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Mayor to meet with transit officials

Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann will meet with key transit officials during a weeklong trip to Washington, D.C., this week. Tomorrow, Hannemann will meet with U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and Federal Transit Administration Administrator Peter Rogoff to discuss the progress of the city's \$5.3 billion elevated commuter rail transit project. The city is still waiting for federal transit officials to approve its environmental impact statement for the project before it can proceed. The city also needs a check-off from Gov. Linda Lingle before it can break ground. Hannemann is also expected to meet with U.S. Rep. Jim Oberstar, D-Minnesota, chairman of the House Transportation Committee, to provide him with an update on the project. Oberstar, during a visit to Honolulu in October 2008, indicated he believes the city would receive about \$900 million in federal dollars for the project. Hannemann will also be attending the 78th winter meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, taking place Wednesday through Friday. Other Hawai'i mayors are also expected to attend. Key members of the mayors' conference, including Hannemann, will meet with President Obama and other Cabinet officials Thursday to discuss the nation's economy. Also Thursday, Hannemann will attend a ceremony at which Americans for the Arts and the mayors' conference will announce the 2010 national award for local arts leadership. Hannemann is chairman of the conference's committee on Tourism, Arts, Parks, Entertainment and Sports. The mayor returns to Honolulu Saturday.

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