

Public Involvement Overview

October 2010

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Community Outreach	
Speakers Bureau	1
Neighborhood Boards	31
Events	7
TV/Radio Appearances	5

Speakers Bureau:

- Thursday, October 14 Rotary Club of Wahiawa-Waiialua

Neighborhood Board:

- Tuesday, October 5 Waianae Neighborhood Board
- Wednesday, October 6 Manoa Neighborhood Board
- Thursday, October 7 McCully/Moilili Neighborhood Board
- Thursday, October 7 Kuliouou/Kalani Ike Neighborhood Board
- Thursday, October 7 Kailua Neighborhood Board
- Monday, October 11 Liliha/Alewa Heights Neighborhood Board
- Monday, October 11 Aiea Neighborhood Board
- Monday, October 11 Waimanalo Neighborhood Board
- Tuesday, October 12 Waikiki Neighborhood Board
- Wednesday, October 13 Palolo Neighborhood Board
- Wednesday, October 13 Kalihi Neighborhood Board
- Wednesday, October 13 Kahalu`u Neighborhood Board
- Thursday, October 14 Diamond Head/Kapahulu Neighborhood Board
- Thursday, October 14 Aliamanu/Salt Lake Neighborhood Board
- Thursday, October 14 Ewa Neighborhood Board
- Thursday, October 14 Koolauloa Neighborhood Board
- Tuesday, October 19 Mililani Neighborhood Board
- Tuesday, October 19 Nanakuli Neighborhood Board
- Tuesday, October 19 Nuuanu/Punchbowl Neighborhood Board
- Wednesday, October 20 Kaimuki Neighborhood Board
- Wednesday, October 20 Kalihi Palama Neighborhood Board
- Thursday, October 21 Waialae-Kahala Neighborhood Board
- Thursday, October 21 Kaneohe Neighborhood Board
- Thursday, October 21 Makiki/Lower Punchbowl Neighborhood Board
- Monday, October 25 Wahiawa Neighborhood Board
- Tuesday, October 26 Pearl City Neighborhood Board
- Tuesday, October 26 Hawaii Kai Neighborhood Board

- Tuesday, October 26
- Tuesday, October 26
- Wednesday, October 27
- Wednesday, October 27

Ala Moana Neighborhood Board
 North Shore Neighborhood Board
 Makakilo Neighborhood Board
 Mililani Neighborhood Board

Community Events:

- Monday, October 11 -
Thursday, October 14
- Friday, October 15 -
Sunday, October 17
- Wednesday, October 20
- Saturday, October 30 -
Sunday, October 31
- Thursday, October 21
- Wednesday, October 27
- Thursday, October 28

9th Annual Native Hawaiian Convention

45th Annual Food & New Product Show

UH College Outreach for Transit Authority
 Ballot Initiative
 Splendor of China

Kapiolani Community College Outreach for
 Transit Authority Ballot Initiative
 Honolulu Community College Outreach for
 Transit Authority Ballot Initiative
 Leeward Community College Outreach for
 Transit Authority Ballot Initiative

TV/Radio Appearances:

- Tuesday, October 12
- Monday, October 18
- Tuesday, October 19

KHON Morning Show
 KITV Morning Show
 Hawaii News Now Sunrise Show

October 2010 website and hotline comments

Submission Method	Submission Date	Submission Content/Notes
Email	10/08/2010	Now that MUFIs Gone lets stop the Rail Or get each person who supports Rail fired. We will remember Nov 2nd Please stop the rail we don't want it And can't afford it And will not ride it MUFIs RAIL MUST BE STOPPED With aloha Tom Welch Kapolei, Hawaii (8080 292-1800 Sent regarding 10/08/1- e-blast
Website	10/12/2010	i just saw in your news paper that the bill has passed?, do this mine that your project is now going to be built?, as the way you wanted it to be?. the way i have been reading other peoples comments they still don't get it or they just want to see higher gas prices for gas for there car. don't they should have came to your meeting to here the truth about what you was trying do to for the island any way.
Website	10/16/2010	Now that MUFIs is out, Please stop the Rail Now. Who is going to pay for it?? Who is going to ride it?? Who is going to Maintain it?? (We still have no lights on our highways) and the roughest road on earth between Waipahu & Makaha. Proof that the transportation department has no clue on how to maintain anything or schedule repairs. Please stop the Rail
Website	10/17/2010	i need some answers to why are you using the same video to try to show on what you are going to do when you are going to start your rail project, it would like to show what you are going to do when you start and not tell what you are doing. i my self like to see some of the details on how and where you are going to start to move the dirt around and how you are going to move some of the building out of the way?, are you going to have it all above ground rail system. i was trying to get more info out of the video but it is the same thing.
Email	10/22/2010	From e-blast: This is the release from the City containing the reference to the referendum on the rail transit authority and how the blank votes will not be counted.
Hotline	10/28/2010	Wanted info on a property located on Dillingham Blvd.
Hotline	10/29/2010	Caller did not identify self. She stated she didn't think the rail was a good idea and that the money would be better spent on roads and other things. Why are we wasting money like this?
Website	10/29/2010	I most often commute by bus from Ewa Beach to Ala Moana and by bicycle from there to UH Manoa. Please incorporate bicycle racks on ALL trains. This will help reduce traffic congestion, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote a healthier lifestyle for Oahu residents.

* Submission Content / Notes have not been edited for spelling grammar. They appear as written. Mailing list requests, procurement, FEIS DVD requests and non material comments are not shown above. Only comments/inquiries/suggestions are shown.

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Opinion: Honolulu Responds to Brizdle on Rail Construction

By Jim Dunn | 10/01/2010

Dear Editor,

Stop Rail Now's John Brizdle's assertion that the city should wait until design is complete and federal money is in hand to begin construction of the voter-approved Honolulu rail transit project lacks insight.

Most current transit projects start construction before they get all their funding. The federal New Starts funding process allows agencies to begin projects before all the funds are in hand. The federal government realizes that "time is money," and when elements of the project, such as utility work and right-of-way acquisitions are done first, construction proceeds more efficiently. In addition, starting construction as soon as possible allows the city to take advantage of the current competitive bidding climate and lock in lower prices. Delays in starting construction will likely result in significantly higher costs.

In addition, the project cost estimate includes more than \$1 billion in contingency funds, which could be used as necessary to accommodate changes to the current plan. The project also accounts for utilities and iwi treatment before the project gets to construction. Utilities will be relocated before columns are placed. New utilities are established before the old ones are turned off. And the project will continue to work with cultural practitioners and community groups before anything is constructed.

The prudent approach is to begin construction as soon as the appropriate approvals are given, and that has always been the plan. The rail project has been meeting its federal, state and local requirements and has been called the "best source of new jobs in the state and the best economic engine we have during this recession." It is best to begin expeditiously.

Jim Dunn
Design Manager, Honolulu Rail Transit Project
(808) 694-3220

DISCUSSION: *What do you think about the city's argument regarding Honolulu's rail project? Share your thoughts in our [rail discussion](#).*

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"Trains Kill Buses," September 2010

In his *Editor's Page*, A. Kam Napier suggested that instead of rail, "the most unimaginative, 19th-century use of \$5 billion we could possibly find," the city try, instead, a fleet of shuttle vans.

A. Kam Napier laments that 20 years of rail expansion in Los Angeles has strangled bus service and done nothing to curb traffic. But what he fails to realize is that the reduction in bus ridership is offset by an increase in rail ridership — as is the case in numerous other cities across the nation.



PHOTO: ISTOCK

Unfortunately, Mr. Napier's dream of glorified door-to-door Super Shuttles that magically appear on demand to deliver travelers to their destinations is simply out of touch with reality. Any such system, aside from being subject to the same traffic delays as vehicles on congested streets, would also likely cost far more than public transit, creating options for only those with enough cash to pay the price. And it's not like it hasn't been tried before with dial-a-ride systems around the country that never lived up to their promise, except in small towns or low-density suburbs.

In contrast, the city's rail transit system provides a reliable, efficient and convenient transportation alternative for the same price of city bus fares. With a network of buses and shuttles connecting riders with key destinations, rail is definitely the real deal and the way to go.

—STEVE M. HOGAN, PARSONS BRINCKEROFF

Hogan is an engineer with Parsons Brinckerhoff, the city's contractor on the rail project.

There is a name for such a system of independently routing, share-riding, midsize multi-passenger vehicles: jitneys. They are small, cheap, scalable and flexible. No public investment required. Not only would this solve the congestion problem, it could solve an employment problem, too. This is exactly what the van-pools did (illegally, door-to-door, on demand) when TheBus went on strike a few years ago, and everyone loved it. What's not to like? —AN ONLINE COMMENT FROM "DR. G IN HILO"

"Goin Atomic," August 2010

"Besides being much safer than conventional nuclear, another advantage for Hawai'i is the opportunity for co-

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Electric Car Charging Stations Coming to Honolulu

By Nanea Kalani | 10/01/2010

The chicken-or-egg debate over [electric cars](#) and the public charging spots needed to power them is soon to be unscrambled in Hawaii.

[Better Place](#) of Palo Alto, Calif., said this week that it will build 10 public charging stations and roll out a small fleet of electric cars in Honolulu in early 2011. At the moment, there are no public charging stations for electric vehicles in the state, a step considered critical to creating a market for electric cars.



Better Place

Member Content

The project will be a joint effort with the [Sheraton Waikiki Resort](#) and [Hawaiian Electric Co.](#), which will operate an initial fleet of seven vehicles.

The charging stations will be based at the Sheraton, which will use two vehicles as guest shuttles, and at three HECO sites in Honolulu. The utility will use the remaining five vehicles.

The announcement comes almost two years after Better Place, which describes itself as an electric vehicle services provider, signed an agreement to work with Hawaiian Electric Co. on the infrastructure and energy needs to power public charging spots and battery-swapping stations.

The company's ultimate goal is to have 50,000 to 100,000 charging spots in the islands by 2012 at a cost between \$75 million and \$100 million. The small-scale launch is expected to cost \$1.1 million, with about \$500,000 in funding from the U.S. Department of Energy.

"This project marks the beginning of our initial, pre-commercial infrastructure deployment in Hawaii," Jason Wolf, vice president of North American operations, said in a statement. "It supports the state's goal of leading the nation in renewable energy use, which Better Place will integrate into the grid via electric cars."

Better Place does not make or sell electric cars, but instead builds infrastructure while working with car manufacturers, including French automaker Renault, to enable their vehicles to connect to Better Place's system. Better Place would own the batteries needed to run the cars and lease them to drivers based on usage needs.

The pilot project in Honolulu will aim to measure vehicle performance, battery-charging metrics, the impact on the electrical grid, driver behavior and test the software systems that will manage the charging network. The Hawaii Natural Energy Institute at the [University of Hawaii](#) will be a research partner.

Better Place also will launch its first full-scale EV network in Israel in next year, where it plans to have 30,000 public charging stations. The company also is building a network in Denmark, where it has 55 public charging stations.

Other developments on the EV scene in Hawaii include the upcoming launch of several all-electric vehicles later this year, including the Nissan Leaf and Chevy Volt.

To encourage buy-in, a state [rebate program](#) and a [federal tax credit](#) — both funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act — can together help knock off as much as \$12,000 from the purchase price of qualifying electric vehicles.

Another player, Korean car manufacturer CT&T, [plans to open](#) a \$50 million electric car plant on 30 acres in Kapolei by the end of next year. Hawaii is part of a [major U.S. push](#) by the company, which hopes to have 40 U.S. plants producing 300,000 vehicles annually by 2015.

DISCUSSION: [Jump into our electric cars conversation!](#)

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Big Job Ahead for New City Administration

By Adrienne LaFrance | 10/04/2010

Throughout his campaign for the job he eventually won, Mayor-elect Peter Carlisle often joked that his wife called him crazy for wanting the position in the first place. Now that Carlisle's moving from the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney to Honolulu Hale, he's taking his deputy prosecutor with him as the city's new managing director. Doug Chin won't formally take the post until the [City Council](#) approves the appointment.



Adrienne LaFrance/Civil Beat

In coming weeks, Honolulu residents will begin to see what two longtime prosecutors can bring to city politics. Chin admits the path is unusual.

Member Content

"It's new for me to go over there and be part of the city, that's obvious," Chin told Civil Beat in an interview. "But at the same time, there are a lot of positives. I think this is really a fresh start for the city."

A new beginning is not without old problems. The city's economic future is uncertain at best. To offset a multimillion dollar spending gap, widespread pay cuts and mandatory furloughs began for city workers in July. The previous administration's executive cabinet took voluntary pay cuts a year before that.

Construction on the [Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project](#) has been stalled nearly a year since former Mayor Mufi Hannemann's projected October 2009 groundbreaking.

To top it off, Hannemann — on his last day in office, July 20 — signed a consent decree that obligates the city to billions of dollars in sewage infrastructure upgrades over the next several decades. Most acknowledge the overhaul is long overdue.

Hannemann's successor and a [mostly new](#) City Council will be tasked with finding a way for Honolulu to afford and enact those improvements without burdening taxpayers beyond reason.

"It's daunting and it's humbling," Chin said. "But I see a lot of opportunities before me. I'm not here because it's a stepping stone. I'm not interested in running for anything. I just want to be the mayor-elect's managing director."

Chin and Carlisle worked together in the prosecutor's office for a decade, and they speak highly of each other and their ability to work together. At the prosecutor's office, Carlisle and Chin managed fewer than 300 staffers. At Honolulu Hale, they'll be in charge of more than 10,000 workers. Chin acknowledges the change in scale is significant, but says he's confident he and Carlisle are up for the job — with some help.

"I think it's important that the directors who are in place are the ones who are the experts," Chin said. "I feel like my job is really to serve them."

Chin said he and Carlisle are working hard to find the right cabinet leadership. Chin said some department heads will be asked to stay, others will be asked to leave. Others, such as [outgoing Budget and Fiscal Services Director Rix Maurer](#), will choose to leave. Beyond saying they're working with human resources during the two-week transition, much of the incoming administration's game plan has been [kept relatively secret](#).

It doesn't take much pressing for Chin to elaborate on the learning curve ahead. The transition itself is grueling, especially for Chin, who is also managing the transition at the prosecutor's office. He cites infrastructure projects as the area of his new job that will present the greatest challenges.

While the city promises that its rail project will spur the economy with job growth and smart development, the project remains stalled and the public's patience — both those who desperately want rail and those who desperately want the city to abandon the proposal and reassess its priorities — is wearing thin.

"It's hard," Chin said. "You have everybody who wants the jobs from rail, but then you have our commitment which is to make sure we're not sticking it to the taxpayers with something they cannot afford."

Chin cites Portland's at-grade, or ground level, system as a source of inspiration.

"From the perspective of rail, the model I appreciate is Portland's," Chin said. "I like the ideas they had, how they were able to put their rail system in place in a city that's pretty close to ours, in some areas it's very similar."

Mostly, Chin said he's focused on how to help Carlisle run a more efficient, less wasteful city. He said he wants to save taxpayers money and offer greater transparency.

"Trying to put into place the kind of management style and structure that the mayor-elect had in place in the

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prosecutor's office," Chin said. "It's not to say that the previous administration's approach was wrong. They may not be perfect but they're all public servants who are trying their best. It's just that our approach will be different."

DISCUSSION: *What do you think of the incoming administration? [Join the conversation](#) about the transition at Honolulu Hale.*

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New Council May Bring More Skeptical Eye on Rail

By Adrienne LaFrance | 10/05/2010

In coming months, the Honolulu City Council will undergo significant changes. With two resignations and three expired terms, the council will say goodbye to the majority — five — of its nine members.

The new makeup of the city's legislative body will have implications for projects that aim to drastically alter Honolulu's infrastructure, from the rail line that's planned to run above city streets, to the sewage system that's piped beneath them.



HonoluluTransit.org

Member Content

Council members will be required to issue special permits for rail construction to begin. They'll have to approve a budget that outlines what kinds of sewage-fee hikes Honolulu residents will shoulder. They'll also usher in a new era of city leadership, approving or rejecting Mayor-elect Peter Carlisle's picks for city leadership.

Of the city's two major multibillion-dollar capital projects on the docket, Honolulu's sewage infrastructure overhaul is arguably more straightforward — if only because it is federally mandated as part of a consent decree with the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The future of rail appears murkier. While voters voiced their support for a steel-on-steel system in a 2008 ballot question, the rail debate hasn't quieted since then. Now, the changing City Council will in turn shape the way the project moves forward.

A Changing City Council

District	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Leaving	Todd Apo	Donovan Dela Cruz		Lee Donohue		Rod Tam		Gary Okino	
Staying			Ikaika Anderson		Ann Kobayashi		Romy Cachola		Nestor Garcia

Nearly a year has passed since city officials said they would break ground on the rail line in October 2009, and the project's opponents continue to speak out against it.

"For as much of the talk that's going on, is something going to stop it?" City Council Chairman Todd Apo asked. "I don't think so. But we need to continue to have the kind of attention we've had, making sure that it gets done correctly."

Not everyone is as confident as the chairman, who's leaving his post in November to take a job with Disney's Aulani Resort & Spa.

In a rare admission of uncertainty about the rail plan's future, acting Mayor Kirk Caldwell said recently that the new City Council could conceivably put a stop to rail. The City Council in 2006 approved the rail plan with a 7-2 vote. But even some councilors who supported it have said they have increasing doubts about the project.

"Of course I was the one who passed the thing, but you have to understand that at that time, the money we were talking about was way less," said Councilmember Romy Cachola, who's remaining in his seat. "It was about \$3 billion. By November 2008, it was \$3.7 billion and now it's about \$5.5 to \$5.7 billion."

The majority of returning City Councilors and City Council candidates characterize their concerns about the project as financial in nature. High cost is a worry in and of itself, but many also cite uncertainty over how Honolulu is going to pay for the project in the first place.

The FTA has told the city its financial plan needs to be strengthened. The federal agency's next assessment of Honolulu's financial readiness for the project will be released in February 2011. In the meantime, the project's finances are undergoing independent scrutiny by the governor's office, which must approve the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the project to go forward.

"I'm hoping we can get an indication from the governor as far as what she's doing," Doug Chin, incoming managing director for Mayor-elect Peter Carlisle, told Civil Beat in an interview. "I understand when people say they want to be sure we're financially capable. Even though we're supposedly in recovery as an economy, I don't think it's necessarily getting better in the next year or two as far as the fiscal state of the city is concerned."

City transit officials explain that lower-than-expected revenue is offset by lower-than-expected costs, both of which

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can be traced back to the recession.

In tracking the evolving financial projections associated with the rail plan, the City Council has also repeatedly complained about a lack of transparency about finances from the administration.

"The financial plan is a public document, so everyone knows what's there and has access to it," Apo said. "The frustration has been getting some of the detailed information and background on the results and conclusions of the financial plan."

In some cases, though, complaints about lacking transparency can be seen as a red herring raised by those who seek to halt or significantly alter the project.

"I think everyone recognizes that at least some of the complaints and issues that were raised were politically motivated to an extent," Apo said. "It's also necessary to balance having the information against allowing the administration to go through a process without fear that they will be attacked and crucified for trying to find creative ways of looking things. You need to lean more toward transparency but you don't want to create a situation where you prevent some good ideas from being shared."

As current City Council members continue to wrestle with some of these issues, candidates who seek to fill council vacancies have the potential to change the council's overall tone on rail. The current council varies in its positions on the project, but with a majority in strong support of it. That may not be the case in the coming months.

Current Councilmembers on Rail

District	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Strong support	Apo	Dela Cruz		Donohue*				Okino	Garcia
Some concerns			Anderson			Rod Tam			
Serious concerns				Djou*	Kobayashi		Cachola		

*Charles Djou left the City Council when he was elected to Congress in a May special election. Former Honolulu Police Chief Lee Donohue was appointed to fill his seat, and is not seeking re-election.

Incoming Council Member [Breene Harimoto](#) won an uncontested race in District 8. In a [Civil Beat questionnaire](#), Harimoto outlined his strong belief in rail and transit-oriented development, writing, "the decision on rail has been made." But Harimoto is not unwavering in his support for the project.

"I have deep concerns regarding the finances," Harimoto wrote. "I pledge to scrutinize the financial plans from a policy perspective."

It's still unclear who will take Apo's District 1 seat — a special election is expected sometime after the November general election — but there are close battles in three other districts.

District 2

Councilmember [Donovan Dela Cruz](#) — a strong advocate for rail — is term limited and is now running for the state Senate after dropping out of the mayoral race.

Candidates [Ernie Martin](#) and [John White](#) are facing off to fill Dela Cruz's seat.

White earned 37.5 percent of the vote in the Sept. 18 primary, edging Martin's 30.3 percent. Like Dela Cruz, both candidates express strong support for the rail plan.

"I support rail, and I'm confident that the money is there," White said. "Here's the challenge: Rail will not be a reality if we don't build it on time and on budget. [City Council members] are the check to the administration and our job is to oversee and ensure that contracts being let out are appropriate, fair and reasonable. We can't pad contracts with extra fat. My commitment to rail is really on that end. If we don't do that, rail will not happen."

Martin is similarly straightforward in his rail support.

"Across the country, rail transit ridership is growing despite criticism by opponents about its costs," Martin wrote in his [questionnaire for Civil Beat](#). "Dollar for dollar — doing nothing will be a greater cost to future generations and to the future of this island."

District 4

For eight years, Charles Djou was the council's face of rail opposition in his District 4 post. When he won a special Congressional election in May, the City Council appointed former Honolulu Police Chief Lee Donohue to serve the remainder of his term. But he is not seeking re-election.

Stanley Chang and Rich Turbin are battling for Donohue's seat in what appears to be the closest City Council race. Chang, who won the Sept. 18 primary with 34.2 percent of the vote, has his mind made up in support of rail.

"I think we do need a rail transit system," Chang said. "I've spoken with Don Horner of the Hawaii Business Roundtable, and he's run the numbers and feels good about them. In 1992, a similar line would have cost \$1.7 billion. If we wait until 2020, 2030, are we looking at \$20 billion? \$30 billion? None of the costs are going to go down in the future. That being said, do we need a watchdog on the city council? Absolutely, absolutely."

Runner-up Turbin got 31.8 percent of voters' support, and isn't sold on the city's rail plan.

"I think it needs to be seriously tweaked," Turbin said. "I have some reservations in the sense that I don't think the best technology is being used. We should be using state-of-the-art light rail. It's commonly used, it's high-tech, it's wonderful, it's flexible, you can take it up, down and underground. Heavy rail seems like an antiquated system, and I just feel that the system that (former Mayor) [Mufi \(Hannemann\)](#) and the City Council voted on was kind of rammed through without having enough discussion and without discussing much better options."

District 6

After a failed bid for mayor, Councilmember [Rod Tam](#) is leaving his post due to term limits, and former state Rep. [Tulsi Tamayo](#) is the front-runner in the runoff following the September primary. Tamayo earned 26.8 percent of the vote compared to Sesnita Moepono's 16.4 percent finish. In her response to a [Civil Beat questionnaire](#), Tamayo made her support for the rail project clear.

"Through the ballot box, the people have spoken in support of the rail," Tamayo wrote. "Mass transit has been debated and talked about for decades. Now is the time to move forward."

Moepono emphasized the importance of rail helping create jobs, but raised more questions in her questionnaire response.

"I am concerned that if there is not enough money to fund the project then the County will have to raise real property taxes," Moepono wrote. "I am concerned given the unmet projections where the money will come to offset the shortfall. I don't know if it will really attract riders and ease traffic congestion. I am supportive of a rail-transit project that won't bankrupt our county."

Future Councilmembers and Candidates on Rail

District	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Strong support	Apo*	Martin and White		Chang		Tamayo			Garcia
Some concerns			Anderson	Turbin		Moepono		Harimoto	
Serious concerns					Kobayashi		Cachola		

*Todd Apo is resigning Nov. 8. A special election has yet to be scheduled.

The person who fills Apo's seat could tip the balance of the council on rail. Through the lens of the rail project, the most drastic change could be the shift from a council that largely stood behind the rail project, to one with a majority that has at least some reservations about it.

Even the strongest rail critics on the council — such as Councilmember Ann Kobayashi — don't tend to characterize their positions as out-and-out opposition. A popular stance from rail opponents goes something like this: I'm all for rail, I'm just against this rail project.

While an elected official may describe his or her stances in shades of gray, the eventual votes that will govern how rail moves forward are black and white: Aye or nay.

DISCUSSION: *Share your thoughts about the Honolulu City Council election and its potential impact on the proposed rail project.*

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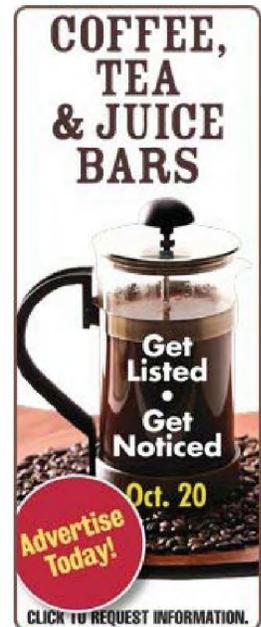
How to save newspapers, part one: Launch more massive public-works projects

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Stop Rail Now's John Brizdle's assertion that the city should wait until design is complete and federal money is in hand to begin construction of the voter-approved Honolulu rail transit project lacks insight ["Stop rail whenever," Letters, 9/22].

Most current transit projects start construction before they get all their funding. The federal New Starts funding process allows agencies to begin projects before all the funds are in hand. The federal government realizes that "time is money," and when elements of the project, such as utility work and right-of-way acquisitions are done first, construction proceeds more efficiently. In addition, starting construction as soon as possible allows the city to take advantage of the current competitive bidding climate and lock in lower prices. Delays in starting construction will likely result in significantly higher costs.

In addition, the project cost estimate includes more than \$1 billion in contingency funds, which could be used as necessary to accommodate





changes to the current plan. The project also accounts for utilities and iwi treatment before the project gets to construction. Utilities will be relocated before columns are placed. New utilities are established before the old ones are turned off. And the project will continue to work with cultural practitioners and community groups before anything is constructed.

The prudent approach is to begin construction as soon as the appropriate approvals are given, and that has always been the plan. The rail project has been meeting its federal, state and local requirements and has been called the "best source of new jobs in the state and the best economic engine we have during this recession." It is best to begin expeditiously.

Jim Dunn
Design Manager
Honolulu Rail Transit Project

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Exclusive: Key Dept. Heads Leaving City Hall

Carlisle Invites Hannemann Cabinet to Remain Until Jan.

Keoki Kerr KITV4 News

POSTED: 10:21 pm HST October 7, 2010
UPDATED: 10:34 pm HST October 7, 2010

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HONOLULU -- KITV 4 News has learned several key members of the former mayor's cabinet are leaving Honolulu Hale, as Honolulu Mayor-elect Peter Carlisle works to fill vacancies in his cabinet before taking office Monday.

Carlisle has had just three weeks to evaluate the department heads at city hall, decide who he'd like to keep, find out who plans to retire or leave and search for any replacements.

He sent members of the cabinet letters Monday, sources said, offering them temporary appointments until January. While some are taking him up on the offer, others are moving on.

Acting Honolulu Mayor Kirk Caldwell and his cabinet welcomed Carlisle with a lei and applause on Sept. 21, just a few days after Carlisle was elected to serve the final two years of Mufi Hannemann's term as Honolulu mayor.

Carlisle praised Hannemann's former department heads at that news conference, inviting them to stay at city hall and become members of his cabinet for an interim period.

"You have years and years of experience, you have expertise that I could not begin to understand or challenge in any shape, fashion or form or claim as my own," Carlisle told them. "Some of the people who are in charge of their divisions in this room are the best you could ask for in the entire state."

But some have chosen to depart, like city budget director Rix Mauer III, who has overseen the city's multi-billion-dollar budget, sources said. His deputy director, Mark Oto, left the city for a private sector job earlier this year. That means Carlisle must find the both a deputy and director for the budget department.

Debbie Morikawa, the city community services director, is also leaving the city, according to sources familiar with the situation. Morikawa oversaw the city's response to the homeless and is a respected expert in the social services field, having once headed the state's largest homeless shelter, the Institute for Human Services.

Carlisle will also have to find a new person to oversee city street paving and pothole repairs. That's because Jeffrey Cudiamat, an engineer, will step down from his job heading the city's department of facility maintenance.

Craig Nishimura, who oversaw most city construction projects as head of the design and construction department, has already retired, sources said. Rae Gee, executive secretary of the Neighborhood Commission, which oversees Oahu's neighborhood boards, is also leaving city hall, as is Michael Pili Pang, who headed the mayor's office of culture and the arts.

Some former Hannemann cabinet members told KITV4 they were "turned

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off" by what they called the "bizarre" and "awkward" news conference during which Carlisle rolled his eyes as Caldwell defended transition offices that Carlisle rejected because the former prosecutor claimed it had the "terrible possible stink of asbestos."

"We still have the office available across the way in Mission Memorial, it's a beautiful building, a historic structure that's been fully renovated," said Caldwell, as Carlisle shook his head and rolled his eyes behind Caldwell, in full view of television cameras.

Sources said other key city department heads are remaining in their jobs, including Wayne Yoshioka, the man who heads the city transportation department and the multi-billion dollar rail transit project. Also staying on is Tim Steinberger, the city's environmental services director, who runs city sewer and solid waste operations.

