

Public Involvement Overview

February 2008

	February
Hotline Calls	5
Comment Sense Comments/Inquiries	39
FOIA requests	0
Speakers Bureau	11
Presentation/Events	12
Neighborhood Boards	11

Hotline and Comment Sense reporting does not include requests for additions/changes to the project mailing list. Only project questions/comments/or requests for information are included.

Neighborhood Board reporting includes both full presentations and project briefings.

February 2008 Comments submitted to the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project

#	Record Date	Submission Method	Submission Content/Notes*
180	02/28/2008	Website	I enjoyed the short computer animated video of the fixed guide-rail at Aloha tower station. I was truly impressed as to how this system will eventually look and function. The overall visual quality improved on how I can finally feel a positive experience about coming into Honolulu. I think it could also offer visitors a very good impression on how 'green' technology is best used here as well. I think more full animated videos would help in encouraging appreciation of the system, for example like a full run animation from Kapolei to UH Manoa and/or from vintage station points along the way. I think that sort of interaction would really make people feel like they wish it was already built. Mahalo.
179	02/28/2008	Telephone	Conducting a senior research project for school on the HHCTCP and would like to speak with people involved in the project. She will be here in Honolulu (from Mainland) March 17-23rd and would like to schedule a meeting with someone...she is getting sponsored to fly here specifically for this project research.
178	02/28/2008	Telephone	Has a question regarding cost of rail transit system.
175	02/27/2008	Website	Since steel wheels may be outcome, where the transit route passes schools and noise readings at property line exceed 85 decibels, will the City pay for noise mitigation infrastructure or air conditioning of entire school and make alternate provision of a reduced noise level playground area(s) ?
174	02/27/2008	Website	Is the cost to benefit ration worth it? People cannot even get into a house, and those in a house cannot even afford the house they live in. The top three issues: Education, cost of living, and homelessness have not been addressed. Yet we address an issue that the board has identified will not alleviate congestion. We have not properly identified the problem. Even if this is to be built, the attitudes of entitlement exist. People are hoping their neighbor will give up driving for them to drive their car. The infrastructure of land, logistically cannot support the stations, parking, etc. The people of Oahu pay enough on taxes (even on food which is unheard of in the mainland). Seems as though local interest are involved in spending taxpayers money to provide a job for the few. Though I do not deal with traffic coming to work, I do going home, and have learned to deal with it. This decision could make or break Oahu, and ruin a once scenic island.

#	Record Date	Submission Method	Submission Content/Notes*
173	02/26/2008	Website	<p>Direct fixation track will last a long time in the climate. Do not use wood switch ties. Use metal or embedded switches which can be easily maintained. Access to the Guieway is a key item. Locations between stations will need to be accessed by Hy Reach. Even during construction Fall protection will be needed so will the work force after the alignment is up and running. Look far into the future. Will 20 miles be enough? This is what happened to Miami Dade Transit and other Transit projects. The pesimists prevailed and the Transit projections for ridership were way below what actual ridership was in actuality. Think about who will build your alignment. A Debom can be costly! I seen the design changes send the cost thru the roof. Are you going supply power?Electric? Have signal engineers in at ground floor. You will need track inspectors. that is were I come in to play. I have 32 years experience in transit.Construction, maintenace,inspections,staffing,start-up etc..... I a member of AREMA Engineering association and i have many contacts. I am loking forward to riding this Hawaian Wave, John F. Swangler</p>
170	02/26/2008	Website	<p>Hello, I would like to know if Honolulu Transit has begun exploring the preferred contracting method for procurement of the high-capacity rail system. Will this project be let as a single Construction Management at Risk program, design/ build, or bid/build? Will multiple contracting mechanisms be used to procure construction services, vehicles, and signalling systems, or will all of these be in a single procurement package?</p>
167	02/25/2008	Website	<p>I do not understand why the panel chose steel rails/wheels for the mass transit technology. While it makes sense for the mainland, steel does not hold up well in Hawaii. Why/how did this technology get selected? How can I get a copy of the comparative analysis. I am an engineer myself and I see all to often mainland companies coming in giving their pro's and cons of technologies without understanding our local conditions. Furthermore, why is there such a push to have a connection to Kapolei? Would it not be better to have the alignment run from Waipahu to the University of Hawaii? I completely understand the need to connect to the "second city" but for our immediate needs, a connection to UH makes more sense. Why does the City council need to approve this? Why can't engineers be allowed to do their jobs and do what makes sense? A Waipahu to UH run, will still allow the City to have mileage of train, but you would get a higher increased ridership with the lack of parking and dorm space at the UH--then extend into the Ewa plain and Kapolei in the future.</p>

#	Record Date	Submission Method	Submission Content/Notes*
166	02/25/2008	Website	I would be happy to help in any way I can. I work for Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) as an estimator. I am not looking for a job nor will I charge you for advice. My wife was born and raised in Makaha where we have a home. Personally, I think Rapid Transit is the only way to go for Hawaii. I saw that someone said it would cost 3.7 billion. That would depend on how many stations you plan on having. A rule of thumb for an Arial system would be around \$7,000 a foot plus \$35 million per station. There are allot of factors to look at but this would give you a start. Hope you get the rail system. Take Care John Helliwell
165	02/25/2008	Website	I think it's an awesome idea. The BART system in San Francisco is a great system. however, as congested as traffic is in Honolulu, an underground or an elevated system would work better than having trains on the streets. certainly from the outline you have on the area that you are looking to build this system, then surface trains would be good yes, but if you go down through waikiki, a monorail would be a great idea.
163	02/25/2008	Website	So Hawaii has decided on a loud elevated train. Steel wheels on steel track is extremely loud and is going to be an extreme nuisance and lower property value for all those living near the tracks. Much better and quieter are monorails and maglev systems. Have you ever been to Disneyland? When the monorail comes by overhead, you hear a whoosh and a low humming and then it's gone. I dare not imagine the sound of dozens of heavy steel wheels rolling by overhead. God forbid Hawaii! Go modern, go new; not old and ancient.
162	02/25/2008	Website	Dear Sir, From 1980 through 2004 I served as Superintendent and Chief Engineer at the Navy Fuel Depot at Pearl Harbor. In that position I worked with R. M. Towill Engineers on the previous design for a rapid rail system providing them information on the Navy and Air Force fuel lines that ran along or crossed the proposed route in the corridor from Eva Junction near Leeward CC to the Airport. My concern is that it appears that the route currently under consideration does not serve the airport directly. Can you direct me to the section on your web site which gives the rationale for not having a rapid rail station at the airport. I have flown into Washingon Reagan Airport many times. There, it is a 5 minute walk from baggage claim to the Metro station and another 15 minutes to downtown on the train. Is there any chance that Honolulu would re-consider and route rapid rail through the airport? Respectfully, Jim Gammon

#	Record Date	Submission Method	Submission Content/Notes*
161	02/23/2008	Website	<p>It is unconscionable for this so called transit panel to recommend a system that will break this State financially. We, the citizens just can't afford the cost of a system thats going to "tax" every citizen, so that a mere 20% of the population might use. It doesn't serve the people of Oahu. Everyone is concerned with the traffic conjection, but this rail system will not fix it or make it go away. It's only going to burden the State and its citizens. It's hard enough having to deal with increases in the very basic necessities of living, like electricity, water, and communications. This proposed rail system is "way over the top". I don't want it! It's just NOT suitable for the islands. So my guess is that these panel members are all transplants from the mainland, right? Thanks alot! Oahu has a pretty darn good bus system. We need to capitalize on that and make improvements in that area. That and tax the hell out of gas!!!! You drive, you pay! Simple!</p>
160	02/23/2008	Website	<p>Since it seems we are going to be stuck with this rail thing, I was wondering if anybody has thought about how we are going to power this monstrosity. Has anyone contacted either of our sun-harnessing darlings (Sopogy, Inc. (833-4748) or Hoku Scientific (682-7800) about using clean, renewable energy rather than adding even more pollution-causing, oil-based power usage, i.e. gas and/or electricity? Since we're being saddled with this thing, can we try to "keep it green?" I understand that this may not be possible or affordable but, did anyone check? Taking our money to pollute our air more is not going to make this any more popular. Making this thing environmentally friendly might make those of us who hate the idea start to like it more. We might not whine so much about the damage done to our beloved skyline if we an be comforted by a benefit to our ecosystem. How about checking into a centralized project to offset the power usage? That may be a definite possibility. Besides, wouldn't this work with the standard objectives the state is looking for? Wouldn't it be a start to their 20% thing? Work with us, put us all on the same team. It's in motion, let's keep it green and make our community happier about it. I ran into this great quote... "Anything else you're interested in is not going to happen if you can't breathe the air and drink the water. Don't sit this one out. Do something. You are by accident of fate alive at an absolutely critical moment in the history of our planet." ~Carl Sagan I asked to be added to the mailing list so I can stay in the loop. Please think about this?!? Mahalo!</p>

#	Record Date	Submission Method	Submission Content/Notes*
159	02/23/2008	Website	Approximately how close to Makamaka Place will this fixed rail be constructed ? I am concerned about the noise pollution a steel rail system will produce during hours of operation along the proposed Farrington Hwy route between Waipahu Intermediate School and Depot Road.
158	02/23/2008	Website	Have been involved providing public involvement support for a similar project here in Phoenix. Just interested in your process. Thanks for the information and good luck with the EIS.
157	02/23/2008	Website	Why do you not take the money you got and start building from the University and go as far west as you can? It's obvious the majority of the traffic is created when private schools and colleges are in session. Also, if you make people catch multiple transfers...you not going to have ridership. You need to provide park and rides along the transit route.
156	02/22/2008	Website	We waited patiently, albeit anxiously, to learn what technology the independent panel (four of whom are from the Mainland) would select for the proposed fixed guideway transit system for Honolulu. We are truly shocked and dismayed that this panel has selected steel wheels on a steel rail as the NOISE it generates will be intolerable! Do any of these panel members live near an existing system on the Mainland and do any of our City Council members or Mayor Hanneman live in areas where this system will be operating? We implore the City Council and the Mayor to take into consideration all aspects of the fixed guideway system. It is we taxpayers who are paying for it and we who will be negatively impacted by the noise it generates as it will sound like a freight train running through areas populated with thousands and thousands of residents. We have already been long-suffering from sewer construction noise at night on Kapiolani Boulevard. The noise from the steel wheels on a steel rail will be ten times worse! When people are subjected to night after night of intolerable noise, this results in sleep deprivation, loss of attention at work and on the roads, possible accidents and lawsuits, etc. We understand that the fixed guideway transit system is going to proceed and we want to be supportive of these efforts but at the very least, please consider selecting a system that is less noisy and less intrusive into the lives of so many hard-working, tax-paying residents. Arthur and Mary-Ann Golden

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155	02/22/2008	Website	In the recent news of the experts panels recommendation, of steel wheels on steel rail. I would have to agree with the U.H. engineer, that it would be a bad decision to select that technology. I think there be higher than expected maintenance cost for the steel rail. we should not compare the results of the BART and other mainland systems, because we a lot more salt in our air. which would increase maintenance cost and noise from it accelerating and decelerating. In closing, I back the rubber on concrete technology 100%. Thank you for your time Vincent Rapoza Electrician Hawaii Can Plant
150	02/17/2008	Website	To Ms. Barbara Marshall, Please do not let this project go forward, unless it services Waikiki, the Airport, Kapolei, and U of Hawaii. The current route is a poor choice. Sincerely, Bob Atkinson
148	02/16/2008	Website	Don't back off from mass transit because of speculation it won't relieve traffic. We will need alternate transportation when we run out of oil for gasoline or when gas prices go so high we can't afford to drive. Choose a system that will run w/o using oil
147	02/15/2008	Website	I'm very concerned once this fixed rail system is built how much more it is going to cost the citizens of Oahu in continuing to subsidizing the project year after year. Although our bus system which I consider to be very good, it still needs subsidizing. Once the fixed rail system becomes operational how much more subsidy is the Oahu resident going to have to provide, ten time more than the current bus system? If so, I don't want us nor our childrens to be burdened by such heavy future taxes. As a citizen of Oahu I would much rather see magnet driven bus system which is 1/10 the cost of the fixed rail system.
145	02/10/2008	Website	Please find below my comments to the Honolulu Advertiser regarding the mass transit system. Their article today was entitled: "Transit system likely won't improve traffic." I disagree with the statement and title: "Transit system likely won't improve traffic." If the system is designed properly, it will absolutely improve traffic and the quality of life. People need to be educated about the benefits of the transit system and then they'll take it over driving. The transit system is the only way to improve the traffic. The faster they get it up the better. Honolulu County will spend more time and money fixing roads, its residents will spend more and more money on gas, and everyone will be wasting time doubting this transit project. It must become reality as soon as possible.

#	Record Date	Submission Method	Submission Content/Notes*
144	02/10/2008	Website	I think the marginal reduction in ridership of less than 10% (Honolulu Advertiser 2/10/08) does not warrant the investment and the disruption. I believe that technology in automobiles will enable a substantial reduction in the distance between cars on existing roads; essentially the use of GPS and cruise control and parking control out one decade. This will really place Honolulu on the map with use of advanced technology that will actually solve the problem. Aloha!
143	02/10/2008	Website	Aloha, Regardless the type of technology chosen, it is important to consider may be a portion of one car on each ram reserved for trolleys, bicycles, Segway and scooters to increase the ridership. If I want to go from down town to Barbers Point, I need to end my trip with something else than counting on a bus that might not be there anytime soon. Thank you. Guy Belegaud
142	02/10/2008	Website	dear mayor hanneman, i m a supporter for the express transit. get your ass up and get start now. what you talking to the experts? i m a expert riding the bus from A to B and i know how long it takes . so make up your mind quickly and dont take to much time just start the project now ! regards wolfgang neumann
141	02/10/2008	Website	This is such an important project, I pray that politics does not get in the way of its design and construction. I believe this mass transit system will help both our environment, our economic growth, and our quality of life, and I am excited to see this project develop.

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			<p>What will be the cost to replace/make necessary repairs 10 years later because you chose to use cheaper parts and materials now? That cost will be; unnecessary downtime, repeated repairs to the same issues, Customer dissatisfaction, both labor and material cost in ten years later dollars too include, aggravation from the time the replacement/repair modification requirement is recognized until it is completed. Solution! Don't count pennies now (Compared to later costs, it is pennies) DO IT RIGHT the first time, using the best materials that will withstand USES, STRESS and allow for simple maintenance without regular, costly renovation and maintenance. Do not consider systems that are on the drawing board! Talk to the engineers that have built currently functioning rail systems (Germany, France, England, Japan, and Washington DC Metro to name a few). All locations with current, up and running systems. Review their plans and major unsuspected issues that occurred during their building process plus the required solutions they had to devise to resolve the issues. Select a time proven system that is currently in operation. Reasonable maintenance cost. Where possible, run lines parallel to existing HI Way! Space that is already in use for transportation requiring less new land acquisition. Go underground not above ground! Just consider the electric power line issue! They should have been underground from the beginning! What is the cost for repair to down lines because of weather, age and the ugliness of the lines all over the place? What would be the cost to now correct the issue and place ALL power lines underground (Where they should have been placed in the beginning)? Do we need to point out medical, commercial, and private home issues because of downed power lines? Or the poorly built (Cheaply Built) sewage system. Also, when choosing building materials for stations, consider daily cleaning and maintenance /renovation cost over the life expectancy of the system! Using quality tile allows for easy, fast, sanitary cleaning. Stay away from paint (labor cost, redo intensive, unsightly until required maintenance is done worse, is cost over time! Little things matter! Are Costly! Example: Do not mount toilet stall walls to the floor. Each anchor point collects filth over time and hinders fast simple cleaning. Mounted to the ceiling allows for simple, fast floor cleaning reducing time and effort required for sanitary cleaning, thus reducing cost while increasing customer satisfaction as well as over all sanitation. Completely tiled walls support fast easy cleaning, sanitation, and no renovation / upkeep requirements. (High quality, large face tile) Reduce building maintenance and air condition cost! Consider POROTON, a commonly use building material in Germany that resists temperature change there by requiring little or no air conditioning! It supports poured floors (cement/concrete). Too, use meaningful installation for the roofs. This will give you a better than 80% reduction in air conditioning cost per year! I built my own home in Germany, using this material. Live six weeks from Oct 2004 to end of Nov 2004 without heat because of furnace replacement/repair. No other source of heat! The house NEVER got uncomfortably cold! Yes we started to wear sweaters in the house, but the house was more that livable! SAVE money, build with</p>

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137	02/07/2008	Website	I am glad that there will be a panel of technical experts reviewing the technology alternatives. I think some of us would like to know who is on the panel and what are their credentials?
136	02/06/2008	Website	Historically, Most if not all transit systems are losing money and increase taxes is the remedy to keep the systems from failing. I liked to know what happens when the ridership does not meet the required amount for solvency. Billions of dollars will be spent to build this transit system and the millions of dollars needed to maintain this lunacy. Elected officials should be more responsible with other people's monies.
134	02/06/2008	Website	20 seconds to board or disembark from a train? Are these going to be sensitive doors that open if a disabled person is still in process of getting on/off or are these non-sensitive doors like the New York subway system that just close, dragging whatever is caught in the door along the track?

