

Honolulu On The Move

August 2006

An Update on the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project

Aloha! We are continuing our work on the city's Alternatives Analysis (AA) – a study considering four alternatives to ease Honolulu's traffic situation. The four alternatives are:

1. No Build
2. TSM (Transportation System Management)
3. Managed Lane
4. Fixed Guideway

The AA will be presented to the Honolulu City Council on November 1, 2006. Council members are scheduled to select Honolulu's Locally Preferred Alternative by December 2006.

Community Updates – Round Two

Our first round of community updates in June was positively received and we appreciate the participation by members of the public. We'll continue to bring you the latest information about the city's transit alternatives analysis at three more community meetings in August. Once again, Mayor Mufi Hannemann, city personnel and project consultants will be on hand to answer questions and provide details on the project. The meetings will be held on:

- Tuesday, August 8, 7:00pm – 8:30pm at Mililani High School Cafeteria
- Monday, August 14, 6:30pm – 8:00pm at Kalani High School Cafeteria
- Monday, August 28, 6:00pm – 7:30pm at Farrington High School Cafeteria

We welcome your participation as we tackle this very important quality of life issue and work to keep Honolulu a viable place to live, work and play.



Honolulu On The Move

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Why the time is right for transit

The sheer magnitude of what it takes to successfully plan, fund and build a transit system caused previous efforts to falter. This time several factors are working in our favor.

- We have a guaranteed, local source of funding for transit through the half percent surcharge on the general excise tax on O'ahu;
- We have assurances from the federal government for transit monies;
- We have the benefit of plans, studies and analyses done for previous transit projects;
- We have rock solid support from our elected officials, as evidenced by majority votes cast at the state Legislature and Honolulu City Council for transit and public support by our governor and Congressional delegation in addition to the mayor; and,
- We have the will of the people behind us, especially those on the west side of O'ahu, who experience traffic gridlock seven days a week.

Rail transit also holds tremendous promise to help us shape a better Oahu through transit-oriented development. I recently saw a great example of this in Englewood, Colorado, where development of a transit station completely rejuvenated the economy. Transit-oriented development also offers tremendous opportunities for the kind of public-private partnership that I personally saw in Salt Lake City, which is what I would like to employ to help finance construction of a transit system for Honolulu.

Rail is only part of the solution

While I've been very clear about my preference for rail, it is important for the public to understand that my administration has always favored a multimodal approach to dealing with traffic congestion. By that, I mean offering people choices on how to move around O'ahu. We're

looking at ways to improve and integrate bus service with light rail. We want to improve synchronization of traffic signals and develop more bike paths. We're working towards creation of a ferry system and we continue to encourage economic development on O'ahu's west side, in keeping with our goal of enabling people to live, work and play in their respective communities.

The bottom line? We're going to have to be creative, courageous and committed to meet Honolulu's ever-growing transportation needs.

On the 1st of November, Honolulu City Council members will receive an alternatives analysis that lays out the cost, ridership estimates, environmental and social impacts for all of the transit alternatives now being studied. Based on that analysis and input from the general public, the Council is slated to select Honolulu's locally preferred alternative by the end of this year.

I applaud all of the individuals who made the time to attend the recent community updates and I encourage everyone who cares about our island's future to get informed and stay involved in this effort. Updated information is available at the project website <http://honolulustransit.org/>. We will continue to hold regular community updates, work closely with the news media and continue ongoing community outreach efforts in the spirit of openness and transparency.

Contact Us

Comments and suggestions on future newsletter topics are welcome. Please call the project hotline at 566-2299 or submit your comments via the website at www.honolulustransit.org.

If you would prefer not to receive this update or wish to receive an email version, simply indicate so by calling the project hotline or visiting the website and clicking on "Contact Us."

Transportation Solutions – Making Progress by Mayor Mufi Hanneman



Over the last several weeks, we've been working on updates of the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor project. An additional series of update meetings will begin soon. Already there is much progress to report at the midway point in choosing O'ahu's locally preferred transit alternative.