Sidney Quintal, who oversees city golf courses, the Blaisdell Center and Waikiki Shell at the enterprise services department, will also remain in his job. The city's top civil attorney, Corporation Counsel Carrie Okinaga, is staying in her post.

"Many people are staying on, at least temporarily," said one member of the former Hannemann cabinet familiar with comings and goings at City Hall.

Sources close to incoming mayor Carlisle said "he will be ready to govern Tuesday morning." But they don't know if all of the department head vacancies will be filled when they take office late Monday.

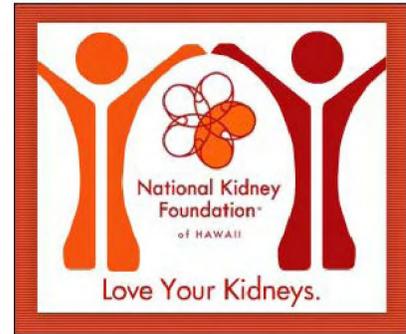
City department heads are paid a little more than \$100,000 a year, which would mean a pay cut for top executives from the private sector in engineering, construction, finance, the law and other fields.

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job because Honolulu jobs are only guaranteed for 90 days. Some people familiar with the search process, noting that Carlisle is serving the final two years of Hannemann's term instead of a full four-year term as mayor.



Political observers also said if Republican gubernatorial candidate Duke Aiona loses the governor's race in November, the state appointees in the Republican Lingle-Aiona administration may look for jobs at city hall, where the Republican-leaning Carlisle will be mayor.

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Letters to the Editor

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 08, 2010

Rail routes don't make sense

I and many others are not anti-rail. It's the current proposed route that is wrong. This project needs to go to downtown Honolulu, Waikiki and the University of Hawaii. Those are the locations to which people drive everyday. It's not rocket science; it's blatantly obvious.

Jan Farrant
Honolulu

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Saturday, October 09, 2010

[Rail Tales: Mapping the Landscape of the Proposed Rail System](#)

By Henry Curtis

I have attended several conferences this summer where speakers intentionally avoid discussing rail. So I reviewed the 1000+ pages of comments submitted in response to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Project proponents include the American Planning Association Hawai`i Chapter, University of Hawai`i System, Windward Ahupua`a Alliance, Sierra Club O`ahu Group, D R Horton: Schuler Division and Castle & Cooke.

Federal agencies raised numerous concerns. These agencies included the General Services Administration, the Department of the Navy, the Department of the Army, the Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) and the Department of the Interior. In addition, Federal Judges based in Hawai`i and the U.S. Marshall for Hawai`i raised security issues.

State agencies also raised significant issues. Those staking out concerns include the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), the Department of Transportation (DOT), the Hawai`i Community Development Authority, the DBEDT Office of Planning, the Department of Education, the Department of Agriculture and the University of Hawai`i at Manoa Environmental Center. On the other hand, the Hawai`i Department of Hawaiian Homelands (DHHL) supports the project.

Kamehameha Schools offered extensive suggestions and favors building an at-grade rail system. Life of the Land believes that if rail is ever built, it should be at-grade wherever possible.

Several organizations pointed out major shortcomings in the proposed rail project. Issues were raised by the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Honolulu, the Native Hawaiian Legal Corporation, Hawai`i's Thousand Friends, Historic Hawai`i Foundation, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Kaka`ako Business and Landowners Association, the Outdoor Circle, Hawai`i Independent Democrats, the League of Women Voters-Honolulu and Life of the Land.

Groups that support the project include the Democratic Party.

Groups which have no stated position include Hawai`i Audubon Society, Blue Planet Foundation, KAHEA and Voter Owned Hawai`i.

Federal Agencies

United States General Services Administration, Public Buildings Service, PJKK Federal Building:

“The United States General Services Administration is the owner of record of the Prince Jonah Kuhio Kalanianaʻole Federal Building and Courthouse located at 300 Ala Moana Boulevard (“PJKK Building”). We have never received any notice from the City and County of Honolulu Department of Transportation Services Rapid Transit Division (DOT) about this project. As such, we were surprised to learn that the proposed project entails the construction and operation of an elevated transit system along a narrow street directly abutting the PJKK Building on Halekauila Street. ...We hereby request an immediate meeting with DOT ...We would caution DOT not to proceed on the basis that any property necessary for this project (including air rights) along Halekauila can be obtained through the eminent domain process since this process is not available against the United States. We trust that DOT will immediately correct its notice procedure”

Federal Judges (Chief Justice Helen Gillmor, Judge Susan Oki Mollway, Judge J. Michael Seabright, Judge Samuel P. King, Judge Alan C Kay, Magistrate Judge Barry M. Kurren, Magistrate Judge Leslie E. Kobayashi, Magistrate Judge Kevin S.C. Chang)

“Neither the U.S. Marshall nor any other federal court security representative was previously consulted or even contacted regarding a proposed transit line running along Halekauila Street adjacent to the Federal Courthouse. The City’s security committee also acknowledged that none of its security specialists who participated in preparing its analysis was familiar with security standards for Federal Courthouses.”

Chief Judge Helen Gillmor, U.S. District Court: District of Hawai`i

“I write on behalf of the Judges of the United States District

Court to strongly voice our opposition to the proposed route of the Honolulu Rail Transit System on Halekauila Street immediately adjacent to the Federal Court Building. ...the guideway structure will be 45 feet above street level and will pass within a mere 45 feet of the Federal Courthouse building. Our Court building is 4 stories high, so the guideway structure will be at the same level as the windows of three Judges' chambers. ...The city's security analysis concludes that 'the possibility of an assault from the viaduct to the Courthouse is deemed to be most improbable for many reasons;' yet the analysis fails to effectively address our concerns. ...The proposed rail transit system on Halekauila Street would expose the Federal Courthouse to a much greater risk, similar to the train bombings which occurred in Madrid."

U.S. Marshall for the District of Hawai'i: "I concur with the above assessment of the Judges of this District"

Department of the Navy: "We are concerned that the City and County of Honolulu (CCH) has conducted assessments of Navy properties and evaluated said properties for National Registry eligibility without Navy input. ...We maintain that Navy's National Registry for Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility determinations remain valid and that CCH may not revise these determinations on Navy's behalf."

Department of the Army, US Army Engineering District, Honolulu: "Based on our review, we found that a number of our agency's previous comments and concerns relating to the identification/delineation of waters of the United States, project impact assessment, the 404(b)(1) alternatives analysis, and proposed compensatory mitigation were not adequately addressed or incorporated into the DEIS. In the absence of this key information, we are unable to provide meaningful comments on the subject draft document as it relates to our statutory responsibilities. Moreover, these data and assessment deficiencies could adversely affect the timeliness and streamlining of our Department of the Army (DA) permit decision."

U.S. Department of the Interior: National Park Service: "A 30-40 foot tall elevated guideline transit system along Kamehameha Highway could cause significant negative impacts to the Pearl Harbor NHL [National Historic

Landmark District] view shed.”

United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA): “While the EPA supports the goal of providing transportation choices to the communities of Oahu, we have some concerns relating to wetlands, water quality, environmental justice, and noise impacts. ... while we believe that most of the alternatives eliminated prior to the DEIS are documented sufficiently, we have remaining questions about why light rail or bus rapid transit in an exclusive right-of-way were not considered reasonable alternatives in the DEIS. ...While we believe that the DEIS appropriately identified EJ [environmental justice] areas, we have concerns about the proposed relocation of residents of the Banana Patch community, which is identified in the DEIS as an EJ area of concern.”

State Agencies

Hawai`i Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR): “The State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD) disagrees with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) that this project will have “no adverse effect” of known and potentially unknown historic properties, potential burial sites, cultural landscapes and traditional cultural properties.”

Hawai`i Department of Transportation (DOT): “The Project will generate significant impacts to DOT airports, highways and harbor facilities. The fixed guideway rail system should be viewed as part of a comprehensive, multi- and inter- modal transportation system.”

Hawai`i Community Development Authority: “The issue of “elevated” or “at-grade” track for Kakaako and Kalaeloa Districts does not appear to be fully explored. This issue needs to be analyzed in depth and (at a minimum) the Kakaako and Kalaeloa communities need to be engaged.”

DBEDT Office of Planning: “Preservation of important agricultural lands is a priority for the State and counties. The DEIS ...concludes that the effects would not be significant. These lands are currently in agricultural use and represent a significant percentage of prime agricultural

lands on Oahu. Please discuss how the loss of these lands can be justified, how other lands of equal importance on Oahu can be protected, and the impact to the specific farm operations and whether they will be able to relocate.”

Hawai`i Department of Education: “The discussion of transit oriented development, which goes hand-in-hand with the development of the transit system, does not acknowledge that increased residential density in urban areas such as Waipahu could generate demand for additional public service space such as parks and school sites that cannot be met in areas already so urbanized.”

Hawai`i Department of Agriculture: “The Project sit has many attributes that would likely qualify it as candidate important Agricultural Lands, pursuant to Chapter 205, Hawai`i Revised Statutes. The loss of these highly productive agricultural lands and any relocation of the affected farming operations northward make it critical that the agricultural lands, north on the H-1 Freeway and along Kunia Road, designated as “Agricultural Land Preservation” in the Ewa Development Plan and Central Oahu Sustainable Communities Plan remain in agriculture. The DEIS states that the project will displace less than one-tenth of one percent of the 70,000 acres of agricultural land in cultivation on Oahu. ...The DEIS for the Hoopili development through which the Project right-of-way passes through, identified four farming operations that are leased or licensed to occupy agricultural lands in the vicinity of the Project ... Aloun Farms ... Fat Law’s Farm ... Sugarland Farms ... Syngenta Seeds ... The four farms had ---4.4% of Oahu revenue from sales of all crops ... [and] about 3.9% of all farm workers on Oahu.”

University of Hawai`i Environmental Center: “We feel that the DEIS does not adequately capture the full range of costs and benefits associated with the proposed project. It appears to focus too narrowly on transportation elements rather than the full range of social, environmental, and economic benefits and costs associated with the proposed project.”

Hawai`i Department of Hawaiian Homelands: “DHHL is supportive of the proposed phasing of the HHCTC project to start construction between Kapolei and Waipahu.”

Proponents

American Planning Association Hawai'i Chapter: "APA Hawai'i Chapter has been a consistent supported of the Honolulu Fixed Guideway project due to the potential it holds for both improving transportation mobility and access among the population, and due to the effect it can have on a more compact and sustainable form of development for the communities and the neighborhoods along the corridor."

University of Hawai'i System: "The University of Hawai'i continues to support the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project."

Windward Ahupua'a Alliance: "Wish it were different but accept current design ...what's being proposed by the City is better than nothing at all given our dependency on fossil fuels and their negative impacts on our environment."

Sierra Club O'ahu Group: "The Sierra Club O'ahu Group supports the Fixed Guideway (rail) alternative. The Fixed Guideway alternative provides what O'ahu needs most: an alternative to the automobile. ...The O'ahu Group believes that any transit plan will succeed only if it is coordinated with other policies that vigorously promote transit ridership and transform land use patterns."

D R Horton: Schuler Division: "We are the developers of the master planned Ho'opili project in West Kapolei, and have been and continue to be a strong supporter of this project. ...The proposed project will increase the infrastructure capacity ...to support the planned growth in the West Oahu region."

Castle & Cooke: "This project is critical"

Kamehameha Schools

"KS supports a rail transit system on Oahu as a long-term transportation solution. ...We have also retained consultants to provide us with an independent review of specific aspects of the Project. The review of the thousands of pages of highly technical material of the DEIS has taken time, and we appreciate your efforts in providing an extension of time for responses. It has made a meaningful difference in the

quality of our review. For the review, we have found many positive aspects to the DEIS and the proposed system. We have also identified, which is understandable in a document of this complexity, some items we believe require additional study and work. ...

The elevated system will cause visual blight and additional details on visual and aesthetic impacts for evaluation by viewer groups would allow a more complete analysis. ...An at-grade or multi-modal transit system in the urban core is an alternative worth evaluating to determine whether it is a less expensive and quicker to construct than an elevated system. ...Because the issue of whether the rail system should run on an elevated line instead of at-grade was never squarely raised during the alternatives analysis process, KS did not previously have the opportunity to comment on the relative merits of an at-grade versus elevated system. It does not appear that the at-grade alternatives were adequately studied before being eliminated from consideration in the DEIS.”

Organizations with Serious Concerns

AIA Honolulu: “We must act now to change the current all-elevated, electrified ("hot") rail technology as planned by the City Administration to light rail technology. If we begin construction of the project using the current planned technology (heavy rail), we will be locked into a future our citizens of Hawai`i cannot afford. ... AIA is pro-rail and believes light rail is the right rail for Honolulu.”

Native Hawaiian Legal Corporation: “The City has failed to provide adequately information on the risks of encountering ancient Hawaiian burial remains (iwi kupuna) in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement despite the clear requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act, section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, HRS Chapter 343, HRS Chapter 6E and the Hawai`i Constitution Art. XII § 7.”

Hawai`i's Thousand Friends: “The DEIS does not provide a full and open analysis of the short and long-term direct, indirect and cumulative social and environmental impacts from the various aspects of the fixed guideway

system. ...What are the direct, indirect and cumulative impacts of all of the above increased population on the rail system and traffic congestion within Kapolei.”

“Elevated fixed rail routes will negatively impact the established landscape of Honolulu and significant view planes makai to mauka ... The rail line will be ugly and block views with concrete rail beds 30-foot wide supported by pillars that are 35-40 feet high and six feet in diameter spaced at 150 feet intervals.”

Historic Hawai`i Foundation: “The proposed Honolulu Transit Corridor project will have a dramatic impact on the landscape of the island of O`ahu; this includes not only the direct impact to specific parcels, but primarily the visual effect on the landscape and historic resources. HHF is concerned that the Draft EIS does not accurately take into account these larger impacts, but rather focuses on those adverse effects caused by the direct taking of land. ...It is vital that direct, indirect and cumulative impacts to districts, bridges, view planes, and individual structures as a result of the presence of the guideway and rail stations are acknowledged and properly identified as adverse impacts.”

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Washington DC: “It is unclear to us how the FTA has proceeded to this point without ongoing consultation with all consulting parties.

Kaka`ako Business and Landowners Association: “The Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project (HHCTCP), the accompanying construction, and the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) will have a detrimental impact on the small businesses and small property owners in Kaka`ako.”

The Outdoor Circle: “The system’s alignment will result in the removal of more than 800 street trees. About one-half to two-thirds of those trees will be transported to unspecified “appropriate areas,” but that leaves a possible deficit of more than 300 trees with no mitigation to the environment for the tree removals.” “degrading our island's visual environment with an overhead system significantly decrease Honolulu's visual appeal as a place to live.”

Hawai`i Independent Democrats believe that an “all-

elevated Oahu rail project could bankrupt the City.”
League of Women Voters-Honolulu “has an established position opposing rail on Oahu.”

Life of the Land: If the rail project is built, the rail line should be at grade where ever possible. Transportation and land use issues are intertwined. Building new highways and/or rail will impact population growth rates and increase pressure to urbanize additional prime agricultural land. These holistic issues must be addressed in the EIS. The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) has published the “Forty Most Asked Questions” about the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA): “Section 1502.14 requires the EIS to examine all reasonable alternatives to the proposal. In determining the scope of alternatives to be considered, the emphasis is on what is "reasonable" rather than on whether the proponent or applicant likes or is itself capable of carrying out a particular alternative. Reasonable alternatives include those that are practical or feasible from the technical and economic standpoint and using common sense, rather than simply desirable from the standpoint of the applicant. ... Alternatives that are outside the scope of what Congress has approved or funded must still be evaluated in the EIS if they are reasonable.”

Individuals

Adrienne LaFrance, writing for Civil Beat (Oct 5, 2010), interviewed two people running for City Council.

Richard Turbin: “I have some reservations in the sense that I don’t think the best technology is being used. We should be using state-of-the-art light rail.”

Sesnita Moepono: “I am concerned that if there is not enough money to fund the project then the County will have to raise real property taxes” ... I am supportive of a rail-transit project that won't bankrupt our county.”

Some individuals stated their personal, not organizational, opinions to me:

Kory Payne: “My personal opinion is 'wish it were different but accept current design'.”

Linda Paul: “Personally, I’m in favor of rapid transit if it runs along a straight track down the existing freeways that: services the airport; services Leeward Community College, points in between downtown and that college and all the way out to the court house area near Ko`olina; and services Punahou, the University at Manoa and all the way out to Hawaii Kai. Service from that straight track to Waikiki and the Ward Center area needs to be a low tech, street car kind of service.”

Makaala Kaaumoana: “I support a ground based rail system that provides airport service.”

Marti Townsend: “I want a better more functional and flexible and comprehensive bus system.”

Marjorie Ziegler: “I support public mass transit”

Alan Murakami: “I oppose rail”

###

Contact Henry Curtis at
ililani.media@gmail.com

Permalink posted by [Henry Curtis](#) @
10/09/2010 12:14:00 PM 

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Rail Transit Increases Greenhouse Gas Emission

COST Commentary: The story below of the lack of transparency and integrity regarding the true greenhouse gas impact of rail transit is more representative than not. In Austin, Capital Metro and the City of Austin have not revealed the impact of proposed rail transit lines on green house gas emissions or on air pollutant emissions. The results in Austin would be similar in that train transit does not effectively reduce undesirable emissions.

Capital Metro's commuter train has diesel engines and produces more pollution per passenger mile than if each of the train riders were in individual cars alone.

[Honolulu Rail Line to Increase Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Report](#)
demographia | 2010/10/09 at 01:13 | Categories: Uncategorized |

A new urban rail line is proposed in Honolulu, which is projected to cost \$4.1 billion. Among the benefits cited by rail line sponsors is the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. This is not surprising in view of the international concern about greenhouse gas emissions reduction. Yet, inexplicably the DEIS contains no estimate of the rail line's impact on greenhouse gas emissions.

This report corrects that oversight. The Honolulu rail line is evaluated using international evaluation standards.

Two cases are reviewed for the year 2030, differing only in the method of generating electric power. The Worst Case assumes that Hawaii's greenhouse gas emissions from the production of electricity will diminish at the projected national rate. The Best Case assumes that 70% of the state's electric power would be generated by renewable energy sources, consistent with an objective established by Governor Linda Lingle.

Step 1: Estimate Greenhouse Gas Emission Impacts: Based upon an analysis of project data, it is estimated that:

- Worst Case: With rail, greenhouse gas emissions would increase 28,000 tons in 2030 compared to without rail (2.1% more than without rail).
- Best Case: With rail, greenhouse gas emissions would decrease 12,000 tons in 2030 compared to without rail (0.9% less than without rail).

Step 2: Estimate Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Costs: The generally accepted method for costing greenhouse gas emission removal is cost per ton.

- A cost per ton of greenhouse gas reduced cannot be calculated under the Worst Case because there is no reduction in greenhouse gases.

- The cost to remove each ton of greenhouse gas is \$29,900 under the Best Case.

Step 3: Evaluate Greenhouse Gas Reduction Costs: The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has indicated that sufficient reduction in greenhouse gas emissions can be achieved for no more than \$20 to \$50 per ton. The present price for greenhouse gas offsets is between \$10 and \$15 per ton.

- Rail reduces greenhouse gas emissions only under the Best Case and this reduction would be at an exceedingly high cost. The \$29,900 per ton reduced is nearly 600 times the maximum IPCC maximum and nearly 2,000 times the maximum price for greenhouse gas.

- The cost per ton is so much that if the same amount were spent per ton to reduce Hawaii's greenhouse gases by 80%, it would cost nearly \$650,000,000,000 (\$650 billion) annually. This is more than 10 times the state's gross domestic product and nearly \$500,000 annually per resident (under the Best Case).

- Under the Best Case, the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions with rail is so small that greenhouse gas offsets could be purchased for a maximum of \$180,000 annually. This is the equivalent of 3 hours of rail costs in 2030. Purchasing greenhouse gas offsets would be a far more cost effective strategy and would achieve the same reduction.

Optimistic Estimates: The estimates above are optimistic. A number of factors could materially increase the greenhouse gas emissions relative to the case outlined above.

Conclusion: Despite being promoted as contributing to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, the Honolulu rail line is likely to increase greenhouse gas emissions in the Worst Case. In the Best Case, rail would marginally reduce greenhouse gas emissions at an extremely high cost per ton. At the IPCC maximum of \$50, a 12,000 ton reduction in greenhouse gases should cost no more than \$600,000, not \$350,000,000 as in the case of the rail line. As a strategy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the Honolulu rail line is exorbitantly expensive.

Full report at: <http://demographia.com/db-honrail.pdf>

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Letters to the Editor

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 09, 2010

We should explore alternatives to rail

As Gov. Linda Lingle has experts pondering the elevated rail's final Environmental Impact Statement, we continue to be frustrated over our daily traffic congestion. Every day that goes by, we delay resolving our traffic problem. There are other mass transit systems that have been installed and tested across the mainland. Good systems. Hopefully the pro-rail people will allow us to look at these during this interim so we can go into the next step in case the rail is dropped, instead of stubbornly adhering to installing the rail and prolonging our islandwide traffic gridlocks that occurs daily.

Let's have open public discussions on a few other mass transit systems for our island, and if the rail is dropped, let's put several systems on the ballot this time and let the people choose. Then everyone can say, "The voters have spoken."

Raymond Horita
Honolulu

Carlisle will hit the ground running

By B.J. Reyes

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 10, 2010



Mayor-elect Peter Carlisle, shown at his campaign office at 210 Ward Ave., takes office tomorrow after only 23 days — about half the usual time of a traditional transition — to get ready.

[More Photos](#)



As he prepares to take office, Mayor-elect Peter Carlisle says he knows what everyone wants to know about his administration.

"The first and foremost question is: Who's going to be running the city starting on (October) the 11th?" he says. "And the people who run the city are, obviously, the directors and deputy directors, as well as the secretarial staff."

Toward that end, Carlisle insists there will not be any drastic changes.

"I would say right now, it looks like the majority of the people who are here are staying," Carlisle said Friday

in an interview. "Talking to deputy directors and secretaries, the answer is the overwhelming majority are staying."

Barring any last-minute challenge to the Sept. 18 special election, the transfer of power at Honolulu Hale should be completed at 4:30 p.m. tomorrow, when Carlisle is administered the oath of office by Hawaii Chief Justice Mark Recktenwald.

The Cabinet is to be sworn in soon after.

Carlisle, who won with 39 percent of the vote, takes over under special circumstances.

He is serving the final two years of the term vacated by Mufi Hannemann, who resigned in July for an unsuccessful run at governor.

Ordinarily, the new mayor would be elected in early November and take office Jan. 2, allowing two months to prepare an agenda and interview potential Cabinet members for the new administration.

But with about half the usual time for a traditional transition — 23 days to be exact — Carlisle has spent the past few weeks interviewing and meeting with his predecessor's team of directors and deputies.

His only Cabinet appointment has been that of Doug Chin — his former first deputy from the prosecutor's office — as the city's managing director and second-in-command.

"You have to make a decision: Are you going to come in with a guillotine and lop off 10 percent of the people who are here," Carlisle said, "or are you going

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to build city government around some of the already existing pillars, which include many of the directors who are remarkably talented and have institutional knowledge and are responsible for the nuts and bolts of the operation?

"I would say that right now, it's not my plan to go in there and start cutting off heads -- that just doesn't make sense to me. It should be a smooth, seamless transition to the greatest extent possible with no disruption to the functioning of the city."

That's not to say there won't be any turnover.

Among the more high-profile losses is that of Budget Director Rix Maurer III, who left for another job and whose last day was Friday. Deputy Director Mark Oto, who routinely was seen in City Council chambers detailing and defending the Hannemann administration's fiscal policies alongside Maurer, has left the city for a private-sector job.

Their departures come as Carlisle comes in with an immediate agenda of laying out the city's budget and determining what the city takes in and what it pays out.

Having campaigned on a platform of "getting the city's fiscal house in order," Carlisle will have to demonstrate that right away, said political analyst Neal Milner.

"I think probably the first thing he has to demonstrate is a sense of mastery of how the city runs," said Milner, a professor of political science at the University of Hawaii-Manoa. "How you demonstrate that to people is, I think, probably going over the budget and seeing whether there is this sort of fat you can cut.

"To the extent he ran on anything really as a policy it was about making the mayor's office more efficient. I think one of the things that people are going to be looking for is what kind of steps he's going to make in that direction."

Carlisle has assembled a team -- including acting Budget Director Michael Hansen, the department's internal auditor -- to begin assessing the budget immediately.

"It's got to be put together right now," he said. "I'm going to be responsible for it. It's that simple."

Assuming the job in the middle of the term gives Carlisle little time to set his own policy agenda before having to begin thinking about re-election, Milner

said.

"You're always handcuffed when you come in like that because in many ways you've got to make some pretty important decisions based on what your predecessor did," Milner said.

At the top of that category would be rail transit.

Carlisle is on record saying he supports rail, but wants it to be done in a fiscally responsible manner.

Milner said, "Rail was this highly visible issue that Hannemann had to spend so much time keeping visible and moving forward. Carlisle is caught up in that momentum and he's never said that he was against it, so getting on board with that, in a sense, that sets his agenda a lot."

Carlisle said rail is near the top of his short list of "huge issues" facing the city, along with sewers, roads, land development, a landfill and other infrastructure.

"All of those things are extremely significant to the progress of Oahu into the city of this century and the next century," he said.

Carlisle insists the transition has gone smoothly and that acting Mayor Kirk Caldwell has extended every courtesy, despite what was seen as a somewhat chilly reception.

At a joint news conference three days after the election, surrounded by members of the Cabinet, Carlisle spoke of his refusal to accept transition office space at Mission Memorial Auditorium because of the resources required to set it up and the potential smell

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of asbestos.

He went on to describe how a secretary was fired for showing him around the mayor's office the previous day and allowing him to move some of his personal belongings into the vacant space.

Caldwell disputed Carlisle's description of the transition office space and defended the decision to fire the secretary, saying he felt the City Charter clearly stipulated the office be occupied only by the certified mayor of Honolulu. Caldwell said he had not moved into the office for that very reason.

Carlisle could be seen on television standing behind Caldwell rolling his eyes as the acting mayor spoke.

"Those are the types of things that I'll get criticized for, but the justification for not allowing me to move into an empty office – that had been vacated for many, many months – having to do with certification struck me as nonsensical," Carlisle said. "Kirk and I have moved on from that, I think everybody else needs to."

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The Rail Divide: Cliff Slater's Complete Response to Civil Beat

By Cliff Slater | 10/11/2010

This is part of a series of stories examining the decision to build a rail transit line in Honolulu.

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Kimberly Lee

Here is Cliff Slater's verbatim response to Civil Beat in response to the question, "Did the process that culminated in the current city proposal adequately evaluate what would be the most cost-effective transit solution to best serve the largest number of people? Please explain."

No. The Alternatives Analysis process undertaken by the City distorted every aspect of the Managed Lane Alternative evaluation.

First, the Final EIS gives no reasonable explanation as to why the City removed the zipper lane in the Managed Lane Alternative.

In the City's response to our comments on the Draft EIS, the City wrote that, "... three managed/HOV lanes in the peak direction is (sic) sufficient to satisfy the demand for restricted lanes." However, since demand is a function of price, and Managed Lane toll prices are varied to control demand, this response is absurd.

If demand threatens to decline, the toll price would be dynamically reduced, to zero if necessary, to maintain demand. It is ridiculous to posit that, at the height of the rush hour, there could be insufficient demand with a zero toll price.

Second, the City has not made a credible scientific argument as to how their \$2.6 billion estimate for the Managed Lanes construction cost squares with that amount being twice as much per lane mile as the H-3 freeway, currently the nation's most expensive highway. The real cost should be less than \$1 billion, which would still be more than twice as much as current costs in Florida.

Third, the City did not address our concerns of their inflated operating costs caused by projecting a 50 percent increase in buses over those for the No-Build Alternative while only projecting a 5 percent increase in riders.

Fourth, they made no attempt to justify that 5,400 park-and-ride stalls for the Managed Lane Alternative, with their attendant costs, was at all necessary.

Fifth, they did not attempt to provide facilities to reduce traffic congestion at the downtown terminus of the Managed Lane Alternative.

Sixth, in considering alternatives one of the more important legal requirements is the avoidance of historic properties, including burial grounds. The Section 4(f) statute requires transportation projects to be evaluated at the alternatives analysis stage with an injunction to avoid historical properties if at all possible. The National Trust for Historic Preservation wrote this to FTA on October 22, 2009, Failure to Identify Native Hawaiian Burials Prior to Selecting Alternatives Violates Section 4(f)

We remain extremely concerned by the City's decision to defer detailed identification of historic properties within the Phase 4 alignment, which is the section that has a known high concentration of unmarked Native Hawaiian burials. We have reviewed the letter from the O'ahu Island Burial Council (OIBC), which has unanimously opposed the decision to defer an Archaeological Inventory Survey (AIS) Plan. In our view, the City's decision renders the project legally vulnerable under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act, pursuant to Corridor H Alternatives, Inc. v. Slater, 166 F.3d 368 (D.C. Cir. 1999).