#	Record Date	Submission Method	Submission Content/Notes*
133	02/06/2008	Website	<p>The Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project needs to be the City and County's top priority. Above all else, a system needs to be designed that is very attractive and people need to be educated about the benefits of using it. The more that people are educated and the system is marketed, the more successful that it will be. It is an excellent idea. People need to know that this system will save money repairing roads, encourage the creation of more jobs, be supported by tourism, save gas money, and be better for the environment, among other things. There should be special schedules for rush-hour, such as express trains to downtown and Waikiki. The buses should be coordinated with the trains, especially from Ewa Beach and to/from military bases. We need to see that the train is a better option than driving. There needs to be spacious parking lots and good drop-off locations. Is the airport still an option? It really should be. Tourists and residents alike will definitely use it more than. Parking lots will always be full. The Japanese tourists are a large percentage of our tourists, and they are very familiar with mass transit. The train needs to employ good technology to impress them. The quieter and better the train is, the better for residents in Hawaii and property values, as well. In terms of the choosing of a train, I'm encouraged to hear that you're consulting various mainland and international vendors. I'm originally from New Jersey, long-considered the most densely-populated state. Our New Jersey Transit System is the only way to get into New York City during rush-hour. It is very comfortable, and is spacious enough to accommodate suitcases, luggage, and even has bathrooms. There are conductors on the train that take tickets. Perhaps we might want to have a more advanced system of paying for tickets here while we're still in the planning stages. Just like on the Boat, I think that wireless internet would be a huge motivator, especially for students. As the climate is different than much of the mainland, the train needs to be designed to weather extreme climate and precipitation conditions. Are we receiving much federal funding for this? We need to be. If our federal government knows what's good for it, it will seek to preserve Hawaii's environment and economy by heavily funding this project. This system should be a showcase to the country of how mass transit is good for the environment. I think that it should also showcase alternative energy sources, specifically utilizing solar power. My husband is in the military, so we will not be here forever, but we own two properties here, so we have a lot invested. I have worked in Waikiki during my stay here, and I know from experience how difficult the commute can be. I have had co-workers who would come to work at 5 or 6am and leave after 8pm just to avoid the traffic. This is no way to live. I hope that you will consider what I've written. Thank you for your service.</p>

#	Record Date	Submission Method	Submission Content/Notes*
132	02/06/2008	Website	
131	02/05/2008	Website	Aloha, Just wanted to give you my support for a fixed way rail system. I know it will take years/decades to build but in the long run will bring new jobs, sustanability and hopefully the residents less stress on the roads. It is a proven method of transportation in may other citys! Good luck and I will continue to support this project. Beth
130	02/04/2008	Website	I would like to be placed on your mailing list.
129	02/04/2008	Website	I sure hope the transit panel decides to go with a rail system with rubber wheels. Steel wheels are extremely noisy. I had the opportunity to ride the transit system in Bangkok, Thailand was impressed with how quite it was. I also rode the system in Chicago and noted how noisy and rough the ride was. I was shocked at how bad the system in Chicago was. The tracks were iin bad shape so much so that it could only proceed at a slow speed. I was surprised at how backward their system was. Thailand which is considered a third world county has Chicago beat hands down. I hope we do not make such a mistake and go with a system that utilizes steel track and steel wheels.
128	02/04/2008	Website	Please replace the addressee for: 2660 Myrtle Street From: Terry Ishii To: Gayle Ishii on the monthly newsletters. Terry Ishii no longer resides at this address. Thank you!!
127	02/03/2008	Website	WHO IS THE INDEPENDENT PANEL OF EXPERTS TO EVALUATE AND SELECT THE VENDOR?????
126	02/03/2008	Website	I think it is a waste of taxpayer money. not only residents won't ride it and how about fixing it. the city cannot even repair thousands of potholes that we have as we speak. the city cannot even return my phone calle for a form request because a huge pothole cause a possible damage to my car. noise heard from under my car since going into the pothole during the heavy rain this week.
125	02/02/2008	Website	I have been receiving 2 mailings at the 215 N King Street address. Please change the mailing address to only one mailing address, the above P.O. Box address.
124	02/01/2008	Website	Please make change to address that your newsletter is addressed to. Currently being sent to: John Cushnie Change to: Grant James (New General Manager)

* Submission Content/Notes column has not been changed or altered in any manner from what was submitted. Missing numbers were submissions received which had no comment regarding the project. These are often mailing list requests.

Posted on: Sunday, February 3, 2008

COMMENTARY

Putting transit on track for the 21st century

By Karl Kim

Recent developments in the city's efforts to build a new transit system for Honolulu bode well for the implementation of a new transportation alternative for Honolulu. The fact that so many vendors with a wide array of technologies have expressed interest is a positive sign. Yet for us to move forward on this multibillion-dollar endeavor, there needs to be clarity as to the goals and objectives for the project and articulation of the criteria used to evaluate these alternative technologies.

Indeed, I remain hopeful that there will be effective deliberation as to the pros and cons as well as the costs and benefits of the competing technologies.

This should be an exciting, albeit challenging endeavor.

In addition to the obvious goal of building a rapid-transit system, capable of quickly and safely transporting thousands of people per hour, it seems that we should also be striving to build a system that will serve us for the next 50 to 100 years. As such, we should adopt a more long-term perspective in terms of this major capital investment.

We should also be looking at serving not just future generations, but also those currently underserved by our transportation system. The opportunity to greatly enhance the mobility and access to transportation services for people without cars, transit-dependent populations, people with disabilities and others who want options to driving or commuting by car should be a foremost consideration in selecting a technology for Honolulu.

We also need to select a system that can compete effectively with existing modes in terms of trip duration, reliability, ease of use and cost. There are at least five main criteria that should be considered in the selection of a new system.

1. Proven technology. We don't want Honolulu to be the test site for some newfangled gizmo that hasn't been proven as a safe, reliable system. We don't need and can't afford to invest in a system that hasn't been built yet, that's still on the drawing boards, and that still needs all the kinks and bugs worked out. There are horror stories of parts of elevated systems falling off or components of systems that never worked as intended.

We need to see the system in operation, not just on a test track, but actually implemented and up and running in a comparable city where the human and environmental factors have been tested in actual service. The growth in ridership depends on the reliability of service. There are so many different aspects — from traction and control, power systems and electrification, vehicle design, communications, guideway and station construction, fare collection, security, and so forth, that it is best to go with proven technology.

2. Cost of operations and maintenance. While many have focused on the capital costs — which are critical — we also need to pay close attention to the operating and maintenance costs of these different technologies. There are trade-offs between steel- and rubber-tired systems, between automated and driver-

controlled systems, between systems that operate on an exclusive guideway that reduces the risk of collision with other vehicles and other disruptions.

Here's where technology and prudent design can also serve to reduce costs of operation.

Given our remote location, we should also be reviewing the service and maintenance records of the various competing technologies.

3. Expandability and flexibility. One of the worst things we can do is sell ourselves short. The new system must be easily expandable and flexible as our conditions and needs change. We should be able to add more trains and vehicles as the need arises. As our population continues to grow, we should be able to add stations and then lines as the demand for transit increases. We should be planning for a system that has surplus capacity, so that as fuel prices rise and more people switch from driving to transit and as others discover the benefits of travel by train, there will be room for expansion.

In most cities with a successful transit system, patterns of land use adjust over time so that there is greater density — and riders — located around stations.

4. Integration with other travel modes. The technology should allow for integration with other travel modes — pedestrian, bike, bus, ferry, paratransit, taxi, car/vanpool, drop-off lots (kiss/ride), commuter parking lots and other transportation systems. We need integrated fare systems, cooperation and coordination with other transport providers, and technologies that allow for ease of transfer between transportation modes.

We should insist on technology that can be fully integrated with the complete mix of transportation alternatives as part of an overall system of moving people efficiently throughout the island.

5. Environmental Considerations. While an electric transit system has obvious environmental advantages over fossil fuel burning automobiles, the new system should also be one that is both environmentally sensitive as well aesthetically pleasing in our community, which places such a high premium on the natural environment.

Issues such as noise, vibration, as well as the visual impacts of guideways, stations, power systems, and other aspects of transit technology need to be taken seriously in the selection process. The environmental concerns relate not just to the operations, but also to repair and maintenance, disposal and/or recycling of components.

As the city moves forward on the deliberation and selection of a new transit system for the 21st century and beyond, let us hope that not only is there more public disclosure of the criteria and basis for picking a technology, but also that we end up buying, building and owning a system we can all be proud of.

Karl Kim, Ph.D., is professor and chair of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Hawai'i. He wrote this commentary for The Advertiser.

Posted on: Monday, February 4, 2008

Letters to the Editor

LET'S MOVE FORWARD, NOT ROUND AND ROUND

Progress is hard because people like to go round and round in circles rather than move forward. This can be said of the recent discussions on technology and HOT lanes/bus versus rail.

The City Council chose a fixed guideway mass transit project more than a year ago. Now, some want to revisit that decision and go back to HOT lanes and express buses.

Jeremy Harris pushed for these same express bus guideways that he called bus rapid transit. There was huge public resistance to this plan.

The express buses would've taken lanes away from existing traffic. Two lanes in each direction on several major roads became "dedicated lanes." This was necessary to keep the "rapid" in bus rapid transit.

HOT is not new technology. It's the same thing — restricted lanes that take away traffic lanes from cars. Drivers would be forced into fewer lanes, unless they're willing pay the toll to drive in the bus lanes.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann is right to propose an independent expert panel. If left to others, we would find ourselves going round and round in circles and not moving forward.

*Terry Ann Yamamoto
Honolulu*

Senate Majority Caucus

Hawaii State Senate

Hannemann Testifies on Mass Transit Bill

Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann testifies before three Senate committees on Senate Bill 3213.

Three Senate committees held a joint hearing today to determine whether Senate Bill 3213 will move forward. The bill says that if the city and county of Honolulu does not decide which technology to use for its fixed guideway mass transit system by June 30, the 0.5 percent tax surcharge it currently charges to fund the project will be suspended. The bill also requires the county to award contracts for the technology by Dec. 31.

Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann testified before the Transportation and International Affairs (TIA), Economic Development and Taxation (EDT) and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs (IGM) committees that while he does not think the legislation is necessary, he appreciates the concern the legislature has over the progress of the mass transit plans. [Testimony](#).

On Jan. 23, the Honolulu City Council voted 6-3 to approve a panel of experts to decide on the technology that will be used for the transit project.

Senators asked Hannemann during the hearing what would happen if they do not pass the bill and the council drags its feet. Hannemann told senators that he does not think there will be any more stalling because the councilmembers know that there is too much at stake to change their minds.

“The more we delay, the more we’re going to pay,” Hannemann said.

The Senate committees agreed to defer the measure until next week, giving senators time to re-word the bill. The bill will be reviewed again by the TIA and IGM committees on Monday at 1:15 p.m. and by the EDT Committee on Feb. 12.

Transit bill would link funds with deadlines

The mayor says the city cannot meet the measure's schedule

By Laurie Au
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Leaders of three state Senate committees interested in ensuring the city moves forward with its \$3.8 billion fixed-guideway project are debating a bill threatening to suspend a funding source if certain deadlines are not met as a way to keep the pressure on city officials.

Some supporters are mindful of a 5-4 decision by the Honolulu City Council in 1992 that abruptly derailed a proposed transit system.

The bill would require the city to select a technology for the route going from Kapolei to Ala Moana by June 30 and to award a contract by Dec. 31 or else lose the local excise tax money needed to fund the project.

Sen. Carol Fukunaga (D, Lower Maikiki-Punchbowl), chairwoman of the Economic Development and Taxation Committee, said in a meeting Wednesday that she cannot support the measure with its current deadlines. Mayor Mufi Hannemann testified that the city would be unable to meet one of them because of federal regulations.

Others argued that the bill is unnecessary because the city seems to be on schedule to break ground late next year.

"There's no indication it'll fall through," said Sen. Will Espero (D, Ewa-Honouliuli-Ewa Beach). "There's every indication it will happen."

"The last time there was indication it would happen, and it didn't," said Sen. J. Kalani English, chairman of the Transportation and International Affairs Committee, referring to the 1992 Council's decision to withhold local funding that killed the project.

The senators are expected to make a decision this afternoon to amend the bill, hold it or defer it. If the committees, which also include the Intergovernmental and Military Affairs Committee, decide to push the bill forward, it would go to the Senate Ways and Means Committee for approval.

As of November the city collected nearly \$135 million from state excise taxes. If the bill passes and the city misses its deadlines, the money would then go to the state highway fund for other transportation projects.

Hannemann told senators that a panel of experts is expected to select a technology by the end of the month. However, he said, awarding a contract to a company by the end of the year is impossible because federal rules say the city must first complete an environmental impact statement, which is not expected until next year.

After the hearing, Hannemann said that he worries about the negative message the bill could send to lawmakers in Washington, who might be hesitant in providing federal funds, especially after the 1992 incident.

"In a perfect world, we'd prefer not to have the (bill)," Hannemann said last week. "Obviously, any time there appears to be an opportunity to revisit the decision made, it sends shock waves not only here at home, but in Washington. This is a risk to push the bill through."



Capitol Notebook

A behind-the-scenes look at state government and politics from Capitol Bureau reporters Derrick DePledge and Treena Shapiro. Share insider tips or ideas with the bureau at 525-8070 or via e-mail.

Reach Derrick at ddepledge@honoluluadvertiser.com and Treena at tshapiro@honoluluadvertiser.com.

Posted on: February 12, 2008 at 4:28:52 pm

Transit deadline bill shelved

A state Senate [bill](#) that would have suspended the general-excise tax surcharge on O'ahu if the Honolulu City Council failed to choose mass transit technology by June was killed off today.

The state Senate Economic Development and Taxation Committee would not go along after two other committees -- Transportation and International Affairs and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs -- passed it out yesterday.

The senators behind the bill wanted to send a message to the City Council to keep the mass transit project on track.

"I'm disappointed we don't have a vehicle," said state Senate Majority Leader Gary Hooser, D-7th (Kaua'i, Ni'ihau). "But they know that we are watching."

State Sen. Carol Fukunaga, D-11th (Makiki, Pāwa'a), the chairman of the economic development committee, and other senators were concerned the bill could undercut efforts to secure federal money for the project.

"The bill could have jeopardized the transit project," said state Sen. Will Espero, D-20th (Ewa Beach, Waipahu). "The bill was also introduced by Neighbor Islands guys who didn't even talk to the O'ahu folks."

Transit meeting going public

Experts chosen to pick the design of the new rail system will not take public testimony

By Laurie Au
lau@starbulletin.com

A panel of experts selecting the technology for the city's \$3.8 billion mass transit system will open its meetings to the public, the city decided last week amid concerns from lawmakers that this critical decision would be made behind closed doors.

In a letter Friday to the state Office of Information Practices, Donna Woo, the city's deputy corporation counsel, said the city still believes the panel does not have to abide by the Sunshine Law, but is choosing to do so to remain open and transparent.

"It's a good compromise," said City Councilman Nestor Garcia, also chairman of the Council's Transportation Committee. "Because this is such a high-profile project, that should allay some of the concerns people have that a deal might be struck behind closed doors."

Cathy Takase, an OIP staff attorney, said OIP always took the stance that it believes the panel would be subjected to the state's open-meeting laws. The city's Corporation Counsel argued that the panel was created by a resolution, which is not explicitly covered by the Sunshine Law.

The City Council asked OIP in late January to issue an opinion, which would have had no enforcement power, on the panel. However, since the city agreed to abide by the Sunshine Law, OIP no longer has to do so.

The city had said the panel would be able to have more open and frank discussions because the decision involves reviewing proprietary material from 11 companies on four types of technology -- steel wheel on steel rail, a magnetic levitation system, a monorail or a rubber-tire vehicle on concrete -- for the route running from Kapolei to Ala Moana.

"It kind of defeats the whole usefulness of the process to have that dialogue," said Wayne Yoshioka, the city's transportation director. "But because of all the concerns, that's the best way we can handle this."

Several state and city lawmakers who objected to the panel's private meetings said they were relieved to hear of the open meetings but still had some concerns, such as the public not being able to testify.

"I applaud their efforts to have open decisions," said Sen. Gary Hooser (D, Kauai-Niihau), who introduced a bill because of the technology panel calling for any committee making decisions affecting procurement to be subjected to the Sunshine Law.

"While I think this is a nice small step, I don't think it goes far enough," said City Councilman Charles Djou. "Even if they are voluntarily complying with the Sunshine act, they can stop complying at the same time."

The panel, which consists of four mainland transit experts and University of Hawaii-Manoa engineering professor Panos Prevedouros, will meet at 8:30 a.m. Friday at Mission Memorial Auditorium next to Honolulu Hale.

The city plans to have the panel meet again on Feb. 21 or 22 to make its decision.

The city is paying each panelist \$175 an hour -- budgeting about \$20,000 per member and \$30,000 for its chairman, Ron Tober, a former general manager of several rail transit systems, who will come back once more to Honolulu to present the panel's report to the City Council.

Set to meet

The public is invited to the first meeting of the panel of experts selecting the technology for the city's \$3.8 billion fixed-guideway system:

- » 8:30 a.m. Friday at the Mission Memorial Auditorium next to Honolulu Hale on South King Street
- » No public testimony



Vol. 13, Issue 44 - Wednesday, February 13, 2008

OUR OPINION

City officials back off on transit meetings; legislators step in

THE ISSUE

City officials have decided to open transit selection meetings to the public, while the state Senate considers setting deadlines for action.

Meetings at which a panel of experts discusses and chooses the type of transit system the city plans to build will be open to the public, as they should be.

Taxpayers have a huge stake in what will be one of the largest projects the city has undertaken -- and an expensive one, at that. They are due the assurance of straightforward decision-making.

While the public properly has a role in transit considerations, state Senate leaders are crossing the boundary between legislating and administrating by seeking to impose deadlines on the city's planning process for the system. They are meddling when there appears to be no reason for concern.