The recent community meetings demonstrated that everyone agrees that traffic is a critical quality of life issue and to "do nothing" is not an option.

We must act to address O'ahu's traffic woes and I believe a light rail system represents our best chance to make a positive difference.

This will require an enormous commitment of financial and human resources and as government leaders ponder the best ways to solve O'ahu's complex transportation challenges, here are some of the hard realities we must deal with.

- Approximately 900,000 people reside on O'ahu.
- More than two thirds of them – 650,000 – live in 139 square miles, a density greater than the New York-Newark metropolitan area.
- Only Los Angeles has an urbanized area with a population density higher than Honolulu.
- There are approximately 1,100 lane miles of roads in Honolulu's urbanized area. This is about 8 lane miles per square mile of area

or 1.7 lane miles per 1,000 residents.

- While Honolulu has about the same roadway density (number of lanes per area of land) as other large cities in the United States, twice as many people need to use each lane mile.
- O'ahu's population is projected to grow by 30 percent by 2030.

This is why we have one of the highest bus ridership levels in the nation when you look at cities that do not have rapid transit systems. We've got a lot of demand for transportation, but not enough supply.

What are our choices?

If we did nothing, residents of Honolulu would have to continue to find ways to cope by riding buses stuck in traffic or heading to work even earlier than they do now in an attempt to miss morning gridlock.

If we could afford it, we could build another 1,100 lane miles to serve the residents. This would cost tens of billions of dollars, displace thousands of residents and businesses, and take decades. It would require every road to be widened or have a second level built above it.

Or, we could implement balanced, multimodal transportation strategies that include roads and transit. This type of approach would include roadway improvements, like those identified in the O'ahu Regional Transportation Plan. It would also include a major transit system to serve much of the demand.

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Creating Successful Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) with Public-Private Partnership

Transit-oriented development (TOD) is a modern name for compact, walkable communities centered around transit lines. It provides residents with an alternative to low-density suburban sprawl where a car is necessary to travel from home to work, school, or shopping. This auto-dependence is reflected in the design of many of today's communities with large streets designed to accommodate high-speed traffic, little or no place to walk, and large distances separating home, work, and shopping.



Transit Station and TOD, Plano, Texas



Development Near Transit, Dallas, Texas

In contrast, TOD includes a mix of uses, such as housing, shopping, employment, and recreation opportunities. TOD is designed with pedestrians and transit as the key priorities, creating communities where residents can live, work and play without using cars. Although TOD is a new term, it is based upon the design principles of downtowns and community centers built before World War II. Many neighborhoods on O'ahu were built around streetcar lines and the OR&L railway. Kaimuki, Manoa, Downtown-Chinatown and Waipahu are local examples of pre-WWII community centers that would be called TOD today.

TOD can make communities better places to live for many reasons. Successful efforts depend largely on the type and quality of the transit service as well as the quality and character of the TOD. The benefits include:

- **Providing transportation choices** to walk, ride transit, and bicycle instead of driving.
- **Increasing public safety** by creating active community centers and reducing chances for car accidents.
- **Increasing disposable household income** by reducing transportation costs.
- **Reducing air pollution and energy consumption** through diminished car use.



Model of Development, Englewood, Colorado

- **Returning neighbor** to the definition of neighborhood as people have more opportunities to meet their neighbors at work or play, rather than only experiencing their neighborhoods through the isolation of their cars.
- **Creating healthier communities** where people spend more time walking than driving to the store and to the transit station.
- **Providing a mixture of affordable and market-rate housing**, all with easy access to transit.
- **Spending public money efficiently** by utilizing existing public infrastructure, increasing transit riders, and promoting infill development that reduces development pressure on the community edge.

Successful TOD projects often rely upon close public-private partnerships to create a TOD, which responds to the market and is tailored to meet transportation needs. Although approaches to TOD must vary based on community needs and attributes, they all share four important characteristics.

- **A mix of uses.** A mixture of residential, commercial, service, employment, and public uses makes many trips between destinations shorter, walkable, more convenient, and enjoyable. Mixed sites, such as ground floor stores and restaurants with residences on the upper floors, are possible.