The City has already stated publicly that it expects a final decision approving the transit project will be challenged in court. In light of this prediction, it is surprising that the City would not act to reduce this legal vulnerability by completing the AIS prior to making a final decision on the project. We urge the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to consider this issue in the context of its own legal sufficiency review for this project.

Here are three quotations that substantiate our contention that the alternatives have not been objectively studied:

"We have remaining questions about why light rail or bus rapid transit in an exclusive right-of-way were not considered as reasonable alternatives in the DEIS." Environmental Protection Agency letter to the Federal Transit Administration, February 12, 2009.

A public official, Dr. Martin Stone, PhD AICP, Director of Planning for the Tampa Expressway, commenting on the City's evaluation of the Managed Lane Alternative, wrote to the City, "It is completely dishonest to say the elevated HOT lane in your transit alternatives analysis is similar to our elevated reversible lanes. And, it is this dishonesty that results in your HOT lanes costing \$2.6 billion instead of the less than \$1 billion that a true copy of our project

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would cost."

Dr. Panos Prevedouros, Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of Hawaii, Chair of the Transportation Research Board's Highway Micro-simulations Committee and himself a member of the City Council Task Force, commented to the City, "... the most egregious violation of FTA's rules on alternative specification and analysis was the deliberate under-engineering of the Managed Lanes Alternative to a degree that brings ridicule to prevailing planning and engineering principles."

Had the City found a credible cost projection for the Managed Lane Alternative, retained the zipper lane, reduced the buses needed to a level commensurate with ridership increases, reduced the park-and-ride stalls to appropriate levels, and recognized that it would be beneficial to avoid an elevated railway/highway through the historic sections of town then the Managed Lane Alternative would have been a clear winner.

DISCUSSION: *Share your thoughts* about Cliff Slater's response to our question and the rail project in general in our rail discussion.

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The Rail Divide: Overview

By [John Temple](#) and [Greg Wiles](#) | 10/11/2010

Related articles in this special report include:

- [The city's complete response to Civil Beat](#)
- [Cliff Slater's complete response to Civil Beat](#)



Honolulutransit.org

One thing became clear during the recent mayoral campaign.

Despite the efforts of former Mayor [Mufi Hannemann](#) to make the proposed \$5.5 [Honolulu rail project](#) seem inevitable, many still have questions about whether it's the best transportation solution for the city.

So a couple of months ago, [Civil Beat](#) asked Doug Carlson, a rail advocate who works for the city and has been a frequent contributor to [Civil Beat's](#) rail discussions, and Cliff Slater, perhaps the most determined critic of the plan, to answer some fundamental questions about how we ended up here and whether the project is worth supporting.

As we told them: "The purpose of this debate is to help residents of Honolulu answer the question whether the city's proposed rail project is a worthwhile investment, one that deserves their support."

Well, as you might guess, it's been a lot more difficult to get this done than we ever imagined. Among the reasons: We're not just delivering you their answers; we've researched the accuracy of what they told us. Veteran Honolulu journalist [Greg Wiles](#) took on the task and his labors on the first question are done.

We asked: "Did the process that culminated in the current city proposal adequately evaluate what would be the most cost-effective transit solution to best serve the largest number of people? Please explain."

What the city believes is clear — or at least it has been. That's why it's moving forward with the rail project. But as of Monday the leadership team that has been pushing rail has been replaced with a new duo at the top — former Prosecutor Peter Carlisle and his former deputy, Doug Chin. The two men say they're just as committed to seeing the proposal become reality as Hannemann and his former top aide, Kirk Caldwell.

Slater, on the other hand, favors what's known as the managed lane alternative, essentially elevated lanes set aside for toll traffic, vanpools and buses. He argues that this would be cheaper and more effective in reducing congestion.

The series of articles that follows includes the complete responses from the city (Carlson's side was ultimately taken up by Honolulu Hale itself) and Slater as well as our evaluation of the responses of both sides.

Here's a quick summary of what we heard:

Member Content

Summary of City and County of Honolulu's response: "We've been over this before." The fixed guideway is a policy of the City and County of Honolulu. Voters on Oahu affirmed the policy when they approved the rail transit City Charter Amendment in 2008. Prior to completion of the transit Draft EIS, a full range of reasonable alternatives was evaluated at three stages. The Alternatives Analysis recommended, and the City Council identified, the Fixed Guideway Alternative as the Locally Preferred Alternative. A fixed guideway system would improve public transit performance and reliability, be more cost-effective than other alternatives and substantially reduce traffic delay for all travelers, not just public transit users.

Summary of Cliff Slater's response: The city didn't adequately evaluate alternatives to rail, both the No Build and the Managed Lane Alternatives. Had the city found a credible cost projection for the Managed Lane Alternative, retained the zipper lane, reduced the buses needed to a level commensurate with ridership increases, reduced the park-and-ride stalls to appropriate levels, and recognize that it would be beneficial to avoid an elevated railway/highway through historic sections of town then the Managed Lane Alternative would have been a clear winner.

DISCUSSION: [Share your thoughts](#) about the points raised in this article in our conversation about Honolulu's rail project.

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The Rail Divide: The City's Complete Response to Civil Beat

By City and County of Honolulu | 10/11/2010

This is part of a series of stories examining the decision to build a rail transit line in Honolulu.

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Here is Honolulu Hale's verbatim response to Civil Beat in response to the question, "Did the process that culminated in the current city proposal adequately evaluate what would be the most cost-effective transit solution to best serve the largest number of people? Please explain."

Mahalo for the opportunity to inform your readers about the rail transit project (the Project). Answers to the first two questions are below. (The answer to the second question has not been included here. Civil Beat will publish it later.) We note the search for Honolulu's mass transit alternative has already been extensively discussed since 2005 at the state Legislature, the Honolulu City Council, in Honolulu's news media, and at community venues such as Neighborhood Boards.

Questions similar to Civil Beat's have been answered many times in these forums.

The fixed guideway is a policy of the City and County of Honolulu, per the Locally Preferred Alternative that was debated, voted on and approved by the Honolulu City Council, and signed into City law by then-Mayor Hannemann in 2006. Voters on Oahu affirmed the policy when they approved the rail transit City Charter Amendment in 2008.

QUESTION ONE

Q: Did the process that culminated in the current city proposal adequately evaluate what would be the most cost-effective transit solution to best serve the largest number of people? Please explain.

A: We strongly encourage you to read Chapter 2 of the Final Environmental Impact Statement, titled "Alternatives Considered." The Chapter summarizes alternatives considered for the Project.

Here are key highlights: The Preferred Alternative evaluated throughout the Final EIS (fixed guideway in exclusive right of way) resulted from a rigorous process involving compliance with and responses to the:

- Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 343 EIS preparation notice comment period.
- Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project Alternative Analysis Report (Alternatives Analysis).
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) scoping process.
- Comments received during the public review of the Draft EIS.

The Project was developed following the process outlined in the U.S. Federal Transit Administration's Advancing Major Transit Investments through Planning and Project Development.

Prior to completion of the rail transit Draft EIS, a full range of reasonable alternatives was evaluated at three stages.

1) A broad range of alternatives was considered and screened down to four alternatives for evaluation in the Alternatives Analysis: *No Build Alternative*. Transportation System Management Alternative (expanded bus service). *Managed Lane Alternative (elevated two-lane highway between Waipahu and downtown for buses and toll-paying HOV and single-occupant vehicles; sometimes referred to as High Occupancy Toll Lanes)*. Fixed Guideway Alternative

2) The Alternatives Analysis recommended, and the City Council identified, the Fixed Guideway Alternative as the Locally Preferred Alternative. A fixed guideway system would improve public transit performance and reliability, be more cost-effective than the other alternatives and substantially reduce traffic delay for all travelers, not just public transit users.

The Transportation System Management Alternative would not have substantially reduced congestion relative to the No Build Alternative and would not have improved corridor mobility and travel reliability.

The Managed Lane Alternative would not have qualified for the Project's primary funding sources: the General Excise and Use Tax surcharge paid by Oahu residents, businesses and visitors, and Federal New Starts funding. Because it would not have resulted in substantially fewer environmental impacts and would not have been financially feasible, the Managed Lane Alternative is not a practicable alternative.

The Fixed Guideway and Managed Lane alternatives were compared to the Transportation System Management alternative for cost effectiveness. The Managed Lane alternative had a cost of approximately \$103 per hour of transit user benefit gained. The Fixed Guideway had a cost of between \$22 and \$23 per hour of transit user benefit

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gained – about four times more effective than the Managed Lane Alternative.

3) Scoping for the for the NEPA process confirmed there were no alternatives that had not been previously studied and eliminated for good cause that would satisfy the Purpose and Need at less cost, with greater effectiveness, or less environmental or community impact.

Reconsidering Managed Lane Alternative (HOT Lanes)

During the NEPA scoping process, several scoping comments were received requesting reconsideration of the Managed Lane Alternative. This alternative was considered during the Alternatives Analysis process and found to provide little benefit compared to the Fixed Guideway. Because no new information was provided that would have substantially changed the findings of the Alternatives Analysis process regarding the Managed Lane Alternative, this alternative was not included in the Draft EIS. Based on the findings of the Alternatives Analysis, the Managed Lane Alternative fails to meet the Purpose and Need because it does not moderate anticipated traffic congestion and because it does not provide a faster, more reliable and more equitable transportation option compared to the Fixed Guideway.

Additional Proposals

In addition to suggestions to reconsider previously eliminated alternatives, three separate proposals were received and documented in the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project National Environmental Policy Act Scoping Report.

One proposal was to provide additional bus service with either school buses or private vehicles.

The second was for a High-Speed Bus Alternative to include aspects of the Fixed Guideway Alternative and the Managed Lane Alternative.

These proposals were similar to alternatives that had already been considered and eliminated during the Alternatives Analysis process. Therefore, they were not considered in the Draft EIS.

The third proposal was for an additional fixed guideway alternative serving the Honolulu International Airport. This alternative was included in the Draft EIS.

Fixed Guideway: additional cost effectiveness measures

The Draft EIS determined the Fixed Guideway's Airport Alternative had a cost of around \$18 per hour of transit user benefit gained. This is lower than the Alternatives Analysis because the Draft EIS determined the Fixed Guideway will serve more riders. The Final EIS gauged the Fixed Guideway's cost at about \$16 per hour of transit user benefit gained, again because of the increase in ridership.

DISCUSSION: *Share your thoughts about the city's response to our question and the rail project in general in our rail discussion.*

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Mayor Carlisle sworn into office, outlines priorities

Posted: Oct 11, 2010 9:17 AM
Updated: Oct 11, 2010 10:54 PM

By Minna Sugimoto - [bio](#) | [email](#)

HONOLULU (HawaiiNewsNow) - Peter Carlisle once told one of his deputy prosecutors that he would become mayor when pigs learn to fly. At his swearing-in ceremony at Honolulu Hale Monday, the winner of the September 18 special election for mayor unveiled a statue of a pig with wings and wasted no time outlining his priorities.

"If you would please, raise your right hand and repeat after me," Mark Recktenwald, State Supreme Court Chief Justice, said while administering the oath of office.

With his wife at his side, Peter Carlisle was sworn in as the new leader of the nation's 13th largest municipality. It wasn't without a little hiccup.

"And conscientiously and impartially," Recktenwald continued with the oath.

"And conscie...conscientiously and impartially," Carlisle stumbled through with a smile.

It will be far from smooth sailing for the new mayor, who must deal with the issue of homelessness, fix roads and water mains, move the rail project forward, and balance the city's budget.

"While these are difficult and taxing times, I believe that these are golden opportunities," Carlisle said.

Facing a budget shortfall, Carlisle wants to establish spending and collections management programs, and call upon respected members of the private financial sector.

"We will come up with the type of solution that we're going to need to get us through this fiscal, this budget cycle as quickly as possible and make it a template for cooperation in the future," he said.

The mayor says he will support the state Department of Hawaiian Homelands in providing affordable homes in West Oahu. First up, he'll lead a team on a trip to Washington DC in the next few days to meet with Federal Transit Authority officials regarding the \$5.5 billion rail project.

"We want to get it going as soon as we possibly can," he said. "We're going to let everybody in Washington DC know that we are enthusiastic supporters. We want rail and we want it now."

He backs the proposal to form a separate, 10-member board that would make decisions relating to the rail's planning, construction and operation.

"Most importantly, it takes the politics out of it," he said about the proposed charter amendment that Oahu voters will decide on November 2. "This is going to be an independent authority that can exercise its own judgment based on its expertise and ability."

The mayor has tapped former deputy prosecutor Jean Ireton to look into tax credits for historic homes, and also pledged the city's support for the creation of the Kamehameha Schools multi-generational learning complex in Makaha.

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Peter Carlisle



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Rail, budget, furloughs among priorities for new Mayor



Reported by: [Marisa Yamane](#)
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Honolulu has a new Mayor..

Mayor Peter Carlisle says the first thing on his agenda is supporting the City's rail project.

He also says he wants to get rid of City furloughs.

Mayor Carlisle sure has a lot on his plate.

And he's coming into office promising "change."

Carlisle took the oath of office late this afternoon with his wife Judy by his side.



"As Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu. Congratulations. Thank you sir."

Mayor Peter Carlisle was joined by family, close friends, some cabinet members, and City Council members for a swearing-in ceremony at his new office in Honolulu Hale.

As Mayor, Carlisle says one of his priorities is keeping Honolulu's five-billion dollar rail project on track, starting with a trip to Washington, D.C. to meet with the Federal Transit Authority.

"It is our intention to tell them that the City's legislative, executive and operational branches are fully committed and dedicated and enthusiastic in our support and mutual cooperation for rail," said Carlisle.

But before the rail project can move full steam ahead, Governor Lingle must sign the final EIS.

"But I'm convinced that her and some of the other Republicans are not going to be going along with this effort and it's going to be my earnest hope that we'll be able to overcome any resistance they have," said Carlisle.

Carlisle plans to keep many of the cabinet members from the previous administration, but emphasizes that change is coming -- starting with transparency.

Another priority is addressing the City's budget woes.

"We're looking across the board at all areas of the City, with the direction that we want to stop spending money on new toys and start spending money on maintenance," said Carlisle.

Specifically, the roads, buildings, harbors, water and sewer system.

Carlisle also wants to get rid of City furloughs.

"There are other ways to deal with that issue. You can have across the board pay cuts -- that's an option. You can have people who understand that, look we're lucky to have government jobs right now. So what we need to do is one, if people leave, not rehire, two, if someone leaves at the top we hire at the bottom," said Carlisle.

Carlisle once told a friend he would become Mayor when pigs learned to fly.

"This is to remind me of what I said before, so apparently pigs have sprouted wings," said Carlisle.

Carlisle's inauguration will be held next week Friday, October 22nd at the Mission Memorial Auditorium starting at 5pm.

Proposal would create board to oversee rail

By Gene Park

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 11, 2010



A ballot question asks whether an agency should oversee the \$5.5 billion project.

Voters will decide next month whether to centralize oversight of the \$5.5 billion rail project under a 10-member authority.

Some City Council members argue that an appointed board of directors would depoliticize the project.

"When you have a group of people selected for the specific purpose of having jurisdiction over an entity like the mass transit project, I think you will get better decisions that way," said Councilman Ikaika Anderson, who is among the three who introduced the Council resolution last year to place the City Charter amendment on the general election ballot.

New board: What it is, what it would do

The following question will be on the general election ballot for Oahu voters:

"Shall the revised City Charter be amended to create a semiautonomous public transit authority responsible for the planning, construction, operation, maintenance and the expansion of the city's fixed guideway mass transit system?"

If enacted, the agency will be called the Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation. Its responsibilities include:

- » Making and executing contracts and labor agreements.
- » Acquiring property for the project by eminent domain, purchase, lease or other means.
- » Directing the planning, design and construction of the system.
- » Preparing annual operating and capital budgets for the system.
- » Creating, promoting and assisting transit-oriented development projects near the system that would promote ridership.

Source: City Council Resolution 09-252, CD1

Rail opponents, however, question whether the system, which only serves Oahu, needs what they characterize as "another layer of bureaucracy."

"When it crosses many political jurisdictions, it becomes really necessary," said Cliff Slater, a vocal critic of the project and chairman of HonoluluTraffic.com. "But we don't have that problem here. It's tough enough for Council members to get information out of the city directly without having to go through another layer."

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The proposed Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation, or HART, would govern rates, execute rail-related contracts and acquire property for the project through condemnation. Currently, the city and City Council are the administrative and decision-making bodies of the project.

"This board will be directly accountable for those things," said Toru Hamayasu, general manager of the city Rapid Transit Division. "It will almost be like the Board of Water Supply."

Creating the board through City Charter amendment is necessary because it is the Charter that grants control over the project to the City Council and the mayor, Hamayasu said.

The board would still answer to the City Council during the budgeting process and for approving bond sales and land acquisition through condemnation. But the authority would prepare its own capital budget and maintain the rail accounts.

It would also be required to hold public hearings before it can adopt a proposed budget, and before it can adjust fares.

"So there's always a check and balance," said City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi.

The board would be made up of three members appointed by the mayor and three by the City Council. The directors of the state Department of Transportation and the city Department of Transportation Services would be ex-officio voting members of the board.

Those eight members would vote for a ninth member. The city Department of Planning and Permitting director would be a 10th nonvoting member.

The City Council approved the question for the Nov. 2 ballot, in part, to minimize politics in the rail system, Council members have said.

"I wish we could've had this earlier in the process to really help coordinate all our transportation issues," Kobayashi said. "Although the appointing bodies are political, they'll be answerable to the public. Hopefully there will be more transparency in how the money's spent, especially when it comes to rail."

Panos Prevedouros, a University of Hawaii civil engineering professor and rail critic, said he believes forming an authority is a "political move from seasoned politicians beginning to shield themselves

from responsibility."

"It is to absolve the politicians of the boondoggle," said Prevedouros, who came in third place in last month's mayoral election.

Like Slater, Prevedouros said the board would be unnecessary given the size of the population and area the rail projected would serve. He cited TriMet, the Portland metropolitan transit agency that serves three counties, or the Chicago Transit Authority, which serves Chicago and 40 surrounding suburbs.

An organization of religious and community leaders said it supports the idea of having a rail board that does not have to run for re-election every few years.

"If you look at (former Mayor Mufi) Hannemann's administration and the rail project, it felt to me that it was very political," said Drew Astolfi, state director for Faith Action for Community Equity Hawaii, which supports rail construction.

"It would be nice to have an extra layer of distance. Most cities have a transit authority because it's just too big of a task to be left to the day-to-day work of the City Council, who is already doing a lot of other things."

Anderson said creating a board not made up of politicians would be an asset to the rail system's development. Political ambition and worries about re-election would not hamper the decision-making process, he said.

"These people will be making decisions on what's best for Honolulu's public, rather than what's best for their

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individual careers, as we've seen over the years," Anderson said. "We're not sure what kind of City Council or mayoral administration we're going to be facing over the outlying years."

Hamayasu said an authority will not cost much because the Rail Transit Division that is under the city Transportation Services Department would be the authority's staff.

Hamayasu said other jurisdictions have created boards to perform different functions.

"Some of them focus more on the operation because it crosses so many jurisdictions, while some are focused only on the construction part of it because they're still building," he said.

Hamayasu said although the city will not be doing any advocacy on the ballot question, his department is planning to disseminate information to the public, since excitement from the primary election has cooled.

For passage, the amendment needs 50 percent plus one vote. A blank or spoiled vote on the question will not be factored into the count, he said.

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New Mayor Takes Office, Preps for Trip to D.C.

By Adrienne LaFrance | 10/12/2010

Honolulu Mayor [Peter Carlisle](#)'s campaign for office was a whirlwind couple of months. His transition since the Sept. 18 election was a mere two weeks. After taking the oath of office Monday afternoon, the new mayor is on the move again. On Wednesday, he'll head to Washington D.C., to meet with federal officials about the city's proposed [rail transit project](#).

Carlisle will have just one full day on the job before the trip. Joining him are departing City Council Chair [Todd Apo](#), City Councilmember [Ikaika Anderson](#) and the city's chief rail planner, [Toru Hamayasu](#). The group is returning on Saturday, a spokesman for Carlisle said.



Adrienne LaFrance/Civil Beat

Member Content

"It is our intention to tell them that the city's legislative, executive and operational branches are fully committed and dedicated and enthusiastic in our support and mutual cooperation for rail," Carlisle said. "We are united as one as a government and a city we want rail and we want it now."

But the trip — and its timing, about a day and a half since Carlisle was sworn in — raises a host of unanswered questions.

His incoming managing director [Doug Chin](#) hasn't yet been confirmed by the City Council, and it's unclear that the city charter will allow for him to fill-in as acting mayor in Carlisle's absence. The city's budget director would be third in line to be acting mayor, but that post remains empty after [Rix Maurer's resignation](#) last week.

Then there's the question of why Carlisle is headed to the nation's capitol in the first place. While former Mayor [Mufi Hannemann](#) visited Washington during the drafting of the city's Final Environmental Impact Statement, that document is now stalled at the state level since its release by the Federal Transit Administration earlier this year.

Overcoming Resistance to Rail

Rail advocates are now waiting for Gov. [Linda Lingle](#) to accept the the document. Her doing so would clear a major hurdle toward the project's groundbreaking, but Lingle has said she first wants to conduct an independent financial review.

"Governor Lingle and I spoke about it already, and we'll continue to speak about it, but I'm convinced that her and some of the other Republicans are not going to be going along with this effort," Carlisle said. "It's going to be my earnest hope that we'll be able to overcome any resistance that they have."

Carlisle said Monday afternoon he hopes the city will take "action" on the project "no later than March."

Carlisle's executive assistant, [Jim Fulton](#), acknowledged the Washington trip made for an "unusual" situation without cabinet-level leadership already in place. A call to the city clerk's office after business hours was not returned before press time.

It also remains to be seen why [Apo](#), who is resigning in November to take a job with Disney's Aulani Resort, was tapped to travel to D.C. just weeks before his departure from the council. Apo has paid out of pocket for trips to Washington in the past — for President Barack Obama's inauguration, for example — but he hasn't yet said whether he or the city will cover the cost of this trip.

It was shortly after being sworn in as mayor at Honolulu Hale late Monday afternoon that Carlisle announced he and other city officials would meet with Federal Transit Administrator [Peter Rogoff](#). Just beforehand, the former prosecutor showed rare jitteriness as he counted down the minutes before Hawaii Supreme Court Justice [Mark Recktenwald](#) administered to him the oath of office.

"He's nervous," Carlisle's wife, [Judy](#), acknowledged, watching her husband greet members of the media in his new office. After being sworn in, Carlisle's hands shook slightly as he began to speak. But the new mayor began to exude the boisterous confidence for which he is known as he outlined the priorities ahead.

Keeping City Spending in Check

Other than rail, Carlisle focused on finances.

Getting the city's "fiscal house in order" was the cornerstone message of his successful mayoral campaign. Carlisle said Monday he's enlisting help from the city's Department of Information Technology director, [Gordon Bruce](#), to implement a "spend management program, funded through savings." When asked for specifics during a later press conference, Carlisle deferred the questions.

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"Gordon Bruce knows this far better than I do, and it was his idea," Carlisle explained. "It's worked elsewhere. You get this external agency, and they come in and they make everything efficient because they look at the big picture. They get people working together."

The new mayor also called for the establishment of a "collections management" financing system, to streamline collections of parking fees, sewer fees, real property taxes and environmental waste management fees. Carlisle said both financial actions are based on a financing system implemented in 2007, but he also called for the implementation of new centralized accounts receivable so the city can better manage incoming monies.

Carlisle also cited an examination into tax breaks for historic homes as a priority, and something his administration is already investigating. Carlisle's losing opponent, former Honolulu Managing Director [Kirk Caldwell](#) benefits from such a tax break.

When Pigs Fly

The new mayor described the symbolism around his new office: A "Hawaiian motif" to represent his gratitude to the Hawaiian people, natural light streaming through open blinds to demonstrate his belief in transparency and a small desktop statue of a smiling pig with wings.

"I once said to a close friend that I would become mayor when pigs learned how to fly," Carlisle said. "She gave me a gift to remind me of that sentiment. Pigs have sprouted wings, and I am extremely happy to be here."

With him in the room were members of the City Council — who didn't receive invitations to the swearing-in ceremony until about an hour beforehand due to "an oversight," Carlisle said.

"I want it to be as cooperative as humanly possible," Carlisle said of his fledgling relationship with the council. "I'm sure we're going to have difficulties on occasion. They're going to see things their way. I'm going to see things from a different perspective. But if we're not working together, the people who suffer are the people who we represent. It's critical that we try to work together as well as possible."

DISCUSSION: *What's your take on Peter Carlisle's first appearance as mayor? [Voice your thoughts.](#)*

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The Rail Divide — Part 1: City Claims Evaluated

By Greg Wiles | 10/12/2010

This is part of a series of stories examining the decision to build a rail transit line in Honolulu.

- [Overview](#)
- [Honolulu Hale's view](#)
- [Opposing view from Cliff Slater](#)
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The city's response revolved around three major points: The selection of rail transit was done through a detailed process, that all alternatives received a reasonable amount of consideration and the Managed Lane alternative preferred by Cliff Slater was inferior to rail transit on many counts.

The selection of a Fixed Guideway (Rail Transit) resulted from a rigorous process.

Mass transit projects for Honolulu have been considered for at least four decades, with a 1980 EIS for an 8.4-mile project from Honolulu Airport to the University of Hawaii promoting a Fixed Guideway (Rail Transit) solution over other alternatives.

In 1992, a second Environmental Impact Statement was issued, this one for a Fixed Guideway system running 15.9 miles from Waiawa to Downtown Honolulu. Other alternatives considered and rejected during that process were Do Nothing and Transportation System Management (enhancement of bus service and other improvements).

The current project's planning and evaluation went through a series of public hearings and analysis.

This included:

Dec. 7, 2005 – The Federal Transit Administration and the Honolulu Department of Transportation Services issue notice of intent to prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Alternatives Analysis for High-Capacity Transit Improvements. The notice said at least four alternatives would be studied – Doing Nothing; Transportation System Management, Managed Lanes and Rail Transit.

April 2006 – A "scoping" report is released based on public and agency comments on a possible transit project. "Scoping meetings" were held in Honolulu and Kapolei for discussion and taking of comments from individuals, organizations and businesses.

April 2006 -- The Oahu Regional Transportation Plan 2030 is published by the Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization, commonly known as OMPO. It is a federally mandated organization that is responsible for coordinating transportation planning on Oahu. The report says traffic congestion will increase by 2030 as the population increases by 240,000. Its transportation plan includes the building of a Kapolei-to-Manoa/Waikiki rail transit system.

October 2006 – The Alternatives Analysis review conducted by the city is published. It compares various alternatives in terms of cost, benefits and impacts and identified the Fixed Guideway as the most cost-effective solution. The Honolulu City Council used the report's findings to get further input during hearings on the selection of a preferred alternative.

December 2006 – The City Council Transit Advisory Task force issues a report saying it found the Alternatives Analysis was presented fairly and accurately. It notes that different variations of the Managed Lane alternative might make it more attractive or feasible than the version that was considered.

May 2007 – A report on public and agency input on the project, including alternatives to be considered and environmental and community impacts, is prepared by Parsons Brinckerhoff.

November 2008 – A Draft Environmental Impact Statement is circulated for public comment. The document covered various aspects of the Rail Transit project, including environmental impacts, potential effects on parks and historic planes and funding sources.

June 2010 – Final EIS is issued.

As can be seen from the above, the project went through a lengthy process.

But Slater contends the process, while extensive, was biased toward a Rail Transit project. He says analysts inflated construction costs for the Managed Lane alternatives, improperly designed ramps near Downtown Honolulu that resulted in more traffic congestion and padded operating costs with more buses and parking spaces than were needed.

More analysis tomorrow in Part 2.

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The Rail Divide — Part 1: Slater Claims Evaluated

By Greg Wiles | 10/12/2010

This is part of a series of stories examining the decision to build a rail transit line in Honolulu.

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Cliff Slater says the Final EIS gives no reasonable explanation why the city removed Zipper Lane in the Managed Lane alternative.

Planners considered a number of alternatives for solving traffic problems but examined only four extensively — Doing Nothing; a Transportation System Management that includes enhanced bus service; Managed Lanes and a Fixed Guideway System (Rail Transit).

Slater believes there was insufficient study of alternatives and that the review of the Managed Lane alternative was altered without explanation.

Managed Lanes can best be visualized by imagining an elevated two-lane highway built above freeways between Waipahu and Downtown Honolulu. This elevated freeway would be used by buses, vanpool and carpool vehicles, high-occupancy cars and single-occupant vehicles willing to pay a toll.

Planners looked at two options for Managed Lanes, one of which would feature traffic going in both directions and another that operated in a single direction depending on the time of day. They settled on the "reversible," or single-direction alternative, because of cost.

Slater contends analysis of Managed Lanes was flawed because it did not keep the Zipper Lane — that extra lane that is created on existing highways when zipper-like barriers are placed in contra-flow lanes during the morning rush hour.

He says if two Managed Lanes are added above the freeway and the Zipper Lane is discontinued, the Managed Lanes option would have the net effect of adding one lane instead of two.