A bill moving through the Senate would suspend a tax surcharge collected to help pay for the transit system if the city doesn't make a selection by the end of June. As plans now stand, the city's expert panel will do so by the end of this month.

The bill also calls for the city to award contracts for the project by the end of the year, a deadline that cannot be met because federal law requires an environmental impact statement before such transactions. Moreover, the complexity and size of the system demands a thorough review; rushing an assessment would be irresponsible.

There seems to be no compelling reason for state lawmakers to be pushing the city along. However, it is not inconceivable that with revenues dropping, legislators might be looking covetously at the more than \$135 million the city has in its transit pot.

Meanwhile, the city's elected leaders, having yielded their duty for choosing a transit system to the panel, have reluctantly granted that the experts' meetings will be public. The Hannemann administration earlier claimed the meetings needed to be secret because companies vying for the project would otherwise have to reveal proprietary information.

After some City Council members objected and sought an opinion from the Office of Information Practices, the administration relented, though still contending that the panel is not bound by the state's Sunshine Law. But without the OIP opinion, officials can still shut off the public if it chooses and there are no guarantees that information used in the panel's decision-making will not be restricted. With no shortage of transit opponents, city officials should be wary of potential legal potholes as they move the project forward.

Clinton Targets Proposals For Hawaii

HONOLULU, Feb. 14, 2008

(AP) [Hillary Rodham Clinton](#) pledged Wednesday to "pay special attention to Hawaii" with plans to rejuvenate tourism, reduce reliance on foreign oil and help veterans as the islands prepare for their Democratic caucus next week.

Clinton's "Solutions for Hawaii" plan comes ahead of a difficult caucus vote Tuesday in the islands, where rival [Barack Obama](#) was born, raised and graduated high school.

"I know we face an uphill battle in the state, but we plan to run a vigorous and successful campaign," Clinton said.

Neither candidate has planned campaign trips to Hawaii, but the Clinton campaign announced on Thursday that Chelsea Clinton will visit Hawaii over the weekend to campaign for her mother.

The former first daughter is to appear in Honolulu tomorrow and Saturday before appearing Sunday at a rally on Maui.

James "Kimo" Apana, Clinton's Maui coordinator, said he hoped the appearance would "fire up" local Clinton supporters and help them feel more connected to her presidential campaign.

Obama's half-sister, Maya Soetoro-Ng, is also campaigning for him locally.

If elected president, Clinton said her programs would strengthen Hawaii's economy, invest in renewable energy and remedy a shortage of public school teachers.

"I will pay special attention to Hawaii because I know how tourism-dependent Hawaii is," Clinton said in a conference call with reporters from San Antonio, Texas.

Clinton said she, too, has strong ties to Hawaii because she has visited the state five times since 1993. Also, former President Bill Clinton was responsible for signing the 1993 Apology Resolution that recognized the overthrow of the kingdom of Hawaii in 1893.

There are only 20 delegates at stake in Hawaii on Tuesday - the same day as the Wisconsin primary - but a Clinton victory would put a dent in Obama's recent string of wins in eight states.

Clinton emphasized that her broad plans have specific benefits for Hawaii.

She said she would maintain military spending, support a proposed light-rail system in Honolulu and sign into law a proposal recognizing Native Hawaiians.

"We can make investments like light rail as we grow the economy," Clinton said. "I will certainly help Hawaii and Honolulu deal with these problems."

Obama has not yet released proposals targeted at Hawaii, but campaign spokesman Brian Schatz said his views more closely reflect those of island voters.

"Obama's foreign policy is more in line with Hawaii's perspective. He got the war right the first time," Schatz said. "We think that his understanding of diversity comes from his upbringing here."

Clinton said her "Tour America Initiative" would bring visitors to Hawaii through a federal government-funded marketing campaign that would create a Web site to promote tourism in the United States and dispel misperceptions about difficulties of traveling to the United States.

Her proposed \$50 billion investment in researching, developing and deploying alternative energy would directly benefit Hawaii, which currently imports about 90 percent of its fuel, she said.

A \$1 billion Green Building Fund would improve energy efficiency in 84,000 buildings in Hawaii. Together, these energy programs would create 2,100 jobs in Hawaii and lower energy costs, the campaign said.

More than 100,000 veterans living in Hawaii would benefit from Clinton's programs by improving health care, offering loans for their business ventures and enabling Filipino World War II veterans to bring their families to the United States, she said.

Clinton has released similar state-specific initiatives in several other states, a campaign spokeswoman said.

Posted on: Thursday, February 14, 2008

Isle vote an 'uphill battle'

By [Derrick DePledge](#)
Advertiser Government Writer

U.S. Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton of New York said yesterday that if elected president she would sign a Native Hawaiian federal recognition bill, maintain military spending in the Islands, and support federal funding for a Honolulu mass transit project.

Clinton, in a telephone conference call with Hawai'i newspaper reporters, acknowledged that the Hawai'i Democratic caucuses on Tuesday will be a challenge. U.S. Sen. Barack Obama of Illinois, her rival for the nomination, was born here and graduated from Punahou School.

"I know we face an uphill battle in the state, but we plan to run a vigorous and successful campaign," the New York Democrat said during a break from campaigning in Texas.

The Hawai'i caucuses usually go unnoticed nationally, but with the nomination still in doubt, both campaigns see value in the 20 delegates at stake here on Tuesday. Chelsea Clinton, Clinton's daughter, is expected to campaign for her mother in Hawai'i this weekend.

Clinton, like Obama, said she would sign a Native Hawaiian federal recognition bill that has been pending in Congress since 2000. The Akaka bill would recognize Native Hawaiians as an indigenous people with the right to self-government and create a process for Hawaiians to potentially have more authority over land and cultural issues. Clinton also said she supported the 1993 resolution signed by her husband, President Bill Clinton, apologizing for the U.S. role in the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawai'i.

"I think it remedies a long history of problems and gives recognition," she said of the bill.

Clinton said she would maintain military spending in the Islands and adequately fund the veterans' healthcare system. "I believe military spending will be maintained because we have to support our national defense priorities," she said.

Clinton said she would back federal spending for a Honolulu mass transit system to help reduce the state's dependence on oil, relieve traffic congestion, and create jobs in construction and other industries. "The federal government should be supportive of initiatives like that," she said. "It's one of the 21st century solutions that I'm promoting in my campaign."

U.S. Rep. Neil Abercrombie, D-Hawai'i, who has endorsed Obama, said Democrats are not necessarily looking at issues to separate Obama and Clinton, but rather which candidate would be the most effective for the party against the Republican nominee in November.

"People are looking for a distinction without much of a difference. I don't think issues are an issue with the voting electorate in the Democratic nomination process," the congressman said in a telephone interview from Washington, D.C. He said "the Democratic base has pretty much decided that it's who they want to be nominated as opposed to any given issue."

ENERGY AND THE ISLES

The Clinton campaign also released a detailed summary yesterday explaining how her national policies on energy independence, education, healthcare, housing, and immigration would benefit people in the Islands.

Local Clinton volunteers said there are no immediate plans for television or radio advertisements, but the Clinton campaign has dispatched staff to the Islands.

Mark Penn, Clinton's chief strategist, indicated in a memo released yesterday that the campaign is looking beyond Hawai'i and Wisconsin — where Democrats also vote on Tuesday — to the March 4 contests in delegate-rich states such as Ohio and Texas. Penn argues that Clinton and Obama will be virtually tied among delegates after March 4 and that the nomination may not tip until after the April 22 vote in Pennsylvania, where Clinton is strong.

Penn contends the demographics in Ohio, Texas and Pennsylvania favor Clinton, who has done well among white women and Latino voters in particular.

"Change begins March 4th," Penn wrote.

Penn also argued that the nomination is about delegates, not how many states a candidate has won, a response to Obama's string of victories since Super Tuesday. He said Bill Clinton in 1992, Walter Mondale in 1984 and Jimmy Carter in 1976 had lost several primaries and caucuses before ultimately winning the nomination.

ABERCROMBIE UNSWAYED

Abercrombie said he credits Clinton for withstanding the barrage of attacks from Republicans and other critics but said she remains a polarizing figure who could galvanize Republican voters in November. Obama, on the other hand, has been able to attract young people, independents and others to the party.

"He can grow the vote and Senator Clinton can't. It's not fair, but it's real with regard to Senator Clinton," Abercrombie said. "Her negatives are so intractable. They're so hard-wired, that she simply can't overcome them, because she's been the object of relentless attacks."

...

CLINTON ON HAWAII

Hillary Rodham Clinton yesterday outlined how her national proposals would affect people in Hawai'i:

- **Energy independence:** A \$50 billion Strategic Energy Fund to research and develop alternative and renewable energy, such as solar, tidal and wave power, could help lower energy costs in Hawai'i, the nation's most oil-dependent state. A \$1 billion Green Building Fund would provide grants or low-interest loans for more energy-efficient public buildings, and a separate weatherization program would be aimed at low-income households.
- **Tourism:** A public-private partnership with states and local communities on a Tour America program to attract visitors to the United States. The initiative would include federally funded marketing campaigns to draw domestic and international

visitors. She would also codify the federal visa waiver program to help nations that are eligible to be admitted. The program allows visitors from countries friendly to the United States to come for tourism and business for 90 days without a visa. Hawai'i tourism officials are anticipating a boost from visitors in South Korea next year if the country is added to the program.

- **Education:** End the federal No Child Left Behind law, which Clinton voted for in 2001, and invest in early childhood education, teacher recruitment and retention, and early intervention programs for at-risk students. She would also double the federal college tax credit and establish a student borrower's bill of rights to protect students from predatory lenders.

- **Healthcare:** A refundable tax credit for people to offset health-insurance premiums, a tax credit to help small businesses offer healthcare to employees, and higher reimbursement rates for the federal Medicare and Medicaid programs.

- **Affordable housing:** A \$1 billion federal fund to support state efforts such as the Rental Housing Trust Fund, which state lawmakers are using to improve access to affordable rentals.

- **Military veterans:** Expand healthcare, education and employment opportunities for active-duty service members and veterans, including low-interest micro-loans for veteran entrepreneurs starting businesses.

- **Immigration:** Enhance family reunification as a goal within the immigration system. She also supports the proposed federal Dream Act, which provides a path to citizenship for immigrant children through military service or college.

Source: Clinton campaign



Transit Experts To Pick Technology

By Andrew Pereira Story Updated: Feb 15, 2008 at 6:38 PM HST

Members of an expert committee charged with picking the technology for Oahu's \$3.8 billion mass transit system met for the first time Friday at Mission Memorial Auditorium in Honolulu.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann's administration initially stated the panel of four engineers and a former mass transit manager would meet in secret, but reversed course after several lawmakers objected.

Meanwhile, it's the opinion of city lawyers that whatever the committee decides will be binding because of the way the resolution that gave birth to the panel was worded.

"I've been told by the Corporation Council that your panel is not advisory, that your selection because it says 'select', your selection becomes a final selection," said City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi, one of about ten people who testified before committee members.

"It's very hard for me as a public official to accept that," Kobayashi added. "I believe that elected officials have the authority to decide how to spend taxpayers' dollars."

A city lawyer also told committee members that they could not consult with one another because they would be reviewing proprietary information from eleven companies that are vying for the mass transit project.

"That's an unfortunate part of the process," said committee chairman Ron Tober, the former Chief Executive Officer of the rail transit system in Charlotte, North Carolina.

"Essentially it's five different completely independent votes with no ability to cross fertilize and use each other's expertise to our advantage," said University of Hawaii Professor Panos Prevedouros, another committee member.

Both Tober and Prevedouros stated that maintenance costs for the fixed guideway system would be a key factor in deciding what technology to use. The half percent transit tax passed by the state legislature expires in December of 2022, and Tober says there needs to be a funding mechanism in place to cover repairs and upkeep.

"No public transportation system anywhere that I'm aware of...is able to cover all of its costs from out of the fare boxes," said the committee's chairman.

Prevedouros believes the key to a successful fixed guideway system for Oahu is flexibility. He dubbed light rail "19th century" technology that doesn't translate very well into modern lifestyles.

"People do a multitude of activities, so a linear system with twenty stations is probably the least appropriate of what we need," said the professor.

Tober added that Hawaii lawmakers should also prepare themselves for the possibility of cost overruns. The south corridor of the Charlotte Area Transportation System, a light rail design that Tober was in charge of until his retirement, was \$36 million over budget as of October of last year.

“We bid construction contracts during a period when steel and cement prices across the world were spiking,” said Tober. “That impacted us greatly.”

The five member panel is expected to meet again next week where they will likely choose a technology for Oahu’s mass transit.

Even if one of the City Council’s nine members introduced a bill to override the committee’s decision, it’s not likely there would be five votes to pass it. If such a bill was to pass and Mayor Hannemann vetoed it, it would take six council members to override.

Three Council members, Donovan Dela Cruz, Charles Djou and Ann Kobayashi voted against the creation of the technology committee.

City Provides Background on Independent Technology Selection Panelists Charged with Selecting Honolulu's Fixed Guideway System

By Bill Brennan, 2/15/2008 3:54:26 PM

The following 5 individuals have been selected as members of the independent panel established to select the vehicle technology for Honolulu's fixed guideway transit system.

The panel was established via resolution 07-376, CD1, FD1 (B) which was adopted by the Honolulu City Council on Jan. 23, 2008.

Panel members will evaluate the submittals received in response to the city's Request for Information and make their selection based on criteria established by the Council and the Department of Transportation Services.

More information on the technologies being considered can be found on the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project Web site at: <http://www.honolulustransit.org/>

Steve Barsony serves as the systems engineering expert and was chosen by the Council Transportation Committee Chair, Nestor Garcia. Prior to his retirement, Mr. Barsony served as Director of the Federal Transit Administration's Office of Engineering, Director of the Boeing Company's Office of Systems Engineering and with Ford Motor Company.

Mr. Barsony's post retirement positions include serving on a selection committee for the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA), as Chief Engineer for Aegir and as a consultant and technical advisor to the Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC).

Kenneth G. Knight is the panel's construction expert. He has more than 45 years experience as a successful manager of large, multi-disciplinary national and international rapid rail transit projects. Mr. Knight has been involved in all stages of transit development from initial planning through design and construction to operation and management of the completed system.

Mr. Knight has professional, relevant experience with the Toronto Transit Commission, the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority, the World Bank, Cansult Limited, DMJM + Harris, Capital Transit Consultants and Parsons, Brinckerhoff, Quade and Douglas, among others.

Henry Kolesar is an operation expert. He has 25 years of relevant experience in the design and maintenance for a broad range of fixed guideway transit vehicles. As a propulsion and systems engineer for Bombardier Transportation, he has engineering knowledge of steel wheel/steel rail and rubber tired fixed guideway technologies.

Mr. Kolesar is the current Group Manager of the Vehicle Maintenance Engineering for the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District, responsible for vehicle systems, maintenance and new-vehicle engineering, reliability analyses, maintenance planning, reliability --

centered maintenance program and quality assurance on a fleet of 699 vehicles.

Panos Prevedourous has an advanced degree in transportation engineering and has been advising government in Hawaii in transportation public policy since 1990. He was appointed by Council Chair Barbara Marshall. He is a professor of Traffic and Transportation Engineering at the University of Hawaii at Manoa (UHM). Mr. Prevedourous serves as Developer and Coordinator of UHM's Traffic and Transportation Laboratory, Transportation Research Board Chair of the Freeway Simulation Subcommittee AHB20(2), President of the Hawaii Highway Users Alliance (HHUA) and on the Board of Scholars of the Grassroot Institute of Hawaii.

Mr. Prevedourous was a member of the Transit Task Force established by the Honolulu City Council to evaluate transportation alternatives in 2006 and is an ex-officio member on the Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization's Technical Advisory Committee.

Ron Tober is the fifth member of the panel and was selected by his fellow panelists. He has been General Manager and CEO of rail transit operating authorities in Cleveland, Seattle and most recently, Charlotte, North Carolina. Mr. Tober has also been responsible for agency rail and bus operations in Boston and Miami. Prior to his work with public agencies, he worked for the consulting firm of Barton-Aschman and performed transit studies in Chicago and Dallas. Mr. Tober is also a past chairman of the American Public Transportation Association.

Posted on: Saturday, February 16, 2008

Obama says he's in tune with needs of Islanders

By [Derrick DePledge](#)
Advertiser Government Writer

U.S. Sen. Barack Obama of Illinois said yesterday that his experiences growing up among different cultures in Hawai'i helped inspire his political views.

Obama, who was born here and graduated from Punahou School, said his time in the Islands as a young man enabled him to see different perspectives and points of view. He said his local roots, which have helped attract dozens of volunteers to his campaign, have given him an advantage over U.S. Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton of New York leading up to the Hawai'i Democratic caucuses on Tuesday.

"Not to pull rank, but I grew up in Hawai'i," Obama told The Advertiser by phone from Oshkosh, Wis., where he was campaigning for the Democratic presidential nomination. "I know the people of Hawai'i. I know the problems of Hawai'i. I know the opportunities of Hawai'i. And the culture is my culture. I learned very early on in Hawai'i how to bring people together, all the different cultures and that spirit of aloha that's so important.

"And that means that, from a practical perspective, I'm going to be constantly listening to Hawai'i in a way that I don't think another presidential candidate would do. I've got extremely close relationships with the people of Hawai'i; my grandmother still lives there, my sister still lives there, so I think that people can count on me caring about Hawai'i in a way that is unique.

"This is the first opportunity in history for the people of Hawai'i to have somebody in the Oval Office who is one of their own."

