gov. Linda Lingle and state Senate President Colleen Hanabusa, D-21st (Nanakuli, Makaha) indicated they were unlikely to agree to reduce the state's 10 percent share of transit tax proceeds. The state is grappling with its own deficit, which the administration has estimated at \$786 million through June 2011.

"Good luck," Hanabusa said during the Rick Hamada show on KHVH 830-AM when asked whether the state would give the city more money for the train. "I can't imagine that they're serious about asking the state for money. Are you kidding?"

## landowners' view

Last week Brennon Morioka, state Department of Transportation director, ruled out providing airport funds to finance the train.

It's also unclear whether private landowners and developers would be willing to kick in money.

"On the surface of it, the answer would be not very likely at this point in time," said Bill Paty, a trustee with the Mark A. Robinson Trust, which owns a controlling interest in the land under Don Quijote's Waipahu store and other Waipahu parcels adjacent to a planned station.

"Looking to the landowners to substantially make up the deficit on that would be a tall stretch. It would have to be balanced out in some fashion or other, but I don't think in terms of our trust here that we would look favorably on it."

The University of Hawai'i-West O'ahu, which also will be near a station, has problems raising money building its new campus. D.R. Horton Inc., another major landowner that could benefit from rail, isn't expected to find out if it can reclassify its 1,600-acre Ho'opili master plan community from agricultural to urban use until late this year or next year.

Kamehameha Schools, the state's largest private landowner, said the city should explore a cheaper, partially at-grade rail system.

"We have shared information with the city that indicates there may be substantial construction savings with a flexible light-rail system that combines elevated with at-grade sections," said Kamehameha spokeswoman Ann Botticelli in a statement. "Before asking for large contributions from the private sector, we encourage the city to explore alternatives to the purely elevated system it has selected to make sure it

has identified the most cost-effective technology."

In addition to seeking out more revenues, the city is expected to try to shave costs.

City Council Chairman Todd Apo said he was told by Yoshioka that the \$500 million shortfall is outdated.

"What wasn't factored in there was some of the cost savings that we're also seeing," Apo said during a news conference. "As much as the economy has caused revenue shortfalls, it's also caused construction costs savings. And so part of that gap-fill is in fact savings that we'll see on the expense side of this project. All of that needs to be put together."

Apo said he didn't ask how much savings the city expected from lower bids. "My understanding is that they (city officials) have found a way to deal with the shortfall in revenue."

Apo said he's looking forward to the release of the final environmental impact statement in September. "That will include the full final financial report ... which will take all of this information and give us the final answers as to where things are in today's world."

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 PDF:

<http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/graphics/pdf/railfinancialplan501.pdf>>Honolulu rail financial plan

Honolulu's Financial Plan for Entry into Preliminary Engineering dated May 1, 2009.

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 PDF: <http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/graphics/pdf/railftaemail.pdf>>Rail funding concerns tackled

July 15 email from an unidentified city official to the FTA attempting to alleviate the agency's concerns about the economy's impact on transit tax collections and the financial plan for Honolulu's transit project. Identity of city official was redacted by the FTA.

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 PDF: <http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/graphics/pdf/railslaterletter.pdf>>Djou seeks information

July 27 memo from city transportation Director Wayne Yoshioka to city council member Charles Djou. Yoshioka states that a June 16 meeting between Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann and FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff involved a discussion of the the federal contribution to Honolulu's transit project as detailed in the draft environmental impact statement that was released last year.

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 PDF: <http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/graphics/pdf/raildjouletter.pdf>>Feds respond to rail opponent

July 30 letter from the FTA to rail opponent Cliff Slater stating that the agency has an updated version of the city's financial plan, which was given to FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff by Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann on June 16.

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August 24, 2009

## Letters to the Editor

Rail transit

### **\$4,000 little to pay for better system**

So "Rail to cost us \$4,000 each" (Aug. 16). That is a bargain compared to the cost of an automobile and the annual cost of fuel, insurance and upkeep. And it is a lot more sane and practical than each of us driving around in our huge pods and stuck in traffic (as we were Friday afternoon on Beretania, with no help from anyone). This was a perfect example of the need for elevated trains.

Nancy Bey Little | Makiki

August 24, 2009

## Letters to the Editor

### Ho'opili

#### Project, rail part of better future for kids

Ho'opili needs to be reclassified to allow for urban development and uses. Ho'opili is part of a much larger community plan. If it is not approved, will the rail transit station planned at Ho'opili sit alone in an agricultural field?

Where will future students and employees of UH West O'ahu and the Kroc community center live? These people and their families will need housing, places to eat and relax, and they deserve the opportunity to belong to a community.

The current farming operations on the Ho'opili site generate a substantial amount of dust — especially when crops are planted and harvested — which is a real problem for residents who live in the villages of Kapolei.

The idea that Ho'opili will create more traffic is just not true. The bottom line is that rail — along with other road improvements already happening in Kapolei and 'Ewa — will reduce traffic in the long run.

In the end we must ask ourselves a critical question: where will our children live tomorrow if we don't carefully plan today?

Leonard Leong | Honolulu



August 27, 2009

## Ho'opili project following rational growth blueprint

### Predictability vital to residents of 'Ewa as well as business

*By John P. Whalen, Don Clegg, Cheryl Soon, Pat Onishi, Jan Sullivan, Randall Fujiki, Eric G. Crispin and Henry Eng*

More than three decades ago, the city adopted a General Plan that designated a directed growth policy. The city and state set out to create a "second" or "new" city in West O'ahu, not just to provide new communities for the population but also as a means to ensure the protection of country areas in other parts of the island.

In the 1980s, studies on infrastructure and concurrency were completed, with initial studies focused on Central and 'Ewa plains. Outreach to landowners and developers identified the potential for residential and commercial developments emerging throughout 'Ewa, Waikele and the greater Mililani areas.

This early research was honed into the first 'Ewa Development Plan in the 1990s. At that time, extensive community outreach and discussion focused on the amount of development, its phasing, and the provision of public infrastructure in a timely manner. Additionally, it was recognized that certain lands must be protected for agriculture, realizing that the area was in the beginning phases of transition from mono-crop agriculture.

The development plan was prepared to direct and help shape the future communities in the 'Ewa plains, while creating transparency and certainty in determining land use and in the allocation of precious resources for the benefit of all.

Adopted by the city in 1997, the 'Ewa DP states that growth in the area will include community building — not project development — with communities designed to enhance residential, business, employment and recreational opportunities, to reduce automobile dependency, and to be connected via a network of greenways. To prevent urban sprawl, the 'Ewa DP establishes an Urban Growth Boundary.

The adopted urban growth boundary is a line. It identifies the areas planned for urban expansion in 'Ewa and Central O'ahu on one side of the line. At the same time, on the other side of the line, it identifies and protects lands mauka of H-1 and in Central O'ahu for agriculture and conservation.

As a result of the designated growth policy in the 'Ewa Development Plan considerable commercial, industrial, resort, residential, and government investment has occurred and will be ongoing over the next 20 years. This is part of the city's master plan to transform 'Ewa into Hawai'i's second-largest city and urban center. Current developments in the region include the University of Hawai'i-West O'ahu campus, the completion of downtown Kapolei, the Salvation Army's Kroc Center, the proposed Ho'opili community, regional shopping centers, new roads, and new public and private schools.

New regional roads and highways, as well as the city's rail-transit system, were identified, planned and funded based on the adopted General Plan and 'Ewa Development Plan. Examples of these are North-South Road and its interchange with H-1, widening of Fort Barrette and Fort Weaver Roads, Kapolei Parkway, and other regional connector roads. The rail-transit system will provide additional transportation capacity and an alternative to private automobile travel.

We fully understand and appreciate the importance of preserving productive agricultural lands for

agricultural use, but the policies of the General Plan and the 'Ewa DP have already provided for that need.

The importance of adhering to these plans is that it promotes transparency and predictability in approaching future developments. That predictability is important to those who live and work in local communities, to long term government investments, and to investors and developers. With predictability, investment in public and community facilities, such as schools, churches, and community centers starts to emerge.

The debate over individual projects should respect the integrity of long-term planning. The city's Development Plans and Sustainable Community Plans have already balanced the preservation of agriculture, conservation and open space lands with the need for residential, commercial and industrial lands for the long-term benefit of our residents and from an islandwide perspective.

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August 27, 2009

## Letters to the Editor

### Ho'opili

#### Bedroom suburb will wipe out farms

In his recent article, Mike Jones of D.R. Horton-Schuler says that Ho'opili will be a planned community "where residents are able to live, work, play and learn." Kapolei was to provide jobs so that people could work where they live, but traffic has continued to worsen each year, making a rail-transit system inevitable.

People work in Honolulu because this is where they receive higher pay, and many drive in to take their children to private school. Ho'opili will be yet another "bedroom community," in an area that already has traffic challenges, even a "planned" city like Kapolei.

This massive development will wipe out a source of locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables. Hawai'i is already overly dependent on the Mainland for our produce, and the loss of this prime agricultural land will further our dependency. We should support our local farmers and own economy, rather than megafarms on the Mainland and in South America.