Slater says a Managed Lane alternative with a Zipper Lane would be a viable option in terms of traffic volume on the H-1 freeway and other roads. By his calculation, general purpose traffic volume on the H-1 freeway and other roads during the morning commute would be 20,322 vehicles per hour with Managed Lanes and a Zipper Lane operating.

Traffic planners looked at a number of traffic measurements to compare the various options, including peak rush-hour traffic volume along the H-1, Moanalua Road and Kamehameha Highway in Aiea. When these numbers are totaled you get a metric planners call Total General Purpose Traffic.

Slater contends the reversible Managed Lanes Alternative with the Zipper Lane reinstated is superior to Rail with respect to Total General Purpose Traffic during the morning rush hour.

Categories	Capacity – Vehicles per Hour	Existing Volume 2003	Managed Lanes with Zipper Lane*	Rail*
Total General Purpose Traffic	14,650	10,960	20,322	21,120
HOV/Zipper	3,800	3,300	4,923	4,980
Managed Lanes**	N/A	N/A	3,457	N/A
Total All Traffic	18,450	14,260	28,702	26,100

*Year 2030 Source: Table 3-12 Alternatives Analysis; Cliff Slater

The above table shows Managed Lanes with a reinstated Zipper Lane beats out Rail in terms of Total General Purpose Traffic.

But on another measure used by Slater, Total All Traffic, Managed Lanes come in second place.

Total All Traffic includes General Purpose traffic in regular lanes on the H-1, vehicles using the Zipper/HOV lane, and traffic in Managed Lanes — would total 28,702 vehicles per hour.

That's more than the 26,100 for the Rail Transit scenario.

As such it is the city's thesis that travel times may be reduced for some commuters with Managed Lanes, but for

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others the time savings will be reduced by bottlenecks around the entrance and exit ramps to the elevated lanes.

Slater, however, notes the higher total traffic numbers don't necessarily mean congestion would be worse. He points to work done by Panos Prevedouros, a former Honolulu mayoral candidate and University of Hawaii professor who specializes in traffic and traffic engineering.

Prevedouros, who ran on the promise that he would kill the rail project, has proposed ways to mitigate congestion in Downtown Honolulu. Slater says these and other measures should have received more serious study by the city. He says they would show Managed Lanes as a worthy option.

In conclusion, Slater's point that the Final EIS doesn't give a reasonable explanation for the removal of the Zipper Lane from the Managed Lane alternative is technically correct. There is no mention of why the Zipper Lane was excluded from the Managed Lane option.

But the Final EIS, released to the public in June 2010, wasn't required to delve extensively into all alternatives. It only was prepared to look at the Fixed Guideway versus the Do Nothing scenario.

In a June letter to Slater, Wayne Yoshioka, director of the city's Department of Transportation Services, noted the Zipper Lane was removed from the Managed Lanes scenario during the Alternatives Analysis in 2006.

He wrote the Zipper Lane was eliminated for several reasons, including the need for more H1 freeway lanes in coming years to handle traffic heading in the reverse direction from commuters.

More analysis tomorrow in Part 2.

DISCUSSION: *Share your thoughts* about this examination of Cliff Slater's response to our question and the rail project in general in our rail discussion.

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There's been a lot of news coverage about this lately and it's best to be familiar with it so you can make an informed decision on November 2. Below is information from a flyer that was posted on the Honolulu Rail Transit website to help us understand the question that will be on the ballot.

The Facts

On November 2nd, the voters of Oahu will be asked to vote on a proposed amendment to the City Charter. Its passage will lead to the establishment of a public transit authority to govern the activities of the Honolulu Rail Transit Project.

The question on the ballot will read: *"Shall the revised City Charter be amended to create a semi-autonomous public transit authority responsible for the planning, construction, operation, maintenance, and expansion of the City's fixed guideway mass transit system?"*

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Voters will have the opportunity to decide whether a public transit authority should be established.

- A **YES** vote means that you support creating the transit authority.
- A **NO** vote means you do not support creating the transit authority.
- A **BLANK** or **SPOILED** ballot will not be counted. Regardless of the outcome of the vote, work on the project will continue.

Will this cost more money?

No, there would be no additional cost to create the transit authority as it utilizes a foundation that is already in place – including expert staff and facilities.

What are the benefits of creating a new public transit authority for the rail transit system?

If established, a transit authority would have the ability to make decisions more quickly because of its singular focus: the success of the rail transit system. An appointed transit authority board would also provide for timely and efficient management of the planning, construction, operation, maintenance, and expansion of the rail transit system, with sound principles and objectives for project delivery.

The transit authority would manage the rail transit system's budget and fares, and be required to properly maintain the agency's financial status. It would also work hand-in-hand with the City Council for City funding and include the public in crucial issues such as setting fares and adopting a budget, further enhancing transparency and accountability.

For more information on the charter amendment, visit www.HonoluluTransit.org

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Mayor Carlisle Prepares For Honolulu's Future

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HONOLULU --
Peter Carlisle became Honolulu's 13th elected mayor on Monday.

His first day lasted only about an hour. But during his brief time in office, he held a press conference to talk about his plans for the future. 10/11/2010.

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Hawaii Supreme Court Chief Justice Mark Recktenwald administered the oath to Carlisle at 4:30 p.m.

On his first day in office he met with his department heads and also held a news conference to talk about his plans for the future.

Carlisle said he wants to make the city more efficient and save taxpayers money by better managing spending and setting up a centralized accounts receivable program for counties and the state.

"This is a golden opportunity to the counties and state to see if we can partner in the deployment of tech solutions," Carlisle said.

The new mayor also has the rail transit project on his mind. Carlisle will not be staying in Honolulu Hale very long. He already plans to head to Washington in the next few days along with city council members to give the Federal Transit Authority a message.

"The city's legislative, executive and operational branches are dedicated, enthusiastic in support of rail," he said.

Along with lots of lei and well wishes from supporters, Carlisle's first day on the job included a reminder of his initial reluctance to run for Honolulu mayor. However, about two years ago, he changed his mind.

"Suddenly the light bulb went off: 'You've always been working for the city. This is a elected executive.' And it surprised everyone around me including me, but from that point on, this is what I wanted to do and this is what I should do," Carlisle said.

He will serve the remaining two years of former Mayor Mufi Hannemann's second term.

Hannemann resigned to run for governor. He lost to fellow Democrat Neil Abercrombie in the primary election.

Carlisle said he has a good feeling about his new job.

"The best part is to know you can make change -- change things for the better, how can we do this more efficiently, how can we do it better," the mayor said.

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New mayor pledges rail support

By B.J. Reyes

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 12, 2010



New Honolulu Mayor Peter Carlisle got a hug from Councilman Todd Apo after Carlisle took the oath of office yesterday at Honolulu Hale. Hawaii Supreme Court Chief Justice Mark Recktenwald administered the oath. Among Carlisle's top priorities is to get Oahu's \$5.5 billion rail project on track. He plans to meet with federal transportation officials in Washington, D.C., this week. "It is our intention to tell them that the city's legislative, executive and operational branches are fully committed, dedicated and enthusiastic in our support and mutual cooperation for rail," Carlisle said.

More Photos



In his first minutes in office, new Mayor Peter Carlisle pledged to follow up on his campaign promise to cut waste in city spending and committed to push full speed ahead on the \$5.5 billion rail transit system.

Carlisle plans a trip this week to Washington, D.C., to

meet with Federal Transit Administrator Peter Rogoff and express his support for the project. He will be accompanied by City Council Chairman Todd Apo, Councilman Ikaika Anderson and Toru Hamayasu, the city's chief transportation planner.

"It is our intention to tell them that the city's legislative, executive and operational branches are fully committed, dedicated and enthusiastic in our support and mutual cooperation for rail," Carlisle said soon after taking the oath from Hawaii Chief Justice Mark Recktenwald. "We are united as one in the government of the city that we want rail and we want it now."

Carlisle's other promises within his first 15 minutes as mayor included support for native Hawaiians and a planned Makaha learning center, as well as a pledge to investigate tax credits for historic homes.

He also promised more transparency, accountability and efficiency in city government.

Carlisle announced plans to establish "spend management" and "collections management" programs to take an immediate accounting of how much the city spends and what it takes in. Those programs would be funded, he said, through cost savings realized by making systems more efficient, using information technology already available to the city.

The programs would be overseen by Gordon Bruce, city director of information technology.

Bruce is among the members of the Cabinet compiled by Carlisle's predecessor, Mufi Hannemann, who are staying on board as the new administration takes over.

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All but two of the roughly 30 appointed department directors are staying on. Only Budget Director Rix Maurer III and Community Services Director Debbie Kim Morikawa chose to leave the Cabinet, said Doug Chin, Carlisle's nominee for managing director.

Transportation Director Wayne Yoshioka said he was pleased to be able to work with Carlisle through the transition.

"The administration will evaluate and determine whether we're a good fit or not," Yoshioka said. "I think this transition will enable us to let the mayor hit the ground running because most of the directors are the same directors that were there before."

In the absence of a budget director, Carlisle said he would convene a team of advisers in the short term to evaluate and start work on the city's fiscal year 2012 budget.

Carlisle was the winner in a special election last month to fill the final two years of the four-year term vacated by Hannemann, who resigned in July for an unsuccessful run for governor.

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The Rail Divide — Part 2: City Claims Evaluated

By Greg Wiles | 10/13/2010

This is part of a series of stories examining the decision to build a rail transit line in Honolulu.

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Member Content

City's Claim: A full range of reasonable alternatives were evaluated.

A number of alternatives have been examined over the four decades that rail transit has been considered in Honolulu, though opponents say they believe an insufficient number of options were studied.

A Fixed Guideway system (Rail Transit) was identified through a three-step process, city officials say.

The initial process included a top-down analysis starting with gathering past studies and recommendations, project and Federal Transit Administration requirements.

The project planners say a comprehensive list of alternatives was developed during this phase, after which criteria were identified to screen which met transportation and other goals. The surviving alternatives were presented to the public and public agencies for comment.

A call for public comment formally began in December 2005 when the preparation notice for a Draft EIS went out and two meetings were held for public input on various options.

Prior to an Alternatives Analysis being performed, a number of alternatives were considered and discarded. The idea of a tunnel under Pearl Harbor was dropped because it wouldn't cut vehicle use or improve connections within the transit corridor. A ferry service was dismissed because of its capacity and travel times.

Other types of rail systems were rejected as well – the small cars of personal rail transit and the bigger cars of commuter rail were deemed unsuitable. Also dropped were guided buses, light rail, people movers, monorail and magnetic levitation rail.

The second step of the process occurred with the examination of four options – No Build, Transportation System Management (an enhanced bus system and other improvements), Managed Lanes and a Fixed Guideway system.

The Alternatives Analysis report compared the options in terms of cost to build and operate, transportation benefits, environmental impacts, traffic, and ridership.

Based on that evaluation it selected Rail Transit as the best alternative.

Effectiveness of Alternatives at Meeting Goals and Objectives

Evaluation Measure	No Build	Transit System Management	Managed Lanes	Rail Transit
Reduction in daily vehicle hours delay	--	2% reduction	1% increase	11% reduction
Reduction in daily vehicle trips	--	10,200	14,900	48,000
Total daily transit trips	232,100	243,100	244,400	281,900
Total capital costs (2006 dollars)	0	0	\$2.6 billion	\$3.6 billion
Annual operation and maintenance costs	\$192 million	\$234 million	\$261 million	\$251 million
Operating cost per transit passenger mile	\$0.35	\$0.40	\$0.47	\$0.35
Proposed share of total project costs from sources other than New Starts federal funds	100%	100%	100%	82%
Proximity to historic resources	0	0	30	70
Full or partial acquisitions of residential or commercial parcels	0	0	31	79
Utility relocation costs	0	0	\$220 million	\$460 million

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Construction duration	0	0	6-8 years	7-9 years
Degree to which funding required to build is attainable	Highest benefit	Highest benefit	Lowest benefit	Highest benefit
Ability to operate and maintain the transit system after it is built	Least impact	Medium impact	Medium impact	Significant impact
Impacts to parking	Significant impact	Medium impact	Medium impact	Minimal impact
Visual impacts/view corridors affected	Least impact	Minimal impact	Significant impact	Significant impact
Reduction in regional transportation-related energy consumption	N/A	Minimal impact	Greatest impact	Minimal impact

Source: Table 6-3. Alternatives Analysis Report Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project

Based on the above and other study, the analysis concluded:

- The Fixed Guideway Alternative was the best option when considering all of the objectives related to the goal of improving corridor mobility.
- The Fixed Guideway Alternative was substantially more cost-effective than Managed Lanes on a respective cost per transit user benefit.
- The No Build and Fixed Guideway alternatives were financially feasible considering reasonably certain funding sources.
- Managed Lanes had no defined funding source while Transportation System Management would require a limited amount of additional funds.
- Managed Lanes would generate the highest levels of air and water pollution, consume the greatest amount of transportation energy, and create the greatest number of noise impacts.
- The Fixed Guideway Alternative would require the greatest number of property acquisitions and have the greatest number of utility conflicts.

Following the Alternatives Analysis, another round of so-called scoping was done to check whether there were alternatives not previously considered that would satisfy the goals of the project at less cost, lower community impact, greater effectiveness and less environmental problems.

The city can clearly point to many steps it took to study alternatives.

Opponents, however, have questioned whether correctly designed alternatives were considered fully. Rail critics have advocated for a better exploration of Managed Lanes.

The Final EIS notes that during the final scoping process, several comments were received requesting reconsideration of Managed Lanes. But it said no new information was provided to warrant it receiving further review.

More analysis tomorrow in Part 3.

DISCUSSION: *Share your thoughts about this examination of Cliff Slater's response to our question and the rail project in general in our rail discussion.*

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The Rail Divide — Part 2: Slater Claims Evaluated

By Greg Wiles | 10/13/2010

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Member Content

Cliff Slater's claim: The city has a \$2.6 billion estimate for managed lanes construction costs. That's twice as much per lane mile as the H-3 freeway.

The Alternatives Analysis projects the construction cost of a reversible Managed Lane project at \$2.6 billion in 2006 dollars. That compares with the \$3.6 billion cost (at that time) of Rail Transit.

Slater contends the state doesn't have a credible argument for the Managed Lane estimate. Slater previously has said the city is using a 16-mile long route for the Managed Lane facility instead of the shorter versions that would provide lower estimates.

The city estimate is slightly lower than what it cost the state to build the H-3 freeway, a 16.1-mile divided highway that has twin two-lane trans-Koolau tunnels, according to Slater. He estimates the H-3's inflation adjusted price tag at \$2.7 billion in 2006 dollars.

The H-3 cost works out to \$41.6 million per lane mile (\$2.7 billion divided 16.1 miles, divided again by four lanes), under Slater's estimates.

The city's Managed Lane estimate works out to \$81.3 million per lane mile (\$2.6 billion divided by 16 miles, divided again by two lanes).

Given this math, Slater is close to the truth in saying the city cost estimates for the Managed Lane alternative is twice as much as it cost to build the H-3.

The city has said the construction cost estimates were reviewed by the City Council's Transit Advisory Task Force and deemed fair and accurate. It says shortening of the Managed Lanes project would not have increased benefits to travelers.

It also says the higher costs for Managed Lanes compared to the H-3 results from several differences between the projects, including the Managed Lanes being built in a heavily developed corridor.

Slater has two figures for Managed Lane construction costs. One is an estimate made several years ago that projected a 10-mile, elevated two-lane freeway costing \$67.3 million per lane mile in 2006 dollars.

Slater said the estimate was generally agreed to by Hawaii and national experts that attended a one-day conference exploring a reversible tolled transitway.

His other estimate is derived from the cost of the Tampa Expressway, which used new construction methods to lower costs by 45 percent. When Slater applied this discount to his other \$67.3 million estimate, the cost is \$37 million per lane mile.

The Alternatives Analysis Report says cost estimates for all of the alternatives were developed using a Federal Transit Administration format. This includes use of standard cost categories that look at all project elements in 10 areas.

The city says unit costs came from Hawaii Department of Transportation data and other data gathered from systems on the Mainland. The city disputes using the Tampa Expressway as a comparison because of inflation, higher real estate costs in Honolulu and construction cost differences between Hawaii and the Mainland.

Slater also contends: the city inflated the Managed Lane alternative's operating costs by projecting a 50 percent increase in buses compared to the No-Build Alternative while only projecting a 5 percent rider increase.

Slater says the Final EIS did not investigate rail opponents' concerns about operating costs and alleges the city didn't address its concerns that operating expenses were inflated for Managed Lanes by increasing the number of buses needed.

The Alternatives Analysis Report cited a cost of \$261 million for operating and maintenance expenses for a

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Managed Lane Alternative. That's more costly than the \$251 million projected for a 20-mile rail project.

Part of the higher cost for a Managed Lane alternative is the number of buses that are required.

The Alternatives Analysis projects as many as 906 buses for the Managed Lanes. That's almost 50 percent more than the 614 buses forecast under the No-Build alternative.

The No-Build alternative will require 89 more buses be added to 2005's fleet of 525 buses by the year 2030. They would be needed to keep up with population growth.

Alternative	Bus Fleet	Transit trips	Boardings	Operating Costs**
2005 existing	525	178,400	243,100	NA
No Build	614	232,100	330,600	\$192 million
Managed Lane*	906	244,400	363,700	\$261 million
20-mile rail	596	281,900	455,300	\$251 million

Reversible lane mode

*2006 dollars

Source: Alternatives Analysis Tables 5-3, 2-1, 3-7

Transit trips under Managed Lane will only rise 5.3 percent more than the No-Build scenario, the Alternatives Analysis says.

Slater questions why the Alternatives Analysis would add so many buses (along with the higher operating costs) if only a small percentage increase in ridership occurs. He also questions why ridership wouldn't increase more if the Managed Lane alternative features faster bus service.

Some of the answer, according to the Alternatives Analysis report, is that a Managed Lane alternative would require a bus network that feeds the express buses. The city has said more buses are needed to ensure Managed Lanes function as planned.

"The bus network would be structured to support access to the managed lane via bus transfers at park-and-ride locations as well as by the addition of express bus routes using the Managed Lane viaduct," the Alternatives Analysis says.

It's difficult to know given available information whether the bus numbers and in turn the operating costs were padded to make the Managed Lane alternative look bad as Slater charges.

Much of his contention rests on the disparity between a big jump in the number of buses forecast for the Managed Lane system and the small increase in riders.

More analysis tomorrow in Part 3.

DISCUSSION: *Share your thoughts* about this examination of Cliff Slater's response to our question and the rail project in general in our rail discussion.

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Carlisle to fly to Washington on behalf of rail

*Posted: Oct 13, 2010 9:39 AM
Updated: Oct 13, 2010 12:51 PM*

HONOLULU (AP) - Newly installed Honolulu Mayor Peter Carlisle is to fly to Washington to lobby on behalf of the city's proposed commuter rail project.

City Council Chairman Todd Apo, Councilman Ikaika Anderson and Deputy Transportation Director Toru Hamayasu will accompany the mayor. The group leaves Wednesday.

They will meet Friday with Federal Transportation Administrator Peter Rogoff, and Carlisle is to return Saturday. City Managing Director Douglas Chin will be acting mayor in the meantime.

Carlisle took the oath of office on Monday. The former Honolulu prosecutor on Sept. 18 defeated then-Acting Mayor Kirk Caldwell, engineer Panos Prevedouros and five other candidates.

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Carlisle Heads To Washington For Rail

New Mayor To Lobby For Transit Project

POSTED: 11:56 am HST October 13, 2010

HONOLULU -- Honolulu Mayor Peter Carlisle left for Washington on Wednesday to lobby for the city's planned commuter rail project.

Carlisle is traveling with City Council Chairman Todd Apo, Councilman Ikaika Anderson and Deputy Transportation Director Toru Hamayasu.

"We are firmly committed to making this project the best that it can be," Carlisle said.

The Federal Transit Administration has said it would provide \$1.55 billion for the project.

They will meet Friday with Federal Transportation Administrator Peter Rogoff, and Carlisle is to return Saturday. City Managing Director Douglas Chin will be acting mayor in his absence.

The city has begun some soil testing on the route of the rail project.

This is Carlisle's first week on the job. He took the oath of office on Monday.

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PACIFIC BUSINESS NEWS

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Carlisle's Early Agenda Getting All Wet

James R. George
Managing Editor



Wednesday, October 13, 2010, 10:36am HAST

Welcome to the mayor's office, Mr. Carlisle.

In a city surrounded by water, [Peter Carlisle](#) took the oath of office Monday to become [Honolulu's newest mayor](#). He's filling the remaining two years of a term that [Mufi Hannemann](#) vacated to run for governor.

For those who believe in omens, underground forces appear to be sending Carlisle a message on what a top priority should be for his administration. On the weekend before his swearing in, [water main breaks](#) in Hawaii Kai and Moiliili closed streets, cut power and snarled traffic. Then, on Tuesday night, a break in East Honolulu where the H-1 meets Kalaniana'ole Highway halted commutes for thousands of drivers.

Water main breaks are common occurrences in Honolulu — cursed when they affect us personally, but tolerated when they inconvenience the other guy.

When I finally arrived home Tuesday night, more than an hour behind schedule, I turned on the TV to find one of our candidates for public office reminding me that she will work hard to bring [renewable energy](#) to Hawaii. That's great — everyone wants cheaper and cleaner energy — but I thought about the thousands of gallons of fossil fuels being burned a few miles away as engines idled.

That is wasted energy.

Carlisle and other city officials are traveling to Washington, D.C., today to "express their strong and unified support" for the city's rail transit project. "We are firmly committed to making this project the best that it can be," the new mayor said in a press release.

That's great, too. An efficient rail system and a clean-energy initiative are critical parts of Hawaii's future. I'm pleased to see city officials united in their support for something.

But, about those water mains, Mr. Mayor. In a talk-story session over wine and cheese a few weeks before the election, you discussed the sorry state of the city's infrastructure and how years of neglect are catching up with us. You said a high priority for your administration would be to fix those problems that the rest of us see only when they literally rise to the surface.

We're talking water mains here.

The [rail transit system](#) will cost more than \$5 billion, and we won't see the payback for years except for construction jobs. Investing a small fraction of that amount in our city's existing infrastructure will have a much more immediate impact on our consumption of fossil fuels.

Carlisle knows this. He appears to be a pragmatic public official, a former prosecutor who is more substance than showman. If he can track down and fix those crumbling water mains the same way he put bad guys in jail, we'll sit in traffic less often and burn less fossil fuel.

Now, that's a good [energy policy](#).

Managing Editor Jim George can be reached at 808.955.8033 | jrgeorge@bizjournals.com

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By Greg Wiles | 10/14/2010

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Member Content

City's claim: The Managed Lane alternative would not have qualified for the project's primary funding sources, provided fewer benefits than Rail Transit in terms of environmental, traffic congestion and cost issues.

The city is using a General Excise Tax surcharge and funds from the Federal Transit Administration's New Starts program as the primary funding sources for a mass transit project.

It says the funding from those sources can be applied to a Fixed Guideway project but not to Managed Lanes.

Some of the state's reasoning is based on how the 0.5 percent General Excise Tax Surcharge is worded. It was passed in 2005 by the state legislature for funding of a locally preferred alternative for a mass transit project.

The key words here are "locally preferred alternative." The City Council selected Rail Transit as the preferred alternative after the 2006 Alternatives Analysis report recommended it as being superior to other options.

As such funds from the surcharge cannot be used for the No Build and Transportation System Management alternative or Managed Lanes.

DISCUSSION: *Share your thoughts about this examination of Cliff Slater's response to our question and the rail project in general in our rail discussion.*

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Member Content

Cliff Slater's claim: The city did not attempt to provide facilities to reduce traffic congestion at the downtown Honolulu terminus of the Managed Lane Alternative.

The city's Alternatives Analysis says significant congestion is projected where the Managed Lanes connect to Nimitz Highway near Dole Cannery in Iwilei.

"Nimitz Highway is already projected to be over capacity at this point, and the addition of high volumes of traffic exiting and entering the managed lanes would create increased congestion and high levels of delay for all vehicles using the facility, including buses. Hence, much of the time saved on the managed lane itself would be negated by the time spent in congestion leading up to the managed lane as well as exiting the lanes at their Downtown terminus."

The analysis notes the alternative would improve travel times for some areas that are well served by the Managed Lanes such as the Waipahu Transit Center to Downtown or Mililani to Downtown. But it has "significant limitations with regard to improving travel times or transit service for a broader customer base."

Slater contends the congestion would not occur if there had been better designs employed for the entry and exit ramps. He cites research by Prevedouros.

Prevedouros wrote a letter to the Federal Transit Administration complaining the Managed Lanes alternatives was under-engineered. The professor's studies show "with properly designed ramps traffic congestion can be reduced and excessive traffic congestion would not occur even during peak-hour traffic," wrote Slater in a position paper.

Slater claims that the city is required to consider avoidance of historic properties, including burial grounds during its Alternatives Analysis stage.

Slater believes there wasn't full compliance with this requirement and cites as his proof a letter from the National Trust for Historic Preservation to the Federal Transit Administration.

He says the law, Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966, requires projects be evaluated in the alternatives analysis stage. The law protects historic sites from acquisition and conversion to transportation use.

The October 2009 letter from the Washington-based trust says it was "extremely concerned" the city wasn't undertaking a detailed identification of historic properties within the Middle Street to Ala Moana Center phase of the Rail Transit project given the area has a high concentration of unmarked burials of Native Hawaiians.

The Oahu Island Burial Council has also said an archaeological inventory survey should have been conducted before selection of a Kakaako route. The city does note the current route will almost certainly encounter buried human remains, which could delay the project and drive up costs.

It has agreed to do an archaeological inventory survey two years earlier than planned.

The Final EIS also acknowledges the potential for finding the burials, noting areas along Dillingham Boulevard, Downtown Honolulu and Kakaako have a high potential for finding burials and other historic resources.

The city has adopted a phased approach to building and says an archaeological survey will be done prior to the final design and construction of each phase.

City officials have maintained that their approach to identifying historic properties and burial grounds has been within regulations. The city's phased approach is being reviewed by the state.

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For Thursday, October 14, 2010

Carlisle's first act is a rail junket?

When I heard on the news that the first item on Mayor Peter Carlisle's agenda is supporting the city's rail project, I just had to wonder if any of the politicians in this state really ever listen to the voters.

During the same newscast, it was brought up that a recent poll showed the vast majority of residents rated the city's poor road conditions and ailing infrastructure like water mains and sewers (greater than 40 percent for each issue) as their No. 1 concern. Only 9 percent ranked rail as their primary concern.

So what does our newly elected mayor say he needs to do first? Why, go on a boondoggle trip to Washington, D.C., with an entourage to discuss rail, of course!

It sure sounds like the politicians are continuing to do what they always do -- talk about change to get elected, then revert to the same old "I'll do what I want to do, or what the unions demand, and ignore what the rest of the constituency wants to do."

Gary Stark
Honolulu

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Carlisle on Rail: Feds Still On Board

By *Adrienne LaFrance* | 10/15/2010

Honolulu Mayor Peter Carlisle and other city officials met in Washington D.C. with Federal Transit Administrator Peter Rogoff Friday for a discussion about Honolulu's multibillion dollar [rail transit project](#).

"It was incredibly productive," Carlisle said via phone from his hotel. "It was very encouraging. Peter Rogoff has always been a supporter of the rail program and he's still committed."

Member Content

Rogoff didn't return calls requesting comment about the meeting, but Carlisle said he took down direct quotes from the media-shy administrator to share on his behalf.

"Let me tell you exactly what he said," Carlisle said. "He said he is, quote, anxiously looking forward to moving our rail project along and our interest in it hasn't changed at all, endquote."

Carlisle said the trip was planned by City Council Chairman Todd Apo as a way to demonstrate continuity in the city's support for rail, amid leadership changes. Apo joined Carlisle in meeting with Rogoff, as did City Councilmember Ikaika Anderson and Toru Hamayasu, chief of the city's transportation division. Apo said even though he's resigning from the council to take another job in November, it made sense for him to go.

"Obviously, I've had an integral part in the project, including having met with Administrator Rogoff before," Apo said earlier this week. "This is part of showing the continuum of the city effort, just helping make that bridge."

Carlisle said federal transit officials took note of how quickly he made his way to Washington D.C. after being sworn into office. Carlisle took the oath of office late Monday afternoon and boarded an airplane for Washington on Wednesday.

"I think they were particularly impressed that I ended up there two days after I was sworn in," Carlisle said. "They know how committed I am, simply because I was willing to do that. I can't emphasize enough that a huge part of this effort was Ikaika Anderson and Todd Apo."

Carlisle said federal officials reiterated their funding commitment to Honolulu.

"This is coming from Barack Obama," Carlisle said. "We already know there's \$55 million in the 2011 budget. There is no reason to believe this will be changed."

Honolulu is counting on about \$1.55 billion in total federal backing.

City officials meet monthly with FTA officials — typically in Honolulu offices — on the project's progress. Carlisle said he's confident in the pace it's moving forward, but acknowledges the meticulousness with which the city will have to proceed.

"On (a federal) level, they are all committed to this project," Carlisle said. "But it's very clear that they're looking carefully at the project because of our history and that's been true since the get-go."