Obama, like Clinton, has taken an interest in the Hawai'i caucuses as the importance of every delegate becomes magnified in their nomination fight. Twenty of Hawai'i's 29 delegates to the Democratic National Convention in Denver in August will be awarded proportionally based on the results of the presidential preference poll Tuesday night.

Obama and Clinton have similar positions on the major federal issues facing Hawai'i, but what has distinguished Obama are his local ties and the energy around his campaign.

Obama released a statement in late January promising that, as president, he would sign a Native Hawaiian federal recognition bill that has been before Congress since 2000. Clinton made the same promise in a telephone conference call with Hawai'i reporters on Wednesday.

Obama also supports federal funding for a Honolulu mass-transit system.

"I think it's a high priority. Obviously, the H-1 and H-2 have just gotten very difficult for commuters," he said. "I've noticed it every time I travel back home. If I'm driving out to Mililani Town or driving out to the North Shore, you can just see that congestion has gotten worse and worse. And it's not good for the environment. It's not good for the economy. And it's obviously not good for people's quality of life.

"I've always been a big mass-transit supporter. It's something that I intend to emphasize when I am president."

Obama, like Clinton, said he would maintain military spending in the Islands and is cognizant of potential conflicts with the environment.

"I think it's important for us to ask these questions first from a national security perspective. And obviously, our bases in Hawai'i are critical to our national security. And I think that it is important for us to maintain those forces in the Pacific.

"But obviously, it's important for our military to be conscious of potential environmental concerns," he said. "And, in the past, I think, the military has not always been as conscientious as it could. I don't think there's a necessary contradiction there. I think it's just a matter of us making sure that we're paying attention to it."

U.S. Sen. Daniel K. Inouye, D-Hawai'i, who has endorsed Clinton and will campaign for her here this weekend, said he has known Clinton since she was involved in a universal healthcare proposal as first lady.

"I know Hillary Clinton and I think she'll make a very wise and strong president," he said by phone from Los Angeles. "She can begin working right away. And I think her heart is in the right place."

Inouye said he does not discount Obama's experiences in Hawai'i but noted they were limited mostly to his time at Punahou, an elite private school. Obama also typically visits his family every year at Christmas.

"If you ask the people in Hawai'i what they know about Barack Obama, I think the honest answer is, 'Very little,' " he said. "He went to school in Hawai'i but he went to Punahou, and that was not a school for the impoverished.

"I don't hold it against anyone who is a Punahou grad. It's a fine school. I would say one of the finest in the United States. But to suggest that Punahou maybe set his life plan in place, I find it very interesting."

Chelsea Clinton, Clinton's daughter, campaigned for her mother on O'ahu yesterday and will be out again today and on Maui tomorrow. The Clinton campaign also announced yesterday that 11 more state and county elected officials have endorsed Clinton.

They include state Sen. Rosalyn Baker, D-5th (W. Maui, S. Maui), the chairwoman of the Senate Ways and Means Committee; state Sen. Brian Taniguchi, D-10th (Manoa, McCully), the chairman of the Senate Judiciary and Labor Committee; and Honolulu City Councilman Donovan Dela Cruz.

State Senate President Colleen Hanabusa, D-21st (Nanakuli, Makaha), and state House Majority Leader Kirk Caldwell, D-24th (Manoa), have already been campaigning for Clinton.

Local Obama volunteers, meanwhile, have planned a news conference this afternoon at the state Capitol to announce a new round of state House and Senate lawmakers who have endorsed Obama.

Over the next few days, both campaigns will ramp up get-out-the-vote operations for Tuesday. Clinton volunteers are linking with members of the Hawai'i Government Employees Association to phone bank today and tomorrow, while Obama volunteers have been working the phones for weeks. The Obama campaign also has district captains ready at all of the more than 60 caucus sites.

Although high-profile endorsements are coveted by the candidates, they do not always have the desired local magic.

U.S. Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., who, like Inouye, is a senior and respected leader in the Senate, endorsed Obama yet Clinton won the Massachusetts primary on Super Tuesday. Inouye is behind Clinton in Hawai'i, but the landscape appears to favor Obama.

Kennedy and Inouye are both superdelegates who could help settle the nomination if neither candidate gets a majority of pledged delegates awarded by the caucuses and primaries.

"The power is with the people, and that's where it should be," Kennedy said by phone from Washington, D.C. "And that's what I admire. I think all any of us can do is give an opinion. But people ought to make a judgment. People ought to make the decision on this.

"And that's why I feel strongly that it's the pledged delegates, the ones that are won by the voters, are the ones that really ought to count."

Inouye, who will arrive back home today, said the caucuses are a unique opportunity for Hawai'i voters.

"I hope they will turn out," he said. "This is a great opportunity for us who believe in democracy. If people don't turn out to vote, democracy is weakened."

Posted on: Saturday, February 16, 2008

Transit-system choice expected to be made Friday

By [Sean Hao](#)
Advertiser Staff Writer

A panel of mass-transit experts is expected to decide Friday which type of technology to use in Honolulu's planned "fixed guideway."

The five members of the group, which held its first meeting yesterday, will individually analyze and recommend whether the \$3.7 billion system should use steel wheels on a steel rail, rubber tires on concrete, monorail technology, or magnetic levitation. Their reports are due Wednesday and the panel is scheduled to reconvene Friday morning to hear the results. Honolulu City Council members are expected to eventually hold a hearing to review the panel's selection.

A decision on the type of vehicle must be made before an environmental impact statement for the project can be completed and allow construction to begin. Mayor Mufi Hannemann hopes to break ground on the project in 2009, with the first segment starting service between East Kapolei and Waipahu in 2012.

The initial 20-mile system will have about 19 transit stations between East Kapolei and Ala Moana.

The panel, which is reviewing proposals from 12 vendors, consists of:

- Steve Barsony, a systems engineering expert.
- Kenneth Knight, a construction expert.
- Henry Kolesar, an operations expert.
- Panos Prevedourous, a public policy expert.
- Ron Tober, a transit manager who was selected to serve by the other panelists.

Panel members are budgeted to receive up to \$20,000 each for their time and expenses.

Transit gurus have a week to choose gear

A panel of experts must review data on different technologies without discussing it

By Laurie Au
lau@starbulletin.com

A group of experts picking the technology for the city's \$3.8 billion fixed-guideway system will likely have a decision by Friday, though some panel members are concerned about the short amount of time and the lack of discussion allowed.

The five-member panel of transit experts met for the first time yesterday at Mission Memorial Auditorium, where the city's consultants outlined the requirements for the technology selection.

The panel will be deciding among four technologies -- steel wheel on steel rail, monorail, magnetic levitation and rubber-tire vehicle -- for the 20-mile route from Kapolei to Ala Moana Center.

Each panelist was given a binder containing information from 10 companies and has until 4:30 p.m. Wednesday to submit a report justifying his decision. The panel will meet again at 8:30 a.m. Friday at the mayor's conference room in Honolulu Hale to make a final selection.

"It's a little early for me to comment specifically on one technology versus the other," said Ron Tober, the panel's chairman and the former general manager of several rail operating systems. "What I know and have seen, all of the technologies proposed have the potential. The question is what the best one is for Honolulu."

Some panelists said the companies submitted thorough information on their technologies; however, they did not provide sufficient cost estimates, which were expected and are a critical component in decision making.

"The real money is in the operation of this system in the long run," Tober said, adding that the panelists will need to use their experience to create a cost analysis. After inflation and interests, the city estimates the project to cost closer to \$5 billion.

Until Friday, panel members are not allowed to have any communication with each other, in accordance with the state Sunshine Law. The city administration decided last week that the panel would abide by the state's open-meeting laws because of concerns among state and city lawmakers that the decision would be made behind closed doors.

"That's the unfortunate part of the process," Tober said. "What we lose a little bit in this situation is being able to interact and debate some things."

"The whole idea was that the experts were complementary," added Panos Prevedouros, a panel member and a University of Hawaii-Manoa engineering professor. "Each one of us knows different things, so it was important for us to talk about things so we can put the puzzle together."

Only about 10 people commented on the project yesterday, unlike other meetings in front of the City Council that drew dozens of passionate speakers.

A few told the panel they would like steel rail, and others said a rubber-tire bus would work best for Honolulu.

The city is paying each panelist \$175 an hour -- budgeting about \$20,000 per member. Tober will receive \$30,000 to return again to present the panel's report to the City Council.

Posted on: Sunday, February 17, 2008

Hawaii rail project may create 9,100 jobs

By [Sean Hao](#)
Advertiser Staff Writer

Honolulu's \$3.7 billion commuter rail project could generate an average of 9,100 jobs during the nine years it takes to build it.

Those direct and indirect jobs could provide a boost to Honolulu's economy — and the construction sector in particular — between 2009 and 2017.

The project's massive scale, Hawai'i's low jobless rate and the specialty skills required to build the rail transit system may result in an influx of workers from the Mainland.

The increased demand for construction workers and materials could also temporarily drive up commercial and residential building costs.

These are some of the findings in a preliminary economic analysis of the transit system by the project's main consultant, New York-based Parsons Brinckerhoff.

Somewhere between a third and a half of the job gains would likely be in construction. Those 3,000 to 4,500 positions would add to the 38,000 construction jobs currently in the state.

"There will be literally thousands of construction workers on the job for its duration, and that multiplies through the community," said Mark Scheibe, deputy project manager for consultant Parsons Brinckerhoff.

Parsons Brinckerhoff has a 2 1/2 year, \$86 million consulting contract with the city for planning the transit system. The economic analysis was included in a May 2007 report to the city.

At least one economist doubts the job projections of Parsons Brinckerhoff. Currently the city expects to spend an average of about \$400 million a year on the project over a nine-year span. That's unlikely to produce the projected 9,000-plus jobs, said University of Hawai'i economics professor Carl Bonham.

Bonham, who did not offer an alternative estimate of the number of jobs the project will create, said the transit system will boost construction and the economy.

"That's roughly the equivalent of building a major resort or a Trump Tower each year," he said. "It helps because it is keeping people at work. It's a stabilizing force."

The activity generated by the transit project could occur at an opportune time for Hawai'i, which is expected to see economic activity flatten out in future years.

"There's an expectation that the economy won't be in as robust an operating condition for the remainder of the decade and indeed could linger at slightly lower rates of growth and vitality on out to something like 2012," said Paul Brewbaker, chief economist at Bank of Hawaii. "Activity that falls out of the sky, so to speak, would be more welcome in an environment of that sort."

Mayor Mufi Hannemann says he wants to break ground on the mass-transit system late next year with the first segment starting service between east Kapolei and Waipahu in 2012. The full 20-mile route from east Kapolei to Ala Moana Center would begin service in 2017, according to city plans.

The transit system is not expected to improve traffic conditions. Rather, the project is aimed at giving commuters another option and accommodating growth in the H-1 corridor.

The transit project, which is expected to be the largest public-works project in state history, will likely provide an economic boost both during the construction phase and once operating, especially in the 19 communities that will host transit stations.

To be sure, the economic impact of the construction jobs will be created by essentially transferring revenues from households to construction. That's because about \$3 billion of the project's price tag will be funded by a half-percentage point increase in O'ahu's general excise tax. Another \$700 million of project funds are expected to come from the federal government.

TECHNOLOGY OPTIONS

Economists and city officials said it's too early to determine the economic impact of the project beyond the construction phase. Parsons Brinckerhoff eventually plans to conduct a more thorough cost-benefit analysis of the project.

The city is considering four technology options for the transit system: steel wheels on a steel rail; rubber tires on concrete; monorail technology; and a magnetic levitation system. All four use what is known as a fixed guideway, or track, as opposed to a system that runs on existing roads.

"Now that we have the selected (the fixed guideway) alternative, we're really able to hone in at a greater level of detail on both the positive and negative impacts" of the rail project, Scheibe said.

Potential negative economic impacts, identified by Parsons Brinckerhoff and others, include:

- Higher cost of living from the increase in the excise tax.
- Traffic interruptions due to construction.
- Restrictions in access to residences and businesses adjacent to construction.
- The loss of jobs due to displacement of business and residential users for transit right of way.

Potential positive economic impacts include:

- Direct and indirect job creation based on construction spending.
- Development near transit stations.
- Reduction of mass transit travel times.
- Reduced automobile usage and lower parking requirements.
- Environmental benefits such as reduced emissions.

Among all the potential positive economic impacts, the most immediate would be the construction jobs.

The number of jobs created is expected to vary during the construction process. So far there is no estimate for the wages of jobs created by the project. However, the average construction wage in Honolulu in 2006 was \$58,657, according to the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations. Between half and two-thirds of the transit jobs would be jobs spurred by construction worker spending.

NEW JOBS OPENING

Just how many of those new jobs will be filled by local workers remains to be seen.

"We do anticipate some Mainland guys coming down, but not much," said Gino Soquena, business representative for Operating Engineers Local 3, the construction equipment operators' union. "We'll get our share of guys out there working also."

Soquena said the transit system will help if economic growth is otherwise on the decline.

"If it's slow everywhere else, then that's going to be keeping who we have now working," he said.

It's not unusual for Hawai'i to import specialized tradespeople, Brewbaker said. However, Brewbaker downplayed the potential problem of a lack of available labor.

As economic growth slows, "those (labor) resources will be increasingly available not increasingly in shortage," Brewbaker said. "People can and will change jobs when the wages make it worthwhile. There's a tremendous amount of substitutability in the workforce, which will mitigate the problems."

On the issue of business displacements during construction and the related job losses, Parsons Brinckerhoff noted that those lost jobs are expected to be offset by new development projects near transit stations.

WALKABLE COMMUNITY

The idea is for rail stations to become hubs for housing, retail and employment within a so-called "walkable" community. The lifeblood of these communities would be the elevated transit system capable of moving up to 9,000 passengers per hour per direction with trains running from 4 a.m. to midnight, according to design specifications.

Ultimately the success of the transit project will be determined by a myriad of economic and social factors that occur well after construction is completed.

"It's not going to have a huge impact on congestion, but it could have a huge impact on quality of life if you do the (transit oriented development) correctly and you build up these centers of population growth around the train," Bonham said. "That will potentially overwhelm even the outlay for building the train. This potentially is just the beginning of the impact."

Posted on: Sunday, February 17, 2008

Housing, health centers near stations could get tax breaks

By [Sean Hao](#)
Advertiser Staff Writer

New affordable housing and healthcare facilities built near future mass-transit stations could qualify for state tax breaks.

Senate Bill 3165, which passed three Senate committees last week, would create the first tax incentives for economic development around 19 stations along a planned 20-mile rail line stretching from east Kapolei to Ala Moana Center.

The bill would exempt certain transit-oriented developments, including eldercare projects, from the general excise tax.

"This is an opportunity for us to look at the general excise tax and how that can play a role in this whole transit system," said state Sen. Will Espero, D-20th (Ewa Beach, Waipahu). "Hopefully the rail will be an opportunity to build housing and specifically affordable housing."

The excise tax break could spur housing and healthcare projects that would prevent rail from pushing out existing residents and businesses, said Sharon Miyashiro, interim associate director for the University of Hawai'i College of Social Sciences' Public Policy Center.

"This tax exemption bill is one of the tools that could help in terms of some of the programs identified for each of these areas as a way of bringing people in that can make a difference," Miyashiro said. "I don't think it's enough, but it's one of the tools in the toolbox that we're trying to create. Once you get that momentum, hopefully there will be other tools and mechanisms that could be developed."

The Public Policy Center spent about a year gathering community input from three future rail stops: McCully/ Mo'ili'ili, Ala Moana/Sheridan/Kaheka and Kaka'ako Mauka.

So far the Senate bill has passed through the Committee on Human Services and Public Housing, the Committee on Economic Development and Taxation, and the Committee on Transportation and International Affairs. The bill now goes to the Committee on Ways and Means.

"One would hope that at the very least we can get this (bill) to the House and let them look at it," said Espero, vice chair of the Committee on Economic Development and Taxation.

The Public Policy Center, Hawaii Association of Realtors, and Hawai'i Alliance for Community-Based Economic Development back the bill. The City and County of Honolulu Department of Transportation Services opposes the bill because it could reduce excise-tax collections, which would mean less money to pay for the transit project.

The Honolulu City Council already is changing land-use ordinances to create transit-oriented development districts around planned transit stations. The idea is to create special districts with specific community-tailored rules governing housing density, parking and pedestrian amenities, among other things.

Waipahu is the only community drafting a formal transit development plan. That plan is scheduled to be completed later this year. Communities must have a development plan in place before receiving station construction funding, according to city regulations.

The potential value of train-related economic development is huge, said Paul Brewbaker, chief economist at Bank of Hawaii. However, it's still unclear how accommodating the city will be toward such developments.

"We don't really understand the scope of transit-oriented development" at this point, Brewbaker said. The city "could adopt a very accommodating posture, recognizing the kind of development you want is within a five-minute walking distance" of a train station, or "the opposite could equally be true where they clamp down and disallow (development)."

Posted on: Sunday, February 17, 2008

Letters to the Editor

ANALYSIS SHOWED FIXED GUIDEWAY BEST OPTION

Transit reporter Sean Hao's Page One article on Feb. 10, "Transit system likely won't improve traffic," presents a variety of numbers taken from the November 2006 Alternatives Analysis Report, which was widely discussed with the Honolulu City Council and the public more than a year and a half ago.

The article omits some key points about mobility options expected in the year 2030 that were part of that public discussion in 2006.

Traffic conditions in 2030 will be worse than today, even with the state of Hawai'i and City and County of Honolulu implementing about \$3 billion in highway expansion projects.