Jones says that farming will be able to continue in the area for many years, but I can already hear the homeowners complaining about the noise, dust and fertilizer smells, like the neighbors of the quarry operation near Kapolei.

Lani Abrigana | 'Ewa Beach



August 27, 2009

## Preserving top-quality 'Ewa farm lands crucial

### Ho'opili displaces farmers, threatens Isle sustainability

*By Kioni Dudley*

Just as people are getting used to fresh, locally grown produce, the 'Ewa farms that grow about half of those products are threatened with development.

Sure, developer D.R. Horton owns the property. And sure, the farmers signed short-term leases knowing they would one day have to shut down.

But this isn't just a matter between the farmers and the developer. The people need a voice, too. What happens to these farms will affect us all, and may make the difference for our future survival.

Ho'opili will be built on "prime" agricultural land, classified as A and B soils by a University of Hawai'i land study. They are precious. There is not a single acre of A land on the Big Island. Moloka'i has a small amount of A land, but no B soils. There are no A or B soils at all on Lana'i, Kaho'olawe, or Ni'ihau. Much of O'ahu's A and B lands have already been covered over by Mililani, Waipi'o, Waikele, Village Park, Royal Kunia, 'Ewa, and Kapolei. We must save what is left.

Goro Uehara, professor of soil science at the University of Hawai'i who has studied soils in different countries, says this is the best farmland in the world. It's not just the rich A and B soils, O'ahu is also perfectly situated in the island chain. Big Island soil is still very young, while the soils of Kaua'i are so old they have lost much of their energy.

O'ahu lands are mature, robust, and ready to produce. Unlike farms in temperate zones with short growing seasons that produce one crop, our farms produce year-round.

But what makes the 'Ewa farms so special? They are in a low lying area, with plenty of sun, gentle winds and an abundance of clean, cheap water.

While one might assume that higher lands that get more rain would be better for farming, what crops really need in order to grow is sunlight.

Higher farms with frequent cloud cover have major problems with root rot and insects that love wet conditions. At higher elevations, the soil's pH levels require expensive lime remediation for alkalinity or acidity.

'Ewa farms have none of these problems. Warm, sunny days allow them to produce four crops a year, compared to three on the north shore and in the central highlands, and two in Waimanalo. The 'Ewa lands are close to markets.

These are major advantages. They allow 'Ewa farmers to produce fresh, high quality fruits and vegetables that can compete with imported products.

As Ho'opili is built, the 'Ewa farms will completely disappear. There's simply no place to move their 1,555 acres of crops. All of Kunia is sold except 400 acres, which have all of the highland problems and no guaranteed water.

The North Shore highlands are relatively empty, but that land is irrigated by water from Lake Wilson. Filled with silt saturated with sewage from Wahiawa and Schofield Barracks for decades, state regulations prohibit using Lake Wilson's water on edible crops that touch the ground. That includes almost all crops grown on 'Ewa farms.

All of the other arable land on O'ahu is already being farmed. There are open lands on other islands, but transportation adds so much to the cost that farmers can't compete.

With nowhere to go, the 'Ewa farms will simply close. Once the land is covered, it can never be reclaimed.

We only grow 15 percent of our fresh produce — that's irresponsible enough in itself.

Can we really afford to lose our highest producing farmland? Is it fair to future generations?

A final note: The high clay content in prime soil expands and contracts, causing foundations to crack, so it needs to be excavated, and has often been taken to the dump.

So let's get this straight: They are going to close down our highest producing farms, excavate the best soil in the world and take it to the dump, fill the holes with coral, and build houses, many of which will be bought by people who don't live here, so that developer D.R. Horton, a Delaware company, can take the profit elsewhere.

Well, we can't eat houses.

## Additional Facts

TO LEARN MORE

- For more information regarding opposition to the project, go to [www.stophoopili.com](http://www.stophoopili.com).
  - To read a counter-point commentary by Mike Jones, president of D.R. Horton-Schuler Division Hawai'i go to [www.HonoluluAdvertiser.com/mikejonescolumn](http://www.HonoluluAdvertiser.com/mikejonescolumn).
  - Share your views with the Land Use Commission at [luc@dbedt.hawaii.gov](mailto:luc@dbedt.hawaii.gov)
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## ISLAND COMMENTARY

# If I were the czar of Oahu ...

By Frank Genadio

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Aug 27, 2009

In Imperial Russia, directives of the ruler — or czar — were implemented without discussion. Perhaps a local czar could deal with two projects currently in the media: the city's steel wheels on steel rails (SWSR) transit project; and D.R. Horton-Schuler's planned Ho'opili development of 11,750 homes on existing agricultural lands. The former moves on despite local concerns. The latter faces a decision from the Land Use Commission.

Lacking a divine right to dictate, I must establish credentials to offer solutions. I am a former member of the Committee for Balanced Transportation and the mayor's Transit Solutions Advisory Committee. I am a current member of the developer's Ho'opili Task Force — although the following might change that status. "Czar Frank" would:

Pause the rail project and order a new environmental impact statement covering all rail technologies. Advise the Federal Transit Administration that the city will still request federal funding in 2011. Advise current SWSR suppliers and construction companies that new proposals will be for a master contract combining an elevated guideway with technology, with bids including 30-year operations and maintenance costs. Advise previous technology suppliers as well as companies developing new urban magnetic levitation (mag-lev) systems that all are welcome to bid. Competition reduces costs, and I anticipate a mag-lev will be selected because of operational and cost advantages.

Negotiate with the Hawaiian Railway Society to refurbish and expand its rail yard in East Kapolei for a maintenance-storage facility along with a railroad museum — at city expense. Building roofs will have photovoltaic panels to supply electricity. A rail system 20-megawatt solar farm will be developed nearby in Kalaeloa.

The rail system will connect the University of Hawaii-Manoa, Waikiki, West Kapolei, Wahiawa and Ewa Beach, and will include express service into downtown with two intermediate stops from West Kapolei and one from Mililani. Because of reduced material costs for the mag-lev guideway, UH-Manoa and Waikiki extensions will be within budget and timelines for the currently planned 20-mile system. For additional financing, the state's 10 percent "rake-off" from the transit surcharge will be eliminated, and the City Council will add another half percent to reach the 1 percent transit requirement).

Concerning Ho'opili, compromise by going "vertical," with the same number of housing units built while preserving some farm acreage. Increase building height limits to at least 350 feet and leave 500 (of the current) 1,500 acres of farms on the fringes, moving through low-rise housing to a city center of high-rise apartment and office buildings. Residents not ready for a skyline on the Ewa Plain should look

at the view from H-1 and see if there is anything of interest. Imaginative architects could make high-rises objects of admiration. D.R. Horton's profits may be reduced with fewer houses and more condominiums — along with its research contribution to increase yields per acre — but there will still be a substantial return on investment.

Those who have experienced city life know that West Kapolei is suburban, not urban. Local elected officials (in their 30s through 60s) have shown no vision. I have written elsewhere about the concepts of UH graduate architecture students for East Kapolei. Those of us in our 70s hope these 20-somethings will see their ideas come to life in a true city center of themed zones such as university, ethnic, arts and entertainment — our residents' Waikiki.

The key to making East Kapolei something better than the "strip mall" to the west is the center point between UH-West Oahu and Ho'opili. Rather than the planned station, a major terminal can be sited among the high-rises, a transit-oriented development primarily privately funded for rights to retail operations. Federal and local governments can help with public elements (e.g., auditorium, post office, offices, multistory garage). State land on the UH side of the North-South Road can include high-rises, with the state compensating D.R. Horton for farmland remaining in the east and the developer helping fund the new campus.

Finally, visualize a mag-lev gliding quietly through East Kapolei high-rises, carrying people who have regained "quality of life" hours lost in their current road commutes. I'd better close; the men in white coats want me back in my padded cell.

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*Frank Genadio is a 17-year resident of Makakilo.*

**Find this article at:**

[http://www.starbulletin.com/editorials/20090827\\_If\\_I\\_were\\_the\\_czar\\_of\\_Oahu\\_.html](http://www.starbulletin.com/editorials/20090827_If_I_were_the_czar_of_Oahu_.html)

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August 28, 2009

## Carlisle opts to run for mayor as nonpartisan

By GORDON Y.K. PANG  
*Advertiser Government Writers*

City prosecutor Peter Carlisle said he has resigned from the Hawai'i Republican Party because he wants to have no party affiliation when he runs in the nonpartisan mayor's race.

Carlisle, a Republican for a number of years, said he resigned from the GOP about six or seven weeks ago, shortly after he announced he will run for mayor when Mayor Mufi Hannemann leaves office.

Hannemann's term ends in 2012 but he has organized a committee to raise money for a possible run for governor in the Democratic primary next year.

Carlisle said he will run in either 2010 or 2012. "I'm running for a nonpartisan (seat) and I want it to be a nonpartisan race," he said.

"The idea is everybody's welcome and partisan politics aren't going to be any part of decision-making for me if I'm fortunate enough to be elected mayor."

Carlisle would not publicly commit to a political party in 2006 when he was considering a run for Congress in urban Honolulu's 1st Congressional District. But he attended the GOP's Lincoln Day that year and later was co-chairman of the state Republican convention.