Honolulu has a decades-long history of rail projects that are started then ultimately halted before construction. While transit planners continue to prepare for construction, the project is stalled until the governor accepts the final environmental impact statement, an FTA-approved document detailing the rail plan. It appears unlikely Gov. Linda Lingle will accept the document before she leaves office.

Carlisle said he's made his opinion on rail clear since he began campaigning. In D.C., he said, he had the opportunity to show that Honolulu officials are aligned in their support of the rail project.

"You've got the legislative branch of government in the City Council, the executive branch with me, the mayor, and the operations side of things with Toru (Hamayasu)," Carlisle said. "We're all 100 percent in accord that this needs to be done and it needs to be done as soon as possible."

DISCUSSION *What's your take on the city's trip inside the beltway? Join [the conversation](#).*

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Adrienne LaFrance
Honolulu Reporter-Host



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The Rail Divide — Part 4: Slater on Five Best Reasons to Oppose Project

By Cliff Slater | 10/15/2010

This is part of a series of stories examining the decision to build a rail transit line in Honolulu.

- Overview
- Honolulu Hale's view
- Opposing view from Cliff Slater
- The Rail Divide — Part 1: City Claims Evaluated
- The Rail Divide — Part 1: Slater Claims Evaluated
- The Rail Divide — Part 2: Slater Claims Evaluated
- The Rail Divide — Part 2: City Claims Evaluated
- The Rail Divide — Part 3: Slater Claims Evaluated
- The Rail Divide — Part 3: City Claims Evaluated
- The Rail Divide — Part 4: The City on Five Best Reasons to Support Project
- The Rail Divide — Part 4: Slater on Five Best Reasons to Oppose Project



HonoluluTransit.org

Here is the Cliff Slater's verbatim response to the question: What are the five best reasons to support or oppose the project? Please explain each reason.

The five best reasons to oppose the project are a) the Final EIS is not credible, b) the elevated railway costs are too high for a city our size, c) a lack of benefits accruing from it, d) the visual and noise blight that would result, and e) building rail precludes spending on other alternatives.

a) The Final EIS is not credible.

The single most important reason to oppose constructing the rail line at this time is that the material presented in the Final EIS is not credible. Ridership forecasts. In its response to our comments on the Draft EIS, the City says, "Honolulu transit ridership has grown over the past several years ..." This is, of course, nonsense. As can be seen from the graph, ridership peaked in 1984 after being socialized in 1972, and since then it has it ups and downs but is down about five to ten percent.

The Final EIS includes a No Build Alternative "to provide a comparison of what future conditions would be if the [rail] Project was not implemented." In short, this alternative is that we keep on doing what we have been doing.

The City forecasts ridership for the No-Build Alternative as 25 percent greater in 2030 than in 2007. (1992 Final EIS, p. 4-10) It should be noted that the 1992 Final EIS for rail projected a 21 percent increase in the No Build for 2005 and instead experienced a seven percent decrease.

The 2003 Final EIS for the BRT project projected No Build ridership increasing at 1.4 percent annually (FEIS p. 4-11) from 2002 levels of 73.5 million. By 2008 ridership had declined to 69.8 million. The City has withheld reporting its ridership data for 2009 and 2010.

What is most annoying is that PB Americas is fully aware of public transportation's declining market share both locally and nationally. No metro area in the nation has maintained market share over any 20-year period despite vast subsidies spent by federal, state and local governments. Yet PB continues to forecast maintaining or increasing the No-Build market share for Honolulu even though we have had declining market share for nearly 30 years.

Projected energy savings. The Final EIS wants you to assume that there will, of course, be energy savings. This is highly unlikely. There are two kinds of energy usage: That used in rail construction and that used in the daily operation of rail transit.

For daily usage the City is relying on industry averages. When the City relies on industry averages, distorted by some lines heavy mileage and energy efficiency, it provides a totally different result than when the individual transit lines are examined.

The individual lines clearly show that the average rail line has energy usage per passenger mile greater than the 3,514 Btus for the passenger car (source: U.S. Department of Energy Data Book, Table 2.13).

The U.S. Department of Energy has elaborated on this stating,

"Because of the inherent differences in the nature of services, routes available, and many additional factors, the energy intensity of transit rail systems can vary substantially among systems. The charts below show that for 2000, light rail systems varied from 1,600 Btu per passenger-mile to over 8,000 Btu per passenger-mile; energy intensity for heavy rail systems ranged from 2,200 to 6,200 Btu per passenger-mile." U.S. Dept. of Energy: Fact #221: June 17, 2002

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The Final EIS makes no attempt to make the case that the Honolulu line would have energy savings from operations. Its operations would be heavily peaked, with full trains running into town in the morning rush hour, and empty when returning, with the opposite true in the afternoon rush hour. There would be light use during the rest of the day. Such operations rarely lead to energy efficiency; energy savings result from heavy use in both directions as seen in the world's larger rail systems.

In any case the overriding consideration is the energy used in rail's construction. The City details in Table 4-21 of its Final EIS that the rail project will save 396 million British thermal units (BTUs) of energy each day, or 144,540 million BTUs per year. Even if you buy that, Cato Institute's Randal O'Toole points out that page 4-206 of the FEIS says project construction will cost 7.48 trillion BTUs. That means it will take 52 years of savings to pay back the energy cost. Long before 52 years are up, huge energy investments will be needed to replace rail cars, worn out track, and other infrastructure. So there is likely no net energy savings.

Population forecast. We believe the City may have deliberately avoided using the latest state population forecasts, which were available to them in August 2009 and which had significantly lowered the population forecast for 2030. We believe they may also have avoided the tables showing population by age group, which shows that the commuting group, those aged 20-64, declines from 2005 to 2030.

Obviously, totally different ridership and congestion data will result from computer models if both the latest population forecast is used for 2030 together with the age group data.

b) Costs are too high for a city our size.

Metro area	Rail Cost in \$billions	Population	Cost per capita	Population Ranking
Washington DC	\$18.2	5,358,130	\$3,403	9
San Francisco	\$13.3	4,274,531	\$3,107	13
Los Angeles	\$12.3	12,872,808	\$953	2
Honolulu	\$5.3	905,000	\$5,875	55
Atlanta	\$4.2	5,376,285	\$779	8
Dallas	\$3.6	6,300,006	\$565	4
Portland	\$3.0	2,207,462	\$1,345	23
Seattle	\$2.9	3,344,813	\$857	15
Baltimore	\$2.7	2,667,117	\$1,015	20
Miami	\$2.0	5,497,709	\$365	7

The \$5.5 billion cost of rail, before cost overruns, is out of all proportion to any metro area our size given due regard to Oahu's relatively high public transportation ridership and relatively high population density.

The Cato Institute's Randal O'Toole has produced a well-documented list of all urban rail lines, both heavy and light rail, built in the U.S. since World War II together with their capital costs, all shown in 2009 dollars.

This allows us to compare the Honolulu rail proposal's projected costs of \$5.3 billion with those of other U.S. metro areas. Bear in mind that the other cities' costs are actual, whereas Honolulu's is projected and cost overruns for rail projects are the norm with an average of 40.6 percent according to the FTA's own study.

Only three other metro areas have spent more than Honolulu intends to spend. They together with their populations are Washington DC, San Francisco and Los Angeles, all with far greater populations than Honolulu. We have included the nine most expensive metro area rail installations together with Honolulu's. Clearly the outlier is Honolulu with a cost per capita of population nearly double that of the next highest and several times that of the average, and that is before any cost overruns.

The costs for rail are irresponsible, in total and for size of community.

c) Lack of benefits.

The City forecasts that the elevated railway will increase person trips by public transportation from six percent of all trips to seven percent. According to the City, we currently experience 71,800 vehicles hours of delay (VHD) and that will increase if we do nothing (the No-Build Alternative) to 104,700 VHD by 2030. If we build the rail line it will reduce VHD by 2030 to 85,800, an 18 percent reduction from the No-Build but a 20 percent increase from today's level. This is not good enough since the 75 percent of trips by motorists will still result in a 20 percent increase in vehicle delay. The Managed Lane Alternative will do better for both transit users and motorists.

d) Visual and noise blight

At the heart of this issue is that of the environmental harm of an elevated rail transit line thirty feet wide at an average of 35 feet elevation accommodating trains every 11/2 minutes (three minute intervals in both directions) during the peak commuting time and three minutes at other times traversing the entire center of urban Honolulu including the waterfront. The effect of elevated rail on the built environment has not been adequately addressed in the Final EIS. The following requirement that there be discussions about the built environment is not fully addressed.¹

Shall include discussions of ... Urban quality ... and the design of the built environment including the reuse and conservation potential of various alternatives and mitigation measures.

Many environmental organizations have gone on record as being opposed to such an elevated structure. The

following are some quotes from their recent statements on elevated rail:

Outdoor Circle: The lack of specific descriptions of how to overcome the visual misery that will be heaped upon the O'ahu landscape leaves our organization with little confidence that damages to the visual environment can or will be mitigated as the project moves forward ... Of equal concern to The Outdoor Circle is the pending fate of literally hundreds of street trees. Honolulu has fostered a worldwide image of being a city full of beautiful trees. It's an important part of Honolulu's appeal to both residents and visitors ... The Outdoor Circle believes the City has deceived the public about the visual impacts the project will have on our communities and our quality of life.

Historic Hawaii Foundation: The proposed Honolulu Transit Corridor project will have a dramatic impact on the landscape of the island of O'ahu; this includes not only the direct impact to specific parcels, but primarily the visual effect on the landscape and historic resources. HHF is concerned that the Draft EIS does not accurately take into account these larger impacts, but rather focuses on those adverse effects caused by the direct taking of land.

Hawaii's Thousand Friends: Elevated fixed rail routes will negatively impact the established landscape of Honolulu and significant view planes makai to mauka ... The rail line will be the ugly and block views with concrete rail beds 30-foot wide supported by pillars that are 35-40 feet high and six feet in diameter spaced at 150 feet intervals.

Hawaii Architects position: ... the proposed elevated rail structure will block mauka and makai view corridors particularly along Nimitz Highway through historic Chinatown and Downtown ... Elevated rail stations and structures along the waterfront will make a poor situation worse by introducing an additional physical and visual barrier ... We are concerned that the areas below elevated rail structures and stations will become blighted, "nuisance" environments and that the lack of natural public sightlines into stations will diminish safety and security for passengers waiting on platforms. The proposed elevated platforms and concourses will also impede convenient access for both able-bodied and disabled users.

The elevated rail violates the Oahu General Plan, which states, in part, that we must,

Protect Oahu's scenic views, especially those seen from highly developed and heavily traveled areas & Locate roads, highways, and other public facilities and utilities in areas where they will least obstruct important views of the mountains and the sea. There has been inadequate consideration of the detrimental effects of elevated rail. What has happened in other communities that once had an EI, such as New York's 3rd Avenue EI? What are the detrimental impacts of the elevated sections of Miami's Metrorail and San Juan's Tren Urbano? What happened in San Francisco when they removed the Embarcadero Freeway segment?

e) Building rail precludes spending on other alternatives. The costs of rail to local taxpayers will \$4 billion plus cost overruns. This amount, together with the EPA sewer settlement of \$7.2 billion (with inflation and financing), will take all the oxygen out of the air, so to speak. It will not allow real traffic congestion relief allowed by some of the following examples:

Freeway bottleneck relief projects. As an example, the projected widening of H-1 freeway at the Middle Street Merge area could lead to reductions of travel times of up to 20 minutes according to Hawaii DOT's Director Morioka.

Traffic signal optimization. Proper optimization and synchronization of traffic signals together with regular adjustments when sufficient traffic engineers are employed for the work involved could lead a reduction of in-town travel times of 30 percent or more.

Low height underpasses. Traffic in Honolulu can be reduced significantly by constructing a few key low-height underpasses for highly congested intersections. These underpasses have a limited height, usually at least eight feet high that allows for vanpools, automobiles, light to medium sized trucks, and vans to fit, but not taller vehicles. Lower height underpasses are much more compact and therefore easier and cheaper to construct in the limited space of existing intersections. (See Appendix A for greater detail.)

See a copy of Cliff Slater's response to the question, including several tables and charts:

[Slater response to question 2](#)

Question 2. What are the five best reasons to support or oppose the project? Please explain each reason.

The five best reasons to oppose the project are a) the Final EIS is not credible, b) the elevated railway costs are too high for a city our size, c) a lack of benefits accruing from it, d) the visual and noise blight that would result, and e) building rail precludes spending on other alternatives.

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Persons Boarding or Exiting vs. Actual Transit Ridership

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DISCUSSION: *Share your thoughts* about the points raised in this article in our conversation about Honolulu's rail project.

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The Rail Divide — Part 4: The City on Five Best Reasons to Support Project

By City and County of Honolulu | 10/15/2010

This is part of a series of stories examining the decision to build a rail transit line in Honolulu.

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- [The Rail Divide — Part 4: Slater on Five Best Reasons to Oppose Project](#)



HonoluluTransit.org

Here is the City and County's verbatim response to the question: "What are the five best reasons to support or oppose the project? Please explain each reason."

The most significant benefit to the project is addressing its Purpose and Need. As stated in the Final EIS, the Purpose and Need were established with public input in 2005.

Rail transit will deliver:

- **More Mobility.** We need to get from here to there – island-wide. The roads and freeways are often congested, limiting our community's mobility. An elevated rail transit system could move up to 16,000 people per hour without taking away the already limited highway and road space we have now.
- **Better Reliability.** The elevated system will make travel times more predictable for all public transit riders.
- **More Access and Infrastructure for West O'ahu.** It is vital that improved infrastructure is in place to support growth on the west side. It will help focus growth in designated areas, and away from areas where we don't want it – helping "keep the country, country."
- **Fairness and Equity in Transportation.** Rail transit is affordable for families, seniors, and students. Rides will cost the same as TheBus, come with free transfers, and like now, a monthly pass will work system-wide.

Another key benefits of rail are job creation and economic stimulus for Hawaii. Building rail will create about 10,000 jobs, according to the Final EIS.

Rail transit, as part of an overall public-transportation system, is a way to enhance Honolulu's quality of life, by easing traffic congestion, enhancing our economy, reducing pollution, and providing greater mobility for us and future generations.

Finally, the Project is supported by more than 40 business, labor, media and community organizations including: AARP-Hawaii, Aiea Neighborhood Board, Carpenters Union, Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii, Chamber of Commerce of Kapolei, Hawaii Business Roundtable, Hawaii Government Employees Association, Iron Workers Local 625, Leeward Oahu Transportation Management Association, Makakilo/Kapolei/Honokai Hale Neighborhood Board, Mililani Mauka Neighborhood Board, Operating Engineers Local 3, the Pacific Business News, Pacific Resource Partnership, Pearl City Neighborhood Board, Waipahu Neighborhood Board, and West Oahu Economic Development Association, among many.

DISCUSSION: [Share your thoughts about the points raised in this article in our conversation about Honolulu's rail project.](#)

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The Rail Divide — The Five Best Reasons to Support or Oppose the Honolulu Rail Project

By John Temple | 10/15/2010

Mayor Peter Carlisle made it essentially his first order of business to fly off to Washington to meet with federal transportation officials regarding the rail project he inherited.



Honolulutransit.org

Member Content

As much as former Mayor Mufi Hannemann might have wanted to make the \$5.5 billion, 20-mile line from Kapolei to Ala Moana a done deal, questions continue to linger over its financial viability and whether it's the best way to reduce congestion and improve commuting in Honolulu.

Civil Beat just ran a four-part series — [The Rail Divide](#) — on whether the process that culminated in the current city proposal adequately evaluated what would be the most cost-effective transit solution to best serve the largest number of people.

Veteran Honolulu reporter Greg Wiles subjected the responses of Honolulu Hale and project opponent Cliff Slater to rigorous scrutiny.

You can read his analysis here.

- [Overview](#)
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- [The Rail Divide — Part 3: City Claims Evaluated](#)

Our second question was also fundamental: What are the five best reasons to support or oppose the project.

Today, we're publishing the responses in full. Read Slater's [response](#) and Honolulu Hale's [response](#).

But we're going to take a different route in fact checking the claims. We're going to ask you to help, something known as crowdsourcing.

We hope some of you will subject their writing to scrutiny and share with your fellow readers your findings. In any event, given the level of debate still swirling about the project, we believe it may be useful for you to hear directly from the proponent and key opponent so you can make up your own mind.

Summary of the City and County's response: The city's main arguments are that rail is needed to relieve congested roads and freeways, and, the public wants it. The project is supported by more than 40 local business, labor, media and community organizations.

Summary of Cliff Slater's response: The five best reasons to oppose the project are a) the Final EIS is not credible, b) the elevated railway costs are too high for a city our size, c) a lack of benefits accruing from it, d) the visual and noise blight that would result, and e) building rail precludes spending on other alternatives.

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Exclusive: Carlisle Says Rail Construction Could Start In March

Rail Supporters Concerned About EIS Approval

POSTED: 5:15 pm HST October 15, 2010
 UPDATED: 5:31 pm HST October 15, 2010

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- Travel
- Grow Your Business

WASHINGTON -- Honolulu Mayor Peter Carlisle and City Council Chairman Todd Apo met with top federal transit officials in Washington D.C. Friday to show their support for the city's \$5 billion rail transit project.

Just days after being sworn in, Carlisle traveled to Washington with Apo and council Transportation Chairman Ikaika Anderson.

They met Friday morning with the head of the Federal Transit Administration, Peter Rogoff.

"By coming here a scant 72 hours now since I was sworn in, this is our way of saying this is that important for me to be here, rather than back with all of the other jobs and responsibilities of a newly-sworn-in mayor," Carlisle said.

Carlisle told KITV4 News the latest estimate for breaking ground on rail transit is March of next year. He called that an "optimistic estimate." The project has been delayed at least twice before, after an initial groundbreaking set for late 2009 was pushed back to spring of 2010.

"We are committed to rail and we want it for Honolulu and we want it as soon as humanly possible. The sooner the better," Carlisle said.

For the first time, President Barack Obama has included \$55 million for the Honolulu rail transit project in his 2011 federal budget. At least \$60 million in previous federal funds came from budget appropriations inserted by Congress.

The Federal Transit Administration is expected to provide at least \$1.55 billion for the project in total.

City officials said they wanted to assure federal officials that changes in the mayor's office will not derail transit.

"I think everyone that we've met with have understood that there's a high priority in this project, a high level of commitment from a new mayor, and as the council changes, we wanted to express that to them too, that the support for this project will continue," Apo said.

"It's important for us all to be here, because we're going to be having five new members of the City Council. We just now have a new mayor, and we needed, I think, to show the FTA that Honolulu is serious about moving mass transit forward," said Anderson.

That March 2011 groundbreaking estimate is based on whoever is elected the next governor accepting the environmental impact statement fairly soon after taking office Dec. 6.

If Democrat Neil Abercrombie wins the governor's job, rail supporters

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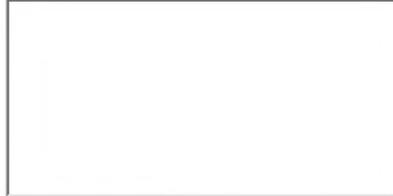
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expect smooth sailing for the EIS. Transit advocates are concerned if Republican Duke Aiona is elected governor, he may put the EIS through a more extensive review, possibly delaying the project once again.

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Honolulu Mayor Peter Carlisle returns from D.C. after lobbying for rail funding



Reported by: [Manolo Morales](#)

Email: mmorales@khon2.com

Last Update: 10/18 9:26 pm

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Honolulu Mayor Peter Carlisle is expressing some optimism over Oahu's proposed \$5 billion rail transit.

He's just returned from Washington D.C. where he lobbied for the project.

Two days after his inauguration last week, Mayor Carlisle flew to the nation's capital and met with the administrator of the Federal Transit Agency. The mayor says the federal government is still ready to back the project with financial support.

"President Obama's 2011 budget includes \$55 million and there's no reason to believe that this will be changed, which means we're good to go," said Carlisle.

More than \$1.5 billion of federal money could be going to the rail project if all goes well. But the mayor says Hawaii's political leaders have to continue to show a strong commitment to pushing mass transit through.

"We have this unfortunate history of getting started with the transit, then stopping and we don't want that to happen again because that will put us completely at the end of the line for heaven knows how long," said Carlisle

The project has been delayed. Right now the governor is still waiting for a third party opinion on the finances of the city project. It's an issue that brought U.S. Senator Dan Inouye to do some public begging two months ago.

"I am begging the governor if everything is in line. Please for the sake of hawaii, sign the paper, I am on my knees, I am really," said Inouye.

Mayor Carlisle says as soon as the city can break ground on the project and actually start spending the money raised from the general excise tax, then federal authorities will be more convinced.

"That's gonna impress them and say hey look, we are now so committed to it that we're spending the money that we've got, and by the end of this fiscal year, we'll already have raised \$400 million," said Carlisle.

When that happens, the mayor says more jobs will be created.



Honolulu Mayor Peter Carlisle returns from D.C. after lobbying for rail funding
Video 1 of 1
All Video



Letters to the Editor

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 18, 2010

New mayor rushing on rail

Immediately after the new mayor was elected he voiced his support for rail and raced off to Washington within the next two days. It would seem to me that a little more reasoned approach when you first come into office would be more prudent.

How could you possibly know all of the financial implications of this massive project without studying the finances after you get into office and dig into the details? Seems too speedy and half-cocked.

Do we need it? Maybe. Can we afford it? Probably not. Can we maintain it? Doubtful.

Jim Quimby
Honolulu

Carlisle: Feds still back rail project

By Star-Advertiser staff

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 19, 2010

The Federal Transit Administration's support of Honolulu's planned \$5.5 billion rail project remains unchanged, Mayor Peter Carlisle said after completing a recent trip to Washington, D.C., to assure officials that his new administration remained committed to completing the project.

Carlisle traveled to Washington last week with City Council members Todd Apo and Ikaika Anderson and Deputy Transportation Director Toru Hamayasu to show a "unified" commitment to the project.

"There were concerns because of Honolulu's unfortunate history of rail projects starting and stopping," Carlisle said through a spokeswoman. "So we wanted to show our commitment to the project and our desire to get it started."

The team met in Washington with FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff.

"Rogoff said he was anxiously looking forward to move our rail project along, and his interest in it hasn't changed at all since the inception of the project," Carlisle said. "Administrator Rogoff also said President Obama's 2011 budget includes \$55 million for this project, and there's no reason to believe this will change."

After being sworn in Oct. 11, Carlisle immediately pledged his support for rail, saying he thought the project could move forward as soon as March.

Groundbreaking still requires the governor to approve the project's final environmental impact statement. Gov. Linda Lingle has said she would not do so until her administration completes an independent review of the project's finances, and final approval likely would rest with the next governor.

Carlisle returned from the four-day trip on Saturday.

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Sandi Yara

Americans view transit as better option than driving

October 21st, 2010 8:49 am HADT

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Here are excerpts from a recent survey that was published in Metro magazine.

Approximately one in four respondents think the most valuable feature of public transportation is:

- that it reduces traffic congestion (28 percent)
- or saves users money (24 percent)
- while about 1 in 7 (13 percent) say it's most valuable feature is the environmental benefit.

Furthermore, nearly nine in 10 (87 percent) Americans who have access to public transportation where they work or live take advantage of it, according to a new survey conducted by [HNTB Corp.](#) (a firm providing architecture, engineering, planning and construction services throughout the country). In addition, almost seven in 10 (69 percent) Americans feel there are many times when public transit is a better option than driving, and nearly three in ten of them choose higher gas prices (29 percent) and convenience (29 percent) as the biggest motivators for riding public transportation.

“Economically viable cities will make transit a priority because they realize they can generate multiple,

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positive economic outcomes with a single investment,” said Elizabeth Rao, chair, public transit services, for HNTB.. “There has never been a better time for cities to build, improve or expand their public transit systems.”

Nearly half (46 percent) of Americans think local, state and federal governments don't spend enough money on public transportation in their area. Almost three in 10 (28 percent) think these governments should rely on a greater share of gas tax to help fund improved public transportation options. Approximately two in 10 think private investors (21 percent) or local sales taxes (20 percent) should be the primary source of public transit funding. Just one in 10 (10 percent) think property taxes are the answer.

To read more about the survey, visit

<http://www.metro-magazine.com/News/Story/2010/10/Survey-Americans-view-transit-as-better-option-than-driving.aspx>

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US Shuns Some Big Public Works Projects

by THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



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Associated Press

FILE - In this Dec. 23, 2008 file photo, traffic at left heads northbound on the Alaskan Way Viaduct, above the southbound lanes below, through downtown Seattle. New Mayor Mike McGinn is threatening to hold up construction of a massive highway tunnel to replace the waterfront's dilapidated, earthquake-damaged Alaskan Way Viaduct because he fears city taxpayers will be on the hook if costs spiral beyond the \$4.2 billion price tag.



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In this Oct. 19, 2010 photo, large rocks protrude from a wall in North Bergen, N.J., at the construction site of the ARC Tunnel. Work on the project has been stopped by New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie.



NEWARK, N.J. October 21, 2010, 06:22 pm ET

text size **A A A**

New Jersey's governor wants to kill a \$9 billion-plus train tunnel to New York City because of runaway costs. Six thousand miles away, Hawaii's outgoing governor is having second thoughts about a proposed \$5.5 billion rail line in Honolulu.

In many of the 48 states in between, infrastructure projects are languishing on the drawing board, awaiting the right mix of creative financing, political arm-twisting and timing to move forward. And a struggling economy and a surge of political candidates opposed to big spending could make it a long wait.

Has the nation that built the Hoover Dam, brought electricity to the rural South and engineered the interstate highway system lost its appetite for big public works projects? At a time when other countries are pouring money into steel and concrete, is the U.S. unwilling to think long-term?

"My sense is things have changed," said Andrew Goetz, a University of Denver professor and an expert on transportation policy. "People now tend to see any project as a waste of money, and that's just wrong."

"I call it the Bridge to Nowhere syndrome," he added. "High-profile projects get publicized and they become a symbol for any infrastructure project that's out there, and even the ones that are justified get tarnished by the same charge."

The so-called Bridge to Nowhere would have cost hundreds of millions of dollars to connect one Alaskan town to an island of 50 residents. It figured in the 2008 presidential election when then-Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin was criticized for initially backing the plan, which was eventually scrapped.



death of a motorist in a ceiling collapse.
Enlarge Associated Press

In this Oct. 19, 2010 photo, a large rusty metal wall is seen in North Bergen, N.J., covering construction at the ARC Tunnel.

of a country dissatisfied with the state of America's aging infrastructure and in favor of improvements, but not necessarily eager to commit the dollars to fix it.

The other cautionary tale of the past few years is Boston's Big Dig, the highway and tunnel project that was originally envisioned at less than \$3 billion and wound up costing nearly \$15 billion.

to get to and from Boston's airport, and it eliminated a shadow over some of the city's neighborhoods. But disruption and shoddy workmanship that resulted in the

Standing in New York's Penn Station on Thursday in front of a sign touting the proposed tunnel, commuter Bill Mischell of Plainsboro, N.J., gave voice to those conclusions.

"You could make the argument that it will make New Jersey a better place to live, but you also have to weigh it impartially against the huge cost," Mischell said. "The state's in pretty significant financial trouble, and the money's got to come from somewhere."

Infrastructure spending in the U.S. stands at 2 percent of the country's gross domestic product— half what it was in 1960 — compared with approximately 9 percent in China and 5 percent for Europe, according to the government report.

"During recessions it is common for state and local governments to cut back on capital projects — such as building schools, roads and parks — in order to meet balanced budget requirements," the report concluded. "However, the need for improved and expanded infrastructure is just as great during a downturn as it is during a boom."

The American Society of Civil Engineers calculates that the U.S. would need to spend an additional \$1.1 trillion over the next five years to restore roads, bridges, dams, levees and other infrastructure to good condition. In its latest report card, the engineering society gave the nation's public works a "D" grade.

"Somehow we believe if we ignore it, it will go away," said Blaine Leonard, the society's president. "And it won't. We have to stop hitting the snooze button on this problem."

He said now is a good time to spend money on infrastructure because construction companies in this weak economy are hungry for work and the costs are relatively low as a result.

Major infrastructure projects of the past benefited from strong leadership, notably the interstate highway system pushed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in the 1950s, he said. Today, though, "there isn't any high-level leadership about infrastructure," so there's no agreement about priorities, Leonard said.

CG/LA Infrastructure LLC, a Washington consulting firm, recently put together a list of the worthiest 100 large infrastructure projects in North America, totaling about \$400 billion. Among the suggestions: a

next-generation air traffic control system; high-speed rail linking Minneapolis, Milwaukee and Chicago; a pair of highway projects in Texas; and the tunnel that New Jersey's governor has threatened to scuttle.

To be sure, there are large-scale projects under way, notably in California, where a combination of federal dollars and voter-approved bonds and local tax increases are funding improvements, from highway widening to the \$6.2 billion renovation of the Bay Bridge between San Francisco and Oakland. And this week, Arizona and Nevada hailed the opening of a \$240 million bridge that bypasses Hoover Dam.

However, many projects recently completed or in the pipeline secured funding before the economy went into a slide. Some of them might not be approved today.