There will be 27 percent more vehicle trips every day and 44 percent more congestion (as measured by vehicle hours of delay).

The Alternatives Analysis explored three transit alternatives added to these highway improvements, TSM (expanding bus service), managed lanes (building a new viaduct for buses and other vehicles) and fixed guideway.

Of the three, the fixed guideway alternative resulted in the greatest reduction in vehicle trips and the largest reduction in congestion (hours of delay) by offering travelers an option to avoid much of the congestion using a fixed guideway line separated from the highway system.

In addition to providing a reliable trip avoiding congestion for transit patrons, implementation of a 20-mile fixed guideway line from East Kapolei to Ala Moana Center would benefit drivers on the roadway system by reducing 2030 congestion (hours of delay) by 11 percent compared to what 2030 conditions would be like without the fixed guideway line.

Mark Scheibe

Deputy project manager, Parsons Brinckerhoff, Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project



Gathering Place

Ditch HOT lanes and busways in favor of rail for Honolulu

The Committee for Balanced Transportation, a nonprofit group formed in 2004 for the education and advocacy of measures to alleviate traffic congestion on Oahu, is pleased with the city's decision to form a five-member technology panel to aid with the evaluation of each transit proposal (rail or bus) and, ultimately, the final selection of a transit system for Honolulu. As such, we are looking forward to an open and competitive selection process. To ensure transparency in the city's review and selection process, however, the CBT suggests that all nonproprietary information from each company responding to the Request for Information be made available to the public.

Inasmuch as each system eventually will be evaluated against a number of criteria (capacity, reliability, speed, noise and vibration levels, safety, cost of operations and maintenance, construction costs for a fixed guideway), we believe that the following transportation concepts should be eliminated from consideration:

» High occupancy tollway or "HOT" lane concept. The reason? City Council Bill 40, which established the general excise tax surcharge, explicitly states that "No moneys received from the surcharge shall be used to build or repair public roads or highways." And it is for the same reason that recently introduced legislation to use the GET for "highway technology" should be defeated; it is just another attempt to acquire public money to fund toll roads.

» Busway concept. The use of buses would require not only a guideway considerably wider than for a rail system, but also ramps for ingress and egress. Additionally, the use of buses also would require the added cost of a driver, as opposed to an automated rail system.

Honolulu has an outstanding bus system. Thus, we support the city's concept of a rail system, integrated with feeder buses, as the "best" for the City & County of Honolulu. We also favor the eventual expansion of the rail system to the Honolulu International Airport and military bases, based on information in the city's Alternatives Analysis report that ridership numbers will be higher along that system alignment. And, while we can understand concerns about "viewplanes," the CBT also believes that the entire transit guideway must be elevated to ensure "zero" impact on vehicular traffic.

The CBT also would like the city to consider two initiatives not found in the AA: some form of express service during morning and afternoon "rush hours," and the use of alternative forms of energy to provide power for the rail system.

The technology panel should recommend that the city choose solely from some form of fixed rail that meets the criteria specified in the administration's RFI. The panel can provide expert opinions on each of seven (steel wheels on rail, monorail, magnetic levitation) systems -- but stop short of advocacy for any specific manufacturer. This will enable the city to issue an open Request for Proposals, leaving an equal playing field for each rail developer (and civil construction partner) to address how it will work with the city during development and throughout the life of the transit system.

The public project will be costly and the largest in the state's history; however, any short-term cost-cutting is likely to create long-term problems. All of us should be working to ensure that Honolulu gets the most for its money and develops a world-class transit system.

Frank Genadio is membership chairman of the Committee for Balanced Transportation, a nonprofit transportation advocacy group on Oahu.



Updated at 4:25 p.m., Wednesday, February 20, 2008

City Council advances five fixed-guideway bills

The Honolulu City Council advanced five "fixed-guideway"-related bills yesterday, including two bills to curb of-street parking near transit stations.

The bills, which also would allow development of hotels in industrial districts near major mass-transit centers, will be referred to committees before another possible public hearing in the future.



Posted on: Thursday, February 21, 2008

Letters to the Editor

RAIL FARE WILL BE SAME AS THEBUS, THEBOAT

In response to recent letters regarding the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Project, I would like to clarify some of the confusion about the system's performance requirements.

The fare to ride the proposed fixed-guideway system would be the same as for TheBus or TheBoat. That is not to be confused with a cost of \$2. Two dollars would be the fare if the system was running today, but it could change in the future. As far as subsidizing the system, all transportation systems are subsidized in one way or another, with the possible exception of some toll roads. The level of subsidy for the transit project will be regulated by the City Council, as it is currently for TheBus and TheBoat.

There was concern about the time the vehicle will stop at stations. Trains are estimated to stop for 20 seconds at each station, but they will be stopped long enough to load or unload passengers. That is about 20 to 30 seconds in most systems around the world.

The system will have a top speed of more than 55 mph and an average speed of 30 mph, including all stops. Between stations, it will travel substantially faster than 30 miles per hour.

I hope this information helps to explain the basis of some of the performance factors.

Stephanie Roberts

Senior planner and public involvement manager, Parsons Brinckerhoff

You are here: [Main](#) / [Customer Services](#) / [Public Communications Division](#) / [2008](#) / [Independent Panel Selects Steel Wheel/Steel Rail As Fixed Guideway Vehicle Technology](#)

INDEPENDENT PANEL SELECTS STEEL WHEEL/STEEL RAIL AS FIXED GUIDEWAY VEHICLE TECHNOLOGY

The City's Fixed Guideway Technology Selection Panel selected steel wheel on steel rail as the vehicle technology for Oahu's fixed guideway transit system. The decision was made today at during the Panel's second and final meeting.

Four out of 5 panel members selected the steel wheel on steel rail technology, with panel member Panos Prevedouros recommending managed lanes as his selection. The managed lanes technology was not consistent with the policy established by the Honolulu City Council when council members selected the fixed guideway system as Honolulu's locally preferred transportation alternative.

The panel members selecting steel wheel on steel rail include: Steve Barsony, Ken Knight, Henry Kolesar, Ron Tober (Panel Chair).

The reasons cited for their selection included:

- Most mature technology;
- Most widely used and available technology, expected to provide the best competition in procurement;
- High reliability;
- Operational safety;
- Best potential for vehicle and system interchangeability;
- High-speed capability;
- Non-proprietary systems;
- Minimal risk.

The four technology options under consideration were:

- steel wheel on steel rail;
- rubber tire on concrete;
- monorail;
- magnetic levitation.

It should be understood that the Panel evaluated the four options after receiving 12 responses to the City's Request for Information (RFI) about technologies that potential bidders could provide.

The City has not yet requested, and the responders have not submitted, actual proposals to supply any technologies or vehicles. Nor has the City yet solicited actual bids to construct any portion of the Fixed Guideway on which the technology will operate. The City will conduct a competitive procurement process as a Final Environmental Impact Statement is completed next year.

Background information on the panel members is available at <http://www.honolulustransit.org/>. The panel's final report and other background information related to the Panel and the overall project can also be found on the project website.

Contact: Bill Brennan, 527-6928

Friday, February 22, 2008



Honolulu a Big Step Closer Towards a Mass Transit System

Updated: Feb 22, 2008 04:48 PM

By [Leland Kim](#)



HONOLULU (KHNL) -- After a week of independent analysis, a panel of transportation experts makes its recommendation to Honolulu city officials Friday afternoon.

Four out of five analysts recommend a "steel wheel on steel rail" system, saying it's highly reliable and is the most widely used and available technology.

This section of Ala Moana could be the final stop for the proposed rail system.

But before that happens, it has to go through several more steps.

The panel's decision Friday helps the City Council move forward with a fixed rail plan.

This could be the future of Honolulu!

Frank Genadio certainly hopes so.

Friday morning, he listens to a group of international transportation experts talk about the best mass transit option for Oahu.

"They're looking to make sure they give the city a reliable system and the steel

wheel on steel rail technology is proven," said Genadio, a Makakilo resident.

The only expert not on board is civil engineer Panos Prevedouros.

He says the \$4 billion price tag is too much for Oahu taxpayers to shoulder.

He favors the "rubber tire on concrete" option.

"Basically it's much cheaper, about two and a half times cheaper, but more significantly with rubber tire has the flexibility to offer express service," said Prevedouros.



When the panel reconvened in the afternoon, chairperson Ronald Tober addressed Prevedouros' concerns.

"The initial cost is higher, but what you end up having is an operation that in the long term, the operating costs are lower," said Tober.

Councilmember Todd Apo says Friday's hearing was the last piece of the puzzle he needed to make an informed decision.

"I think what was most helpful for us is the discussion that went on today about what the reasons were, about what the pros and cons were of the different systems," Apo said.
"Because that's what we as a council need to take to ultimately make the decision at what technology we're going to use and move this project forward.

And leeward coast residents hope it moves forward, so they can move faster around the island.

"If they don't get a fixed rail transit system, they're going to be very unhappy and they might, as the demographics change, affect the political landscape in the city," said Genadio.

The City Council wants to act on this pretty quickly.

It hopes to move this to a public hearing in March, and make a final decision in April.

[More California news](#)

Steel wins panel's support

ASSOCIATED PRESS

5:42 p.m. February 22, 2008

HONOLULU – A panel of five experts on Friday chose steel wheels on steel rails as the technology for Oahu's planned mass transit system.

The city-appointed panel also considered rubber tires on concrete, monorail and magnetic levitation for the \$3.8 billion project.

The 20-mile route is to run from Kapolei to Ala Moana Center in Honolulu. Mayor Mufi Hannemann wants to break ground in 2009, with the first segment from East Kapolei to Waipahu completed in 2012.

Reliability was the primary reason the steel wheel technology prevailed in the 4-1 vote, panel members said. Steel has proven itself on other systems throughout the country, they said.

In the long run, the technology will also prove to be the cheapest option because there are several companies that construct steel rail, allowing for competitive bidding, the panel said.

Panel member Panos Prevedouros cast the lone dissenting vote. The University of Hawaii professor of civil and environmental engineering favored rubber tires on a concrete fixed guideway system.

Prevedouros also proposed a bus system on managed lanes, but that wasn't one of the four options the city was considering.

The City Council will now take up the issue.

The decision of the five-member panel allows for the completion of an environmental impact statement.

Panel members had one week to consider the four technologies without speaking to one another in order to comply with the state's open-meetings law.

Ron Tober, a former general manager of several rail operating systems, was the panel's chairman. The other members of the panel were Steve Barsony, a systems engineering expert; Kenneth Knight, a construction expert, and Henry Kolesar, an operations expert.

Posted on: Saturday, February 23, 2008

Steel rail option chosen for Honolulu transit

By [Sean Hao](#)
Advertiser Staff Writer

The railroad may be making a comeback on O'ahu.

A panel of city-appointed experts yesterday decided that traditional steel wheels and rail technology is best suited for Honolulu's planned \$3.7 billion elevated commuter line.

The decision was based on factors such as reliability, safety, ride quality and cost, according to the four city-appointed panel members who voted in favor of steel rail technology for the 20-mile route between Kapolei and Ala Moana Center. Rubber tires on concrete technology came in a distant second, garnering only one of five votes. Both magnetic levitation and monorail technologies were ruled out because of cost and capacity concerns.

Steel wheels on steel rails generate less friction than rubber on concrete and last longer, but they typically have lower acceleration and braking performance than rubber on concrete. Steel also is noisier than other rail technology.

Panel member Ron Tober downplayed concerns raised about the noise and vibration of steel railway systems.

"The new vehicles, the new technology is in fact very quiet and they can be made to be nearly vibration-free," Tober said. "Some of the other technologies I don't think are proven enough for Honolulu to take the risk."

The decision could mark the return to O'ahu of railroad technology, which disappeared from much of the island's landscape in the mid-20th century.

A decision on the type of vehicle must be made before an environmental impact statement for the project can be completed and the city can apply for federal transit money. Mayor Mufi Hannemann hopes to break ground on the project in 2009, with the first segment starting service between East Kapolei and Waipahu in 2012.

In addition to being a proven technology, the decision to go with steel rail opens the project to at least five potential vehicle vendors, which was greater than any of the other alternatives, said panel member Henry Kolesar.

"It's most competitive if we select something that's widely available," he said. "Sticking with the low-risk proven technology is in the best interest of Honolulu."

So far, the vendors proposing using steel wheels on steel rails for Honolulu's transit system are ALSTOM Transport, AnsaldoBreda Transportation Inc., Bombardier Transportation, Mitsubishi-Sumitomo and Siemens Transportation Systems Inc. They are vying for a future vehicle contract from the city valued at an estimated \$230 million.

Panos Prevedouros was the only panel member to recommend the city choose rubber on cement technology for the project. Prevedouros, a rail opponent, also recommended the city switch from a fixed-guideway rail-transit solution to a guideway with ramps and managed lanes.

Prevedouros said fast, high-capacity "super buses" would be cheaper to install and allow more future flexibility than rail.

A fixed railway system requires commuters to ride TheBus to the train, which will result in low ridership and won't reduce congestion, said Prevedouros, who is a University of Hawai'i transportation engineering professor.

"People are fed up with 75 to 90 minute commutes," he said. "They are sitting in their car and they're looking for a solution. But they're looking for the other guy to take the train and (in other cities), the other guy is not taking the train."

The panel's choice isn't the final decision in the matter. However, it is expected to tilt the debate in favor of steel rail.

The City Council's Committee on Transportation and Public Works is scheduled to hold a hearing on the panel's selection Thursday. Council members Ann Kobayashi, Donovan Dela Cruz, Romy Cachola and Charles Djou yesterday asked the committee to consider a last-minute proposal that would let the council specify the criteria that will be used to solicit bids for transit vendors. That would likely leave open the question of which technology to use.

An official bid solicitation won't be made for at least a year.

City Councilman Todd Apo said he hoped the panel's decision would end the debate over whether the planned elevated guideway project will be a rail, rather than a managed lane system.

"For our city's mass-transit project, I think the technical experts are telling us that (from) the practical realities of it, it needs to be a rail system," he said.

Reach Sean Hao at shao@honoluluadvertiser.com.



Posted on: Saturday, February 23, 2008

Letters to the Editor

IN THE LONG RUN, RAIL SYSTEM WILL PAY OFF

With respect to Dawn Hayashi's letter (Feb. 14), I've noticed that those who often oppose rail transit are those who "drive their comfy cars with air conditioning, stereos and a cup holder for their coffee" from anywhere other than the Leeward side. To you, this may be a "small area" that the rail will service, but the thousands who sit daily in hours of traffic may beg to differ. Rail means fewer cars, whereas another road allows more traffic. Traffic is the problem here, not the "look of Honolulu proper."

Not to mention the cost comparison — rail may initially cost more, but in the long run, the constant roadwork repairs (adding even more traffic) and the enormous cost of more cars and buses on our environment is more detrimental than a lower-maintenance fixed rail that runs electrically.

The big question is "if you build it, will they ride?" The proof is in the pudding. Look at every other city that opposed a rail system but is now successfully running an efficient mode of mass transportation for the commuter. And when the price of gasoline reaches \$7 or more, I foresee many jumping ship — or car perhaps — right onto the train.

*Melanie Gibson
Waipahu*



Posted on: Saturday, February 23, 2008

Letters to the Editor

RAIL NOT MEANT TO HANDLE ALL COMMUTERS

Dawn Hayashi's letter (Feb. 14) doubting whether commuters will ride Honolulu's future transit system had a faulty premise, just like so many other letters that question future ridership:

"All the people who drive their comfy cars are not going to ride rail," she wrote. She's right about that; all current car commuters won't switch to transit.

What she and others fail to appreciate is that transit can't possibly accommodate all commuters, nor is it intended to.

Many will continue to drive, and that will be their choice, just as the new system will be the choice of those who no longer wish to drive.

How many times must this point be made before critics get it? Transit is an alternative to traffic, an option that currently does not exist to gridlock on the freeway.

*Jason Lee
Kailua*

Independent Panel Selects Steel Wheel/Steel Rail as Fixed Guideway Vehicle Technology

By Bill Brennan, 2/23/2008 3:00:01 PM

HONOLULU, HAWAII - The City's Fixed Guideway Technology Selection Panel selected steel wheel on steel rail as the vehicle technology for Oahu's fixed guideway transit system. The decision was made Friday at during the Panel's second and final meeting.

Four out of 5 panel members selected the steel wheel on steel rail technology, with panel member Panos Prevedouros recommending managed lanes as his selection. The managed lanes technology was not consistent with the policy established by the Honolulu City Council when council members selected the fixed guideway system as Honolulu's locally preferred transportation alternative.

The panel members selecting steel wheel on steel rail include: Steve Barsony, Ken Knight, Henry Kolesar, Ron Tober (Panel Chair).

The reasons cited for their selection included:

- Most mature technology;
- Most widely used and available technology, expected to provide the best competition in procurement;
- High reliability;
- Operational safety;
- Best potential for vehicle and system interchangeability;
- High-speed capability;
- Non-proprietary systems;
- Minimal risk.

The four technology options under consideration were:

- steel wheel on steel rail;
- rubber tire on concrete;
- monorail;

- magnetic levitation.

It should be understood that the Panel evaluated the four options after receiving 12 responses to the City's Request for Information (RFI) about technologies that potential bidders could provide.

The City has not yet requested, and the responders have not submitted, actual proposals to supply any technologies or vehicles. Nor has the City yet solicited actual bids to construct any portion of the Fixed Guideway on which the technology will operate. The City will conduct a competitive procurement process as a Final Environmental Impact Statement is completed next year.