Gov. Linda Lingle and other top Republicans courted Carlisle. "How fortunate we are that when he decided to align with a political party — Peter Carlisle chose us," Lingle told Republicans at the state convention in 2006.

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August 28, 2009

## Letters to the Editor

### Better options exist in urban Honolulu

A representative of the city overseeing the development of Ho'opili asked me, in response to my opposition of the housing project, "Where else can we build more homes?"

We can build in areas that won't exhaust the Islands of precious agricultural lands. Here are my suggestions:

**Kaka'ako:** 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. Land owners are not building on the land.

**Kapi'olani/Mo'ili'ili/McCully:** These areas are populated by very old, two-story walk-up apartment buildings. The city can remove the three-story height limitation on these areas and let us go vertical. Going vertical will improve the skyline, provide fulfillment of the affordable housing need, and create workforce housing for those who work in Waikiki, Downtown Honolulu, Pearl Harbor and Fort Shafter.

These 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?

I say that government should refocus on these areas as opposed to sacrificing our precious agricultural lands which play a major role in creating a sustainable and self-sufficient Hawai'i.

Rep. Rida Cabanilla | District 42

August 28, 2009

## Letters to the Editor

### Ho'opili

#### Get involved to halt irrevocable step

I urge all residents of O'ahu to become involved in the decision to take the acreage proposed for Ho'opili out of agriculture use.

The state Land Use Commission will have to re-classify the land from "agriculture" to "urban." Likewise, the City and County of Honolulu will have to change the zoning from the agriculture district to the (A)partment, (R)esidential or (I)ndustrial districts.

This land is probably the most productive ag land on this island, and we certainly do not need another Mililani between Waipahu and Kapolei. These houses will go in long before the rail is viable. Imagine 15,000 more cars on the freeway in the morning. Let's try to handle growth through facilitating urban infill/redevelopment and through development of marginal ag lands before taking this irrevocable step.

Jack Arnest | Honolulu



August 28, 2009

## Revenue forecast may hinder rail funding

*By Sean Hao  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

A reduction in projected state tax revenues for this year could further hamper collections needed to build Honolulu's planned commuter rail system.

As recently as last month city officials were anticipating a more than \$500 million shortfall in transit taxes needed to build the 20-mile, \$5.3 billion train line from East Kapolei to Ala Moana. That projection, which was initially included in a May 1 dated report to the federal government. City officials have said that report is outdated and will be replaced by a new report that will be released next month.

The shortfall in transit tax collections — which amounted to \$27.1 million less in collections in fiscal year 2009, which ended June 30 — could grow larger based on new tax collection forecasts released yesterday.

The state Council on Revenues lowered the forecast growth rate for general fund tax revenues for fiscal 2010 from 0 percent growth to minus 1.5 percent. At its previous meeting in late May, the council reduced the forecast from 0.5 percent growth to 0 percent.

The council yesterday also increased the projection for fiscal year 2011 to 6.5 percent growth — up from 5.6 percent.

Transit tax collections already are falling short of forecasts for the current fiscal year, which began July 1. During the current fiscal year the city was projecting tax collections to average \$16.5 million a month, based on a forecast made last November.

However, in July the tax raised just \$12.3 million. Those figures along with all other transit tax collection figures in this story account for the 10 percent the state takes off the top to pay for administering the tax.

City Transportation Director Wayne Yoshioka said the city was encouraged by the Council on Revenues' five-year tax revenue forecast, which reflects a positive long-term outlook on Hawaii's economy.

"The council projects an economic recovery beginning fiscal year 2011 with tax revenues up 6.5 percent," Yoshioka said in a news release. "Tax revenues will continue to rise through fiscal year 2015, according to the council."

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...ne adequate to cover both operations and the debt associated with its 2007 purchase by a Mainland investor. It's located in cramped, outdated quarters on Kapiolani Boulevard, on property that already has been sold.

KGMB is partnering with KHNL, the NBC outlet, and its smaller cousin, KFVE (or K5), an independent station known mainly for its University of Hawaii sports coverage. KHNL and K5 recently moved into spacious high-tech quarters in Kalihi. KHNL's ratings have been at the bottom of the competition for nearly all of the 14 years it's been producing a local newscast.

What will emerge in the next couple months is a large and poten-

...stations for years.  
We are not surprised that the two TV operations came together because the Honolulu TV market, 72nd in the country, appears too small to support four full-scale news operations. The ad revenue pie just isn't enough, in these times at least, to make all of them viable, and local news is one of the main drivers of profitability.

We do have some concerns, though, issues we hope will be addressed as the three stations merge into one full-blown operation in time for the November rating sweeps.

The first question is whether the merger will pass muster with the Federal Communications Commission, which long has opposed "duopoly" or

Raycom says it has done similar on the Mainland with other stations it owns, but this plan certainly different because the licenses essentially "swapped."

A more serious question is the KGMB-KHNL operation, which plans to broadcast the same news programs on both stations, with resources to overwhelm the competition, KHON and the ABC station KITV. There is the possibility of a giant news operation and two news vans.

We have learned over the years never to underestimate Blang. He has taken KGMB from a big money-losing operation to a profitable

## Letters to the Editor

### Rail the antidote for parking

Joe Lee is right on the money about the cost of downtown parking (Aug. 14 PBN).

It's expensive because it's scarce. With no land available to build more parking garages in downtown Honolulu, parking spaces will only become scarcer and more expensive. It's the law of supply and demand and, unfortunately, it works against downtown commuters like me.

The only solution is more commuting alternatives that don't require downtown parking. Buses are OK, but they crawl through downtown because they are mired in the same traffic congestion as cars and trucks. I much prefer the city's proposal for an elevated rail system with a stop in downtown. As I understand it, trains will travel above cars, trucks and buses and deposit riders at Alakea Street near Nimitz.

It's a sensible alternative. The sooner rail comes downtown, the better.

Alan Maxbright  
Honolulu

### Replace G.E.T. with sales tax

Thank you for reporting that Hawaii has the highest sales tax burden of all 50 states, according to the American Legislative Economic Council. (PBN online, Aug. 10).

Let's do something about it. We need to repeal the unfair Hawaii General Excise Tax and replace it with a reasonable sales tax.

The G.E.T. taxes every level of production. It requires us to pay taxes on taxes. It raises prices. It's confusing. And it's just plain unfair.

For every \$100 spent on goods/services, consumers pay \$4.17 in general excise taxes (not including the Oahu rapid transit surcharge). That's 17 cents more than if there were a 4 percent sales tax, plus a 1-cent tax on the \$4.17 tax.

Sound like pennies? In FY 2006, retail businesses reported \$59,497,017 in gross income. Hawaii collected 4.17 percent or \$2,379,881, not including Oahu rapid transit tax or other taxes, according to the Department of Taxation Annual Report 2006, page 36. Consumers overpaid \$2,288,347 in taxes — money that belongs to taxpayers and that could directly stimulate the economy.

Here's my math: \$59,497,017 (base with taxes collected) divided by 1.04 equals \$57,208,670 (tax without taxes) multiplied by 4.17 percent equals \$2,288,347 (taxes owed). The \$2,379,881 (G.E.T. paid) minus \$2,288,347 (amount with 4 percent sales tax) equals \$91,534 (tax saved).

I encourage all of you to contact your legislators and ask that they sponsor or support legislation to repeal the Hawaii G.E.T. and replace it with a reasonable sales tax.

Rachael



August 29, 2009

## Hoopili proposed housing project hits snag in land-use law

### Land committee cites deficiencies in rejecting 'Ewa urbanization plan

*By Andrew Gomes  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

The proposed 11,750-home Ho'opili project in 'Ewa suffered a setback yesterday as the state Land Use Commission ruled that the developer's petition to urbanize 1,554 acres of farmland for the envisioned community is deficient.

In a 5-3 vote, the commission ruled that developer D.R. Horton-Schuler Homes didn't comply with state law requiring that development be substantially complete within 10 years for land under consideration by the LUC for urbanization.

Community group Friends of Makakilo with support from the state Office of Planning challenged the developer's petition at a hearing yesterday on the issue because Ho'opili is slated to be built over 20 years.

Friends of Makakilo also asked the LUC to deny urbanization for Ho'opili, but that motion didn't pass.

The ruling gives Schuler options to return to the commission and seek partial or complete urbanization of the Ho'opili site.

At a minimum the development effort could be delayed by about a year, though that could be longer if Schuler is required to amend an environmental impact statement and resubmit its application to reclassify the land from agricultural to urban use.

"Obviously we're disappointed," said Mike Jones, president of Horton's Schuler Division. "It's a setback ... but we'll continue to work with the state and other parties to have a petition that everybody can accept."

Friends of Makakilo founder and 30-year Makakilo resident Michael Kioni Dudley regarded the commission's decision as a victory because he doubts Schuler can overcome concerns about traffic and the loss of farmland raised by state agencies and residents.

"It's a win for the people out here who sit in traffic every day, and it's a win for the 'aina," he said.

Yesterday's ruling puts off what previously was anticipated to be a decision by the LUC to approve or reject Ho'opili by the end of this year.

