

Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project Alternatives Analysis

Final Public Involvement Plan

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**Prepared For:
City and County of Honolulu**

**Prepared by:
Parsons Brinckerhoff**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The goal of the Public Involvement Plan (PIP) is to inform the citizens of O‘ahu about the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project (HHCTCP) Alternatives Analysis by providing meaningful information throughout the process, and to solicit and record the public’s views on key issues. The PIP and the materials produced for it will explain the benefits of the alternatives considered, and how they can improve the quality of life for residents in the corridor and for all citizens of O‘ahu. Additionally, the PIP will solicit public input, promote dialogue, address community concerns and support selection of a locally preferred transit alternative that best meets the needs of the citizens of O‘ahu.

The Public Involvement Plan (PIP) provides guidance on how the Project Team will:

- Educate the public and keep them up-to-date about project progress;
- Collect and address community concerns;
- Build on DTS’s public participation programs from previous corridor projects;
- Plan publicity efforts in cooperation with the Mayor and City staff; and
- Utilize the news media, community groups, neighborhood associations, and other resources within the corridor and throughout O‘ahu communities.

The PIP has six key features:

1. City/Public Involvement Team collaboration and involvement in all major aspects of the program.
2. Community and civic group outreach via a Speakers Bureau program and regularly scheduled community updates.
3. Targeted information campaign for government officials.
4. Continual public information effort working in collaboration with the news media.
5. Specific information programs for each of the corridor sections focused on various alignments.
6. Responsiveness and follow-up to document every comment and respond to every question.

This PIP defines the approach to engaging, informing and involving the public throughout the planning, evaluation and selection of the Locally Preferred Alternative phase of the project. The Public Involvement component of the effort is designed to complement the technical flow of work, while making every effort to inform and engage key stakeholders, property owners, policy makers, and the general public, especially those along proposed alignments.

2.0 STRATEGY AND INITIAL STEPS

There are three key strategy elements to effect a successful and informative public involvement campaign. The strategy is based on critical items identified by the Project Team and provides the framework to guide the public outreach and information efforts. In support of the strategy, three key initial actions were considered to initiate the public involvement efforts correctly.

2.1 Strategy

The three main strategy elements for this approach are:

- Build on DTS's previous and existing public participation programs. Publicity efforts will be planned in cooperation with the City's Customer Services Department including drafting media releases, coordinating regular scheduled editorial and media briefings and updates and reaching out to community and civic groups through a Speakers Bureau effort and a Neighborhood Board liaison effort. While the bulk of the media effort will be in earned media, paid advertising will also be utilized in a strategic manner. To foster better communication between the PB Team and DTS, a coordination meeting will be held at least every week.
- Identify the various public groups most interested in and affected by the project and inform them at critical milestones in the project. Recognizing the diverse public and private interests in the corridor, the PB Team will utilize various community groups, neighborhood associations, and other resources within the corridor, as well as involve the general public directly.
- Utilize a variety of outreach methods and techniques to ensure that all interested public are appropriately involved and provided adequate opportunity to provide input and feedback. Such methods will include:
 - Convening focus groups of various O'ahu constituencies to determine baseline information and opinions about mass transit and appropriately craft public outreach effort
 - Developing a project mailing list and issuing a bi-monthly project newsletter
 - Creating and continually updating a project web site
 - Creating a telephone information line
 - Holding public workshops and meetings
 - Presenting information at existing community forums via the Speakers Bureau
 - Utilizing local media and television/cable networks including 'Ōlelo
 - Displaying project information in heavily trafficked areas (e.g., buses, grocery stores, libraries, coffee shops, schools, etc.).

- Providing timely responses and appropriate follow-up to community comments, questions and concerns.
- Appointing a Transit Solutions Advisory Committee to serve as a sounding board for DTS and the PB Team and enhance outreach efforts to community leaders, Neighborhood Boards, and local citizen organizations.

2.2 Initial Steps

This section summarizes the strategies and the initial action steps needed to launch the Public Involvement Program.

2.2.1 Focus Groups

To ensure that the Project Team adequately informs O‘ahu citizens about the HHCTCP, focus groups were conducted to determine residents’ attitudes on mass transit and fixed guideway options. The focus group interviews were conducted by a third party and identified the most effective means of mass communication regarding project information. The results of the focus group interviews were used to mold the type, detail and method of conveying information about the project to the public.