Background information on the panel members is available at

<http://www.honolulustransit.org/>. The panel's final report and other background information related to the Panel and the overall project can also be found on the project website.

Bill Brennan is spokesperson for the City & County of Honolulu

Oahu Residents Weigh In on Light Rail Plan

Updated: Feb 23, 2008 08:30 PM

By [Leland Kim](#)

OAHU (KHNL) -- Leeward Oahu residents express gratitude that a rail plan is finally on track.

Friday, a panel of international transportation experts recommended a steel wheel on steel rail option as the best plan for Oahu.

Saturday, residents all over the island give their reaction on the city council's plan to move it forward.

Traffic during the weekend isn't too bad, but during the week, parts of the H-1 Freeway and Nimitz Highway can be bumper to bumper during rush hour. Folks from different parts of the island weigh in on a plan that could help Oahu's traffic problems.

Over the years, leeward residents have gotten used to sitting in traffic, but it's taken its toll.

"It's so bad that it takes an hour and a half just to get to Pearl Harbor and I work at Pearl Harbor," said Ono Wsene, a Nanakuli resident.

That's why people like Esene are happy a light rail system on Oahu could be under way soon.

"Well, I'm very excited about the idea that they're going to move forward with that," she said.

Not surprisingly leeward residents seem to be aboard the rail plan, but even folks on the windward side think it's a good idea. Folks like Josef and Jessica Trainor, who live in Kailua.

"I think as long as they can keep it on time and within the budget, I definitely think it's an excellent idea," said Josef Trainor.

"I think it'll be a good idea," said his wife Jessica. "It worked well in Denver and I used it a lot in Denver, and I think it would benefit the people on the leeward side quite a bit."

Jessica said Denver's light rail system helped make her long commute a lot more enjoyable.

"I could just park at the Park and Ride and get a ticket and sit for half an hour and read my book, not worry about traffic at all," she said.

But some East Oahu residents aren't sold on the plan.

"It's unnecessary and even if it has been successful in other states in the United States, even in other countries, I still think we need to ask the question, 'Is it right for Hawaii?'" asked Yana Alliata, a Tantalus resident. "Because, as we all know, Hawaii is unique."

And some say the \$4 billion price tag to build Oahu's light rail system is too expensive.

"I think the fact that I would have to be paying for something like this as a taxpayer kind of upsets me but then again, there's so many other things in Hawaii that I'm paying as a taxpayer that I don't necessarily support," said Alliata.

Still others say they're willing to support the project even if they don't directly benefit from it.

"I'd be willing to absolutely put my tax dollars towards something like that would not benefit me personally, but everyone else on the island, so just improve the situation a lot," said Josef Trainor. "It's definitely worth it."

"In the long run, I think it could really help Hawaii, help our traffic, help our congestion problems on the roads," added Jessica Trainor.

People can make their voices heard in a series of public hearings next month. Then, the Honolulu City Council plans to make a decision in April. Mayor Mufi Hannemann (D-Honolulu) hopes to break ground on the project by the end of 2009.

Panel picks steel transit system

A panel's pick, while expected, will face scrutiny as it moves into the political arena

» [Steel rail companies](#)

STORY SUMMARY »

The best mass transit option for Honolulu is a train system that uses steel wheels on steel rails, a city panel of transportation experts decided yesterday.

In a 4-1 vote, the panel chose that option for the \$3.8 billion project, rejecting monorail, magnetic levitation and rubber tires on concrete.

The recommendation now goes to the City Council where the immediate reception was mixed. Some councilmembers said steel on steel makes the most economic sense, while others complained that the panel's selection was predetermined, rubber-stamping Mayor Mufi Hannemann's preferred choice.

Hannemann has said he wants to break ground in 2009 on a 20-mile mass transit system from West Oahu to Ala Moana Center.

The lone dissenter in yesterday's panel vote was University of Hawaii-Manoa engineering professor Panos Prevedouros, who argued that a rail system will have little impact on traffic congestion.

Panel Chairman Ron Tober said a steel-on-steel system will save the city money in the long run.

"We're not going to eliminate traffic congestion by any of these alternatives," he said. "We can do some things to reduce the growth in future traffic congestion or allow it to continue to grow at the rate that it has in the past."

WHAT'S NEXT

- » The City Council will discuss selecting the fixed-rail technology at its Transportation Committee meeting Thursday morning.
- » The city administration is preparing its draft environmental impact statement, hoping to include the technology pending the City Council decision, for federal review in June. The report is scheduled for public release in September.

[FULL STORY »](#)

By Laurie Au
lau@starbulletin.com

A panel of experts selected rail as the technology for the city's \$3.8 billion fixed-guideway system yesterday, saying it is the most reliable and would be the least expensive long-term option for the city.

Four of the five panel members agreed steel wheel on steel rail was the best choice because it is the most commonly used mass transit system -- giving the city a competitive advantage when seeking bids -- has lower operating costs and can be more easily expanded in the future.

"If we were to select something that is widely available, it's not only competitive initially, it's competitive in the long term," said Henry Kolesar, a panelist and the group manager with the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District. "Honolulu, I'm sure, will be expanding their system, and sticking with the low-risk, proven technology is in the best interest of Honolulu."

In the largest public works project in the state's history, the city would build a 20-mile elevated system from Kapolei to Ala Moana starting in late 2009 with plans to later extend it to the airport and University of Hawaii at Manoa.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann had long favored rail, but he proposed a panel of experts to consider four options -- rail, a rubber-tire bus system, monorail or magnetic levitation. The City Council, which has the final say on funding, will take up the technology selection with its own bill.

For the past week, panel members toured the island and evaluated information submitted to the city from 10 companies. In a meeting lasting about two hours yesterday at Mission Memorial Auditorium with brief comments by a handful of Oahu residents, panel members voted 4-1 to recommend rail.

Of the four technologies, the city received the most number of responses -- five companies, most of which are the largest providers in the world -- on rail. The panel did not select a company, which is done in a later procurement process. It is likely these companies would submit proposals.

Panel members rejected a monorail or magnetic levitation system, saying those technologies are not as common and have not been proved to work in other urban areas.

The other option, a rubber-tired bus on concrete, would not be appropriate for Honolulu because it has lower capacity and cannot be expanded as easily, several panel members said.

The lone dissenter, University of Hawaii-Manoa engineering professor Panos Prevedouros, proposed a bus system on managed lanes, meaning the elevated system would have its own lanes and connect to current roads. However, this was not a part of the city's four technology options and was ruled out.

Prevedouros favored his second choice, the rubber-tired bus system, because it would cut down on electricity use and be quieter than rail. This was also rejected by the other panel members.

Ron Tober, the panel's chairman and former leader of several U.S. rail transit operating systems, said initial costs to build rail are higher, but its operational costs are lower.

"I do believe steel wheel on steel rail will save you all money in the long run," said Tober, who added that the companies did not provide sufficient cost estimates for Honolulu's system.

Toru Hamayasu, the city's chief transportation planner, said rail as the chosen technology will not increase the city's costs for the project. Of the estimated \$3.4 billion to \$3.8 billion cost, about \$200 million is budgeted for the technology. After inflation and interest, the total cost comes closer to \$5 billion.

Prevedouros, long opposed to the city's preferred fixed-guideway system, questioned the need to spend billions of public money on a system he says will have low ridership and little impact on traffic congestion, which was stated in an earlier study by city consultants.

"We're not going to eliminate traffic congestion by any of these alternatives, including the managed-lanes alternative," Tober acknowledged. "We can do some things to reduce the growth in future traffic congestion or allow it to continue to grow at the rate that it has in the past."

Haunted by a decision by the 1992 City Council to block a mass transit system after federal funds were secured, several city and federal government leaders were pleased the panel moved the project forward.

"The principal thing for me is that the city needs to be committed to the full transit system," U.S. Rep. Neil Abercrombie, who has helped secure federal funds, said Thursday. "Whatever happens (with technology selection), I'm going to help make the project happen. ... Let's get going."

The earliest the City Council could approve its technology selection bill is mid-April. It would then go to Hannemann to sign into an ordinance.

"I think it's important for the public's confidence as well that their elected officials take this up and have the public hearings to make that decision," said City Councilman Todd Apo yesterday.

"That's their call," Hannemann said Thursday. "I just want them to make sure it's a timely decision so that we can factor it into our (environmental impact statement) ... and to keep us in line for competitive federal funds."

Posted on: Monday, February 25, 2008

First phase of rail would end in Pearl City

By [Sean Hao](#)
Advertiser Staff Writer

If all goes as planned, in four years an end-to-end commute via Honolulu's new elevated commuter rail system would start in Kapolei and end 12 minutes later on the 'Ewa side of Pearl City.

That will leave many H-1 corridor commuters waiting much longer — until 2017 — before the train stops at major traffic centers such as Downtown Honolulu and Ala Moana Center.

The city's decision to start the massive project in what today is an east Kapolei field rather than in urban Honolulu has caused some critics to dub it the train to nowhere.

That's because three of the first six planned stops between Kapolei and Leeward Community College are in the middle of what are now empty fields. The plan is for those fields to turn into bustling communities by the time the train makes its first stop.

If things don't go according to plan, there could be little development surrounding transit stations in 2012, resulting in fewer than anticipated riders, at least initially. That would mean lower fare collections, which could require greater subsidies to finance the \$3.7 billion project.

"The first three stops on the route are dirt fields," said Honolulu City Council member Charles Djou, an opponent of the project. "Right now there's nothing there. What traffic is that going to relieve?"

BEST STARTING POINT

Those dirt fields are the best place to start building the 20-mile line because they require little displacement of existing homes or businesses, according to city transportation officials.

Construction on the section of rail running from Kapolei to Fort Weaver Road would affect mostly non-residential properties and won't result in any building displacements. The segment also is not expected to cause the business and job losses anticipated when construction of the rail enters developed areas, according to a technical report prepared for the city last year.

"That's probably the easiest place to start," said Toru Hamayasu, chief of the city's transportation planning division. "There's no infrastructure or anything."



The second stop of the first phase of the city's rail system would be built in this area, by the planned UH-West O'ahu campus.

BRUCE ASATO | The Honolulu Advertiser



The western-most station in the rail project's first phase would be constructed around an area near the new North-South Road, by the 'Ewa Villages Golf Course.

BRUCE ASATO | The Honolulu Advertiser

Groundbreaking on the mass-transit system could occur next year. Major east Kapolei developments planned near future transit stops include:

- The University of Hawai'i-West O'ahu's new campus. Construction of the first phase is expected to begin in October, with up to 1,520 students starting classes in fall 2009 or spring 2010. Proposed commercial and housing developments are planned for later phases.
- Mauka of the UH campus will be the massive Ho'opili residential/commercial community. Ho'opili developer D.R. Horton Inc. plans to begin construction in 2010 with the first homes and businesses opening in 2012. Completing the project could take another 20 to 30 years and involve the building of 10,000 to 15,000 homes, plus schools and parks.
- On the makai border of the UH campus, Florida-based developer DeBartolo plans to build a 67-acre mall for the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands. The first stores are expected to open in late 2011.

CHANGING LANDSCAPE

DHHL's projects, which include new headquarters in east Kapolei, and other nearby developments should change the landscape of east Kapolei. The key question is whether the new transit system will be running as scheduled in 2012, said DHHL spokesman Lloyd Yonenaka.

"We know our stuff will happen," he said. "Hopefully, everything will fill in and it will look very different than it does now."

Honolulu residents and visitors already are helping to pay for the system via a half-percentage-point surcharge levied on nearly all O'ahu transactions, which started in January 2007. That surcharge is expected to raise about \$3 billion before expiring in 2022.

Once completed, the full 20-mile route is expected to have operating and maintenance costs of about \$61 million a year. According to the transit system's most recent publicly available financial plan, 28 percent of future operating and maintenance costs are expected to come from rider fares. If farebox collections are lower, more money would need to come from the city or other sources.

The transit system's first phase would generate higher ridership if it stopped at major traffic draws such as Waikiki, Downtown, UH-Manoa or Honolulu International Airport, Djou said.

"If you wanted to help people out, (start at) maybe H-1, H-2 merge to the airport, Pearl Harbor area," he said. "That would probably do far more to help relieve traffic."

The desire to start the commuter rail in Kapolei also is driven by the need for a maintenance yard, which the city prefers to place near the H-1 and H-2 freeway merge.

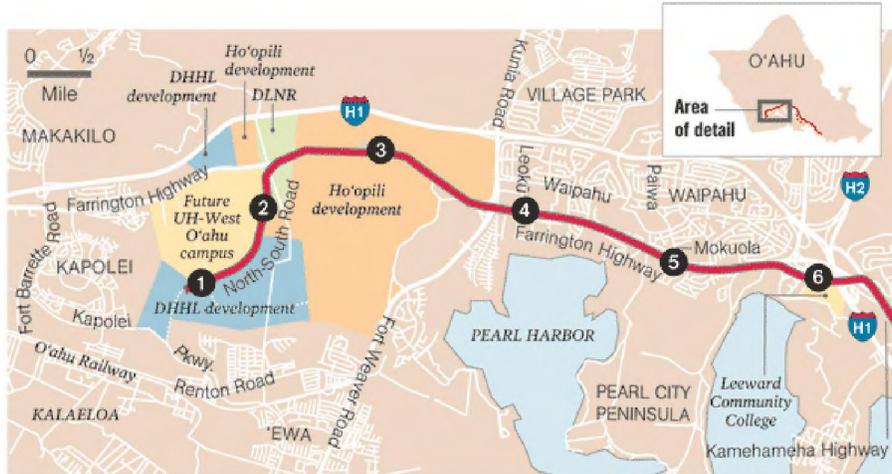
The city also said the Kapolei leg of the rail is being driven by increasing ridership needs. Westbound average daily ridership on TheBus between Kapolei and Waipahu rose 165 percent to 2,091 between 2004 and 2007, according to the city.

The Kapolei preference also helps ensure the guideway will be built the full 20 miles from the 'Ewa plain to Ala Moana, said state Sen. Will Espero, D-20th ('Ewa Beach, Waipahu).

"I think the likelihood of starting it in the country, on our side, and going inward will make that longer stretch more likely to happen," he said. "It forces it to go all the way into town."

Reach Sean Hao at shao@honoluluadvertiser.com.

• • •



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FIRST-PHASE PLAN • FIRST SIX STATIONS FROM KAPOLEI END

STOP 1	STOP 2	STOP 3	STOP 4	STOP 5	STOP 6
UH-WEST O'AHU MAKAI – near DHHL development site	UH-WEST O'AHU AT FARRINGTON HIGHWAY – near future UH-West O'ahu campus	FARRINGTON HIGHWAY KOKOHEAD OF NORTH-SOUTH ROAD – near future Ho'opili development	FARRINGTON HIGHWAY AT LEOKŪ STREET	FARRINGTON HIGHWAY AT MOKUOLA STREET	LEEWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Source: www.honolulutransit.org/

The Honolulu Advertiser

Posted on: Monday, February 25, 2008

City needs quick action on rail technology issue

The experts have weighed in on the multi-billion-dollar question about the city's transit future: Which fixed-guideway technology would best suit the needs of O'ahu taxpayers who are footing the bill and who will ride it?

The answer came Friday from an independent technology-selection panel, and the conclusion by four of the five panelists was clear: Steel wheels on steel rails offered the best combination of reliability, capability and cost.

But instead of breathing a sigh of relief that this verdict is behind them, Honolulu residents still have to hold their breath. The political drama may not have been played out fully before the City Council.

This week the council's Transportation Committee will consider a bill to make the final selection of the transit technology.

Council Chairwoman Barbara Marshall, an outspoken opponent of the transit project, said city attorneys have confirmed that the council has not relinquished its right to make the final decision on technology.

That right, she said, was established by ordinance, the bill enacted when the council voted to proceed with the 'Ewa-to-Ala Moana alignment.

And even though a council resolution set up the expert panel as decisionmakers, the original ordinance trumps it.

That's just wonderful: Now there's the prospect of more political wrangling over the technology, even though experts paid by the city have done a rational study with a nearly unanimous conclusion.

Of course, even critics of the rail alignment acknowledge that a council selection of a technology other than the panel's choice is likely to be vetoed by the mayor. And rightly so. Then it will take a "super-majority" on the council — six of the nine members — to override that, landing the whole project back to Square One.

There's no point to such an exercise.

The lone panelist opposed to this option, Panos Prevedouros, stated his preference as HOT lanes — something that did not meet the requirements set in the ordinance. Prevedouros, a longtime vocal opponent of rail — which is why Marshall named him to the panel — seemed determined not to stick to the menu. When pressed to pick one of the qualifying options, he named rubber tires on concrete.

As the rest of the panel has pointed out, steel-on-steel systems have a better track record and would be available from multiple, competitive bidders. Among its strengths: it's a proven technology, widely used and readily available; and it is known for its operational safety.

The choice seems clear. Let's not waste any time or money reinventing the wheel, so to speak, when a rail transit system appears to be the way ahead.

Council Transportation Committee to Review 'Steel on Steel' Rail Proposal for Honolulu

Read the Minority Report by Dr. Panos Prevedouros Opposing the Mayor's Panel Recommendation

By HonoluluTraffic.com, 2/25/2008 9:07:36 AM

On Thursday at 9 a.m., the Honolulu City Council Transportation Committee will meet in the Committee Room on the second floor on City Hall to hear from the Chairman of the mayor's 5-member "Experts Panel" on why four of the five members of the panel are recommending a steel on steel rail system for Honolulu.

They should be sure to ask him how the panel majority came up with the one option guaranteed to ensure that traffic congestion in the future will be worse than it is today.