## **\$4.6 billion project**

The estimated \$4.6 billion project is one of the most important considerations before the commission in decades.

Designed with roughly as many homes as Mililani or Hawai'i Kai — plus five public schools and 3 million to 4 million square feet of commercial space — Ho'opili will affect the balance between urban growth and preservation of prime agricultural land on O'ahu, and have huge influences on traffic and

jobs.

Passions have run high for supporters and opponents since conceptual plans for Ho'opili were publicly disclosed three years ago.

LUC hearings on the project began early this year to consider the case. Before yesterday, about 130 people or organizations had submitted comments to the commission, reflecting a fairly close division of support and opposition.

Yesterday, about 35 people testified before commissioners, largely opposing the project mostly because it would pave over arguably the best farmland on O'ahu and add to already bad traffic.

Among those opposing or raising concerns about Ho'opili yesterday were four state legislators: Sen. Clayton Hee, Rep. Rida Cabanilla, Rep. Jon Riki Karamatsu and Rep. Maile Shimabukuro.

Hee, D-23rd (Kane'ohe, Kahuku) and chairman of the Senate Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs, said the petition before the commission is probably the most important one since developers unsuccessfully sought to urbanize land in Waiahole and Waikane valleys.

Shimabukuro, D-45th (Wai'anae, Makaha, Makua), said she was surprised when running for office to find out the chief concern for area residents was traffic. "It really is a daily nightmare for people who live on the West side trying to go to and from work," she said.

The state Department of Transportation amended its testimony on Tuesday to say that it has been unable to resolve concerns with Schuler over H-1 Freeway traffic impacts expected from Ho'opili.

The agency proposed an agreement with Schuler prohibiting occupancy of any building until surrounding roads including H-1 operate at an acceptable level defined as at least a "D" rating on a scale of A to F with F being gridlock, but concluded that even with the most optimistic rail projections, the best freeway rating with Ho'opili would be E.

"There is currently no reasonable proposal (from Schuler) that will resolve this significant regional concern," wrote DOT Director Brennon Morioka.

## main concerns

Traffic is one of the two most frequent concerns raised regarding Ho'opili. The loss of agriculture has been the other.

Four farms operating on what amounts to 14 percent of all available farmland on O'ahu would be displaced by Ho'opili. The largest is Aloun Farms, which cultivates about 1,100 acres of Schuler land under a lease that expires in 2013 but can be ended earlier.

The state Department of Agriculture on Tuesday submitted written testimony stating that it can't support the Ho'opili plan.

The agency suggested that if Ho'opili is approved, it should be with a requirement for Schuler to obtain an easement committing 1,407 acres of equivalent prime farmland elsewhere on O'ahu for farm use in perpetuity.

Others aren't willing to compromise. Nada Mangialetti told commissioners yesterday, "I'm not against development, but I don't think sacrificing ag land is the way to do it."

"There's plenty of other land to build homes on," added Robin Doak of Makakilo.

Cabanilla, D-42nd ('Ewa, Waipahu, Honouliuli) and chairwoman of the House Housing Committee, said urban development should be focused on areas such as Kaka'ako, McCully and Mo'ili'ili where small buildings can be redeveloped with high density.

Jeff Pederson of Makakilo told commissioners he used to walk through lemon groves on the way to school where he grew up in Upland, Calif., before the area and surrounding farm communities were converted to housing.

"I saw this all happen before (and) I left," he said. "It's horrible. It's a shame."

Schuler's position is that the 'Ewa site has long been designated by the county as part of a secondary urban center for O'ahu to accommodate population growth and protect farmland elsewhere on the island from development.

The developer also has said Ho'opili represents a unique opportunity to design a community around the city's planned rail system, and that its homes will be targeted to entry-level buyers. If realized, Ho'opili would create an estimated 7,000 to 8,000 permanent jobs.

Ho'opili supporters include neighboring landowners such as the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands and the University of Hawai'i, which are developing homes and a new campus. The Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation also agreed that the county's 'Ewa Development Plan designating the Ho'opili site for urban growth should be respected.

Other advocates for the project include leaders of three area neighborhood boards closest to the project site and a handful of other nearby residents who Schuler enlisted years ago to help plan Ho'opili.

## 'a greater good'

One of the project's most loyal backers is Maeda Timson, who has lived in Makakilo for 38 years and been closely involved with the evolution of O'ahu's second-city concept of which she regards Ho'opili a beneficial extension.

"This proposed Ho'opili project is an integral part of the 'Ewa Development Plan," she said.

Coby Lynn, a 20-year 'Ewa Beach resident, said ensuring adequate supply of homes affordable to future generations is more important than preserving farms.

Vernon Ta'a, a local plumbers union employee living in 'Aiea, told commissioners he wants his 13 grandchildren to have opportunities to be homeowners in Hawai'i.

"If there's a choice between a tomato plant and my grandchildren, I choose my grandchildren," he said.

Honolulu resident Lydi Morgan, however, said the bigger issue has to do with quality of life in Hawai'i where people aren't stuck in traffic for an hour to get to work and forced to eat imported food.

"It's not about people vs. the tomato plant," she said. "It's about a greater good."

If Schuler successfully revives its petition, these issues could still be decided by the commission. If later approved, the project would still have to obtain a City Council zoning change.

Up until yesterday, the developer had sought to urbanize all 1,554 acres of the Ho'opili site despite prior requests from the commission and the Office of Planning to seek urbanization in increments.

Under state law, the LUC is supposed to consider petitions to urbanize land on which development should be substantially complete within 10 years. Schuler's project has a 20-year timetable, but the developer said various state road improvement projects, the city's rail plan and other issues made it infeasible to divide the project into phases.

After one LUC member in June suggested that the petition was deficient, Schuler sought to include a two-phase plan for consideration while maintaining its request to urbanize the whole property at one time.

Bryan Yee, an attorney for the Office of Planning, said Schuler rejected repeated requests before the start of hearings earlier this year and up until the June hearing to provide phasing information, and shouldn't be allowed to add the information now after so much testimony has been based on urbanizing the site without phases.

"It's inexplicable why they withheld this information from us, but they did," he told commissioners. "We need to send a message to this and other developers that this way of doing business is absolutely unacceptable."

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August 29, 2009

## **Letters to the Editor**

### **Road maintenance**

#### **Our freeways ought to be best in nation**

By any comparison, the state of California is in far worse condition than Hawai'i.

Yet on a recent trip to California, armies of road crews would descend on the freeway system every night. They would strip off the old pavement and lay an entire new, smooth road surface. Standing sentinel everywhere over these crews were signs stating that their project was being paid for by President Obama's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

We have the smallest freeway system in the nation. Yet we have the worst. The stretch of H-1 from Waikale to the Middle Street merge is no better than roadways in most Third World countries and it is less than 25 miles in length! All we've been able to count on every year are crews with substandard material filling in potholes that make the situation even worse.

The length of all three of our freeways is less than 58 miles. California's freeways are thousands of miles long. Why aren't our freeways the best in the nation?

David Taylor-Garcia | Mililani

August 29, 2009

## **Letters to the Editor**

### **Rail transit**

#### **Please report more on per-capita costs**

The League of Women Voters of Honolulu thanks The Honolulu Advertiser for informing the public of the per-capita costs of the mayor's rail transit plan. Especially important is the information that the per-capita cost in Honolulu is many times that of other cities with rail transit.

The Advertiser rendered a great public service by putting this story on the front page. The subsequent front-page stories on the secrecy surrounding the tax collection shortage were in the same vein of public service. The city's characterization of your revelation of that shortage as "misleading and irresponsible" is transparently self-serving.

Another great service you could perform is telling us exactly where the \$1,000 per person already collected in taxes went and how much is still to be spent.

For instance, did the cost of the elaborate exhibit at the recent finance expo come from the rail excise tax money? How much tax money has been spent on media advertising? How much tax money did the meetings soliciting public input cost? Just where has the excise tax money gone and how much is left?

The Honolulu League of Women Voters has written several letters to the mayor requesting answers to these questions. The reply we did receive contained no specifics, only generalities.

Piilani Kaopuiki | President, The League of Women Voters of Honolulu

## State land use panel rejects plan for 12,000 homes on Ewa farms

By [Susan Essoyan](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Aug 29, 2009

In a rare move, the state Land Use Commission rejected yesterday a developer's push to urbanize 1,500 acres of prime agricultural land in Ewa to create a new community of nearly 12,000 homes.

The commission voted 5-3 to declare the petition by D.R. Horton-Schuler Division "deficient," saying the developer had not followed the rules by spelling out an incremental development plan for its Ho'opili project. But it said Horton could fix its petition and try again.

"Hallelujah!" Kioni Dudley, president of Friends of Makakilo and leader of the opposition, declared after the vote. "It's a great victory. It's a victory for the aina. I hope the setback to the developer is permanent."

 Major setback for Hoopili land users



Developers of a planned 12,000 home development that would displace farmers on prime Ewa land today suffered a major setback. .

[ [Watch](#) ]



Dudley had some powerful support at yesterday's hearing, including the state Office of Planning, which argued forcefully against the project, and the heads of the state Transportation and Agriculture departments. The commissioners also heard hours of testimony from members of the public, most of

them pleading to keep the land growing fruits and vegetables for local consumption.

