Honolulu On The Move

August 2008

An Update on the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project

Mythbusters

Aloha! Welcome to the Mythbusters edition of "Honolulu on the Move." We will tackle the myths and inaccuracies about Honolulu's rail system and traffic on our island with the facts.

Myth: *We can just add more buses.*

Fact: Roger Morton, President and CEO of TheBus, recommends Honolulu's rail system because adding more buses alone cannot improve our transit system.

One of out of every three buses is late because of traffic congestion, and adding more buses will make it worse. There are too many vehicles on the road, creating a gridlock that slows everyone down, including buses.

Myth: *HOT Lanes will solve traffic congestion.*

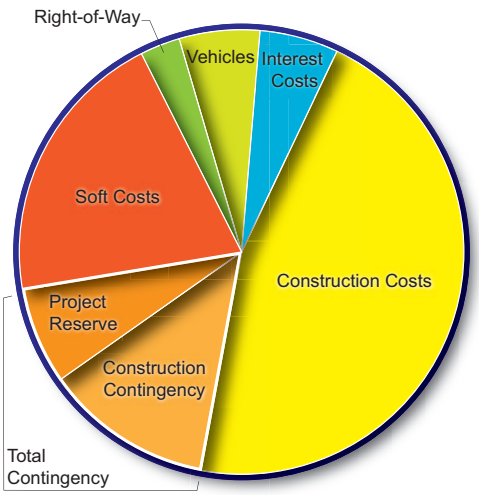
Fact: The Alternatives Analysis showed that Managed Lanes (HOT lanes) increase traffic congestion instead of reducing it.

HOT lanes are High-Occupancy Toll Lanes, where drivers pay a fee to use the HOV lanes, but without passengers.

Myth: *Rail is too expensive.*

Fact: Rail transit is the most cost-effective option among those studied, including expanding bus service or building a HOT lane viaduct. The initial route from East Kapolei to Ala Moana Shopping Center is affordable with identified funding sources.

Funding comes from the .05% GET surcharge and the Federal Transit Administration's New Starts program.



$3.7 Billion Total
(2006 Dollars)

Myth: *The construction estimate for Honolulu's rail system is too low.*

Fact: Construction costs are estimated using the building industry's best practices. Costs are based on engineers' calculations of current and comparable construction costs in Hawaii. The cost estimate will be adjusted and updated with inflation as the project advances. Nearly $1 billion in contingency is included in the total cost to absorb future uncertainties.

Myth: *The city is focusing only on rail transit and no other transportation improvements will be done.*

Fact: The city and state have already committed $3 billion to roadway improvements, expanding TheBus service, revamping the islandwide bicycle plan, carpooling and ridesharing and other services. These were included in the traffic analysis that showed that rail

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Local Thoughts

"I'm excited about the possibilities for what this project will do for people on the leeward side of the island. I feel the quality of life can be substantially improved for people who have get up to crawl [in traffic] into town, go to work and then crawl home [in traffic]."

Stuart Murray,
Punchbowl

"This is about choice. I believe rail is not the only solution, but its one piece of the puzzle. Having all the information about the project helped me see that most complaints have no merit."

Grant Kanoho,
Newtown

City Highlight
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Others Looking to Rail
Tulsa, Oklahoma is also looking for a new rail system… read this excerpt from the June 1, 2008 edition of Tulsa World, Tulsa's local newspaper.

"Gas, road costs put rail plans on track"
By Susan Hylton, Tulsa World Staff Writer
Tulsa's carbon footprint also fuels the vision of rail transit.

The idea of commuter rail seems to be gaining steam in an atmosphere of skyrocketing gasoline and road-widening costs and a worrisome report on the size of Tulsa's carbon footprint.

One of the biggest reasons cited last week by the Brookings Institution for Tulsa's ranking of 11th for its output of greenhouse gases was its lack of rail transit made worse by urban sprawl and near-total dependence on personal vehicles.

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City and County of Honolulu
650 South King St. 3rd floor
Honolulu, HI 96813

www.honolulutransit.org

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Call or email us if you would like to receive an electronic version of this newsletter or would like be removed from our mailing list.

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The good news is that Tulsa already has numerous rail lines in place that are still active, connecting downtown to all the suburbs.

"I think it's something we have to begin to look at," Mayor Kathy Taylor said. "We know the environment is something we can either spoil or take care of. Knowing what we can do to reduce (emissions) is not just smart, but it saves money."

Tulsa City Councilor Rick Westcott said it is discouraging to realize the size of Tulsa's problem.

"But I think it could prove as an impetus toward people realizing the need for a good commuter rail system or connecting to the Amtrak system," he said.

Traveling by rail is a romantic notion for many, but there also are practical benefits such as infill development that experts say tends to spring up near rail stations.

An alternate means of transportation also would help many people avoid unaffordable gas prices. It also gives the aging population a way to continue being mobile.

"There's going to come a time when people are not going to be able to afford to drive every day," Westcott said.

The article continued to describe Tulsa's plans for their light rail route.

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is the most effective tool for decreasing traffic congestion.

Myth: *Rail is noisy.*

Fact: Modern rail is quieter than an accelerating city bus. There will not be a detectable increase in community noise levels.

Myth: *Rail will rust.*

Fact: Steel rail is used successfully in many humid, tropical areas, including Miami and the island of Puerto Rico. Steel used for modern transit systems is far more resistant to rust and corrosion than the steel used to build Aloha Stadium more than 30 years ago. With regular maintenance, rust will not be an issue.

Myth: *Rail uses more energy than cars.*

Fact: Trains are far more energy efficient than cars and trucks, utilizing 27 percent less energy per passenger-mile as passenger vehicles, according to the U.S. Department of Energy's 2007 Transportation Energy Data Book.

Myth: *We need to build a new HECO power plant just to power the rail.*

Fact: HECO already plans to build a new power plant at Campbell Industrial Park. HECO estimates that the new plant will be able to power the expected needs of the rail system.

Did You Know?

Rail is great for mobility.

Rail transit can move 9,000 people an hour in both directions –it has a system capacity equal to 6 lanes of cars.