Dr. Panos Prevedouros, who was in the minority in opposing the 'Steel On Steel' rail proposal has a minority report that outlines the case for the best alternative.

See it here:

<http://www.hawaiireporter.com/file.aspx?Guid=2080393c-1461-4c7d-9843-0a5a280409d5>

Prevedouros will speak at the Small Business Hawaii monthly breakfast meeting on Thursday at 7 a.m. in Alan Wong Pineapple Room in Macy in Ala Moana Center. For more information and to make reservations, call Small Business Hawaii at 396-1724.



Posted on: Tuesday, February 26, 2008

Letters to the Editor

SCARE TACTICS CLOUDING DISCUSSION OF TRANSIT

Misinformation and scare tactics are being used to oppose rail transit, which is by far the safest, cheapest, most fuel-efficient, economical, best ecological and environmental form of mass transportation.

Rail is not forced to get its energy from oil, nor does it require thousands of feet or acres of land for its right-of-way.

Unlike the roadway entity, both the fixed-plant and rolling stock of rail will remain major-maintenance free for years, providing both are properly engineered and constructed. Even with local stops, rail will be faster than roadway over distance. But the stop-everywhere-one-pokey-train scenario is a failure waiting to happen.

Governing factions have the right idea but the wrong concept. What is needed is a light-rail transit system coordinated with the roadway mode as a meaningful entity for the people and not the show-off Christmas tree novelty it may become.

And as for increased traffic in the future, simply add another car to the train in lieu of another roadway for gas-guzzling vehicles.

*Peter Gibson
Waipahu*



Vol. 13, Issue 57 - Tuesday, February 26, 2008

Letters to the Editor

Future looks bright with Mufi's vision

At the end of his State of the City address, Mayor Mufi Hannemann talked about our youth and what type of island we want them to inherit. So I asked myself what type of place will Oahu look like if we continue on the path Mufi has set. Five years from now, I see a place with islandwide curbside recycling, modern sewers and pothole-free roads. I see an island with a functioning rail system from the West side with plans to extend it to Waikiki and the University of Hawaii-Manoa in the works. I see a city with very few homeless people living on our beaches or in our parks, and a city whose first responders have modern equipment and training. I see a city that is financially secure.

I hope the people of Oahu continue to support the mayor as his administration continues to move us toward this vision.

Vanessa Matautia
Honolulu



Council Takes Up Transit Development

By Andrew Pereira

Oahu's proposed \$3.8 billion mass transit system will likely shape the look and feel of future development on the island for years to come.

During an Executive Committee hearing Wednesday afternoon members of the Honolulu City Council discussed a bill that sets guidelines for the development that will spring-up around the twenty transit stations along the proposed 20 mile route from Kapolei to Ala Moana.

The legislation, Bill 10, was introduced by Mayor Mufi Hannemann's administration and passed first reading on February 20th. Council members were in agreement that transit oriented development on a fixed guideway system could benefit all of Oahu.

"This is a great opportunity for us to redevelop the urban core, especially areas that need the help," said District 2 Councilman Donovan Dela Cruz. "This is how we can keep the North Shore, North Shore and Kailua, Kailua and making sure that the density that might be threatening those areas get focused somewhere else."

Council Chairwoman Barbara Marshall said the legislation would require "an awful lot of work" before it could be passed and questioned whether amending the city's Land Use Ordinance, as the bill proposes, would be too slow a vehicle to guide development around transit stations. "I don't think this Council should put itself in a position of having to go through that kind of process to make changes in something that might need to have major changes made," she said.

Councilman Todd Apo who represents District 1 suggested a menu of transit oriented development that communities could choose from, saying that could streamline the permitting process around transit stations. "We can setup parameters and say if you stay within these parameters it's done administratively but if you need more, if you need to go outside of those parameters those things need to come to the Council."

Whether permitting is done administratively or through the Land Use Ordinance, Council members want to make sure the city does transit oriented development the right way in order to foster compact, walkable communities. Apo said there should not be a "cookie cutter" approach to what development will look like.

"There may be stations in which it is a vehicle based area," Apo said, pointing to Kapolei as an example. "We may need that to be developed so that the Leeward Coast can access that area via their vehicles...and use the mass transit into town."

"We need to make sure that there's going to be bike accessibility (and) walking paths," added Dela Cruz. "It's going to really have to be a walking / biking community within that transit oriented development."

Bill 10 requires input from communities where transit stations will be built and states that the planning process will be inclusive and "open top residents, businesses, landowners, community organizations, government agencies and others."

"The neighborhood plan I think is critical," said District 8 Councilman Gary Okino. "We cannot move ahead without community input."

[Bill 10 Text](#)

Andrew may be reached at apereira@khon2.com or ph. 591-4263.

An Update on the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project

Aloha! As we start a new year, we thought this would be an opportune time to reacquaint you with the goals and objectives of the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project.

Goal: Improve Mobility

We need to get from here to there – island-wide. The roads and freeways are often congested, so mobility is often limited. A fully elevated fixed guideway system will be able to move thousands of people per hour without taking away existing roadway and freeway lanes.

The elevated fixed guideway allows a new transportation system to be operated without taking away the limited road space that we have now.

Goal: Support Growth

Significant growth is planned in West O`ahu and it's vital that the right infrastructure is in place to support that growth. The transit line makes it possible to expand residential, commercial and recreational developments without sacrificing mobility.

The fixed guideway system is also good for areas outside of West O`ahu because it will focus growth in the areas designated for growth - and away from areas that don't

want growth. This actually helps "keep the country country."

The elevated system will support smart growth by locating the transit system above neighboring communities, allowing these communities to remain connected. The elevated system helps avoid the "other side of the tracks" situation that can occur when a guideway system with frequent vehicle trips is overlaid on a community. With the elevated system, there is no "other side of the tracks." The guideway is not an impediment to existing and developing social networks and travel patterns.

Goal: Improve Reliability

The elevated transit system will improve travel time reliability because the system will be out of existing traffic. Existing traffic will not slow fixed guideway travel and the guideway vehicles will not interfere with roadway traffic. An at-grade system would have to stop at traffic signals or would delay roadway traffic with fixed guideway vehicles traveling every 3 minutes. The elevated system also avoids the risk of cars or people crossing the tracks, which is potentially dangerous and slows operations.

The system will operate with precision and reliability. So, if you need to be at work by 8 a.m., you'll be able to use the fixed

guideway system and be assured that you will arrive at work by 8 a.m., even if it's raining or there's a big accident on H-1. The frequency of operation is planned for a 3-minute spacing between vehicles during the commute hours, so you won't have to check the schedule to catch the next one.

Goal: Improve Equity

Everyone can use the fixed guideway system and afford it. Rides will cost the same systemwide and will come with transfers. So, you won't need a car to get around quickly. The buses and the ferry will be linked with the fixed guideway system, so you will be able to get to areas off the guideway route easily, too.

Unlike a toll road system, it won't be limited in capacity. If more people are riding at a certain time, more vehicles will be added to accommodate them. System capacity will grow as demand grows and will be flexible in doing so.

The bottom line is that the fixed guideway system is a way to enhance our quality of life, by keeping the economy vibrant, our cities livable, and pollution minimized, reducing our greenhouse gas emissions, and providing a viable mobility option for us and our children.

Current Issues: Technology



Rubber Tire - Las Vegas

Selecting which technology will run on the fixed guideway system is the next critical step for the mass transit project.

To help the City Council and City Administration determine which technology

best meets Honolulu's requirements, a process called Request for Information (RFI) is being used. In this process, we post a list of performance features that are required for our system. (For example, it must be able to travel at least 55 mph.) Then, any transit vehicle supplier who wants to be considered for our system can send a list of their vehicle's features and match it against the features we require.



Magnetic Levitation - Nagoya, Japan

All of the vendors' information will be collected and compared

against the requirements to see which technologies best meet our needs. This process often leads to better responses during the procurement phase from vendors so Honolulu can get the best transit vehicle available. At this time, vendors will be supplying information only on the technology; it is the technology that will be selected through this process, not the vendor. A technology vendor will be selected in a separate process in the future.

The City Council is now considering a resolution that creates an independent panel to evaluate the vendor information submitted to select the technology. The independent panel would work with the fixed guideway criteria previously established by

— continued on back



Contact Us

You can reach us by calling the project hotline at 566-2299 or by submitting your comments to www.honolulustransit.org.

Call or email us if you would like to receive an electronic version of this newsletter or would like to be removed from our mailing list.

City Highlight:

Green in Portland with lower Greenhouse gasses



With their efficient and convenient transit system, people in Portland, Oregon drive about 4 miles per day less than the average American. By driving less, the city of 2 million saves about 19.4 million tons of greenhouse gases per year. This provides an estimated cost savings of \$28 and \$70 million annually and it's considerably better for the environment.

Source: Cortright, Joe. "Portland's Green Dividend." CEOs for Cities. July, 2007. Joe Cortright is a non-resident Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution.

— continued from front

the City Council and additional operating criteria established by the Department of Transportation Services.

This method ensures that analysis and logic drive the technology decision rather than politics. Determining the best technology for Honolulu's fixed guideway system requires technical knowledge. And, the project will continue to move forward so Honolulu gets a world class transportation system.



Steel Wheel - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

and quality of service. Technology information is expected from vendors that supply steel wheel on steel rail, rubber tires on concrete, monorail, and

magnetic levitation. The panel will select the technology that is most advantageous for Honolulu and its citizens.

The pictures of systems shown are some of the technologies Honolulu is considering.



Steel Wheel - New York



Rubber Tire - Toulouse, France

The panel will review the vendor information considering safety, reliability, environmental impacts, performance, cost,

Honolulu On The Move

An Update on the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project

Presentation to Fill in here

Month xx, 200x

www.honolulustransit.org
566-2299

What will be presented

- Why this project
- Fixed guideway selection
- Project alignment
- Technology selection
- What's next

Purpose of the Project

Planning for the Future O'ahu in 2030

- 22% more population than in 2005
- 21% more employment than in 2005
- 27% more daily trips than in 2005

Corridor Designated by the O'ahu Regional Transportation Plan 2030

Alternatives Analyzed

- No Build
- Transportation System Management (TSM)
- Managed Lane/ Bus Guideway
- Fixed Guideway

Locally Preferred Alternative Selection December 22, 2006

- ~~• No Build~~
- ~~• Transportation System Management (TSM)~~
- ~~• Managed Lane/Bus Guideway~~
- Fixed Guideway

Fixed Guideway Alternative

- High Capacity
- Reliable travel times
- Integrated with bus, parking, bicycling and walking
- Convenient
- Reduced cost of travel
- Environmentally friendly
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Efficient and Cost Effective

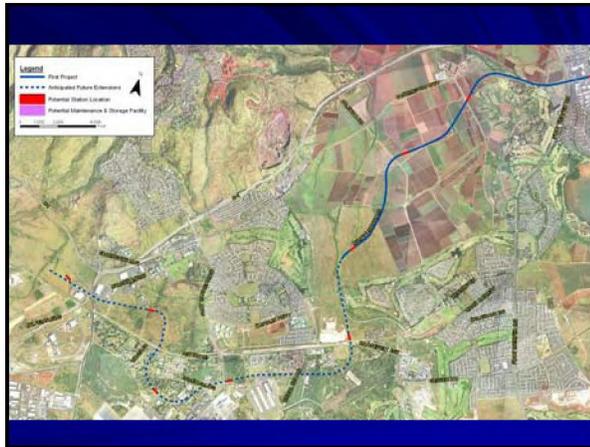
- System capacity equivalent to six freeway lanes of cars



- \$3.5 Billion System Cost Includes:
 - \$1.8B for Construction
 - \$200M for Vehicles
 - \$70M for Right-of-Way
 - \$1.4B for Contingency and Soft Costs
- Operation and maintenance less expensive than an expanded bus system

EIS Alternative





Technologies Evaluated

- Steel wheel on steel rail
- Rubber tire on concrete
- Magnetic Levitation
- Monorail

– Resolution 07-376 created the Independent Technology Selection Panel to evaluate the four technologies

Technology Selection

Steel Wheel on Steel Rail



ALSTOM



Ansaldo-Breda



Siemens



Bombardier



Mitsubishi-Sumitomo

Technology Selection

Rubber Tire on Concrete



APTS - Phileas

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Hitachi America

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Existing View - Kamehameha Highway at Acacia



Fixed Guideway Structure - Kamehameha Highway at Acacia



Existing View - Pearlridge Center



Fixed Guideway Station – Pearlridge Center



Next Steps

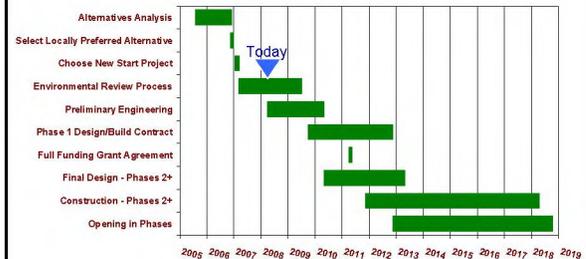
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Questions?

Extra slides

Reasonable Expectation of Funds

- GET Surcharge Funds
 - ~ \$ 2.6 – \$ 3.2 billion in 2006 Dollars
- FTA New Starts Funds
 - ~ \$ 500 – \$ 900 million in 2006 Dollars
- Other Sources
 - Public-Private Partnerships – TBD

Sources & Uses of Funds

East Kapolei to Ala Moana Center, via Salt Lake Blvd. Project

	Millions of 2006 Dollars
Total Net GET Surcharge Revenues	3,020
FTA New Starts Funds	700
Total Revenues	3,720
Fixed Guideway Capital Costs	3,470
Net Interest Costs	250
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Honolulu On The Move



An Update on the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project

Presentation to **Fill in here**

Month xx, 200x

www.honolulustransit.org

566-2299

What will be presented

- Why this project
- Fixed guideway selection
- Project alignment
- Technology selection
- What's next

Purpose of the Project



IMPROVE RELIABILITY
FASTER
MORE RELIABLE
TRANSIT

PROVIDE AN
ALTERNATIVE
TO PRIVATE
AUTO



IMPROVE EQUITY

PURPOSE

MODERATE
TRAFFIC
CONGESTION



IMPROVE MOBILITY

IMPROVE LINKAGES
 Kapolei
 UH Mānoa
 Urban Center
 Waikīkī

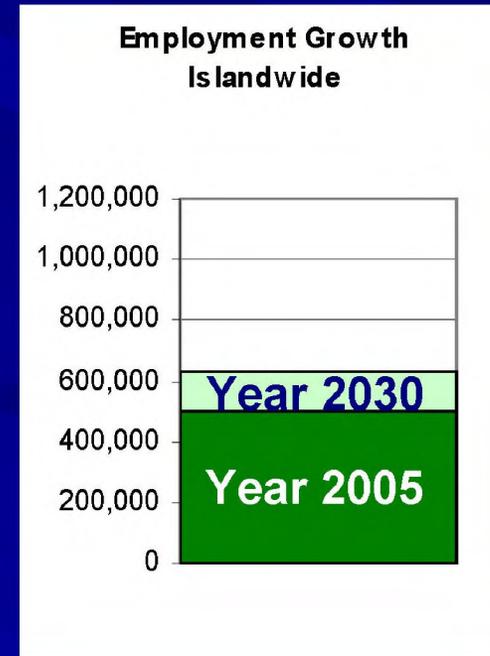
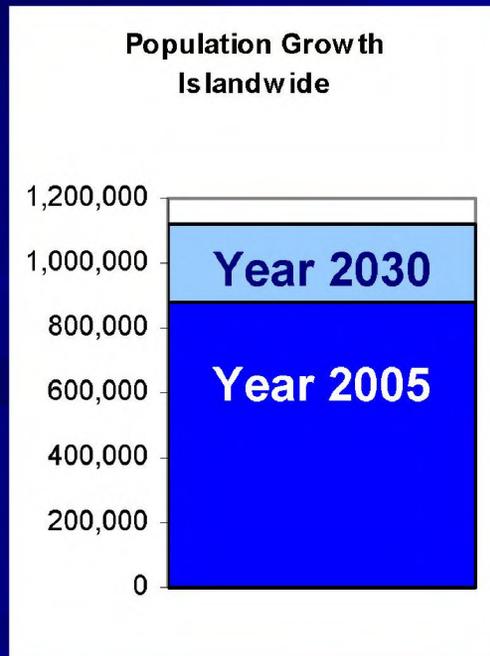
The Honolulu Advertiser	
Planned Development	Size
*Hirohō	10,000 to 15,000 homes planned
*Ewa by Gentry	7,200 homes existing and planned
*Eo 'Ōhā Resort	4,450 homes existing and planned
*Makua Hill	4,100 homes planned
*Ocean Pointe	4,850 homes existing and planned
*Kapolei West	2,370 homes planned