In New Jersey, construction on a rail tunnel connecting New Jersey and New York City — the largest transportation project under way in the U.S. — began in 2009 under then-Gov. Jon Corzine, a Democrat. It is projected to double train capacity at peak times as well as provide 6,000 construction jobs immediately and up to 40,000 jobs after its completion in 2018. About \$6 billion of the cost is being covered by the federal government and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

Earlier this month, Republican Gov. Chris Christie announced he was pulling the plug because the cost had escalated from \$5 billion in 2005 to more than \$9 billion by the federal government's estimate, and as much as \$14 billion by Christie's reckoning.

"I simply cannot put the taxpayers of the state of New Jersey on what would be a never-ending hook," he said.

Christie later agreed to reconsider. The two-week review period expires Friday.

In Hawaii, Republican Gov. Linda Lingle announced recently that she wouldn't sign off on a federally subsidized rail line until an updated economic study is conducted. And that may not be completed before she leaves office in less than two months. That means the project's fate could be in her successor's hands.

In Seattle, new Mayor Mike McGinn is threatening to hold up construction of a massive highway tunnel to replace the waterfront's dilapidated, earthquake-damaged Alaskan Way Viaduct because he fears city taxpayers will be on the hook if costs spiral beyond the \$4.2 billion price tag.

"The issue of the overall cost of the tunnel has been a concern to voters since before the recession, and I think the severity of the state's and the city's fiscal situation is causing people to take a harder look at ... an expensive and risky project," McGinn said.

In Wisconsin, Ohio and California, Republican candidates for governor have vowed they won't endorse high-speed rail projects, despite the promise of billions of dollars from Washington.

Other countries are spending heavily on job-creating infrastructure. Projects include Algeria's \$11.2 billion east-west highway; a planned \$10 billion bridge linking the Indonesian islands of Java and Sumatra; and China's \$60 billion Yangtze River diversion project.

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City Asks Voters: Have a HART?

By [Adrienne LaFrance](#) | 10/22/2010

Voters' decisions on six charter amendment questions will shape the way Honolulu manages its operations. The first ballot question has generated the most attention because it pertains to the city's [rail transit plan](#).

The amendment would create a semi-autonomous agency that would have the power to set fares, buy and sell land, make contracts and issue revenue bonds pertaining to the rail project. Critics argue that the agency would have too much independence from the City Council.

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Here's what you'll read when you vote:

"Shall the Revised City Charter be amended to create a semi-autonomous public transit authority responsible for the planning, construction, operation, maintenance, and expansion of the City's fixed guideway mass transit system?"

As listed in the question, above, the Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation (HART) would be responsible for:

- Planning
- Construction
- Operation
- Maintenance
- Expansion

It's a straightforward list that carries with it some serious and complex responsibilities.

As it stands, the city's director of the transportation services department, Wayne Yoshioka, is charged with supervising transportation systems in that capacity.

If passed, this charter amendment would transfer those directorial duties to a 10-member transit authority board, and any staffers currently in the department's rapid transit division would instead work for HART.

"It is configured in a way so that the rapid transit division would not be part of my department any more," Yoshioka said. "I think it's a good thing. My department would get smaller, and it allows (transit division staffers) to focus on their primary activity, which would be to build the rail."

Yoshioka said the separation from the rest of the department would make it easy for the public to track costs and spending on rail.

"As a semi-autonomous authority, the finances are isolated," Yoshioksa said. "They're not mixed in with everything else."

But transit division finances are already parsed out in Yoshioka's departmental budget: "Every single line in the budget, how much we spend on office supplies and everything," he said.

It appears one of the most significant changes would be the City Council's involvement. Specifically, the transit authority would make and execute contracts and labor agreements. It would be able to enter into agreements with public and private agencies as it sees fit.

HART would also establish all fares, fees and charges for the rail line. It would oversee and manage all financial accounts pertaining to the line, and develop corresponding operating and capital budgets each year.

"I always thought the transit authority was alright, and I voted for it, but we're talking about very large sums of money," said Honolulu City Councilmember Ann Kobayashi, who is a vocal rail skeptic. "This is the largest project ever, and I worry about transparency."

The new agency would still have to filter some of its decisions through the City Council. For example, it would have the power to purchase land for the rail line after notifying the council. The City Council would have 45 days to draft and approve a resolution objecting to the property acquisition, if it chooses.

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Adrienne LaFrance
Honolulu Reporter-Host



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The authority may also recommend to the City Council the sale of real property — all proceeds would go to the authority, to be used on the rail line. Further, it would be responsible for promoting transit-oriented development projects near the fixed guideway system. The agency's purview would not extend beyond the rail project — for example, oversight of TheBus — without another charter amendment.

The authority would be charged with seeking federal assistance through grants, and would be allowed to issue revenue bonds, subject to council approval.

"I think elected officials want accountability, especially with a visible project like this," Yoshioka said. "They want to help but they get too much involved maybe. With (a transit authority), there's less detail to the council but all that detail shows up in the annual report but it's not intermingled with everything."

At least one city councilmember said the distance from the council that a semi-autonomous agency promises worries her.

"Whenever we spend taxpayers' money, then there should always be a check and balances," City Councilmember Ann Kobayashi said. "Because now the transit fund is still in the city budget, which goes through the City Council. There's that check and balance. But the letting of the contracts and how the money's being spent would be decided by the transit authority. And it always comes down to who the people on the board are."

Driving the Train

HART would be made up of 10 board members — nine voting members and one non-voting member — as follows:

- State Department of Transportation director
- City Department of Transportation Services director
- City Department of Planning and Permitting director (non-voting member)
- Board member appointed by mayor
- Board member appointed by mayor
- Board member appointed by mayor
- Board member appointed by City Council
- Board member appointed by City Council
- Board member appointed by City Council
- A tenth board member will be appointed by the eight voting board members

The board would choose its own executive director, and would have the right to remove that person after appointing him or her. Board members would be required to file an annual performance evaluation to the mayor and the City Council about its executive director, and about the authority's overall activities. All board members would be considered part-time staffers.

If Honolulu voters opt for the creation of a transit authority, one of its first tasks will be to develop a six-year capital program. That has to happen within the first six months of the authority's existence.

It's a lot of responsibility for 10 people, but there are external checks and balances built into the charter amendment. In addition to required annual reports filed by the authority, an annual financial evaluation by a certified public accountant — paid with the authority's funds — would also be mandatory.

But anytime the agency would want to expand the rail line — or make alterations to the line as it's planned thus far — the charter question specifies that the authority must seek council approval for "any new alignment, extension or addition to the fixed guideway system."

Comparisons with the Honolulu Board of Water Supply

Yoshioka said the authority would operate much like the semi-autonomous Honolulu Board of Water Supply, which split off from what was then the city's Sewer and Water Commission in 1929.

Kobayashi said, even with these checks and balances built in, comparisons to the Board of Water Supply maker her nervous.

"The Board of Water Supply, I don't know what goes on there because a lot of what they do doesn't need Council approval or public hearings," Kobayashi said.

The Board of Water Supply does have public meetings, though, and some open records.

"The biggest difference (compared to city agencies) is that we are financially self-sufficient because we rely not on taxpayer dollars but water rates that we charge," Board of Water Supply spokesman Kurt Tsu said. "Our operations are financed by the revenues we generate through fees, and federal and state grants. That's the primary difference. We do work very closely with the city in our operations."

Tsu said he's "not aware," of any downside to — or complaints about — the Board of Water Supply's semi-autonomy. City officials associated with the rail project are similarly optimistic about the vision for HART.

City officials aren't allowed to advocate or lobby for the creation of the authority, but many of them say it's a natural move given that many cities with rail systems oversee them in a similar capacity. Kobayashi challenges that assumption.

"Other transit authorities around the country are there because they (have transit systems that) go between jurisdictions, different counties or even between states," Kobayashi said. "But here, we're only going 20 miles."

DISCUSSION *Do you think the city should create a transit authority? [Join the conversation about rail in Honolulu.](#)*

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Road to Nowhere: Infrastructure projects in U.S. stalled by spending concerns

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By Palash R. Ghosh | October 22, 2010 20:26 GMT

Large-scale infrastructure projects seem to be mushrooming across the planet, but in the U.S., a massive wave of opposition to spending has seriously hurt the likelihood of much-needed improvements in roads, railways, seaports and airports.



Reporters stand near portion of ceiling which collapsed inside Big Dig tunnel in South Boston

The American Society of Civil Engineers recently estimated that a \$1.6-trillion investment will be required over the next five years just to bring the civil infrastructure in the U.S. to a "standard" level.

However, under the crushing weight of a weak economy, heavy debt loads and budget deficits, cash-strapped state and municipal governments simply lack the political will to commit billions of dollars into building (or re-building) roads, bridges, and ports – even if such schemes would create thousands of desperately-needed jobs overnight.

For example, the Governor of [New Jersey](#), Chris Christie, just decided to scrap – although is now reportedly reconsidering – a plan to construct a rail tunnel between his state and [New York City](#). The project was expected to provide 6,000 construction jobs immediately and up to 40,000 jobs after completion in the year 2018.

But the estimated costs of the project escalated from \$5-billion just five years ago to more than \$14-billion (by Christie's own

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"I simply cannot put the taxpayers of the state of [New Jersey](#) on what would be a never-ending hook," he said.

The new Mayor of Seattle, Wash., Mike McGinn, has vowed to delay the construction of a highway tunnel because he is worried the final cost will greatly exceed the current \$4.2-billion estimate.

"The issue of the overall cost of the tunnel has been a concern to voters since

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before the recession, and I think the severity of the state's and the city's fiscal situation is causing people to take a harder look at... an expensive and risky project," McGinn said.

Similarly, a planned \$5.5-billion railway project in Honolulu, Hawaii is in limbo after outgoing Governor Linda Lingle said she would not approve the project's final environmental impact statement until her administration completed an independent review of the project's finances. (The new Mayor of Honolulu Peter Carlisle, however, supports the rail project).

Andrew R. Goetz, professor of geography at The University of Denver in Colorado, explains that in addition to uneasiness about the amounts of money involved in upgrading infrastructure, both the public and politicians may have soured on the notion of such projects because of the debacles associated with two high-profile cases: the "Bridge to Nowhere" in Alaska and the infamous "Big Dig" in Boston.

The "Bridge to Nowhere" was scheduled to connect the town of Ketchikan, Alaska with Gravina Island, an island with only 50 inhabitants (at a cost of almost \$400-million). Outrage over the proposed expenditures for such a dubious project killed it (although the state of Alaska eventually received the money for other uses).

The "Big Dig" (which was a highly useful and practical project to build a highway and tunnel to and from Boston's Logan Airport) nonetheless saw its costs ultimately balloon up to nearly \$15-billion from an originally planned \$3-billion. The project became a huge fiasco, and involved accusations of corruption, delays, poor workmanship and, most tragically, the death of a motorist.

"These extreme cases distort the public's perception of infrastructure projects," Goetz said.

"While they are rightfully concerned about wasteful spending – especially in the current climate of fiscal restraint -- we have huge backlog of legitimate, worthwhile, necessary and important projects that will likely not get funded."

Apparently, the American public wants better roads, railways, seaports and airports, but they're not in mood to pay for it.

Indeed, according to a recent report from The Department of the Treasury with the Council of Economic Advisers, infrastructure spending in the U.S. amounts to only about 2 percent of the country's gross domestic product, versus figures of about 9 percent in [China](#) and 5 percent for Europe.

In foreign countries, the scenario is dramatically different.

Great Britain plans to spend \$45-billion to develop a high-speed train service between London and Birmingham; [Japan](#) has committed \$70-billion to construct a Tokyo-Osaka highway. Just today, Indonesia received \$52.9-billion of investment commitments from [Japan](#) over the next fifteen years to develop the country's infrastructure.

[China](#) is probably the infrastructure titan.

In fact, the Chinese are expected to spend an estimated \$300 billion to have a national high-speed rail system in place by 2020. The country has already finished the fastest high-speed rail line in the world, connecting the megacities of Wuhan and Guangzhou.

Another high-speed rail line, running between Shanghai and Beijing, is expected to be completed in 2011.

China is also spending multi-billions to build a south-to-north water diversion project from the Yangtze river to drought-stricken cities like Beijing and Tianjin.

"China sees infrastructure spending as a critical part of driving its huge economic engine," Goetz noted. "They are spending heavily in roads, airports, waterways, etc,

Goetz points out that the type of government China has (and its buoyant economy) makes spending money on infrastructure a no-brainer.

"Capital spending is not a worry for them," he said. "And obviously, their [totalitarian] government

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means that any decision it makes will face muted or nonexistent opposition.”

For example, in the U.S., a major construction project would face a multitude of steps and obstacles like environmental reviews and issue of eminent domain and private property. In China, such things are unknown.

Also, the [European Union](#) is in the midst of a massive multi-year program to construct dozens of ambitious projects under its “TEN-T” umbrella, including the Brenner pass linking Austria and Italy.

“Despite Europe’s ongoing budget deficit problems, their infrastructure spending is already built into their taxing/funding mechanisms,” Goetz said. “It’s a very high priority for them.”

Over the summer President Obama announced an infrastructure plan that will include a \$50 billion initial investment connected to a six-year reauthorization of the surface transportation program and the creation of a National Infrastructure Bank to leverage private capital and select projects.

How much of this proposed plan will come to fruition remains unknown, given the political uncertainties surrounding the issue.

Proponents of upgraded infrastructure point to its short-term beneficial effects (i.e., jobs, especially in the beleaguered construction industry); and long-term positive effects (a more cost-efficient transportation system crucial to a growing economy).

In a recent research piece by economists Ethan Pollack and Rebecca Thiess for the Economics Policy Institute, investments in U.S. transportation infrastructure -- particularly in public transit and railways -- would create hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of new well-paying jobs for an economy in dire need of employment growth.

Specifically, they stated, an annual investment of \$27.3-billion over six years into public transit capital would support 15,554 direct and indirect jobs for each billion dollars of transportation investment (or 2.5 million jobs from the entire proposal).

“Of those jobs, this funding scenario would generate 403,961 direct and indirect jobs specifically in the manufacturing sector,” the report stated.

“It should also be noted that this does not represent the full job impact of such investments, as it does not include jobs created from the re-spending of new employees’ incomes back into the economy.”

Pollack and Thiess that such newly-created jobs would most benefit the lower and middle-classes, i.e., those hit hardest by the recession.

“Over half of the jobs would go to those with a high school education or less,” they said. “Yet these jobs are well-paying, with only 15 percent falling in the bottom wage quintile, and over two-thirds falling in the middle three quintiles. This funding scenario also supports a higher share of unionized jobs (50 percent more than the overall economy), which often translates into higher benefits and greater job security.”

In an alternate scenario, Pollack and Thiess posited that investing \$30 billion into public transit capital and \$10 billion into intercity/high-speed rail annually for six years would support 15,524 direct and indirect jobs for each billion dollars invested (or 3.7 million jobs for the entire proposal). Of those jobs, this funding scenario would generate 605,352 direct and indirect jobs specifically in manufacturing.”

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Letters to the Editor

For Sunday, October 24, 2010

City transit authority should be rejected

Why do we need a transit authority to run the rail? The city already has a transportation department that can do this. An unelected layer of bureaucrats is unnecessary and deflects the job of running the rail from the City Council and the mayor.

Since the Council voted for the project and the mayor seems to be a big supporter, they should shoulder the responsibility of seeing this thing through. We the people need to hold them accountable. The last thing we need is a shield between the people and their elected officials. I say vote "No" on the transit authority.

Susan Yonaoshi
Honolulu

'Yes' to transit authority

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 24, 2010



HONOLULU RAIL TRANSIT PROJECT

For 40 years, rail transit for Oahu has been debated, studied, rejected, planned for, planned against, anguished over, voted on and finally approved. Now comes the hard part.

Barring extraordinary circumstances, work on Hawaii's biggest public works project -- a 20-mile, \$5.5 billion guideway that will change the way Oahu residents commute between Kapolei and downtown -- will proceed. And Honolulu voters have a chance to decide how this massive project will be managed.

Question No. 1 on the Nov. 2 ballot reads, "Shall the revised City Charter be amended to create a semi-autonomous public transit authority responsible for the planning, construction, operation, maintenance, and expansion of the city's fixed guideway mass transit system?"

Voters should choose "Yes."

The engineering, design and construction challenges will be unprecedented for Hawaii. The rail system will

traverse, literally and figuratively, a landscape fraught with political landmines: vacant farmland on the Leeward side, urban areas now occupied by homes and businesses, potential iwi burial sites in Kakaako.

A transit authority, with its semi-autonomy and singular focus, can respond to these inevitable hurdles far more efficiently than the current management structure, without eliminating reasonable safeguards for transparency and public input. Among its key components:

ON THE WEB

» Last week's general election endorsements -- including [governor](#), [Congress](#), [OHA](#) and [school board](#). For more on all candidates and the Nov. 2 election, click on the website's "VOTE 2010" election guide icon.

» To view candidates on video, see www.olelo.org/whatson_vote_cif.htm.

» Leadership: The authority would be overseen by a 10-member board of directors including the state director of transportation, the city director of transportation services, three members selected by the City Council and three by the mayor, plus a ninth member selected by the first eight; the 10th member would be the city director of the Department of Planning and Permitting, who would not have a vote.

» Management: An executive director, appointed by the

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board, and supporting staff -- mostly the city employees already working on rail -- would comprise the front lines of the transit authority.

For more information, go online to www.honoluluelections.org and click on the "2010 Proposed Charter Amendment" link.

» General powers: The authority could obtain property needed for the rail project, including condemning property through eminent domain, provided the City Council does not act within 45 days to stop it. The authority could also make and execute contracts, issue revenue bonds with Council approval, set fares and otherwise handle all aspects of the construction and management of the rail system.

The authority would not have unlimited powers. The City Council would have to approve the authority's budgets, its eminent domain decisions and bond sales. Public hearings would be required for the authority's budget and fare adjustments. The authority's accounts and financial status would be audited every year.

Even so, accountability is a concern. A project this size must invite scrutiny of how the billions of dollars are spent. Elected officials may find it tempting to hide behind the authority's quasi-autonomous status to avoid taking responsibility for the inevitable problems that arise. Those who run the authority, the elected officials who ultimately oversee them and the private contractors and unions who contract with them should expect and welcome full public disclosure of the authority's activities. With that understanding, Oahu voters should approve creation of the transit authority.

Other City Charter amendment questions of interest to Honolulu voters include:

Question 2: This tightening of conflict-of-interest rules would restrict a newly appointed city department head's ability to make decisions using information gained from that person's previous employer.

Question 3: This is an attempt to strengthen the Liquor Commission's oversight, giving it more authority to hire or fire its administrator and deputy administrator.

Question 4: This clarifies inconsistent language in rules governing the public initiative process for creating new city ordinances.

Question 5: This would liberalize the city's rules in disposing of personal property.

Question 6: This would create a city office of housing to address affordable, senior and special needs housing and homelessness. The Star-Advertiser has endorsed [this amendment](#).

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Have the Bridges to Nowhere killed our will to think big?

Published: Monday, October 25, 2010, 12:32 AM Updated: Monday, October 25, 2010, 7:20 AM

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New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie wants to kill a \$9 billion-plus train tunnel to New York City because of runaway costs. Six thousand miles away, Hawaii's outgoing governor is having second thoughts about a proposed \$5.5 billion rail line in Honolulu.

In many of the 48 states in between, infrastructure projects are languishing on the drawing board, awaiting the right mix of creative financing, political arm-twisting and timing to move forward. And a struggling economy and a surge of political candidates opposed to big spending could make it a long wait.

Has the nation that built the Hoover Dam, brought electricity to the rural South and engineered the interstate



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AP File Photo

In 2008, Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann points to a graphic that shows the newly proposed rail transit station at the Honolulu International Airport during a news conference. Republican Gov. Linda Lingle announced recently that she wouldn't sign off on the federally subsidized rail line until an updated economic study is conducted.

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highway system lost its appetite for big public works projects?

At a time when other countries are pouring money into steel and concrete, is the U.S. unwilling to think long-term?

"My sense is things have changed," said Andrew Goetz, a University of Denver professor and an expert on transportation policy. **"People now tend to see any project as a waste of money, and that's just wrong."**

"I call it the Bridge to Nowhere syndrome," he added. **"High-profile projects get publicized and they become a symbol for any infrastructure project that's out there, and even the ones that are justified get tarnished by the same charge."**

The **American Society of Civil Engineers** calculates that the U.S. would need to spend an additional \$1.1 trillion over the next five years to restore roads, bridges, dams, levees and other infrastructure to good condition. In its latest report card, the engineering society gave the nation's public works a "D" grade.

"Somehow we believe if we ignore it, it will go away," said Blaine Leonard, the society's president. **"And it won't. We have to stop hitting the snooze button on this problem."**

In New Jersey, construction on a rail tunnel connecting New Jersey and New York City — the largest transportation project under way

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in the U.S. — began in 2009 under then-Gov. Jon Corzine, a Democrat. It is projected to double train capacity at peak times as well as provide 6,000 construction jobs immediately and up to 40,000 jobs after its completion in 2018.

About \$6 billion of the cost is being covered by the federal government and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

Earlier this month, Christie announced he was pulling the plug because the cost had escalated from \$5 billion in 2005 to more than \$9 billion by the federal government's estimate, and as much as \$14 billion by Christie's reckoning.

"I simply cannot put the taxpayers of the state of New Jersey on what would be a never-ending hook," he said, although he is reconsidering.

In the U.S., it often takes a catastrophe to give infrastructure improvements more urgency. The Minneapolis bridge collapse in 2007 that killed 13 people prompted reviews of aging bridges around the country.

"Unfortunately, our attention span is short," Leonard said. **"You would think the Minneapolis bridge collapse would have sent repercussions throughout the system that would have resulted in a transportation funding bill, but it didn't. Even bridge funding bills didn't get through Congress."**

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Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project

The City and County of Honolulu plans to build a \$5.5 billion elevated rapid-transit line that will cover 20 miles from east Kapolei to Ala Moana Center. The proposed route, pending approval from the Federal Transit Administration, passes through Ewa, Waipahu, Pearl City, Aiea, Kalihi, downtown Honolulu and Kakaako. Since release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement in November 2008, the city has made a route adjustment to bring a stop near the Honolulu International Airport into federal compliance. The proposed route is scheduled for completion by 2019. Future plans call for eventually extending the line to the University of Hawaii-Manoa and Waikiki.

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The Final Environmental Impact Statement for the project was released in June 2010. This followed adjustments to the route after the Federal Aviation Administration noted that the proposed train passed too close to the Honolulu International Airport runway. The route adjustment cleared the way for the city to submit the final Environmental Impact Statement to the Federal Transit Administration. Now that the final EIS has been released, the city can present both the FTA and Gov. [Linda Lingle](#) with a financial statement to demonstrate whether Honolulu can not only pay for construction, but also operations and maintenance once the rail line is open.

A number of steps remain before construction could begin, including an almost inevitable lawsuit by opponents. Although former Mayor [Mufi Hannemann](#) pushed the project through to completion of the Final EIS, the fate of the rail project will be decided by a new mayor, who could replace the department heads currently overseeing the rail line. Because of term limits, a new governor will also take office in December 2010 and at least four City Council seats will change hands in January 2011.

The city considered four options before settling on a steel wheel on steel rail system, which has received city, state and federal support. During the 2008 general election, 50.6 percent of Honolulu voters said yes to the charter amendment question: "Shall the powers, duties, and functions of the city, through its director of transportation services, include establishment of a steel wheel on steel rail transit system?"

The rail issue was so divisive during the election that more people voted down the steel-on-steel technology (140,818) than voted for anti-rail mayoral candidate, now-Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi. Kobayashi received 128,798 votes.

The project continues to have vocal detractors, however, who have called for [alternatives](#), such as high occupancy toll lanes with prioritized bus rapid transit or even nothing at all.

The city's proposed route would include 21 ADA-compliant rail stations that will have escalators, elevators, stairs and platforms level with the trains' floors. Not every station will have parking, but the rail system is intended to work in concert with TheBus, allowing for easy transfer between the two.

Route

The initial Honolulu rail line is proposed to run 20 miles from east Kapolei, near the University of Hawaii-West Oahu campus, to Ala Moana Center. Along the way, it would pass Waipahu, Leeward Community College, Pearl City, Pearlridge, Aloha Stadium, Salt Lake, Kalihi, Honolulu Community College, downtown Honolulu and Kakaako. Extensions are also planned. One extension would go from Ala Moana Center to the University of Hawaii-Manoa campus, as well as Waikiki. Other proposed extensions would lead west through Kapolei and to Kalaeloa.

The route proposed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement released in June 2010 would require the acquisition of 160 acres. Previous estimates for [acquisition](#) ranged from 183 to 267 acres. Nearly 200 parcels would be impacted, with 40 being fully acquired and another 159 being partially acquired. On those parcels, 20 residences, 67 businesses and one church are slated to be displaced and relocated.

The city has notified landowners slated to be impacted by the right-of-way acquisitions of their rights, but appraisals for fair market value and compensation negotiations cannot start until the project is given a final green light in the form of a federal record of decision. At that point, some landowners and their tenants will begin receiving 90-day notices to vacate, and will be assisted with relocations under the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act. The Federal Highway Administration has published informational brochures on [acquiring real property and displacement and relocation](#).

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The route will also have visual impacts. Some trees will have to be cut down and some ocean and mountain views will be altered by the elevated tracks. The American Institutes of Architects Honolulu Chapter has posted simulations of [what an elevated rail line would look like](#) in downtown Honolulu.

History

The current rail proposal isn't Oahu's first. The idea has been considered for 40 years. In 1967, the Oahu Transportation Study recommended a fixed guideway from Pearl City to Hawaii Kai, which then-Mayor Neal Blaisdell pursued. In the 1970s, then-Mayor Frank Fasi inherited the project and received federal money for the Honolulu Area Rapid Transit (HART) project, a fixed guideway that would connect Aloha Stadium and Kahala Mall. However, Fasi's defeat to Eileen Anderson in the 1980 election put his rail plans on hold. Fasi would regain the mayoral seat and, with support from the Gov. John Waihee administration, receive Congressional approval for \$618 million in federal funding for HART. The plan called for a 0.5 percent general excise tax increase to cover the remainder of the project costs, but in 1992 the city council voted down the tax increase in a 5-4 vote, killing the plan.

In 2003, rail came up again, this time as a light rail proposal from then-state Sen. President Robert Bunda, (D-21, Mililani Mauka, Wahiawa, Haleiwa, Mokuleia, North Shore). Gov. [Linda Lingle](#), a Republican, that year also proposed light rail in West Oahu and an elevated Nimitz "flyover" highway. She ended up dropping both plans due to her party's opposition to the projects, which would have required tax increases for funding.

Two years later, however, both the city and state agreed to work together on a rail proposal. In 2005, the state legislature passed a GET surcharge, which Lingle allowed to pass into law without her signature. This time the city council approved the tax increase.

In 2008, the city, state, Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and voters approved the start of a steel-wheel-on-steel-rail system. The project's groundbreaking was scheduled for December 2009, but has been delayed because the FTA has yet to approve a Final Environmental Impact Statement. In April, the city announced it had adjusted a portion of the route near the airport so it would no longer encroach on the airport runway protected zone.

Although the FTA has approved the final EIS, other factors could hold up the project. Lingle has said she wants to do a thorough [analysis](#) of the updated financial plan, which could take up to three months.

Lingle's analysis is not included in the city's current [timetable](#), which calls for FTA approval and groundbreaking in 2010 and the first segment from East Kapolei to Pearl Highlands to be completed and opened in 2012. The other segments are scheduled for completion by 2017, in three phases:

- Pearl Highlands to Aloha Stadium
- Aloha Stadium to Middle Street
- Middle Street to Ala Moana Center

The entire project is scheduled for completion in 2019.

Financing

Honolulu's \$5.5 billion rail project will be funded by a combination of city, state and federal funds. The city has already set aside \$250 million in tax revenue for the project and anticipates receiving a total of [\\$1.55 billion in federal funding](#). So far, Congress has appropriated \$65 million for the project over three years and another \$50 million was included in this year's budget. Hannemann said the remainder of the [federal funding](#) for the project is slated by the end of fiscal year 2011, but that is subject to approval of the environmental impact statement and financial plan.

President Barack Obama has included an additional \$55 million for the project in his executive budget for fiscal year 2011. This particular funding installment is a part of the Federal Transit Administration's New Starts program. FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff said in February that the FTA expects Honolulu to be signed on for the full funding of \$1.55 billion by the end of the 2011 federal fiscal year. Federal funds, once appropriated, are available for two years. Therefore, the \$30 million in fiscal year 2010 funds is available through September 30, 2012.

The [one-half percent general excise tax surcharge](#) dedicated in 2007 to fund the bulk of the rail system has produced lower than anticipated revenues. City officials have pointed out that while revenues have dropped during the economic downturn, including a \$27.1 million shortfall last year, the projections are based on the surcharge being spread out over 16 years. After the city dropped rail tax revenue projections from \$198 to \$164 million in fiscal year 2010, the state [Council on Revenues](#) reported in March that GET collection had been even lower than expected. As a result, with only four months until the fiscal year ended June 30, the city had only collected \$104 million.