2.2.2 First Newsletter

The first newsletter announced the project and kicked-off the public information phase by outlining the schedule and the technical work to be performed. It identified the website, the telephone access number, the DTS and PB Team contacts, and advised on the availability of project speakers and information for interested groups. It also announced the scoping meetings scheduled for mid-December.

2.2.3 Scoping Meetings – December

The first public meetings are described below in Section 3.4. They were held in mid-December 2005 to avoid being delayed until after the holidays. This round of meetings is a federal requirement for the Environmental Impact Statement process and included both public and agency meetings.

3.0 PUBLIC REPORTING SCHEDULE

During the 18-month period of the project, there will be a regular and steady stream of project progress reports made to the public via community presentations, media briefings and through the project newsletter and website.

- December 2005 – Launch the public involvement program by providing information about project scope, goals, and schedule of the major alternatives and the primary engineering, environmental, and fiscal constraints. Media briefings will be held in advance of scoping meetings
- January 2006 – Project newsletter publication initiated, with initial newsletter edition recapping scoping meetings and outlining project timeline. Community outreach effort commences with launch of Speakers Bureau. Goal of this effort is ten public representations per week.
- February 2006 – Results of scoping meetings releases via newsletter and news media briefings.
- March 2006 – Station locations announced.
- April 2006 – Update on alternatives under consideration including modifications made as a result of community input.
- May 2006 – Additional information on Managed Lane Alternative released.
- June 2006 – Initial ridership and construction cost comparisons announced. Community update meetings.
- July 2006 – Operation and maintenance cost estimates/final capital cost estimates.
- August 2006 – Findings of environmental discipline studies released.
- September 2006 – Final financial plan, visual/aesthetic issues, concepts, options and approaches to explain the preliminary draft EIS.
- October 2006 – Begin briefing public on Alternatives Analysis results, timeline and need for continued public involvement
- November 2006 – Release of Alternatives Analysis, encourage public participation in process to select Locally Preferred Alternative.

- December 2006 – Complement City Council selection of Locally Preferred Alternative, inform public of next steps in transit planning process.

Throughout the public reporting process, the PB Team, in coordination with DTS, will organize written materials summarizing progress to date and conduct a series of informational forums and meetings to report on the project work and to receive public input and comment. The PB Team will attend such meetings after consultation and approval by DTS. The PB Team will coordinate and execute all logistics including set-up of equipment, preparation of materials both printed and video or PowerPoint, and summary reports including any follow-up responses.

In addition, the PB team, through the project's Speakers Bureau, will provide information to Neighborhood Boards, business groups, citizen interest groups, and others who may want to receive a progress report on the project. The Speaker's Bureau will consist of PB's principal team leaders and subconsultants with technical knowledge and experience in meeting with the public.

3.1 CITIZEN AND COMMUNITY MEETINGS

The PB Team will utilize existing citizen groups, Neighborhood Boards, and a wide variety of community organizations for disseminating information about the project. The PB Team will actively request opportunities to be on the meeting agenda of many organizations to provide information on the project and highlight opportunities for public involvement.

The PB Team, in collaboration with the DTS staff, will be responsible for preparing the information to be presented and for facilitating the meeting. The PB Team will also handle, if necessary, all aspects of event coordination, including selecting and securing a location compatible with community needs; conducting site-checks of proposed facilities and paying all rental fees if required; drafting and producing informational materials, such as agendas, fact sheets, programs, etc.; design, production, and dissemination of informational and publicity materials prior to each meeting, including postcards, newsletters or flyers, and media releases; conducting "reminder" telephone calls to encourage attendance; drafting and producing comment cards, sign-in sheets, staff name tags; providing refreshments; set-up and clean-up of equipment and facilities; meeting follow-up, including preparing summary reports with specified action items and issues, and appropriate responses, database maintenance, and appropriate correspondence; and all other event logistics.

The PB Team will provide DTS staff original hard and electronic copies of all informational materials/handouts, and comment forms; attendance records, summary reports of all meetings complete with agenda, comments/statements by responsive members, specified action items and issues; and any required follow-up steps.