"This is arguably the best agricultural land in the state," said Richard Valasek, a nurse who lives in Aiea. "Once it's gone, it's gone."

But that wasn't the deciding factor in yesterday's vote.

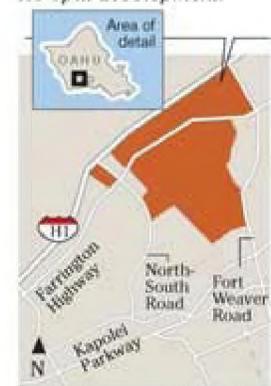
The decision hinged on the failure of the developer to submit a detailed plan showing the timing, phasing and location of each step of the development. Such a plan is required if a project cannot be completed within 10 years. The Ho'opili project, which is the size of another Mililani or Hawaii Kai, would take 20 years to build.

"The petitioner has repeatedly refused to provide an incremental development plan," said Bryan Yee, attorney for the Office of Planning. "By allowing them to go forward, you will establish a horrible precedent for any developer to violate the rules and then be forgiven."

After the hearing, Mike Jones, Horton's president, vowed not to give up. "Obviously we're disappointed in the decision," Jones said. "It's a temporary setback at this point in time. We plan to go back and work with the parties."

"I think it's important right now for us to plan for the future of Hawaii, for future job growth and local housing," Jones said. "It's probably the best place on Oahu for that, with what's going on with UH-West Oahu and transportation."

*D.R. Horton-Schuler property. Site of proposed Ho'opili development.*



The project area lies between Waipahu and Kapolei, makai of the H-1 freeway. Although designated as agricultural by the state, the land falls within the urban growth boundary of the city's Ewa Development Plan. The city's rail transit project is slated to run through it, and the project would include 3 million square feet of commercial space, with higher densities along the rail corridor.

"It is all part of a decades-old plan to develop the secondary area," said Clyde Hayashi, director of the Hawaii Laborers and Employers Cooperation Education and Trust Fund. "It will provide needed homes in the second city along with jobs."

But Transportation Director Brennon Morioka said the developer needs to address the impacts of "the largest development in the state's history."

"We're concerned about the congestion that's going to continue to grow on the H-1, and there are no proposals for mitigation by the petitioner," Morioka said. "We've been trying to work with the developer, and it's been a challenge for us."

Yee warned that "if Ho'opili goes through, H-1 is going to be a parking lot from Waiawa to Makakilo."

Rep. Rida Cabanilla (D, Waipahu-Ewa) was one of several legislators opposing the project. She advised redeveloping Oahu's urban core, rather than displacing farmland. In written testimony, Sandra Lee Kunitomo, chairwoman of the Board of Agriculture, also opposed the loss of highly productive lands.

The Ewa property, 14 percent of the available farmland on Oahu, is considered the best on the island, with ample sun, good irrigation and top-quality soil. It is leased to several farmers, the largest of which is Aloun Farms, and grows a substantial amount of the local supply of diversified crops such as sweet

corn, beans, melons, pumpkins and lettuce.

Steven Lee Montgomery, a former Land Use Commissioner who testified against the project, drew laughter with his plea: "All I am saying is give peas a chance."

But Vernon Ta'a, a plumbers union representative, had a different take on it. He welcomed the homes and jobs the project would bring for his extended family.

"If there's a choice between a tomato plant and my 13 grandchildren, no question, I would choose my grandchildren," he said. "They have to have a job. They have to have money to buy the tomato."

Horton filed its original petition in January 2007. After several months of hearings this year, the developer was ready to wrap up its case yesterday, which would have paved the way for the other side to make its arguments.

But Commissioner Reuben Wong moved to declare Horton's petition deficient, noting that the developer had the right to "cure" the deficiencies. He was joined by commissioners Lisa Judge, Normand Lezy, Duane Kanuha and Vladimir Devens. Voting against the motion were Nicholas Teves, Kyle Chock and Ransom Piltz.

The developer cannot submit a new petition for at least 45 days. When it does, the yearlong clock on considering the project will begin again. Rather than starting entirely from scratch, the commissioners may decide to preserve some of the testimony already submitted on the project.

**Find this article at:**

[http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20090829\\_State\\_land\\_use\\_panel\\_rejects\\_plan\\_for\\_12000\\_homes\\_on\\_Ewa\\_farms.html](http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20090829_State_land_use_panel_rejects_plan_for_12000_homes_on_Ewa_farms.html)

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## City touts 'bike friendliness' of rail

By [Rob Shikina](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Aug 30, 2009

Bicycling enthusiasts see the city's proposed rail project as a way to get more people out of cars and onto bikes. So does the city.

In its first draft of a new bike master plan, the city touts the advantage the rail line will provide bicyclists who need to get from West Oahu into town and back, and visa versa.

The key for this plan is rail transit, which will stimulate less automobile-centric development around stations, providing opportunities to build bike facilities, said Wayne Yoshioka, director of the city Department of Transportation Services.

"One of the trademarks of transit-oriented development is bicycle friendliness," he said.

The draft bike master plan, released earlier this month, is part of the city's goal of developing a multiple mode transportation system.

Proposed in the plan are 572 miles of bikeways around the island -- which includes bike lanes, paths, and routes -- on city and state property at a cost of \$217 million. Of that, 40 miles are priority projects for the city, costing \$18.6 million and designed to be built within 10 years.

"Even if we didn't do anything, the transit -- when that gets built -- is going to have a huge impact on bicycling," said Honolulu's bicycle coordinator Chris Sayers. "We can work on that and enhance that."

### **View Bike Plan**

» See the Oahu Bike Plan at [oahubikeplan.org](http://oahubikeplan.org).  
Submit comments on the plan by tomorrow at [oahubikeplan.org/contact.html](http://oahubikeplan.org/contact.html).

The city is seeking comments on the draft until tomorrow. A final version is planned for release as early as October.

Officials say the \$400,000 plan is more comprehensive and practical than its 10-year-old predecessor.

Yoshioka says the 1999 plan was hampered by designs that required significant changes to surrounding areas.

The old plan also proposed dream projects that would take too long to complete, such as a bike route from Kahala to Pearl City.

Unlike that plan, the new one contains bikeways that can be built quickly and around the island.

"The focus this time around is very strongly on connectivity," Yoshioka said. "What we're trying to avoid is isolated pockets of great bicycle facilities with no way to get from one to the other."

The method, Yoshioka said, is to build less-than-ideal facilities that can be used sooner rather than waiting for "the perfect situation." Less-ideal facilities could mean shared traffic lanes instead of separate bike lanes.

The transit project won't garner federal money for bikeways, but officials hope the plan will ensure that transit stations are bike-friendly.

The draft bike plan proposes transit stations with parking for bikes, and special facilities to help cyclists walk their bikes up stairs so they can take them on the train.

Yoshioka said the plan preserves areas around the train stations for bikeways to major bike routes through the city.

"It's not so much about building super bikeways," Yoshioka said. "Transit-oriented development creates a development pattern that fosters" lighter road traffic and encourages the use of bicycles without fear of being hit by cars or other motorized vehicles, he said.

Justin Fanslau, spokesman for Hawaii Pedal Power, a coalition of bicyclists, complimented the plan's attempt to make rail stations accessible for bicyclists.

"We want to make sure we create these bicycle transit centers to enhance the rail project," he said.

Some, however, criticized the city for not accomplishing the 1999 plan's objectives.

Robin Brandt, a member of the University of Hawaii bicycling committee, blasted the city for lacking oversight and follow through with the old plan.

"We're just going nowhere," she said. "I don't feel any safer on the road."

The old plan proposed bicycle counts to measure usage and had benchmarks for projects, several of which the city failed to meet. The new plan has similar goals.

Yoshioka defended the city, arguing that bike counts require people and money; he called the old plan "ambitious."

"The 1999 plan was a good plan," he said. "It was what you would build if you had no constraints."

Even if objectives aren't met, the city needs a plan, he said.

"It's important that you have something like a bike plan to prioritize your spending," he said.

Funding for city bike projects is about \$1 million annually -- almost half from bicycle registrations and the rest from federal highway and city funds.

Using the bike plan, he said, the city could quickly add bike facilities at no additional cost when

reconstructing roads.

"It becomes part of the thinking," he said.

**Find this article at:**

[http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20090830\\_City\\_touts\\_bike\\_friendliness\\_of\\_rail.html](http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20090830_City_touts_bike_friendliness_of_rail.html)

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

August 31, 2009

## **Letters to the Editor**

### **Rail transit**

#### **It's not news reports that are 'misleading'**

On Friday, Aug. 21, I received an e-mail from the "damage control" branch of Honolulu Rail Transit. I deeply resent their characterizations of recent newspaper reporting as "misleading and irresponsible."

Whose information is truly misleading? Those who are making apples-and-oranges comparisons to other metropolitan areas' transit systems.

Who is being truly irresponsible with taxpayers' hard-earned money? Those who are hell-bent on ramrodding elevated light rail through to completion, ignoring other more sustainable (and less financially catastrophic) alternatives.