Development Plan, Englewood, Colorado

- **Quality pedestrian environment.** Vibrant communities, are convenient and comfortable places for pedestrians. Wide sidewalks, buildings oriented to the street, storefront windows, street trees and lighting, safe and direct connections, and protection from traffic are key ingredients to encourage walking and transit use.

- **A defined center.** Transit is particularly successful in communities and neighborhoods that have defined centers, offering multiple attractions and reasons for pedestrians to frequent the area.

- **Greater density than the community average.** A key ingredient for walkable communities and support for transit is to have homes in a more concentrated area to reduce walking distances between residences and other destinations, including commercial services, schools, parks, and transit. The type of homes may vary from single family residences to high-rise buildings, depending upon the desired character of the TOD and its relationship with the surrounding community.

Local governments and agencies and private developers have established partnerships aimed to provide the necessary ingredients for successful TODs. Recent examples of successful public-private partnerships include:

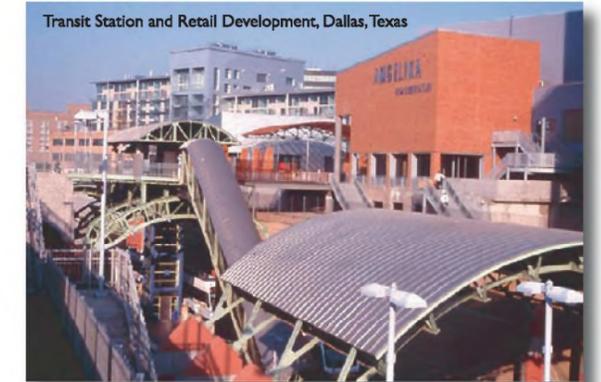


Mixed Use Development Near Transit, Portland, Oregon

- **CityCenter** in Englewood, Colorado redeveloped a vacant suburban shopping mall. The city took the lead in assembling a former shopping center site and provided infrastructure improvements to reinvigorate this aging portion of the city. The project features a combination of civic uses, offices, retail establishments and residences that is designed to take advantage of Denver's light rail and includes more than 400 apartments, civic offices, outdoor plazas and almost 700,000 square feet of retail development.

- **Mockingbird Station**, located next to Dallas' DART light rail line, is a mixed-use development that includes a combination of offices, restaurants, entertainment, and 211 residential units. The project includes over 1,400 parking spaces for park-and-ride. Federal contributions were made to help fund construction, but it was privately financed.

- **Eastside Village** in Plano, Texas created an urban infill development in a suburban downtown. Adjacent to Dallas' DART line, the city financed and leased the site to a developer to create a 234-unit residential project with supporting retail uses and park-and-ride spaces.



Transit Station and Retail Development, Dallas, Texas

- **Ohlone-Chynoweth Commons** in San Jose, California redeveloped an underutilized park-and-ride lot to private development of a new 195-unit residential community of predominantly affordable housing with supporting retail businesses.

- **Orengo Station** in Hillsboro, Oregon changed an industrial zoned site to a "town center" calling for higher density mixed-use. Financed by the private sector, this 1,834-unit residential, retail and office project now takes full advantage of the light rail station within it.

Although the circumstances for each of these projects varied widely, there are common elements that contributed to their success. The important contributions made by public entities included providing necessary transit facilities and other public infrastructure, rewriting regulations to allow TOD with the necessary elements, and assembling properties to aid TOD planning and implementation. The private sector contribution came in knowing how to create a community that included the key TOD characteristics, tailored to local desires and market opportunities. The private sector also commonly provides project financing, project development, and construction management.



Development Near Transit, San Jose, California

Communities around the country are rediscovering the benefits of transit-oriented development that results from the partnership of government and the private sector, and provides benefits to everyone. Residents have affordable housing and reliable commutes, enabling them to spend more time on more productive matters, like spending time with their families. Developers are able to recognize higher return on their investment because of easy access provided by transit, and governments can provide more and better service at a lower cost as a result of the resources provided by the developers.