Facts about rail transit near the Honolulu Airport.

HONOLULU RAIL TRANSIT

You may have read a recent article that implied the City did not adequately prepare for the airport portion of the Honolulu Rail Transit Project. This is untrue.

Here are the facts:

Fact: The City completed the required airspace study for the rail route near the airport and the Lagoon Drive rail station.

Fact: The City gave the airspace study to the Hawaii Department of Transportation (HDOT) in 2008 and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in mid-2009. It was based on the airport's official plans which did not have the new, larger FAA runway protection zone.

Fact: At the time, neither HDOT nor the FAA found conflicts with the rail route or the Lagoon Drive station. When we discovered a conflict we informed HDOT and proposed a mitigation plan.

Fact: HDOT Director Brennon Morioka sent a letter agreeing to the City's mitigation plan in November 2009.

Fact: The form 7460 that is mentioned in the article has nothing to do with the EIS, or the runway protection zone. It's a standard form filed a minimum of 30 days before construction, and construction of this segment is several years away.

Fact: The City informed the FTA that we have reached a solution to the FAA and HDOT concern over the airport issue, including the runway protection zone, and we are waiting for the FTA's concurrence. This federal EIS is a FTA document so their concurrence is needed before the solution is finalized.

Fact: The airport is a vitally important destination for the rail system, which is why the City is working diligently to ensure that the airport station is planned well.

Fact: We have collected over 99.4% of the forecasted amount in GET revenue from 2007 to date.

Some continue to give an inaccurately bleak picture on GET revenue and say we are short on money. Instead of reacting to the month to month revenue fluctuations, we rely on the economic experts' assessment through the project time period. The experts adjusted the financial plan for the economic downturn and our financial plan was even deemed "conservative" by the independent Hawaii Business Roundtable.

We anticipate the recovery from the recession and so does the Governor's Council on Revenues. Their latest forecast shows the economy is recovering sooner than expected with the growth rate of 6.2%. The City also moved up some key construction contracts to take advantage of the current slow market so that the contracts are coming in with substantial savings.Additionally, the Federal Transit Administration has expressed strong support for funding this project with over $1.5 billion in federal funds.

The project has a solid financial base and is moving forward. Mahalo for your continued support for rail.

"Honolulu's rail system is the best transit project in the country."

Congressman James Oberstar
Chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

Paid by: Kiewit Pacific Co., PB Americas, Inc., InfraConsult LLC.