David Kammerer | La'ie



## Rail transit could cost less than projected

Hannemann says proposals are falling below budget

By [Rob Shikina](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Aug 31, 2009

Proposals for the first phase of the rail transit project appear to be below budget estimates, forecasting a possible savings of hundreds of millions when the \$5 billion system is completed.

"We're in good shape," Mayor Mufi Hannemann said yesterday at a news conference.

State figures, however, show the city has been falling short about \$80 million a year in revenues for the project since the surcharge began in 2007.

Friday was the deadline for proposals from contractors vying for the job of building a 6.5-mile elevated guideway from Kapolei to Pearl Highlands.

Hannemann said state procurement laws restrict him from releasing specifics until a final selection is made in October. But he did say that an analysis of the proposals shows the cost seems to be matching a national trend of public transportation bids coming in at 10 to 25 percent below budget.

The first phase refers to the raised guideway between Kapolei and Pearl Highlands -- not including stations, vehicles or base yards -- of the 20-mile route. This phase was expected to cost \$550 million to \$600 million, said city spokesman Bill Brennan.

When a proposal is selected, "it will verify what I am saying today, and it will come in under budget," Hannemann said, adding that the entire project could be several hundred million dollars below budget.

"That doesn't surprise me," said Cliff Slater, chairman of [honolulutraffic.com](#), a group that opposes the rail transit project. "Construction is very competitive right now."

But the savings will not make up for a decrease in income from declining tax revenues, he said. A half-percent increase in Oahu's general excise tax on Oahu for 16 years is projected to pay for most of the project.

Slater said according to documents he has received in a request for public information from the federal government, the city's decrease in tax revenues will leave the entire project short by \$953 million.

Hannemann said opponents who claim the rail project is not fiscally sound are relying on an outdated city report to the Federal Transit Administration. He said construction of the project will pump \$200 million into the economy next year, boosting tax revenues and creating jobs.

Slater said if the city had submitted a subsequent document, "then fine, let's see it. The only thing we have to go on is what the city submitted to the FTA on June 16."

**Find this article at:**

[http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20090831\\_Rail\\_transit\\_cost\\_less\\_than\\_projected.html](http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20090831_Rail_transit_cost_less_than_projected.html)

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

# Honolulu Rail Transit Project



# 20-Mile Route Kapolei to Ala Moana Center



# Public Decisions

- December 22, 2006
- City Council selected fixed guideway in exclusive Right-of-Way
- Known as the Locally Preferred Alternative
- Established route, elevated guideway in downtown

# Public Decisions

- **Transit Mode**
  - Fixed guideway in exclusive Right-of-Way
- **Alignment**
  - Now – East Kapolei to Ala Moana Center
  - Future – Kapolei to UH Mānoa and Waikīkī
- **Vehicle Technology**
  - Steel wheel on steel rail – “Light Metro”
  - Widely used, durable, cost-effective

# How Will the System Work?

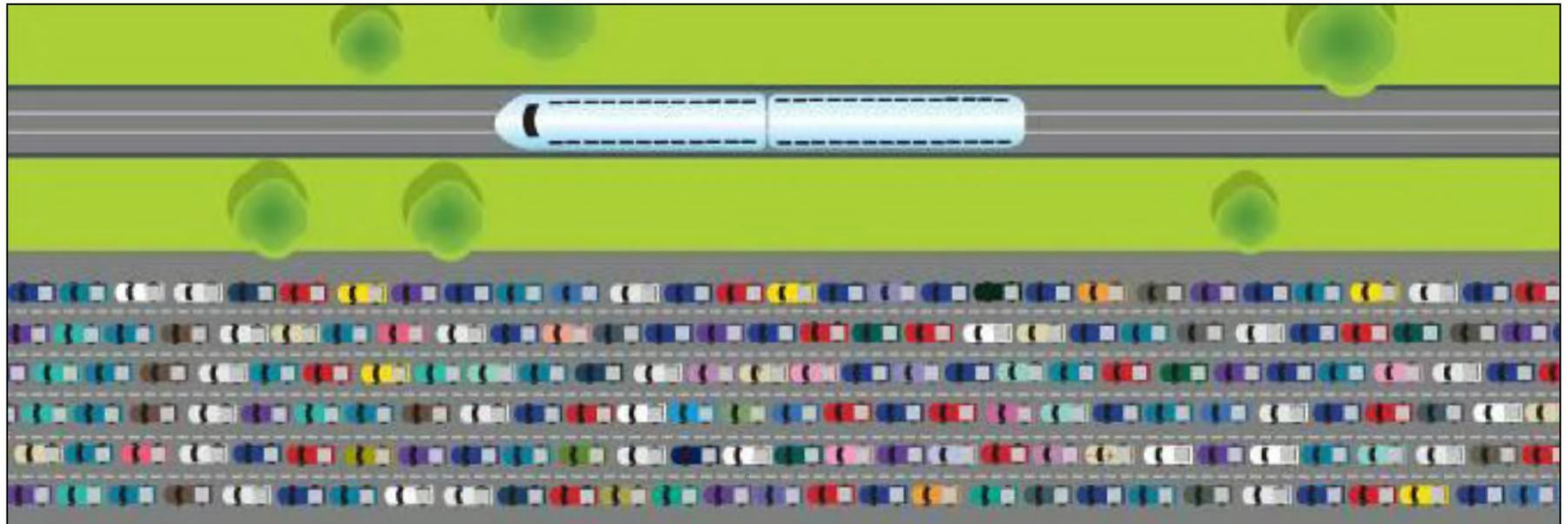
- **When will it run?**
  - From 4 a.m. to midnight, every 3 to 10 minutes
- **How fast will it be?**
  - 55+ mph top speed; 30 mph average with stops
- **How much will a ride cost?**
  - Same as TheBus, can use a transfer from one to the other
- **How do I get to it?**
  - Integrated with TheBus, bike and walking paths, and park-and-ride at some stations

# Travel Times to Ala Moana Center Station

<b>From:</b>	<b>Time:</b>
<b>East Kapolei Station</b>	<b>42 minutes</b>
<b>Waipahu Transit Center</b>	<b>31 minutes</b>
<b>Pearlridge Center Station</b>	<b>24 minutes</b>
<b>Airport Station</b>	<b>16 minutes</b>
<b>Kalihi Station</b>	<b>10 minutes</b>
<b>Downtown Station</b>	<b>4 minutes</b>

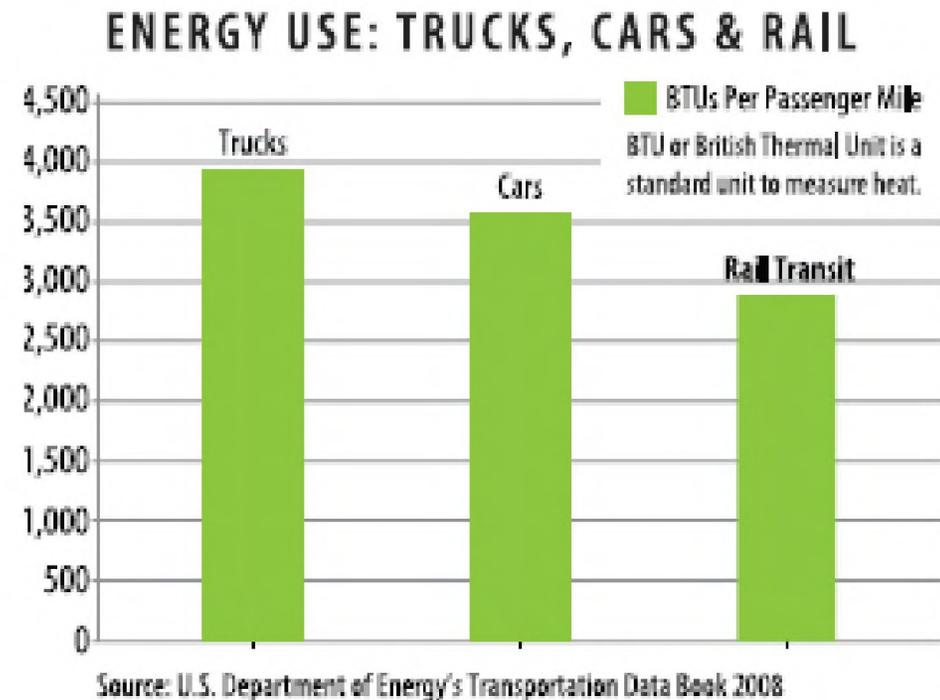
# Traffic Benefits

- Reduce future traffic delay by about 20%
- Remove more than 30,000 cars and trucks from our roads each day



# Environmental Benefits

- Rail uses less energy than single occupant cars and trucks, per passenger mile
- “Is Rail Green? YES, compared to today’s driving patterns” – Hawaii Business magazine, June 2009



# Key Sustainable Features

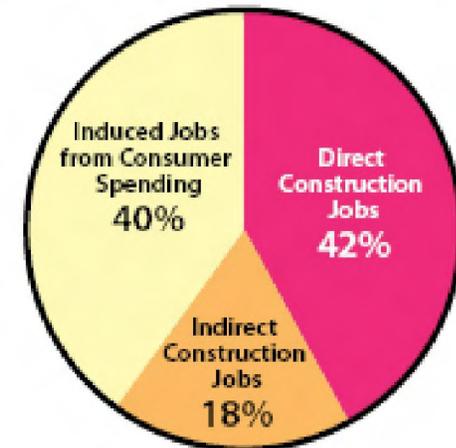
- Sustainable construction methods
  - Reuse and recycle concrete, steel, asphalt when possible
- Maintenance & Storage Facility – LEED Silver Certified
- Open-air rail stations connect with bike and walk paths



# Economic Benefits

- Building rail will fight the recession
- Creating 10,000 jobs a year
- State's largest job creating project

Employment Created by Rail Construction\*



\*Person years of employment.