SUPPORT GROWTH

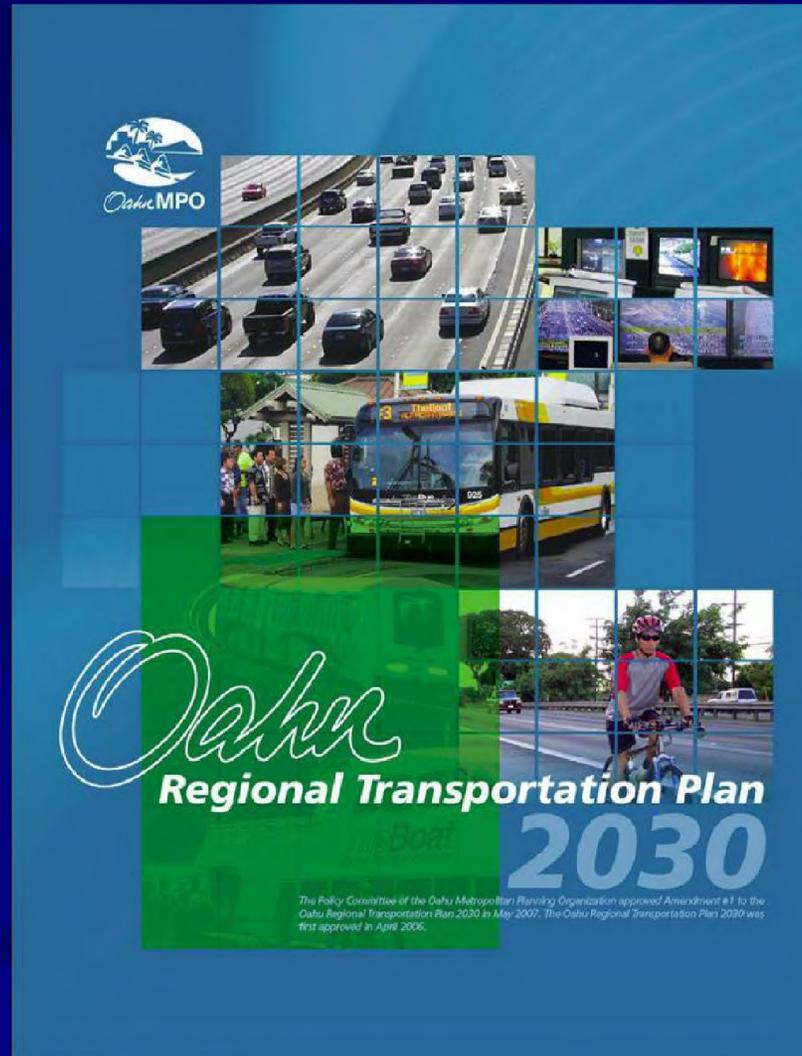
Planning for the Future

O'ahu in 2030

- 22% more population than in 2005
- 21% more employment than in 2005
- 27% more daily trips than in 2005



Corridor Designated by the O'ahu Regional Transportation Plan 2030



Alternatives Analyzed

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Bus Guideway
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Locally Preferred Alternative Selection December 22, 2006

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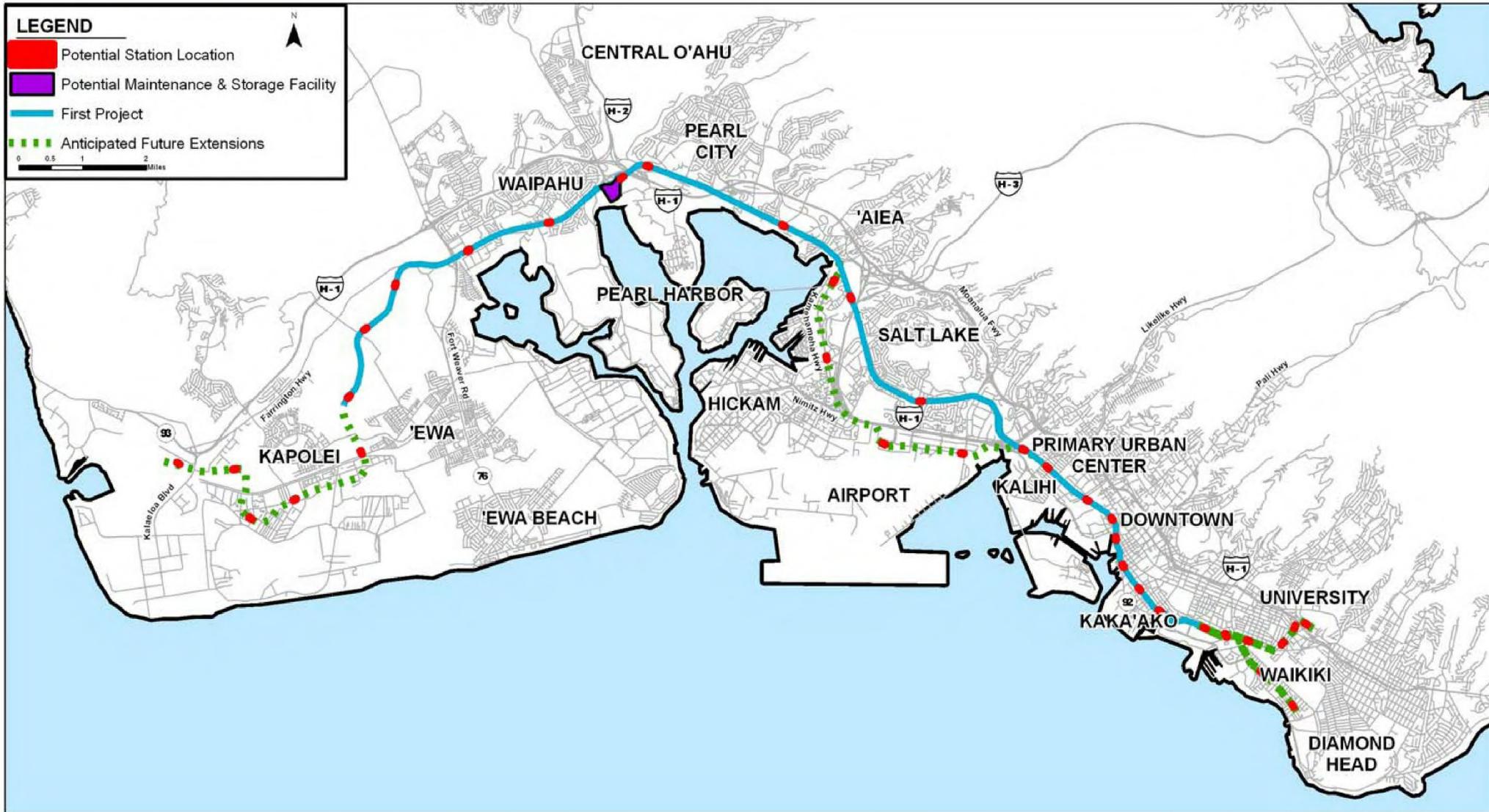
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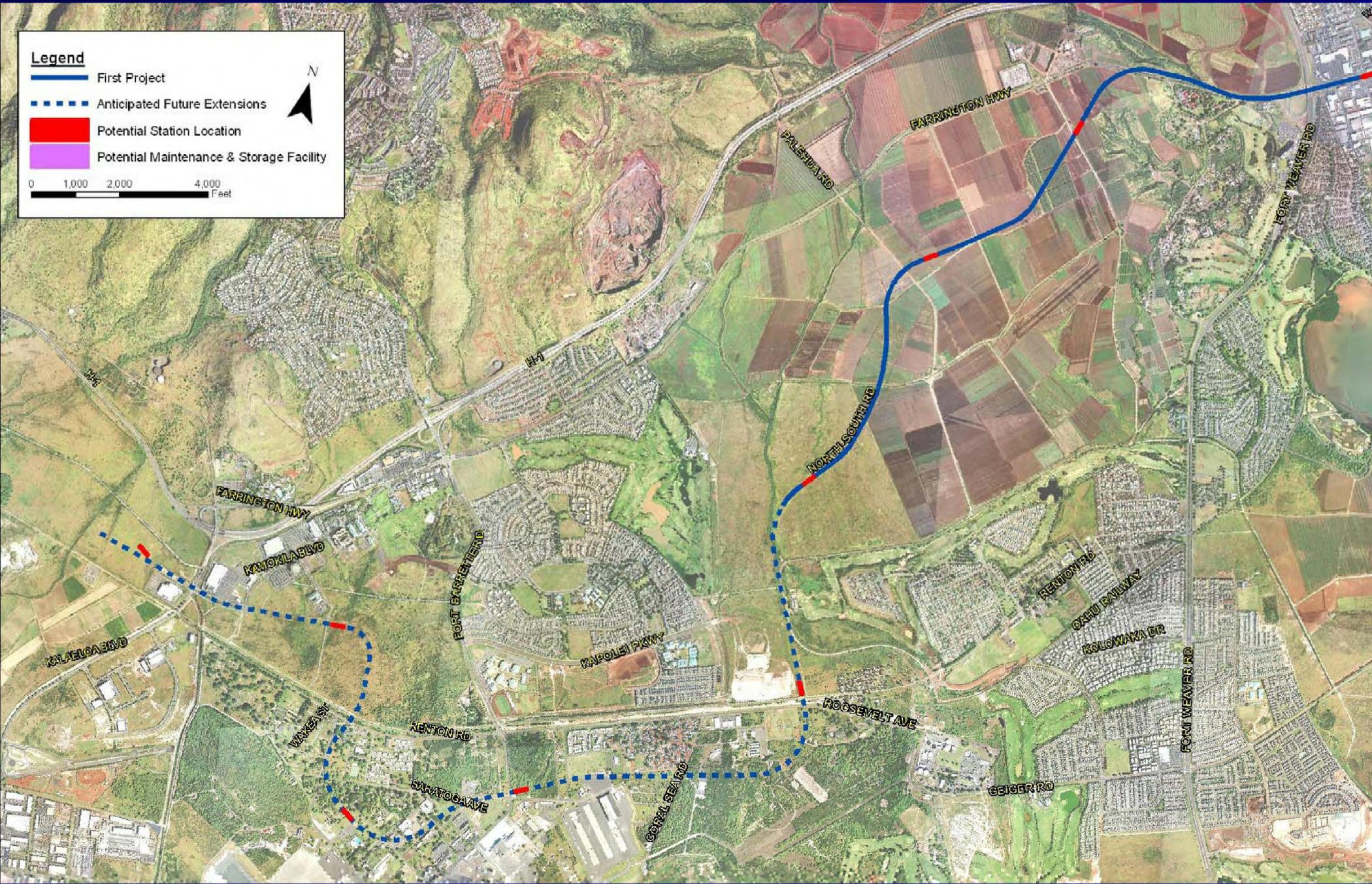


Legend

-  First Project
-  Anticipated Future Extensions
-  Potential Station Location
-  Potential Maintenance & Storage Facility

0 1,000 2,000 4,000 Feet

N

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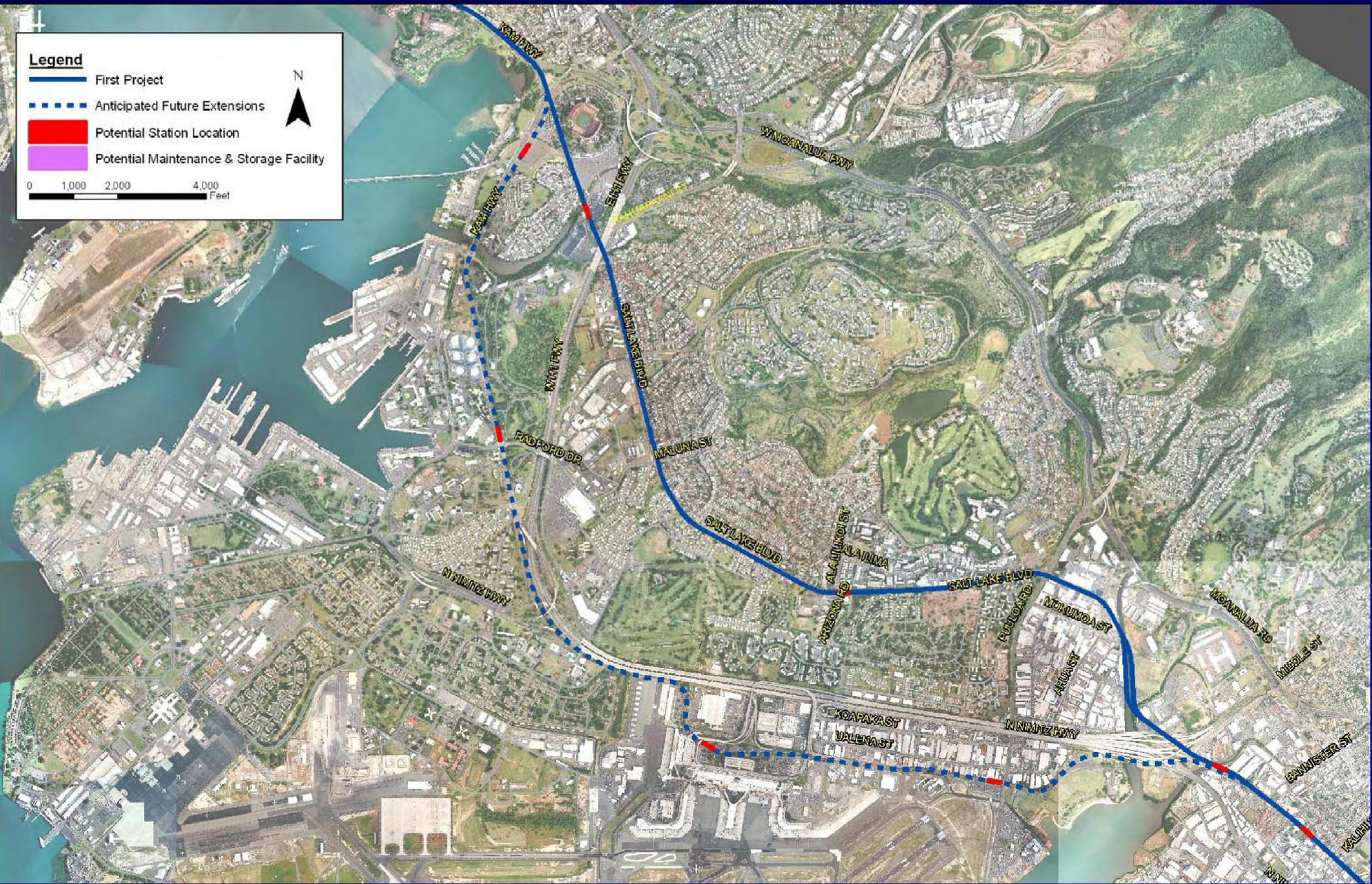



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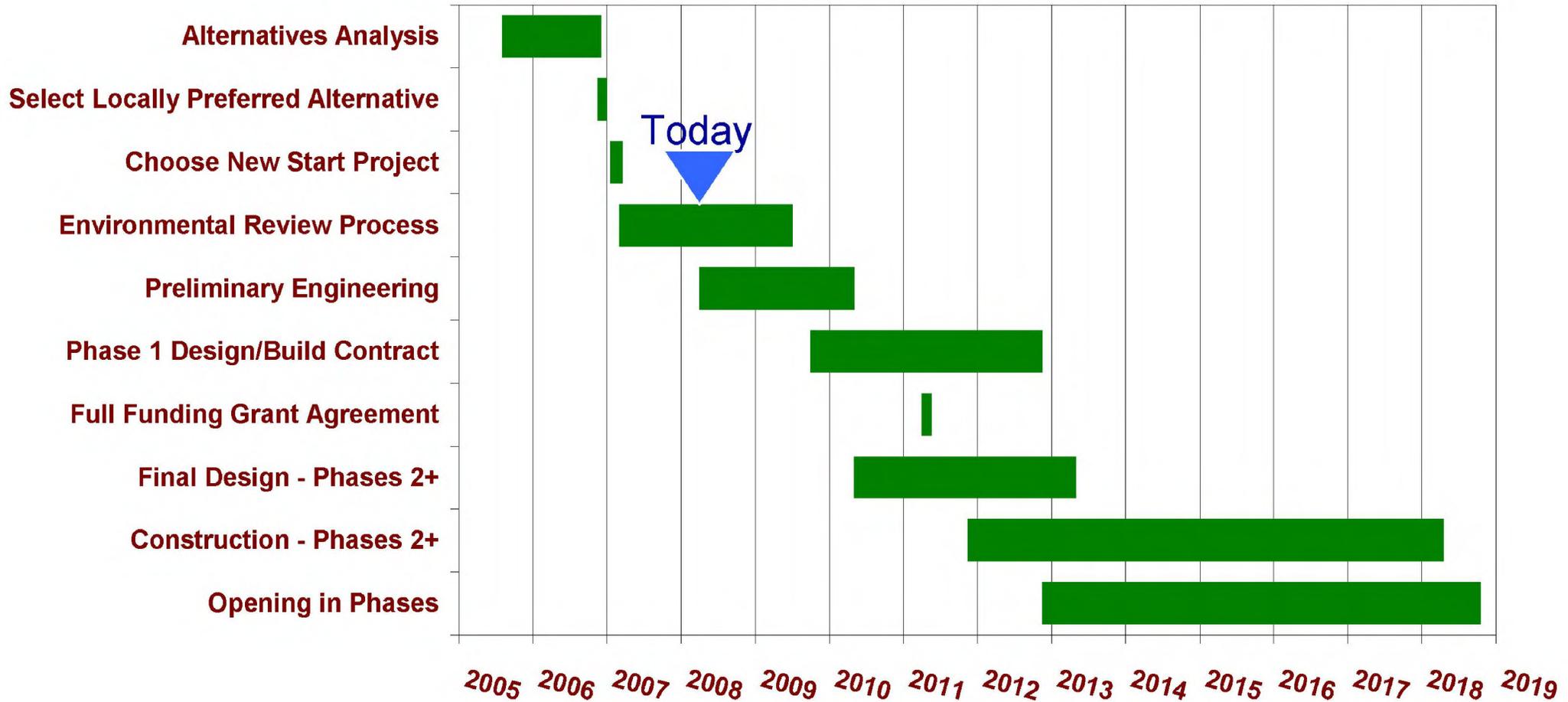
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