MEMORANDUM

TO: Administrator Peter Rogoff
FROM: Susan Borinsky, Associate Administrator for Planning and Environment
DATE: February 26, 2010
RE: Meeting with Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann

MEETING OVERVIEW

You will be meeting with Mayor Hannemann who will be inquiring on progress towards completion of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Honolulu rail project. With the mayor will be Todd Apo, current chair of the City Council and a rail supporter; Toru Hamayasu, Chief of the City's Rapid Transit Division; and perhaps another councilmember still to be determined.

TOPIC OF MEETING & TALKING POINTS

The mayor is likely to ask about a variety of topics related to near-term closure on the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and the position of Hawaii Governor Linda Lingle on the project. Two principal issues remain regarding the FEIS: the Programmatic Agreement (PA) for Section 106 resources and impacts on operations at Honolulu International Airport.

PA: FTA has completed its review of the draft PA and has forwarded the document to the Hawaii State Historic Preservation Office for its concurrence. FTA staff anticipates no major changes to the document and the availability of a final PA for signature within the next several weeks.

Airport: FTA awaits the findings of the Federal Aviation Administration regarding the impacts, required mitigations, and costs consequent to the City's preferred alignment through the airport. Preliminary indications are that the impacts and mitigations are substantial. At this point, it may be prudent for the City to develop all information necessary to document in the FEIS one or more alternative airport alignments that would avoid these impacts. (City staff have voiced hope that FTA will "push back" against this outcome; the mayor may also.)

Regarding the governor's position, the mayor may ask about her latest meeting with Secretary La Hood and offer various counter-arguments to her public statements on the cost of the project, the financial plan, and her plans for a detailed review of the FEIS and the financial plan.

The mayor may also ask for expedited closure of issues related to the initial design-build contract that the City has executed with a contractor team led by Kiewit Pacific. FTA staff have been working with the City to ensure that the contract work undertaken in advance of a Record of Decision for the project complies with applicable FTA guidance. FTA staff expects closure on this issue by the next project-oversight meeting in Honolulu, scheduled for the first week in March.

NOTABLE BACKGROUND

The entire Hawaii Congressional delegation has been supportive of this project, particularly Senator Inouye.