A breakdown of the estimated \$5.5 billion costs are as follows, according to an October 2009 Federal Transit Administration memo:

- Guideway and Trackwork: \$1.7 billion
- Stations, stops, terminals: \$389 million

- Support facilities: \$138 million
- Site work/Special conditions: \$895 million
- Systems: \$311 million
- Right-of-way, land, improvements: \$129 million
- Vehicles: \$399 million
- Professional services: \$934 million
- Contingency: \$184 million
- Finance charges: \$290 million

Gov. [Linda Lingle](#), who will have to [sign off](#) on the project, has called for an analysis of the updated financial projections to determine the economic viability of the project.

Technology

The Honolulu Rail system will use steel-wheel technology. In February 2008, an independent [panel of transportation experts](#) appointed by the administration and city council recommended steel-on-steel as the best long-term and most cost-effective solution. The panel cited benefits that include higher passenger capacity, better ride quality, better energy efficiency and lower noise and air-quality impacts.

The independent technology selection panel had five members:

- Chairman Ron Tober, former manager of several transit authorities
- Steve Barsony, a systems engineering expert
- Kenneth G. Knight, a construction expert
- Henry Kolesar, an operations expert
- [Panos Prevedouros](#), a professor of Traffic and Transportation Engineering at the University of Hawaii-Manoa.

Prevedouros, who jumped into the 2008 mayoral race and campaigned against rail, was the only dissenting vote. Prevedouros supported [rubber tire technology](#), citing the advantage of it being a lighter weight system with a lower price tag.

The panel had compared the steel-wheel on steel-track system to rubber tire on concrete, monorail and magnetic levitation technology.

The decision to move to rail came just a couple years after the city abandoned plans for a bus rapid transit system in urban Honolulu, due in part to concerns that dedicated bus lanes would create more congestion rather than help it. The city considered other alternatives, such as elevated high-occupancy toll roads, as well.

Honolulu follows several cities in selecting a fixed rail system — Charlotte, Houston, Los Angeles, Phoenix, Sacramento and San Jose have all built light rail systems since 2003. However, the American Institute of Architects Honolulu Chapter pointed out that most of those routes operate at ground level, rather than the elevated line proposed for Honolulu.

The architects' group supports light rail, but in a [flexible system](#) combining elevated and at-grade tracks, with the route at ground level through the urban core.

Impacts

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Honolulu rail project looked at the traffic corridor from Kapolei to Manoa and drew conclusions based on more residents and job sites moving toward West Oahu through 2030.

Currently, 63 percent of Oahu's population and 81 percent of employment is located in the designated transit corridor. The planning documents looked at a narrow 23-mile strip bounded by the Waianae and Koolau mountain ranges and the Pacific Ocean. The corridor includes most of West Oahu, including many new and upcoming suburban developments and the "second city" of Kapolei, as well as the business district and Waikiki. By 2030, the population living in the area is expected to increase to 69 percent, along with 84 percent of jobs. If those projections are correct, along with the expectation that 95,000 commuters will ride a train on a daily basis, the city predicts future traffic congestion will be reduced by 20 percent instead of steadily increasing as more people and businesses move toward West Oahu.

Ridership

In 2007, about 73 percent of more than 2 million daily trips on Oahu originated between Kapolei and Waikiki, including about 350,000 trips during peak morning travel times. Under the proposed system, trains will hold more than 300 passengers, which planners say is the equivalent of more than 200 cars, with trains coming every three minutes during rush hour. If the train ridership is as robust as the city hopes, it could mean 30,000 fewer cars on the road each day. According to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), this could improve traffic congestion and parking shortages for others commuting to work in downtown Honolulu, Kakaako or the Ala Moana area, even those coming from areas not served by the rail system.

While there is skepticism among opponents about whether the ridership projections will be realized, the city hopes to have similar results to smaller communities, as well as less densely populated cities with successful steel-wheel transit systems, including Portland, Seattle, San Francisco and Los Angeles. Although 2010 data shows declining ridership in public transportation nationwide, the American Public Transportation Association reported before the economic downturn that public transportation use had been on the rise in several cities, with increased ridership of 5 percent to 43 percent within a one year time frame.

Honolulu's ridership numbers will likely depend on how easy the rail system will be to use and how much it reduces commute times. The city so far has offered little data to make comparisons between the length of a rail commute and driving in rush hour. The Draft EIS offered only two comparisons between 2007 rush hour drive times and projected 2030 transit travel times:

- Waianae to UH-Manoa: 128 minutes by car vs. 91-93 minutes by train
- Kapolei to Ala Moana Center: 101 minutes by car vs. 57-59 minutes by train

In his State of Rail Address on Oct. 29, 2009, Hannemann offered one more comparison — travel from East Kapolei to downtown Honolulu would take 38 minutes by train, compared to the 89 minute average drive in 2007.

None of those estimates take into account how long it would take a commuter to get to the nearest transit station, however.

Economic Impacts

According to Hannemann, the Honolulu rail project would create 10,000 jobs and add \$330 million to the economy this year.

However, a University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization study in March 2009 offered a different outlook, combining the construction impacts of both the State Highway Modernization Program and Oahu Rail Mass Transit: "These programs have little near-term stimulative effect, but may provide a substantial boost to the industry in the medium term, adding more than \$2 billion in annual real contracting receipts and nearly 6,000 additional jobs by 2013."

Over the course of the project, UH economists' projections cut the city's job estimate by a third, taking into account the current economic climate. They also predict significant job creation won't take place immediately — in contrast to Hannemann's statement that 4,000 jobs would be created in 2010 alone. However, while the job numbers and timeline are different, the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization reports on the construction industry predict that large government-funded projects, including rail, will give the struggling construction industry a boost when construction begins.

Opponents of the project, including mayoral candidate and outspoken rail critic Panos Prevedourous say it will create only 1,000 local jobs and 2,000 jobs total in the public sector. However, his projections could not be substantiated in the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization report he cited or by local economists reached by Civil Beat.

Impact on Historic Sites

Although the city has said seven historic sites will face negative impacts, the Historic Hawaii Foundation believes at least 33 historic properties, including three historic districts, will be adversely affected by the planned rail route. Adverse effects, according to the foundation's definition, include "demolition, physical occupation of a portion of the site or having an impact on the site's setting, context, feeling or association." Another 50 are in the area of potential effect.

Key Players

Hannemann has been rail's most visible advocate since 2005, a position that made for a contentious campaign when Hannemann ran for re-election in 2008. See more on the Honolulu Rail Key Players page. Acting Mayor Kirk Caldwell, the city's former managing director under Hannemann and a candidate to succeed him in the Sept. 18, 2010, election, is also a strong proponent of rail.

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Honolulu Rail Key Players

Several of the state's most prominent politicians, including Sen. [Daniel K. Inouye](#), have voiced their support for the city's proposed rail project.

Member Content

Former Honolulu Mayor [Mufi Hannemann](#) has been rail's most visible advocate since 2005, a position that made for a contentious campaign when Hannemann ran for reelection in 2008.

Hannemann resigned from office to run for governor, raising questions about the fate of the [Honolulu Rail](#) project. Hannemann lost the Democratic primary to former Congressman [Neil Abercrombie](#).

Abercrombie, along with the rest of Hawaii's congressional delegation, has been a rail supporter. Lt. Gov. [James "Duke" Aiona](#) is the most prominent Republican running for governor and has not taken a strong position on the subject.

Former city prosecutor [Peter Carlisle](#) won the special mayoral election to fill out the remainder of Hannemann's term, and has stated his support for rail.

Sen. Inouye, the state's most powerful politician, has been the most outspoken of Hawaii's Congressional delegation in support of the rail issue. In 2009, Inouye discouraged the state legislature from using the state's rail transit tax to ease the state's budget deficit. [Daniel Akaka](#) and U.S. Congresswoman [Mazie Hirono](#) also back the project.

Government

- City Transportation Director Wayne Yoshioka
- State Transportation Director Brennon Morioka
- Federal Transit Administration Administrator Peter Rogoff
- Rail project manager Toru Hayamasu

The city's website for the rail project is <http://www.honolulutrainsit.org>.

Contractors

- InfraConsult LLC, of Scottsdale Ariz., received a five-year \$36.7 million contract to oversee the rail project after no other bidders emerged. InfraConsult has been managing the project since March 2007, when only one other firm bid for the \$11.5 million contract. InfraConsult will oversee the other contractors.
- Kapolei-based Kiewit Pacific Co., received a [\\$483 million contract](#) in Oct. 2009 to build the first 6.5 mile leg of the route from Kapolei to Pearl Highlands.
- Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas, Inc. received an \$86 million contract in August 2007. The New York-based engineering firm played a major role in designing the H-3 freeway and is the city's general engineering consultant for the rail project.
- Engineering and consulting firm PB Americas Inc., a unit of Parsons Brinckerhoff with offices in Honolulu, was awarded a \$90 million two-and-a-half year contract in Aug. 2007 to prepare the environmental impact statement for the proposed transit route.

Opponents

- <http://www.honolulutraffic.com>
- Grassroots Institute
- Cliff Slater
- [Panos Prevedouros](#)
- State Sen. Sam Slom
- State Sen. Fred Hemmings

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Sandi Yara

Clarifying the Transit Authority Charter Amendment question

October 26th, 2010 7:56 pm HADT

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Popular articles

This information was included in a recent Honolulu Rail Update which I thought might interest readers / voters.

In a week (November 2), Oahu voters will be asked to vote on a [proposed amendment](#) to the City Charter. Its passage will lead to the establishment of a public transit authority to govern the activities of the Honolulu Rail Transit Project.

The question will read: "**Shall the revised City Charter be amended to create a semi-autonomous public transit authority responsible for the planning, construction, operation, maintenance, and expansion of the City's fixed guideway mass transit system?**"

What does this mean?

Voters will have the opportunity to decide whether a public transit authority should be established.

- A YES vote means that you support creating the transit authority.
- A NO vote means you do not support creating the transit authority.

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6. Boehner: Please refrain from making any more boneheaded remarks about biking

- A BLANK or SPOILED ballot will not be counted. Regardless of the outcome of the vote, work on the project will continue.

Will this cost more money?

No, there would be no additional cost to create the transit authority as it utilizes a foundation that is already in place - including expert staff and facilities.

What are the benefits of creating a new public transit authority for the rail transit system?

- If established, a transit authority would have the ability to make decisions more quickly because of its singular focus: the success of the rail transit system.
- An appointed transit authority board would also provide for timely and efficient management of the planning, construction, operation, maintenance, and expansion of the rail transit system, with sound principles and objectives for project delivery.

The transit authority would manage the rail transit system's budget and fares, and be required to properly maintain the agency's financial status. It would also work hand-in-hand with the City Council for City funding and include the public in crucial issues such as setting fares and adopting a budget, further enhancing transparency and accountability.

For more detailed information on the [charter amendment](#), visit HonoluluTransit.org.

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In Newspaper Ad, Neutrality Isn't Black and White

A recent newspaper ad touting the benefits of a proposed transit authority raised a question about how the city can spend taxpayers' money on a ballot issue.

It makes sense that city officials see a need to educate the public on what they're being asked to decide. But where should the line be drawn between education and advocacy?

This year we've seen different approaches coming out of Honolulu Hale.

Member Content

City Clerk Bernice Mau told Civil Beat her office spent \$368 using in-house printing and a pamphlet-folding service to produce about 1,400 pamphlets detailing each of the six ballot questions. The pamphlets are available at Honolulu Hale, and the resolutions in question are also [posted online](#).

One of those questions — a resolution [to create a transit authority](#) to manage Honolulu's rail project — has also been presented to the public in a separate campaign.

The city's rail transit division has shelled out \$40,898 for ads in the [Honolulu Star-Advertiser](#), MidWeek and some smaller community newspapers over the course of "a couple of months," said Jim Fulton, executive assistant to the mayor.

Mau appeared surprised when she heard the cost of the transit division's ad campaign.

"That's different than what we're doing," she said. "They have an agenda. It's different. Ours is just a reprint of the resolutions. We don't want to get into interpreting anything."

Given the estimated cost of the project — \$5.5 billion — rail transit staffers say the widespread outreach is not only justified but a basic responsibility given the project's scope.

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Adrienne LaFrance
Honolulu Reporter-Host



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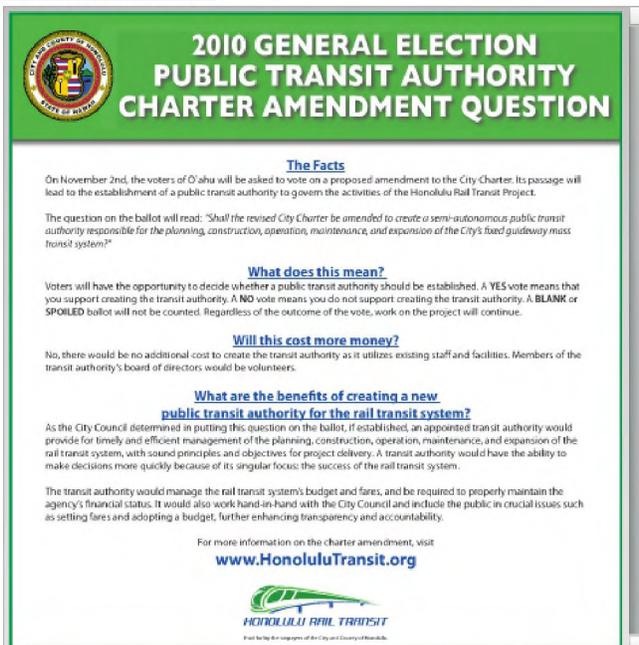
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Honolulu Charter Amendment Ad



**2010 GENERAL ELECTION
PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITY
CHARTER AMENDMENT QUESTION**

The Facts
On November 2nd, the voters of O'ahu will be asked to vote on a proposed amendment to the City Charter. Its passage will lead to the establishment of a public transit authority to govern the activities of the Honolulu Rail Transit Project.

The question on the ballot will read: "Shall the revised City Charter be amended to create a semi-autonomous public transit authority responsible for the planning, construction, operation, maintenance, and expansion of the City's fixed guideway mass transit system?"

What does this mean?
Voters will have the opportunity to decide whether a public transit authority should be established. A YES vote means that you support creating the transit authority. A NO vote means you do not support creating the transit authority. A BLANK or SPOILED ballot will not be counted. Regardless of the outcome of the vote, work on the project will continue.

Will this cost more money?
No, there would be no additional cost to create the transit authority as it utilizes existing staff and facilities. Members of the transit authority's board of directors would be volunteers.

What are the benefits of creating a new public transit authority for the rail transit system?
As the City Council determined in putting this question on the ballot, if established, an appointed transit authority would provide for timely and efficient management of the planning, construction, operation, maintenance, and expansion of the rail transit system, with sound principles and objectives for project delivery. A transit authority would have the ability to make decisions more quickly because of its singular focus: the success of the rail transit system.

The transit authority would manage the rail transit system's budget and fares, and be required to properly maintain the agency's financial status. It would also work hand-in-hand with the City Council and include the public in crucial issues such as setting fares and adopting a budget, further enhancing transparency and accountability.

For more information on the charter amendment, visit www.HonoluluTransit.org

HONOLULU RAIL TRANSIT
Rail for the People of the City and County of Honolulu

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The content of the half-page ad in the Sunday paper raises more questions. There are four subheads:

- The facts
- What does this mean?
- Will this cost more money?
- What are the benefits of creating a new public transit authority for the rail transit system?

The first three seemed relatively straightforward, but the fourth made us pause. Is it right for the city to use taxpayer money to present only the benefits of a charter amendment put to the public for a vote?

Given that the city is prohibited from advocating passage or defeat of charter amendments, is it even legal?

City officials say there's no question the ad is legal.

"The public involvement team consulted with Corporation Counsel to be sure that the wording was taken nearly verbatim from the resolution," Fulton said. "It conforms with the prohibition against partisan advocacy."

One of the city's transit spokesmen, Bill Brennan, also emphasized that the language of the ad comes directly from the resolution. Some of it does, but many of the benefits are paraphrased to laud a potential transit authority's "singular focus," how its board members would use "sound principles and objectives for project delivery," and their ability to "make decisions more quickly." None of that language comes directly from the resolution.

But Brennan argued the language in the ad is actually less glowing than that in the resolution itself.

"Read the actual resolution," Brennan said. "It says, 'whereas, it is prudent and in the best interest of the City to establish a semi-autonomous public transit authority.' Prudent and in the best interest!"

But resolutions are written to be passed, and the language used in a resolution is meant to support that goal. There isn't a law prohibiting a resolution's inherent advocacy. There is a law prohibiting the city from encouraging voters to cast ballots one way or the other.

By only presenting the benefits of a possible transit authority, isn't the city lobbying for its passage?

A former State elections officer said, in legal terms, no.

"It doesn't sound like advocacy," said Robert Watada, former executive director of the Hawaii Campaign Spending Committee. "It would have to say, 'we want you to vote this way' or 'we want you to vote that way,' for it to be advocacy."

This isn't the first time the issue has come up. City Ethics Commissioner Chuck Totto was out of the office when Civil Beat called this week, but his office issued a decision on a similar matter two years ago.

Residents had called into question a glossy flier that former Mayor Mufi Hannemann's administration characterized as public information about a ballot question on rail. It cost more than \$100,000 in taxpayer money, and some taxpayers saw it as partisan advocacy. The ethics commission [issued an opinion](#) explaining it was not. That opinion echoes what Watada said about cut-and-dry cases of partisan advocacy.

"Partisan advocacy is easy to identify when it is express. Exhortations urging voters to vote in a certain way on an election matter -- 'vote Yes' or 'vote No' -- are clear cut examples of partisan advocacy.

'Vote for,' 'vote against,' 'elect,' 'support,' 'cast your ballot for,' 'defeat,' and 'reject,' are other examples of express partisan advocacy. ... Appeals to vote a particular way that uses these express words of partisan advocacy constitute political activities that clearly cannot be funded with public resources."

The commission also explained that the mayor had "implied power to spend public funds to inform and educate the public about matters of public concern, including matters that are subject to a vote."

But interpretation of the law isn't always so straightforward. The ethics commission went on to explain some of the nuances that got us asking about the transit ad in the first place:

"Not all partisan advocacy, however, is so blunt. Certain communications can implicitly urge voters to vote a particular way on an election matter even though they eschew express words of advocacy. For example, a communication can present information that is so heavily one-sided, or make arguments that favor one side of the debate, that it can only be reasonably interpreted as an unspoken appeal to vote a particular way.

These communications are, in other words, the 'functional equivalent' of express partisan advocacy, since they serve the same political purpose -- influencing voters to vote a certain way."

So we asked an increasingly exasperated Brennan to explain: Why did the city only explore the presumed benefits of a transit authority?

"You're assuming there are any negatives," Brennan said. "What negatives are there to include? I think you're trying to find something that just isn't there."

Brennan followed up in a later e-mail: "This ad is not partisan advocacy, because after reading it, you can disagree and vote no. And the ad speaks about a No vote..."

Among the concerns raised by neutral groups, such as the League of Women Voters of Honolulu, and scholars:

- It would grow the bureaucracy and make it harder for citizens to get information.
- It would make elected officials less accountable for rail.
- Citizens would not be able to change board leadership whereas they can vote out elected officials.
- Such an authority isn't necessary for a system that doesn't cross governmental jurisdictions, say between cities or counties.

The only part of the ad that indicates that voters can do anything but support the amendment goes on to remind them that the project will continue either way.

Under the "What does this mean?" heading: "A NO vote means you do not support creating the transit authority. A BLANK or SPOILED ballot will not be counted. Regardless of the outcome of the vote, work on the project will continue."

As it does, we'll continue to ask questions about how the city spends tax dollars.

Posted by [Adrienne LaFrance](#) on 10/27/2010

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Why is a blank vote not counted (I agree it shouldn't)? But, I thought a blank vote means "no" in Hawaii.

Posted by Dave Kozuki on Oct. 27th 2010 12:46 a.m.



Dave, you're remembering a court ruling on a State issue (I think it was a constitutional amendment) that doesn't apply to a Charter vote.

Posted by Doug Carlson on Oct. 27th 2010 5:59 a.m.



This story also calls to mind another court ruling: *Rees v Carlisle*. A 2007 Hawaii Supreme Court judge sided with then-prosecutor Peter Carlisle – now Honolulu's mayor – amid charges that he broke the law by advocating a ballot amendment.

It's a little long, but it's worth reading this portion of the ruling:

"The law not only tolerates public officials expending public funds and resources to address political issues that are germane to the business purposes of the office, but it expects such conduct ... When a public official from an office such as the Prosecutor's Office, which is charged with a specific mission to prosecute criminal defendants, makes a public statement on a ballot question, there is no doubt which way the Prosecutor wants the public to vote.

So to draw a bright line between constitutional and unconstitutional use of public resources based upon whether or not the Prosecutor says vote yes would be an artificial and arbitrary distinction and flies in the face of the reality that every voter knows how the Prosecutor wants the public to vote on (such) a matter."

Here's a link to the complete ruling: <http://bit.ly/dmljmb>

If you want to get even deeper into the issue, check out the precedent set in the 1953 case, from which the distinction between providing information and blatant advocacy emerged: <http://bit.ly/anb92F> [less]

Posted by [Adrienne LaFrance](#) on Oct. 27th 2010 6:27 a.m.



Dave, I meant to comment earlier on the blank votes being "no" on a state constitutional amendment. Our state constitution and government is built to prevent radical change and it's like that by design (as with the federal side also). The concept is that no change (status quo) is "safer" than change.

The constitution is built to be a solid ship, not a nimble one.

Now, I don't disagree with you that change is sometimes needed and government is slowing things down. But the way to accomplish that in our system is a mass change of the people in office... an unlikely shift. Or to have overwhelming support to push the amendment through (even with blank votes). Changing the constitution, the core of our laws, should have a higher threshold than just 50%+1 of people voting.

You also brought up the Con-Con in a previous post... but I believe that it didn't even make the 50%+1 in the two cycles I remember (again I don't disagree that it would have been a good thing to have...).

Getting long... But back to this CB post. What's interesting is that this is a City division releasing this piece. Should that be different than a person? Also, the state handles their education materials with a pro vs con piece that is very unbiased (in my opinion). [less]

Posted by Jared I. Kuroiwa on Oct. 27th 2010 8:58 a.m.



Money that the City receives from taxpayers is being used to pay for ads to convince those same taxpayers to vote for the transit authority. That is like people who watch TV paying for commercials.

Posted by John Kawamoto on Oct. 27th 2010 11:32 p.m.

Join the discussion

Remember, own your words. Be civil!

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Signed in as: Jonn Serikawa

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Professors Question Need for Transit Authority

By Adrienne LaFrance | 10/28/2010

Honolulu lacks the conditions that make transit authorities necessary in other cities, transportation scholars tell Civil Beat.

But local rail proponents say the [charter amendment](#) on the Nov. 2 ballot would benefit the project by removing politicians from key aspects of the project.



HonoluluTransit.org

Member Content

"The charter amendment is necessary because it takes the decision-making out of the hands of politicians," City Councilmember Ikaika Anderson said. "Some politicians are weak when it comes time to make decisions. They'll do it based on what's good for their career versus what's good for the people they represent. This way, we leave the decision to those folks who may have more expertise to make that decision, and have no reason not to make the necessary decisions."

The Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation would be responsible for planning, construction, operation, maintenance and expansion of the project. The agency's board members would be responsible for setting fares, buying and selling land and entering into contracts. Its proposed organizational structure mirrors that of several transit agencies in municipalities across the United States. But there are some differences, too.

"The most common and most justifiable reason to (create a transit authority) is that you have multiple jurisdictions," said Brian Taylor, director of the Institute of Transportation Studies at UCLA. "The Bay Area Rapid Transit system serves four counties in 14 cities, so because of that you create the joint powers authority."

The City and County of Honolulu is the only municipal jurisdiction on Oahu. While the city has entered into intergovernmental agreements with the state as it moves forward with rail, Taylor said it's "puzzling" that Honolulu officials see the creation of a transit authority as necessary.

Most Authorities Serve Multiple Jurisdictions

"One of the unique organizational structures of Oahu is that the city and county serve one government structure," Taylor said. "The city and county are coterminous, and the political configuration will never involve moving to another jurisdiction. The principal reason for forming one of these authorities doesn't apply, so it isn't obvious to me why they would pursue this."

Taylor said he casually follows Honolulu's rail development through online news reports — he even lived temporarily in Honolulu for about 10 months in 2005 and 2006 — but he hasn't kept up with the latest progress, or the political undercurrents beneath support and opposition.

The next most common reason Taylor cites for the creation of a semi-autonomous transit authority is also absent in Honolulu. He said in some of the world's biggest public transit systems, an added layer of bureaucracy improves efficiency.

"Sometimes it's such a giant organization, like in New York," Taylor said. "In L.A., we have 16 and a half million people (but) Oahu has something like 900,000 people. In most cases, you're not going to have an organization so giant that you're going to be benefited from breaking it up."

But city officials argue the insulation from city politics will serve to make for a more efficient process with regards to rail.

"It's very easy as a semi-autonomous entity," said Wayne Yoshioka, director of the Department of Transportation Services, who would serve on the authority's 10-member board. "Everything is isolated, not mixed in with everything else."

But that segregation from other divisions in the city's transportation department — Traffic Engineering, Transportation Planning, Traffic Signals & Technology and Public Transit — represents another anomaly about the

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About the Author

Adrienne LaFrance
Honolulu Reporter-Host



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- Most cities create transit authorities because multiple jurisdictions are involved.
- Transit authorities can make operations more efficient, but that's usually the case in much larger metropolitan areas.
- Local officials say the authority would help remove politics from the project.

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- The Rail Divide — Part 2: City Claims Evaluated
- The Rail Divide — Part 3: City Claims Evaluated
- The Rail Divide — Part 4: The City on Five Best Reasons to Support Project
- The Rail Divide — The Five Best Reasons to Support or Oppose the Honolulu Rail Project
- The Rail Divide — Part 4: Slater on Five Best Reasons to Oppose Project
- The Rail Divide: The City's Complete Response to Civil Beat
- The Rail Divide: Cliff Slater's Complete Response to Civil Beat
- The Rail Divide — Part 1: Slater Claims Evaluated
- The Rail Divide — Part 2: Slater Claims Evaluated
- The Rail Divide — Part 1: City Claims Evaluated
- The Rail Divide — Part 3: Slater Claims Evaluated
- The Rail Divide: Overview

Primary Topic Pages

- Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project

proposal in Honolulu compared to transit authorities in other parts of the country. It wouldn't integrate management of TheBus, at least not without a subsequent charter amendment.

On one hand, the separation may quell concerns that rail planners would raid TheBus' coffers. On the other, it means discussions on fares, service routes and how the two systems overlap will take place in separate places.

"This raises an eyebrow a little," UCLA's Taylor said. "I am having trouble seeing what the rationale for this would possibly be. You're going to need close coordination with the bus system, and that's going to be more difficult if you have two authorities. To be honest, to isolate this project in this way sounds like a lot of political ambition. It's not shady but it is a bureaucratic move to essentially kind of privatize the particular project. It leaves me to think they want to not allow second guesses."

More troubling to another academic is the power semi-autonomous agencies have to make – then keep private – agreements with contractors.

"It's a question of public accountability," said Hiroyuki Iseki, an assistant professor in the Department of Planning & Urban Studies at the University of New Orleans. "The one drawback is this kind of authority has sometimes too much autonomy. In the city of New Orleans, we have the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority, and they started contracting many aspects of running transit services and systems to a private contract. There is a problem with transparency because they are private contracts, and I am having a hard time obtaining contracts from private agencies. I feel there is something wrong with this."

Questions About Transparency

City transit officials, who say gripes about a lack of transparency are unfounded, insist that all city contracts are public record. But for the public to get a copy of those contracts isn't so straightforward.

Government agencies, including the City and County of Honolulu, regularly refuse to fulfill requests unless the full, proper name of a document is used in a request. Without knowing which contract agreements are made, the public doesn't always know which documents to request. When reporters request large swaths of information in an attempt to get at some of those documents, they're often denied for making too broad a request.

City officials, though, say there's a larger reason to support the charter amendment: To create stability for a long-term project amid regular personnel changes. Honolulu elected a new mayor in September, and will hold another mayoral election in 2010. In the coming months, five of the City Council member's nine members will be replaced.

"We do not know what this council will look like in 10 years or 20 years," Councilmember Anderson said. "We have no idea. And none of us will be here then because we are term-limited. So all of these current councilmembers, even the ones who are being elected right now, in 2020, they're all gone."

By then, transit officials hope the first portion of the rail line will be built. Construction has been stalled for more than a year since the planned October 2009 groundbreaking, but the creation of a transit authority may be a catalyst. That's what happened in Los Angeles about 15 years ago.

"They created a separate construction authority so that they could fast track the construction," Taylor said. "It was so they could get it built."

Taylor said haste to move into the construction phase of major public works projects is ubiquitous in American cities. But he also notes that people in his field are trained to believe that expanding existing public transportation systems should be considered before building new ones.

"In general, public officials tend to be more enthusiastic about rail and its benefits than cost-benefit analyses would justify," Taylor said. "Put it this way: You can't have a media event and cut a ribbon in front of expanded bus services. But if you have a gleaming new airport or a gleaming new freeway or a gleaming new rail line, you can."