3.2 SCOPING MEETINGS

Three scoping meetings were held in December 2005 to introduce the project, explain the draft purpose and need statement, and receive the public's interest and comments on the project and

the draft scoping report. One of the scoping meetings was conducted with the resource agencies, and two were open to the general public. Both public meetings were located to encourage community participation at transit-convenient locations. The resource agency meeting was held near downtown Honolulu so it was convenient for local, state and federal agencies:

- 1) Resource Agencies Scoping Meeting
Tuesday, December 13, 2005
2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Neal S. Blaisdell Center, Pitake Room
- 2) General Public Scoping Meeting
Tuesday, December 13, 2005
5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Neal S. Blaisdell Center, Pitake Room
- 3) General Public Scoping Meeting
Wednesday, December 14, 2005
7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Kapolei Middle School Cafeteria

The PB Team was responsible for presenting the draft scoping report and facilitating each meeting. The PB Team also arranged for all meeting logistics, including site checks; set-up and clean-up of facilities and equipment; securing hearing impaired translator; drafting and producing informational materials including flyers, notices, handouts, fact sheets, etc.; staff name tags, attendance sheets, and comment cards; reminder phone calls to key individuals/agencies; court reporter; summary notes of key comments, questions, and concerns, etc.

The PB Team drafted and produced a scoping booklet that was distributed to the resource agencies prior to the scoping meetings. The PB Team also produced scoping booklets or folios for the general public at the scoping meetings. The booklet described the purpose of the project, a discussion of proposed alternatives and the environmental review process, as well as information on opportunities for public input. The booklet information was also placed on the project web site.

The PB Team prepared press kits with information and hand-outs about the scoping process for media representatives.

The PB Team provided DTS staff original hard and electronic copies of all informational materials/handouts, comment forms, and the scoping booklet; attendance records; summary reports complete with agenda, dictation from court reporter with comments/statements by responsive members, specified action items and issues, and appropriate responses.

3.3 BRIEFINGS FOR PUBLIC OFFICIALS

The PB Team, at DTS's direction, will provide informational briefings to government agencies. These may take the form of one-on-one discussions or formal presentations for groups of elected or appointed officials.

The PB Team will provide to DTS a complete record of such briefings, including those in attendance, the topics covered, the main questions asked, and any materials distributed.

3.4 TRANSIT SOLUTIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

To assist the Mayor and City Council in reviewing the technical work of the project and in evaluating alignment options, the Mayor has appointed a Transit Solutions Advisory Committee (TSAC) of 25-30 community leaders. TSAC would meet several times during the course of the project with DTS staff and the PB Team for the purposes of serving as a sounding board to ensure that the information provided to the public is what people need to make sound decisions. This committee will also complement public outreach efforts using their individual community networks to ensure that we reach all segments of the community.

4.0 COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

To ensure that the public is receiving current information, a number of communication and public outreach activities will be utilized.

4.1 MAILING LIST

The HHCT Corridor is approximately 23 miles in length and continues to increase in population and travel congestion. The corridor has a wide range of distinctive issues, interest groups and citizen organizations. The PB Team will develop and maintain a comprehensive mailing list of contacts in the corridor.

The goal of establishing and maintaining a project mailing list is to ensure that all interested parties are appropriately informed and updated on the purpose and progress of the project. The PB Team will work with DTS staff to develop an inclusive and diverse database. The PB Team will develop a project mailing list(s), incorporating all interested parties, including:

- Key stakeholders
- Community groups
- Civic groups
- Neighborhood associations
- Unions
- Transit users and advocates
- Education groups
- Health care industry
- Visitor/Tourism industry
- Business and planning professionals
- Transportation industry
- Environmental groups
- Local elected officials (City and State)
- Local, state and federal agencies
- Regional groups/organizations

A partial list of such organizations/associations is identified below:

- Ala Moana Center
- American Lung Association
- Chinatown Task Force
- Conservation Council of Hawai‘i
- Downtown Business Council

- Hawai‘i Bicycling League
- Hawai‘i Hotel Association
- Hawai‘i Transportation Association
- Hawai‘i’s Thousand Friends
- Leeward O‘ahu Transportation Management Association
- Outdoor Circle
- Pearl City Shopping Center
- Pearlridge Center
- Sierra Club, Hawai‘i Chapter
- Waikīkī Improvement Association

4.2 RESOURCE DATABASE

Drawing upon the files from previous transportation studies, and as the technical work is produced, the PB Team will develop a resource database on issues in the corridor. Fact sheets, white papers, articles, letters, and other information sources will be organized according to issue topics and corridor sections as required. Such topics will include:

- Relationship between transit and traffic congestion
- Types of transit technology including relative costs, carrying capacity, and speed
- References to previous studies
- Transportation impacts on land use planning
- Ridership analyses
- Other topics as required

This resource database can then be made available in videos, PowerPoint presentations, FAQ’s, brochures, and in other ways for public dissemination.

