

I hope you agree that the morning sessions have been exciting and educational.

We've got an extremely distinguished roster of transit leaders with real life experiences and I want to thank them, again, for so generously contributing their stories to help us with Honolulu's largest, most important project public works project.

I want to spend some time over this lunch hour updating you on exactly where we are in making mass transit a reality for Honolulu.

In spite of the many challenges that face us, I am happy to report that our project is on proceeding right on pace.

We set an extremely ambitious schedule and we are meeting all of the important milestones.

Exactly one year ago we completed the first step in the federal process known as the Alternatives Analysis and last December, the Honolulu City Council selected the fixed guideway as the locally preferred alternative.

In March of this year, we initiated the preparation of an environmental impact statement, and we hired the consultants to conduct the preliminary engineering work a few months ago.

Going forward, our schedule calls for completion of the draft environmental impact statement in June 2008 and obtaining federal approval of the final environmental impact statement in September 2009.

That clears the way for us to start the construction contract in the year 2009.

### **Preliminary Engineering**

The Federal Transit Administration has hired a project management and oversight contractor to work with the city in the preparation of the next steps, and they've helped us to set up the Rapid Transit Division within the Department of Transportation Services.

The Rapid Transit Division, or RTD, will be responsible for bringing the project through the preliminary engineering phase and it is likely to expand into a larger organization as the project moves forward and into the design and construction phases.

Shortly, we will be hiring technical professionals for the project and it is my hope that we can attract best local minds in Hawaii and also lure home others who chose to leave the islands to pursue professional opportunities elsewhere.

### **Congressional Support**

You heard earlier in today's program and I want to re-emphasize the tremendous support we're receiving from our Congressional delegation.

I appreciate Senator Inouye, Senator Akaka, and Representative Abercrombie's unanimous support from my first day I took over the Office of the Mayor and launched the effort to develop this project.

Thanks to their efforts, we've had more federal funding than many other cities at this stage of the project development.

I must also extend my special thanks to Representative Hirono.

During her first term in office, she's worked tirelessly to gain support for our project in key House committees. I was very encouraged by the supportive words I received from the chairmen and the high ranking members of these committees during my recent visit to Washington DC.

I met with the Chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, James Oberstar; Chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Highway and Transit subcommittee, Pete DeFazio, and the Ranking Minority member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Highway and Transit Subcommittee, John Duncan. These gentlemen had high compliments for Rep Hirono's efforts and expressly stated their support for Honolulu.

### **Federal Earmark**

There is good news from the Senate as well.

I am pleased to let you know that I received a phone call from Senator Inouye and he told me that he was able to obtain \$15.5 million for Honolulu Transit in the federal transit New Starts program. This is a significant sum from the Congress for a project that has just entered the competition for New Starts funding.

Funding at this level in the early stages of the project's development is thanks to the hard work and unified congressional support from Senators Inouye and Akaka and Representatives Abercrombie and Hirono.

Thank you for all that you have and continue to do on behalf of Honolulu's mass transit project.

### **Transit Oriented Development**

One of the most exciting opportunities to be created by mass transit is Transit Oriented Development or TOD.

Many of you participated in our TOD workshop for Waipahu, which was specifically chosen as the first community to participate in TOD planning.

Waipahu started out as sugar mill and plantation town, a part of our island heritage that many of us hold dear.

But Waipahu's charm was being lost to urban sprawl.

Small shops that were frequented by customers who walked to these family businesses have been mowed over by strip malls with huge parking lots, completely changing the Waipahu environment.

Waipahu is no longer a pedestrian friendly community and there are few vestiges of the charming plantation village of old.

TOD can bring back neighborhoods where we greet our neighbors face to face instead of through the windshields of our cars.

We're hopeful that Waipahu will be a vibrant, real life example of a community where people can live, work and raise their families. I am extremely excited about TOD's potential to revitalize and invigorate communities all along the transit route and I am looking forward to this afternoon's TOD discussion by our distinguished guests.

### **Technology Selection**

One of the most significant next steps in this project is selection of the fixed guideway technology.

There has been some intentional confusion generated by some City Council members on this issue, but let me assure you -- we are focused on maintaining the integrity of the city council policy determined when the Council selected the fixed guideway as the locally preferred alternative.

In that action, the Council expressly rejected busways from further consideration so we will focus our effort in selecting the best fixed guideway technology.

Soon, working with the Council, we will be requesting that all eligible technology vendors submit specifications and price information so that a panel of technology experts can evaluate and determine what is best for Honolulu. I hope to have that evaluation in hand by early 2008.

If we keep to schedule, as we have so far, next year's symposium will likely be focusing on the selected technology.

You may be able to touch and feel the samplings from the vendors who would demonstrate their systems that met Honolulu's technology specifications.

## Conclusion

In closing, let me say that these are exciting times.

We're closer than we've ever been in creating a mass transit system that fits Honolulu today and tomorrow.

While I am mass transit's most enthusiastic proponent, I want to assure you that I know that solving Honolulu's transportation challenges requires an integrated, multi-modal transportation system.

We've been hard at work improving and enhancing our award winning bus system.

We're proud of our fledging commuter ferry system and were so happy to be able to welcome TheBoat as one of our transportation options.

This year, Honolulu received national recognition as a bike-friendly city and I am committed to continue enhancing our network of bike and pedestrian paths.

For me, it's all about providing people transportation choices that offer predictable, reliable travel times.

The problems that face us are complicated and complex and it would be foolish to believe that a single transportation mode will provide all of the answers.

All of you are here today because you understand that to rise to our transportation challenges, we'll have to work hard and work together and I thank you for the role you play in this effort.

Together we can and will make Honolulu the best place to live, work and raise our families.

Right now, I'd like to welcome the former mayor of another great city, Wellington Webb.

While serving as Mayor of Denver from 1991 to July 2003, he oversaw an investment of \$7 billion in infrastructure. Those projects included the \$4 billion Denver International Airport and redevelopment of former Stapleton Airport into a thriving residential/business community.

He convinced voters to approve a \$300 million expansion to the Colorado Convention Center, which opened in December 2004, and led tough, successful negotiations for a nearby hotel.

The mayor strongly supported the revitalization of the Mile High City's downtown, which has become a model nationwide.

Mass transit played a pivotal role in Denver's progress and here to share his experiences is the man who made all of that happen.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann  
Transit Symposium 2007  
Luncheon Speech

Please join me in giving a real Honolulu style welcome to  
Wellington Webb.