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# Kapolei

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# Making Tracks

## Honolulu's Rail Transit Project

**F**OR FUTURE RIDERS, their experience of the planned Honolulu Rail Transit Project will be focused on the trains they will ride on a track that will connect them to stops along the route from East Kapolei to Ala Moana Center. Their only expectation will be getting to their destination comfortably, quickly and on time.

But a great deal of work goes into building a system that will meet rider expectation. It involves a myriad of complex steps to build the \$5.3 billion 20-mile, 21 station elevated rail system.

The first step is preparing the route for construction of the rail transit guideway. Kiewit Infrastructure West Co., is now doing the prep work for the first phase of the route from East Kapolei to Pearl City. Crews are relocating existing water, gas, phone and electrical lines, sewer and storm drains, and trees to adjacent areas to clear the rail's pathway.

Once this is completed, Kiewit will start construction on the guideway, which is expected to begin by the end of 2011. In the meantime, contractor Ansaldo Honolulu is expected to build a fleet of 80 trains. Transit planners expect one half of the route (from East Kapolei to Aloha Stadium) will be ready for riders by 2015. After that, the route will be expanded to Kalihi by 2017, and the initial route to Ala Moana will be operational by 2019. After this initial route is completed, there are plans to extend the rail transit system to West Kapolei, Waikiki and UH Manoa.

Time is of the essence for riders looking to shorten their commute time. Total travel time for East Kapolei to Ala Moana will be only 42 minutes, with stops at or near UH-West Oahu, Leeward Community College, Pearlridge Center, Aloha Stadium, and Honolulu International Airport. In Kapolei, the first two stops will be next to the Salvation Army Kroc Center and the UH-West Oahu campus.

There is another aspect to the rail transit system that will have an enor-



• PHOTO: Simulation of a planned station for Honolulu's Rail Transit project.

mous stimulating impact on the economy. The first, most immediate is jobs. Roughly 10,000 will be attributed to rail construction during each year of the project, About half will be in the construction industry, while the rest will be indirect as a result of the project's ripple effect throughout the economy. Other benefits will come through balanced development around rail stations (called

portation (HART), which is tasked with overseeing construction, operation and maintenance of the rail project.

"All of us serving on the HART board understand the great responsibility before us in moving this important project forward," said HART chairwoman Carrie Okinaga. "We are here to ensure this rail project comes in on time and on budget, and that it is well-

**"Not only do we want to keep the public updated on the project's progress, but we also want to gather their input on ways to make this project the best it can be."**

—Carrie Okinaga, HART Chairwoman

transit-oriented development or TOD), which will pump billions of dollars into the economy in the coming decades. It will be most visible around the Kapolei stations where new communities are being designed with the city's sustainability model of balancing economic, social and environmental needs very much in mind.

The enormity of the transit project's impact is not lost on the newly formed Honolulu Authority for Rapid Trans-

managed."

Okinaga said the board also encourages public input. "Not only do we want to keep the public updated on the project's progress, but we also want to gather their input on ways to make this project the best it can be," Okinaga said.

For more information on the ongoing construction work in West Oahu, visit the project website at [www.honolulutransit.org](http://www.honolulutransit.org) or contact the project hotline at 566-2299.