4.3 INFORMATIONAL AND PUBLICITY MATERIALS

The PB Team will produce numerous informational materials including fact sheets, brochures, newsletters, media releases and public service announcements, notices, flyers, announcement or reminder postcards, web site links, handouts, etc. All materials will be informative and serve as educational pieces. The PB Team as directed by DTS will utilize various forms of media, including print, radio, television and the Internet. This will help to sustain the inclusiveness of the outreach efforts, and ensure that the public is informed of the project’s progress.

The PB Team will develop a logo, masthead, and format for all project materials. These project-distinctive images, once approved by DTS, will be used on all informational materials, including flyers, newsletters, postcards, press releases and notices, fact sheets/handouts, presentations, posters, etc. Furthermore, the PB Team will work with the DTS staff in designing the appropriate layout for specific informational and publicity materials throughout the project.

4.4 MEDIA RELEASES, PUBLIC NOTICES, AND ADVERTISEMENTS

The PB Team will work with DTS to identify appropriate media outlets. The PB Team will work as an extension of DTS and City staff to support the City's policy in informing the media about the project, including the preparation of draft media releases and public service announcements to highlight key project issues or milestones, and to publicize upcoming opportunities for public involvement.

The PB Team will follow up on all media submittals. The PB Team will also draft and submit articles to be published in local publications and newspapers as directed, providing updated information on previous meetings, as well as the project's progress and outlets/opportunities for community involvement.

In order to enhance attendance at major selected public forums and the official public hearings, the PB Team will also design black and white advertisements in local publications if necessary. In addition, the PB Team will work with DTS staff in scheduling and coordinating other media events including news conferences, photo sessions, media tours and radio and television appearances.

4.5 NEWSLETTERS

The PB Team will design and produce periodic newsletters to provide the public with detailed information on current project issues. The first newsletter (November 2005) will be a letter from the mayor to introduce the project, outline the project's purpose and need, and announce the project's web site, telephone access number, and other general information. Subsequent newsletters will report on key ridership and cost data for the major alternatives, and other timely information. The final newsletter (Fall 2006) will serve as an executive summary, highlighting the initiatives and activities taken throughout the project, issues and concerns addressed, key decisions made, preliminary conclusions reached and a preview of the City's next steps. The final newsletter will be a comprehensive, yet concise, stand-alone document. All newsletters will encourage use of the project telephone access number and web site for public input.

4.6 WEBSITE

The PB Team has initiated a website specifically for the project, which provides a link to the Honolulu City and County existing website. This will allow the public to access both websites to obtain updated information on the project's progress and public input/involvement opportunities. The project website, www.honolulutransit.org, will include the following information:

- Project purpose and need
- Overview and schedule
- Study alternatives

- Corridor maps
- Environmental review process
- Public involvement opportunities
- Summaries of previous public meetings
- Contact information
- Recent articles/press releases
- Links to related sites
- Time, date, and location of upcoming meetings

The website will be updated by the PB Team with new material as it is developed.

4.7 TELEPHONE INFORMATION LINE

The PB Team will install a separate project information telephone number for the project. The number will provide twenty-four hour access for public inquiry and comment. The PB Team will be responsible for updating the recorded voice message on a weekly, or as needed basis to include project updates, upcoming public meeting dates and event information.

The PB Team will manage all inquiry responses. The PB Team will check the message box at least twice daily, and will be responsible for personally responding to caller inquiries, or routing caller inquiries to the most appropriate project or DTS staff person for a response. The PB Team will also be responsible for creating and maintaining a phone log complete with the date, time, and description of the caller inquiry, as well as the response made by the PB Team.

5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ISSUES

As required under federal law and as part of the environmental evaluation of alternatives, the project will address environmental justice issues by carefully considering community demographics and socioeconomic impacts in analyzing alternatives.

Particular attention will be paid to reaching low income and minority populations that are traditionally underserved and underrepresented in the public involvement process. Materials will be prepared in the major languages of O‘ahu and translators will be available upon request at the meetings. Information will be distributed through cultural organizations, ethnic associations, housing associations, community development groups, and similar organizations.

In addition, the community impacts assessment will be closely coordinated with the noise, transportation impacts, safety, relocation, land use, parks, and socioeconomic impact analyses. The community impacts assessment will focus on barriers to neighborhoods, service areas or community facilities. Other community issues as brought forth in community meetings, stakeholder interviews, and at public workshops also will be addressed as part of this evaluation.

The PB Team will pay particular attention to meeting this federal requirement, and to documenting the project’s outreach activities and public comments.