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JULY 1, 2011

HART BOARD PASSES KEY MEASURES FOR HONOLULU'S RAIL PROJECT

(Friday, July 1, 2011) — Members of the newly created Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation (HART) today were sworn in and conducted their first meeting, passing several key measures regarding the Honolulu Rail Transit Project.

The HART board includes six members appointed by the mayor and the Honolulu City Council, and three ex-officio members, with a tenth member to be appointed by the voting members of the board.

Appointed board members are: William “Buzz” Hong; Don Horner; Keslie Hui; Damien Kim; Ivan Lui-Kwan; and Carrie Okinaga. Ex-Officio members are: State Department of Transportation Director Glenn Okimoto; City Department of Transportation Services Director Wayne Yoshioka; and City Department of Planning and Permitting Director David Tanoue. The City planning director serves as a non-voting member.

The board selected Okinaga as board chairwoman and Lui-Kwan as vice chairman. The board also established the following standing committees and committee leadership slate: **Audit Committee** (Lui-Kwan, chairman; Horner, vice chairman), **Finance Committee** (Horner, chairman; Hui, vice chairman), **Human Resources Committee** (Hui, chairman; Hong, vice chairman), **Project Oversight Committee** (Kim, chairman; Hong, vice chairman), and **Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Committee** (Hong, chairman; Lui-Kwan, vice chairman).

“I look forward to working with my colleagues and all stakeholders to ensure that taxpayer dollars are invested wisely,” Okinaga said. “We are here to ensure the project comes in on time and on budget, and that it is well-managed.”

“By adopting our operating rules, your transit authority board is organized today. I thank my colleagues for taking on these substantive committee assignments. They will be rolling up their sleeves and getting to work with a sense of urgency,” Okinaga added. “To ensure public confidence, the Audit Committee chaired by Vice Chairman Lui-Kwan will be initiating an audit immediately to ensure that we have a clean set of books from the start.”

The board adopted the transit authority’s \$20.5-million operating budget and its \$354.7-million capital budget. The budget amounts were identical to the budgets previously approved by the Honolulu City Council and ensures that the rail project will continue without unnecessary delays, said HART Finance Committee Chairman Don Horner, who committed that a thorough review would be conducted of the budget.

“Legal action is clearly not in the best interest of the taxpayers and I am confident we can work with City Council and the Administration in providing budget oversight,” Horner said. “We also plan to begin work on next year’s budget immediately. The committee intends to conduct public meetings on the future budget and then, submit it to both City Council and Administration before submission to the full HART board.”

The board also named Toru Hamayasu, the current general manager for the project, as HART interim executive director. The board plans to enlist a national and a local search firm with expertise in transit executive searches to assist members in the selection of a permanent executive director. The board’s objective is to appoint HART’s permanent executive director by the end of the year, Okinaga said.

HART’s board of directors will meet on the first and third Thursday of each month, and 25 percent of the authority’s meetings will be held at Kapolei Hale or at another West O`ahu location to ensure full public participation. In addition, all five committees will conduct monthly public meetings. The board also adopted a transparency policy, a financial policy, a procurement policy, and a code of ethics for all members to follow.

The board of directors is also accepting applications for those interested in applying for the tenth board member’s position. Cover letters expressing interest and resumes are being accepted online now through August 5, 2011 at www.HonoluluTransit.org.

For more information on HART and the rail project, visit www.HonoluluTransit.org.