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March 30, 2006

Mr. Patrick Leonard, Field Supervisor
Pacific Islands Office
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
300 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 3-122
Box 50088
Honolulu, Hawaii 96850

Subject: Proposed High-Capacity Transit Improvements From Kapolei to the
University of Hawaii at Manoa
Island of Oahu
Request for Species List, Endangered Species Act

Dear Mr. Leonard:

The City and County of Honolulu, Department of Transportation Services (DTS), in cooperation with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), intends to propose public transit improvements in a 23-mile travel corridor between Kapolei and the University of Hawaii at Manoa, which may include an extension to Waikiki (see enclosed project study area). Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, Inc. is assisting DTS with this project.

Because of anticipated federal involvement with this project, coordination activities complying with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act need to occur. I am writing to request that you provide us with a list of federal trust species, or candidate federal trust species ("species list") for the project site shown in the map enclosed. In addition, we request your input on any relevant critical habitat.

For your information, the following is a brief overview of the proposed project, including the alternatives under consideration. Please note that an Alternatives Analysis and a draft Environmental Impact Statement, pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and Chapter 343 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes, will be prepared for this project.

Study Area

The proposed project study area is the travel corridor between Kapolei and the University of Hawaii at Manoa (UH Manoa) and Waikiki (see attachment).



Purpose of and Need for the Proposed Project

The intent of the project is to provide improved mobility in this highly congested corridor. A high-capacity improvement project would serve areas designated for urban growth, provide an alternative to private automobile travel, and improve linkages between Kapolei, Honolulu's Urban Center, UH Manoa, Waikiki, and urban areas between these points.

Alternatives

The alternatives currently under study were developed through a screening process that included NEPA scoping activities, and subsequently identified the best reasonable alternatives from the range of possible alternatives. The current alternatives are:

1. No Build Alternative, which would include existing transit and highway facilities, and most committed transportation projects anticipated to be operational by the year 2030.
2. Transportation System Management (TSM) Alternative, which would provide an enhanced bus system based on a hub-and-spoke route network, community bus circulators, conversion of the present morning peak hour only zipper lane to both a morning and afternoon peak hour zipper lane configuration, and relatively low-cost capital improvements on selected roadway facilities to give priority to buses. Capital improvements may include intersection improvements, minor road widening, traffic engineering actions, bus route restructuring, shortened bus headways, expanded use of articulated buses, express and limited-stop service, signalization improvements, and timed-transfer operations.
3. Managed Lanes Alternative, which would include construction of a two-lane grade-separated (elevated) guideway between Waipahu and Downtown Honolulu for use by buses, high-occupancy vehicles (HOVs), and toll-paying single-occupant vehicles. The lanes would be managed by setting the minimum occupancy for HOVs and the tolls for single-occupant vehicles at levels that would preserve free-flow speeds on the facility.
4. Fixed-Guideway Alternative, which would include the construction and operation of a fixed transit guideway system between Kapolei and UH Manoa and Waikiki on one of several possible alignments.

Maps of Alternative 3 and Alternative 4 are enclosed.

Potential Interactions with Protected Species

Technical studies are being prepared for this project. We will ensure that those studies address potential impacts on the federal trust species and important habitats that you identify.



Mr. Patrick Leonard
3/30/2006
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We would appreciate receiving a species list within 30 days from the receipt of this letter. If you have any questions about this request, please call or email me at 808-566-2239, or ohtomo@pbworld.com.

Sincerely yours,

Nami Ohtomo
Environmental Planner

Attachments: Study Area map
Alternative 3 maps (2 pages)
Alternative 4 maps (5 pages)

- c. City and County of Honolulu, Department of Transportation Services (Ms. Faith Miyamoto) – w/o attachments
State of Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Wildlife (Mr. Paul Conry) – w/o attachments