# How Much Will It Cost to Build?

	Millions of 2008 Dollars	Millions of Inflated Dollars
<b>Estimated Construction Cost</b>	<b>2,100</b>	<b>2,490</b>
<b>Design/Construction Contingency</b>	<b>555</b>	<b>660</b>
<b>Construction Subtotal</b>	<b>2,655</b>	<b>3,150</b>
<b>Right-of-Way</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>175</b>
<b>Vehicles</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>355</b>
<b>Professional Services</b>	<b>795</b>	<b>970</b>
<b>Project Reserve</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>280</b>
<b>Capital Cost</b>	<b>4,125</b>	<b>4,930</b>
<b>Finance Charges</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>505</b>
<b>TOTAL COST</b>	<b>4,500</b>	<b>5,435</b>

# Sources and Uses of Funds

	Millions of Inflated Dollars
<b>GET Surcharge Revenues</b>	<b>4,050</b>
<b>FTA New Starts Funds</b>	<b>1,385</b>
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>5,435</b>
<b>Capital Cost</b>	<b>4,930</b>
<b>Finance Charges</b>	<b>505</b>
<b>TOTAL COST</b>	<b>5,435</b>

# Operating & Maintenance Cost

- 2-3% of the City's annual operating budget
- an amount that can be accommodated without an increase in taxes

A bus+rail system costs less than the cost of carrying the same number of riders on a bus-only system

# What Could It Look Like?



# West Loch Station



# West Loch Station



# Waipahu Transit Center Station



# Waipahu Transit Center Station



# Canopy Design for Stations

## Aerial view



# Canopy Design for Stations

## Ground level view



# Canopy Design for Stations

## Platform view



# Ground-Level Rail Compared to Elevated Rail

- **Slow – would add 60% to travel times**
  - Trains slowed by traffic congestion, red lights, accidents, etc.
- **At-grade traffic impacts**
  - Safety and car-train and ped–train collisions
  - Reduced service to cross-traffic
- **Far fewer passengers**
- **36% higher operating cost per passenger mile**
- **Many more property acquisitions and relocations**

# At-Grade Rail Property Impact

## More land used:

- **Seattle displaced nearly 300 homes and businesses for 5 miles of at-grade rail**
- **Phoenix partially and fully acquired 770 homes for 20 miles of at-grade level rail**



Phoenix

At-grade train in Phoenix, a spacious and sprawling city



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



**Ground-level train needs a 12-foot wide traffic lane**

Phoenix

# Simulation of Street Level Rail at Honolulu Community College



Simulation

# Elevated Rail

- **Fast, frequent trains – 42 minute Kapolei-to-Ala Moana Center trip**
  - **Top speed more than 55 mph**
  - **Trains every 3 minutes in AM and PM rush hours**
- **Land use – fewer than 40 full acquisitions for 20 miles of elevated rail**
- **Capacity – over 100,000 rides per day**
  - **Peak of more than 25,000 riders per hour in each direction**

# Elevated Rail: Vancouver



# Project Schedule

- **Late Summer 2009: Release of Final EIS**
- **Fall 2009: FTA issues Record of Decision**
- **December 2009: Groundbreaking**
- **Spring 2011: Anticipated federal funds**
- **Late 2012: Service opens in phases, beginning in Waipahu**
- **Spring 2019: Start full service**

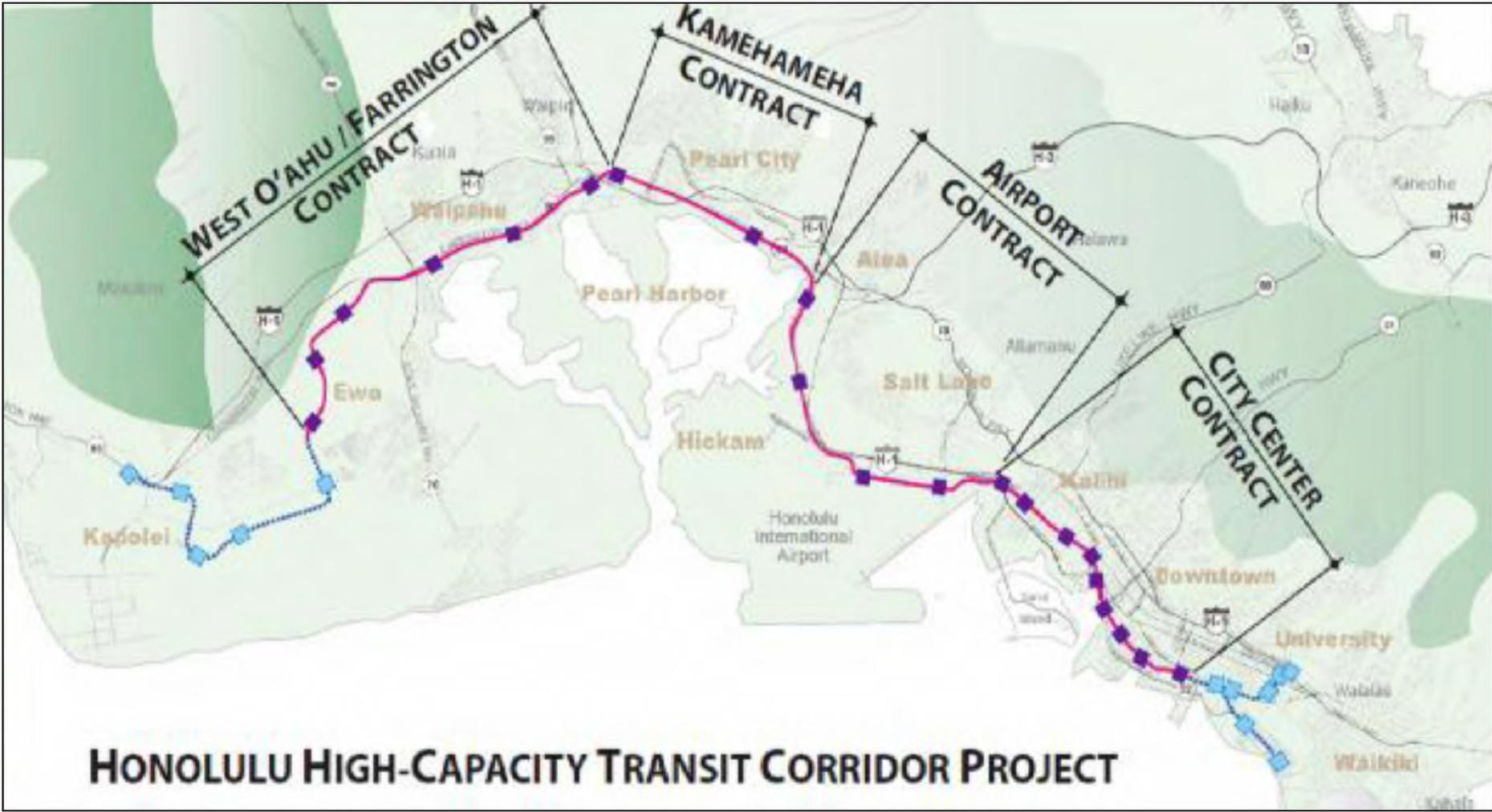
# Stay Informed

- **Sign up for monthly newsletter**
- **Watch “Honolulu on the Move,” ‘Olelo Channel 54, Mondays at 6:30 pm**
- **Visit [www.honolulustransit.org](http://www.honolulustransit.org)**
- **Visit [youtube.com/honoluluonthemove](http://youtube.com/honoluluonthemove)**

*Mahalo!*



# Project Schedule



# Kamehameha Highway at Ka'ahumanu Street



# Crossing Nuʻuanu Stream



# Halekauwila Street at Mother Waldron Park



# West O'ahu

## Final Rail Station Community Workshop

August 5, 2009

Kapolei High School



RAIL STATIONS COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

# Agenda

- Project overview & schedule
- Elevated guideway
- Station designs
  - East Kapolei
  - UH West O‘ahu
  - Preliminary design for Ho‘opili
- Canopy design for stations
- Ask questions, talk story with the Architects



# HONOLULU RAIL TRANSIT



R A I L S T A T I O N S C O M M U N I T Y W O R K S H O P S

# Project Schedule

- Late Summer 2009: Release of Final Environmental Impact Statement
- Fall 2009: Federal Transit Administration issues Record of Decision
- Fall 2009: Award design/build contract for first guideway segment
- December 2009: Start construction of elevated guideway

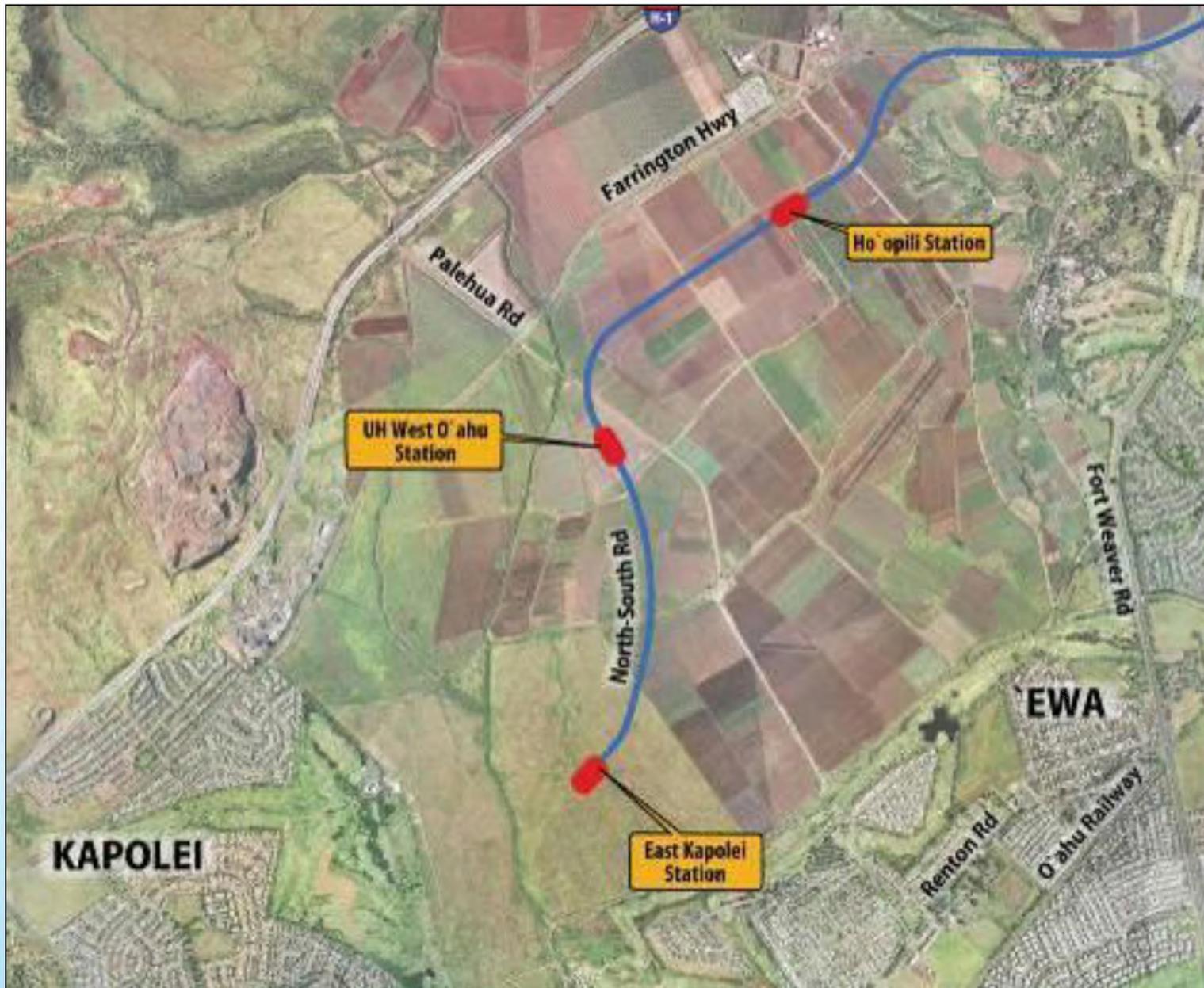


# Project Schedule

- Summer 2012: Start of construction of East Kapolei and UH West O‘ahu train stations
- Late 2012: Initial service in Waipahu
- 2014: Service from East Kapolei to Pearl Highlands; additional service to follow
- Spring 2019: Full service between East Kapolei and Ala Moana Center



# Project Route in Kapolei



RAIL STATIONS COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

# Elevated Guideway Simulation



**Kamehameha Highway near Acacia Street, looking 'ewa**



# Elevated Guideway Simulation



Kamehameha Highway at Kaonohi Street, looking makai



R A I L   S T A T I O N S   C O M M U N I T Y   W O R K S H O P S

# Travel Times from Kapolei

Destination	Travel Time
Pearl Highlands	14 minutes
Airport	26 minutes
Kalihi	32 minutes
Downtown	38 minutes
Ala Moana Center	42 minutes



# Design Presentation | *East Kapolei & UH West O'ahu Stations*



Photo:Skyscrapercity.com



RAIL STATIONS COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

# COMMUNITY COMMENTS:

## Like the Design

1. Love the design for entrance way
  - Green roofs, open design, landscaping
2. "Outstanding design"; landscape, culture considerations
3. Like the design
4. Like the greenery and anti-graffiti materials
5. Likes the plan

## Sustainable/Green Design:

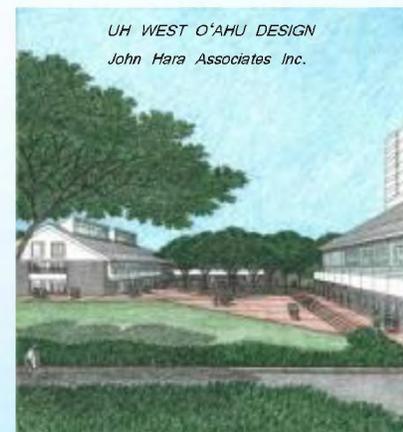
1. Roof materials - will they accommodate solar panels?
2. Can green roofs be incorporated for East Kapolei?
3. What about solar?
4. Concern about 'Ewa plain being very hot
5. Facilities for recycling necessary



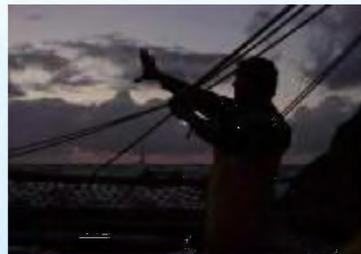
# COMMUNITY COMMENTS:

## Kapolei Design Context:

1. Coral and designs very good – depicts Kapolei
2. "Pretty station but I don't see Kapolei... great job Makai but Mauka not captured" looks like Kalakaua Avenue tropical but.....
3. "What buildings here look like Kapolei" several respondents agreed– Honolulu Advertiser building and Honolulu Police Department building
4. Design doesn't seem to reflect Kapolei, looks like it could be anywhere
5. Design does reflect Kapolei well, looks local
6. Needs to reflect Kapolei
7. Kapolei reflects the goddess Kapo and Pele
8. No Hawaiian motifs on the floors, no colors incorporate
9. The facade looks like an aquarium, original comments were to have a land look
10. Too circular



# INSPIRATION | *Mauka – Makai*



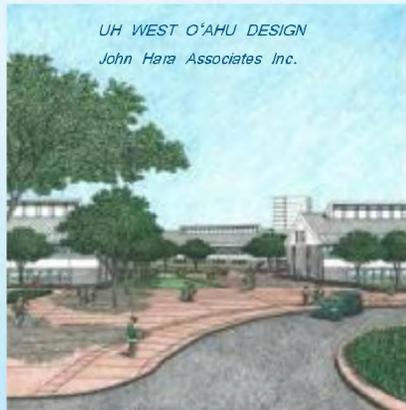
R A I L S T A T I O N S C O M M U N I T Y W O R K S H O P S

# MAUKA | Site Plan – UH West O‘ahu Station



RAIL STATIONS COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

# MAUKA | *Aerial View – UH West O‘ahu Station*



RAIL STATIONS COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

# MAUKA | *Aerial View – UH West O‘ahu Station*



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# MAUKA | *Entry View – UH West O‘ahu Station*



R A I L S T A T I O N S C O M M U N I T Y W O R K S H O P S

# MAKAI | Site Plan – East Kapolei Station



RAIL STATIONS COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

# MAKAI | *Aerial View – East Kapolei Station*



RAIL STATIONS COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

# MAKAI | *Aerial View – East Kapolei Station*



RAIL STATIONS COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

# MAKAI | *Entry View – East Kapolei Station*



RAIL STATIONS COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

# Ho'opili Station

## Preliminary Design



RAIL STATIONS COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

# Ho'opili Station

## Preliminary Design



RAIL STATIONS COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

# Ho'opili Station

## Preliminary Design



R A I L S T A T I O N S C O M M U N I T Y W O R K S H O P S

# Canopy Design for Stations



RAIL STATIONS COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

# Canopy Design for Stations



R A I L S T A T I O N S C O M M U N I T Y W O R K S H O P S

# Canopy Design for Stations



RAIL STATIONS COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

# Next Steps

- Talk story with architects
- Ask questions, give them your thoughts on the designs



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