DISCUSSION: *Share your thoughts about the proposed transit authority and read what others have to say about it in our [discussion](#) of the rail project.*

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Letters to the Editor

For Thursday, October 28, 2010

Rail agency would have too much power

I urge each voter to thoroughly read each proposed charter amendment prior to casting their vote. After reading each sentence of the proposed public transit authority, I believe it gives too much power to the appointed director and members of the board of a newly created "Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation." The power to condemn, purchase, exchange or transfer real property, for instance, and to sell bonds to finance the many and various aspects of the project. The wording is vague and subject to interpretation.

The project should be the responsibility of the existing state and city transportation departments and all elected officials, directly answerable to the voters of Honolulu, not hiding behind the director and members of an appointed board.

Wilbert W. W. Wong Sr.
Kaneohe

Letters to the Editor

For Thursday, October 28, 2010

Transit authority will move rail ahead

In the November election, the public will be able to vote on the formulation of a public transit authority that would oversee the planning, construction, operation and maintenance of Honolulu's rail transit system.

This is not a new concept. Every major city that has a rail transit system operates under a transit authority. The authority would be an independent agency that provides efficient management of the rail construction, which is expected to create thousands of good-paying jobs and help stimulate Hawaii's economy. Business leaders and transit experts who could be tapped to serve on the transit authority would be tasked in creating a sensible financial plan for the project to ensure taxpayer dollars are spent wisely.

A "yes" vote for the transit authority ballot initiative would continue to move the Honolulu rail transit project in the right direction.

Jon McKenna
President, West Oahu Economic Development Association

Jonh Serikawa (Member758) | Manage Account | Sign Out

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HONOLULU CIVIL BEAT

Honolulu, HI 7:22 AM

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Next Governor Pivotal For Rail Project

By [Adrienne LaFrance](#) | 10/29/2010

It's a truth that most city officials don't like to talk about: The future of Honolulu's \$5.5 billion rail project rests in one person's hands.

Transit officials continue to move forward with the project, but they aren't allowed to break ground until the governor signs off on the city's final environmental review. The Federal Transit Administration gave the go-ahead on that document in June.

Member Content

Gov. [Linda Lingle](#) is not expected to accept the document before she leaves office next week. She has expressed strong concerns about the project's cost. Lingle launched an independent financial review in September, eight months after announcing her intention to do so.

"The governor is obviously not going to have it before the end of her term," Honolulu Mayor [Peter Carlisle](#) said last week. "It will depend on who the next governor is. I mean, we know (Democrat gubernatorial candidate) [Neil Abercrombie](#) is full guns forward."

Abercrombie's support for the project appears clear. He takes credit for helping secure federal funding for the proposed system, and reiterates his position on his [campaign website](#).

"Rail is too important a project for [Honolulu](#) and for the State of [Hawaii](#) for it to fail because of a personal political agenda," Abercrombie wrote.

At the time that was posted — February 2010 — the comments appeared to be directed at former Mayor [Mufi Hannemann](#), who lost the Democratic primary to Abercrombie in September. As mayor, Hannemann helped resuscitate the rail project after several failed attempts by previous administrations to build a rail system in Honolulu over the decades.

Abercrombie's current opponent, Republican [James "Duke" Aiona](#), comes from a different political climate regarding rail. As lieutenant governor under Lingle, Aiona's position on rail sounds a lot like his boss' take on the project.

"I don't believe that the contingencies that they built into it are satisfactory enough to make this an economically feasible project," Aiona said at a [news conference](#) in August. "Until I can get a satisfactory answer as to how are we going to maintain it, I gotta question the financial aspect of this whole project and the wisdom of going forward."

That's what Lingle has been asking, too. The outgoing governor insists her financial analysis is not holding up the project, but that it coincides with a meticulous review process by the Hawaii Department of Health's Office of Environmental Quality Control. She wrote something to that effect in a Sept. 2010 statement about the financial review.

"While the OEQC is continuing its legally required review of the EIS, my Administration is also performing the financial due diligence to make certain Hawaii taxpayers can afford this multi-billion project — including the cost to operate, maintain and sustain the system well into the future," Lingle wrote. "To ask me to sign the EIS at this point in time is inappropriate and premature."

Earlier this month, Carlisle and other city officials [traveled to Washington D.C.](#) to meet with Federal Transit Authority officials on the project. Councilmember Ikaika Anderson was there, and said part of the purpose of the trip was — at least in part — to alleviate federal officials' worries about the future of rail in Honolulu.

In addition to electing a new governor and a new mayor, the Honolulu City Council will have [five new members](#) in the coming months.

"FTA Administrator (Peter) Rogoff was concerned about the changing administrations," Anderson said. "He was also concerned about changes on the City Council. He said he was relieved to know that this (new mayoral) administration will likewise support mass transit."

Carlisle said he's confident that anyone who looks closely at the rail plan will realize it's "an extremely impressive enterprise." He said the FTA is tracking Honolulu's progress particularly closely because of the city's history of

ELECTION PROMOTION

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About the Author

[Adrienne LaFrance](#)
Honolulu Reporter-Host



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Related Topic Pages

[Neil Abercrombie](#)
[James "Duke" Aiona](#)

Discussions

[Discussion: Honolulu Rail](#)

starting then stopping rail projects.

"The federal authorities are not going to allow us to be anything other than upfront with the money and on-time and on-target to the greatest extent possible," Carlisle said. "We are accountable to them. They know it and we know it. They are making sure we're doing everything right with your federal money and we're going to make sure we're doing everything right with your city and county money."

Carlisle said, once a new governor is elected, he looks forward to collaborating with that person to move the rail project forward. Councilmember Anderson said, for now, rail supporters are waiting to see what happens on election day.

"Abercrombie has stated publicly that he will sign the FEIS," Anderson said. "Aiona, I just don't know. Wait and see who gets elected. From what I've known of Congressman Abercrombie, if he says something — whether he's going to do something or not going to do something — he sticks to what he says."

Even if the new governor promptly accepts the FEIS, there are more hurdles the city faces before rail is built. There are permits to obtain and promised federal monies to secure.

Plus, it's likely rail opponents will file lawsuits in an attempt to stop the project. Even if those suits ultimately fail, further delays to the project may hurt funding prospects.

DISCUSSION *Will Honolulu ever get a rail system? Call it [like you see it](#) in our conversation on rail.*

Have feedback? Suggestions? [Email Us!](#)

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Honolulu Rail Transit Project



H O N O L U L U R A I L T R A N S I T P R O J E C T

566-2299 | www.honolulutrainsit.org

AR00078578

Honolulu Rail Transit Project Presentation

Rotary Club of Wahiawa-Waialua

October 14, 2010



20-Mile Route Kapolei to Ala Moana Center



Operating Details

- **When will trains run?**
 - From 4 a.m. to midnight
 - Every 3 minutes at morning and afternoon rush hour
 - 6 minutes at mid-day
 - 10 minutes at night
- **How fast will trains travel?**
 - Over 55 mph top speed; 30 mph average with stops



Operating Details

- **How much will a ride cost?**
 - Same as TheBus; one-way transfers valid on both
- **How do I get to a rail station?**
 - Bus circulators will connect communities to the fixed guideway system
 - Every station will have bus stops, bike racks and sidewalks
 - Four park-and-rides totaling 4,100 parking spaces



Elevated Rail

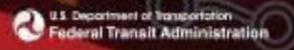
- Fast
- Reliable
- Efficient
- Safe
- Doesn't remove travel lanes
- Less likely to impact Iwi



Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT/SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION

- East Kapolei
- Ulu West Oahu
- Honolulu
- West Loch
- Waipahu Transit Center
- Leeward Community College
- Pearl Highlands
- Pearlridge
- Alifan Stadium
- Pearl Harbor Naval Base
- Honolulu International Airport
- Lagoon Drive
- Middle Street Transit Center
- Kalihi
- Kapalama
- Hahaione
- Chinatown
- Downtown
- City Center
- Kalihi
- Ala Moana



JUNE 2010

Where to Find Final EIS

- Project website: www.honolulustransit.org
- City library & Department of Transportation Services
- All state libraries
- Order free DVD by calling 566-2299 or e-mailing info@honolulustransit.org

Key Impacts

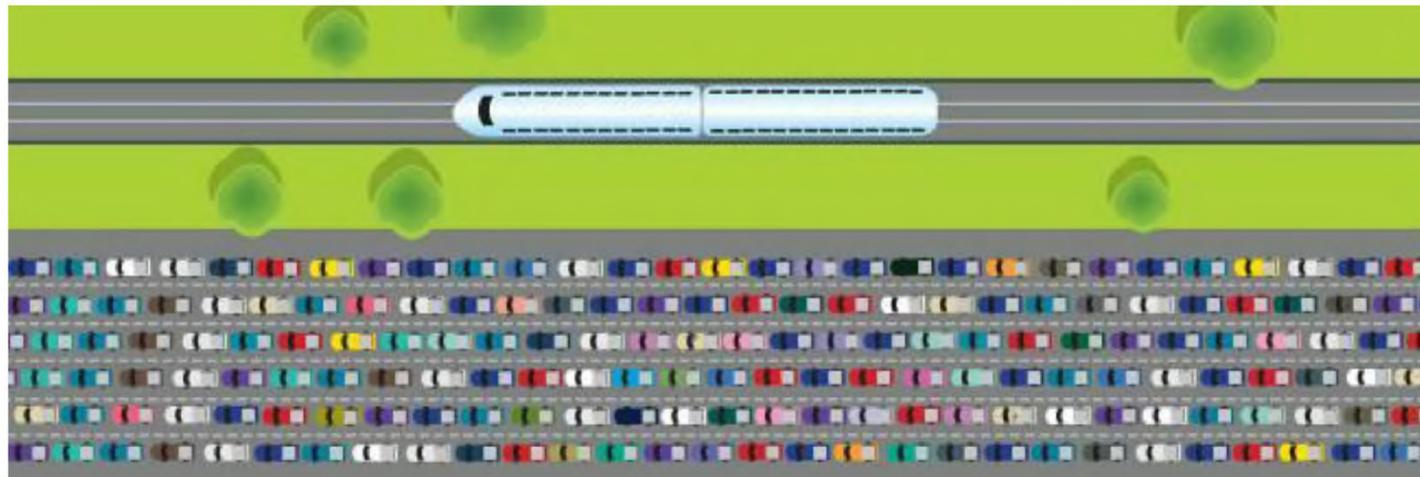
- Right-of Way
 - 40 full acquisitions, 159 partial acquisitions
 - All affected property owners contacted
- Visual Impacts
 - Will create new linear visual element
- Noise Impacts
 - No noise effects with mitigation
- Historic Properties Impacts
 - 33 historic properties affected

Travel Times from Pearl Highlands

To:	Time:
East Kapolei Station	14 minutes
Airport Station	12 minutes
Downtown Station	24 minutes
Ala Moana Center Station	28 minutes

Transportation Benefits

- Estimated 116,000 average weekday ridership in 2030
- Reduced traffic delay by 18% in 2030
- Estimated 40,000 fewer vehicles on the road in 2030



Economic Benefits

- Creating about 10,000 jobs a year
- Rail will be Hawaii's single largest job creator
- Supports Kapolei as urban center
- Redevelopment around stations



Sustainable Contributions of Rail

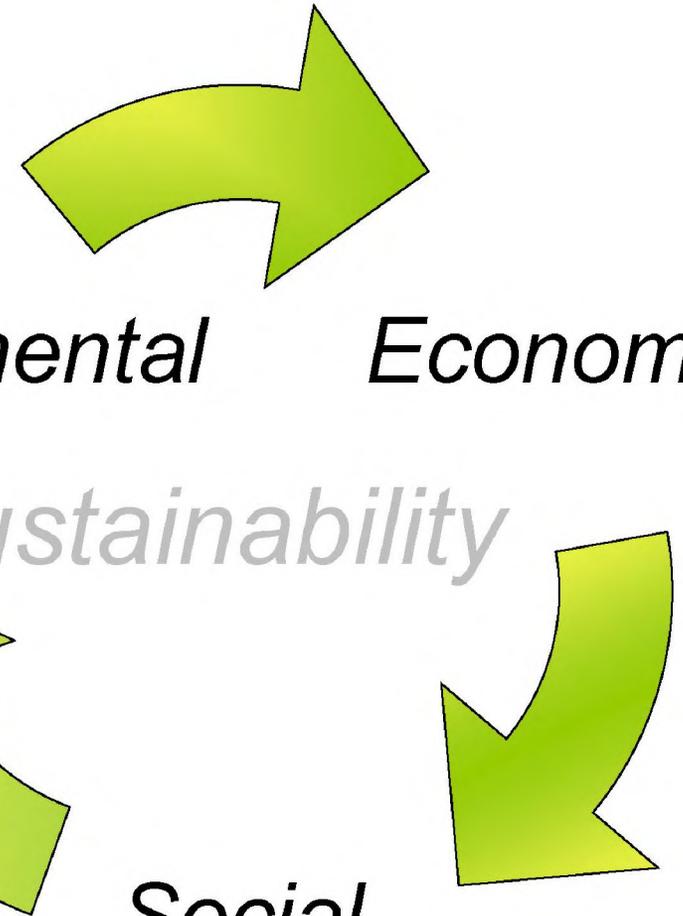
- Complete sustainability

- Social
- Economic
- Environmental

Environmental *Economic*

sustainability

Social



Sustainable Environment

- REDUCED because of rail:
 - About 4% less air pollution
 - About 2% less energy consumption
 - Greenhouse gas reduced by 124 million pounds per year
 - Fuel consumption reduced by 33,000 gallons per day
 - Electrically-powered rail could use renewable energy sources

Data source: Final Environmental Impact Statement, June 2010

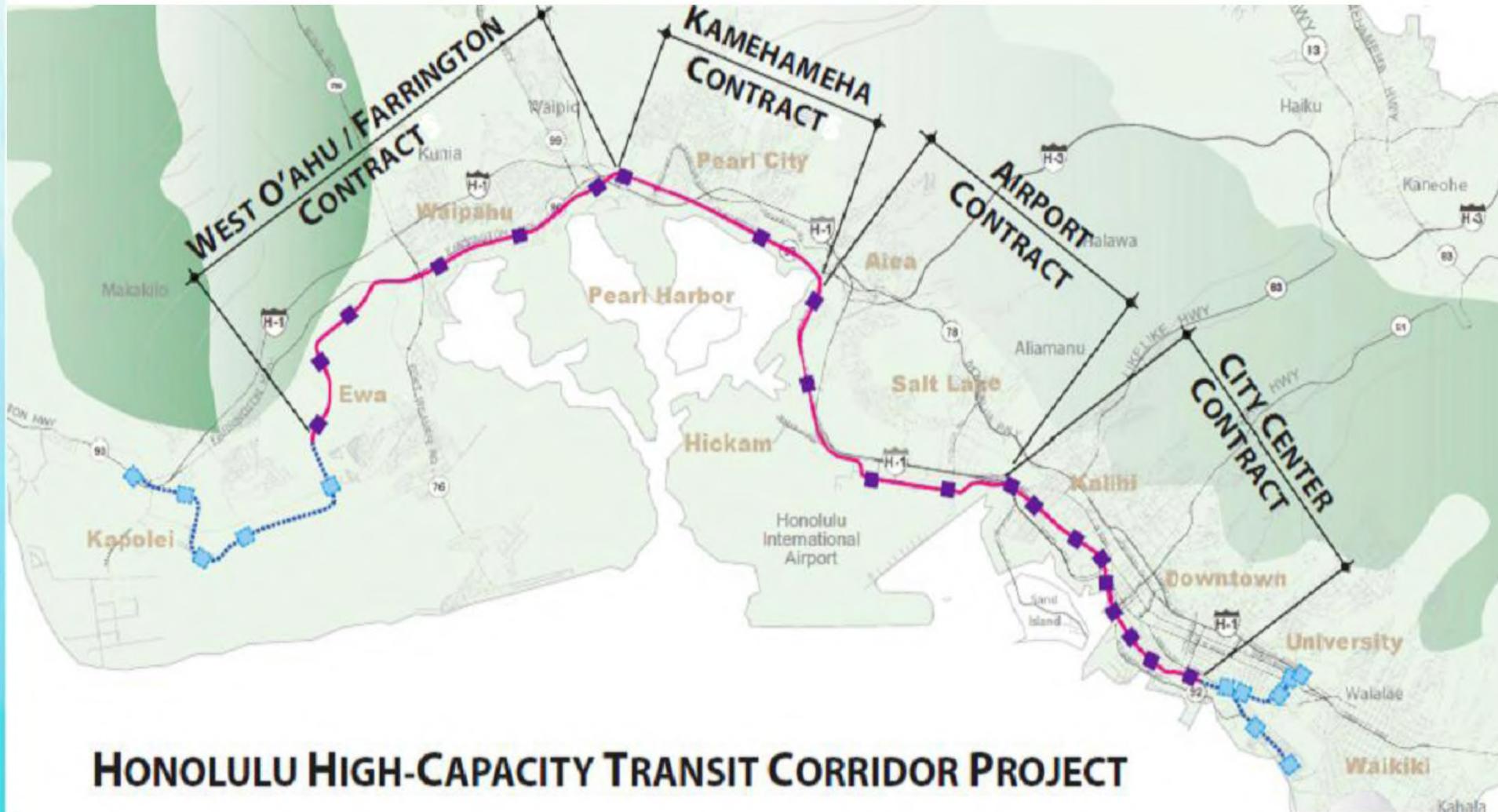
Sustainable Construction & Design

- Sustainable Action Plan & Waste Management Plan
- Minimize energy use/fuel consumption
- Minimize environmental impacts
- Sustainable design criteria
- Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)
- Silver LEED certification for train yard

Finances On Track

- \$18.5 million in GET collected in June 2010
- GET surcharge revenue is 99.6% of projections
- Independently reviewed by local business leaders
 - Business Roundtable
- Construction costs \$150 million less than projected

CONTRACT PACKAGING



HONOLULU HIGH-CAPACITY TRANSIT CORRIDOR PROJECT

CONTRACTS AWARDED

Contract	Awarded To	Amount	Under Budget
WOFH Design-Build	Kiewit	\$482 million	\$90 million
Maintenance and Storage Facility	Kiewit/ Kobayashi	\$195 million	\$60 million
West Loch, Waipahu Transit Center, and Leeward Community College Station Design	HDR/Hawaii Pacific Engineers	\$5.5 million	

What's Next

- Final EIS review and acceptance by Governor Lingle
- Record of Decision from Federal Transit Administration
- Groundbreaking

Transit Authority

- Honolulu City Council approved placing a City Charter Amendment question on November 2 ballot:

“Shall the revised City Charter be amended to create a semi-autonomous public transit authority responsible for the planning, construction, operation, maintenance, and expansion of the City’s fixed guideway mass transit system?”

What is a Transit Authority?

- Single focus – success of the rail system: planning, construction, operation, and maintenance
- Appointed board of business and transit leaders
- Manage rail's budget, fares and maintain financial status
- Regardless of the vote on the Transit Authority, work on the project will continue.

What are the Benefits?

- Timely and efficient management
- No additional cost to create the authority; volunteer members; use existing staff and facilities
- Fiscal autonomy and accountability
- Checks and balances – requires City Council approval for funding and public meetings for crucial issues
- Transparency and accountability
- For more detailed information on the Charter Amendment, visit HonoluluTransit.org

Dan Inouye

U.S. SENATOR FROM HAWAII



- “I remain committed to this project and will continue to do everything I can at the federal level to fund the work and ensure its timely completion.”*
- “We have debated and studied this project to an excessive extent over the last 20 years and now is the time to move forward.”*

*press release, June 15, 2010

Congressman Jim Oberstar

Chair, Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure

- Honolulu's rail project is "the premier transit project in the entire country."*
- "This is vastly safer transit project than anywhere else in America. It's exceedingly well designed, and it has received the highest rating from the Federal Transit Administration."*

*Summit on the State of Physical Infrastructure in Hawaii,
July 13, 2010

Transit-Oriented Development

- Optimize resources and infrastructure
- Communities & businesses planned around transit access
- Publicly enabled, privately invested



What Could Elevated Rail Look Like in Honolulu?

Kamehameha Highway near Acacia Road



Simulation

Kamehameha Highway at Kaonohi Street



Simulation

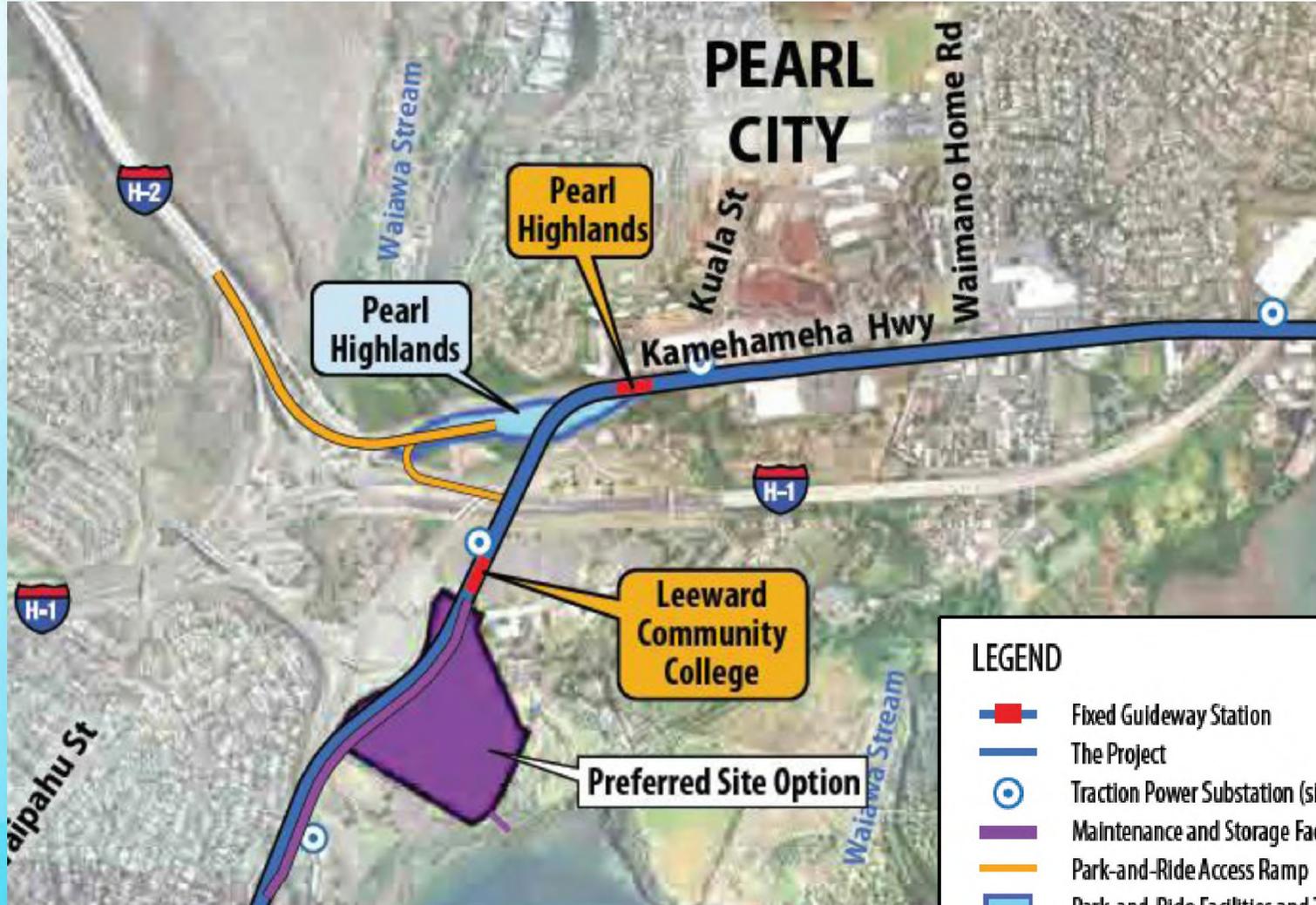
Aloha Stadium



Simulation

Honolulu Rail Transit Station Designs

Pearl Highlands Station



LEGEND

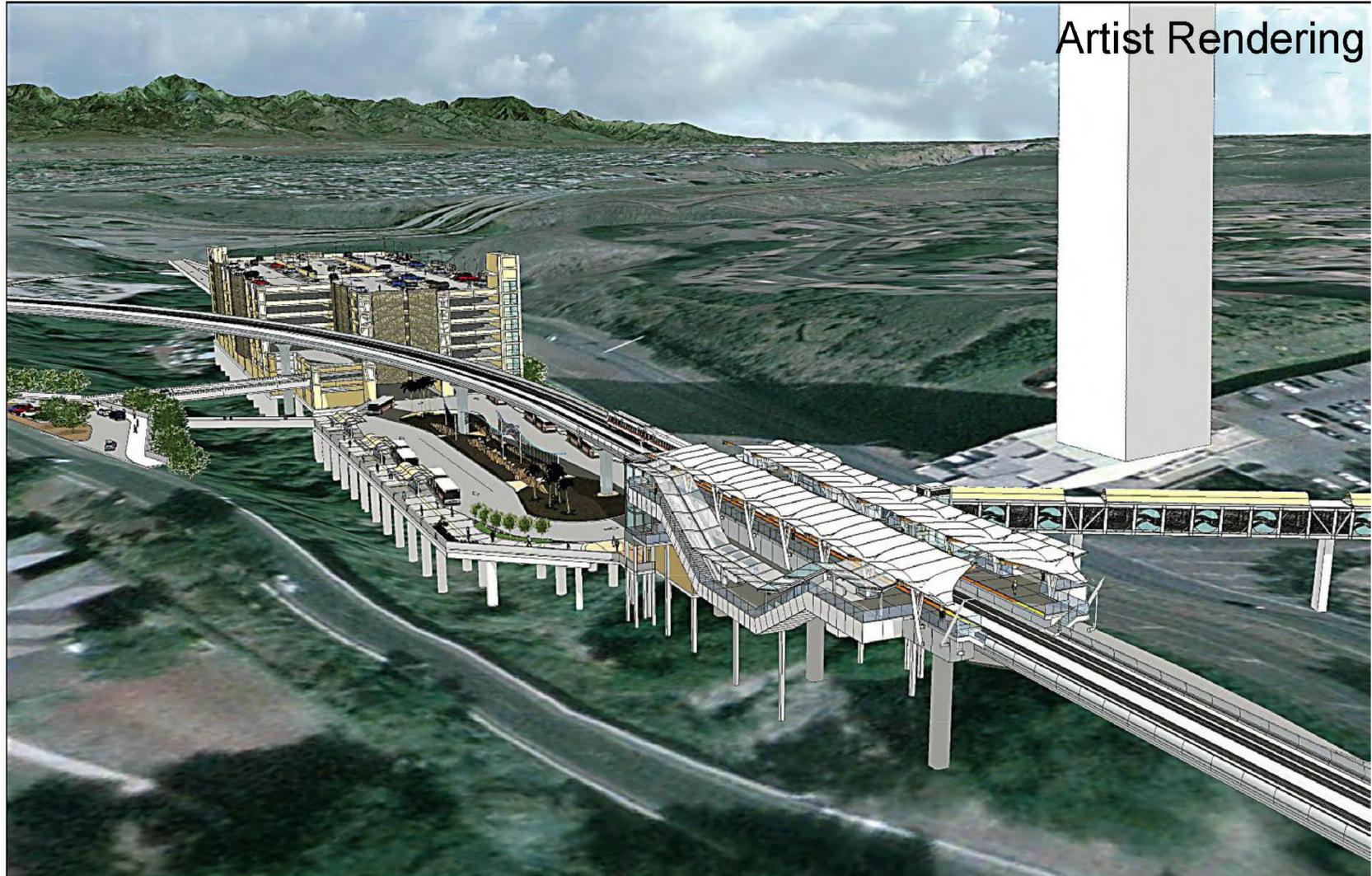
- Fixed Guideway Station
- The Project
- Traction Power Substation (size exaggerated, for location only)
- Maintenance and Storage Facility Options
- Park-and-Ride Access Ramp
- Park-and-Ride Facilities and Transit Center
- Transit Center

0 1,000 2,000 4,000 Feet

Pearl Highlands Station Features

- Parking garage with 1,600 spaces
- New H-1 and H-2 off-ramps
- Bus transit center with connections to Central O`ahu
- Bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- Kiss-and-ride drop off and pick up area
- Highest number of boardings during a.m. peak period

Pearl Highlands Station Rendering



Pearl Highlands Station Rendering



Artist Rendering

Canopy Design for Stations



Artist Rendering

Canopy Design for Stations



Artist Rendering

Rail Transit Resources

- Monthly newsletter
- www.honolulustransit.org
- Twitter.com/HNL_RT D (@HNL_RT D)
- Youtube.com/honoluluonthemove
- Facebook – search Honolulu Rail Transit
- ‘Ōlelo – Sundays at 4:30pm

Mahalo!





West O'ahu/Farrington Highway Guideway Contract

SOIL TESTING PUBLIC NOTICE TO MOTORISTS (As of October 3, 2010)

The City & County of Honolulu and Kiewit Infrastructure West Co. want drivers to know that preliminary engineering field work continues along Farrington Highway in Waipahu as part of the Honolulu Rail Transit Project.

Soil sampling work will be conducted next week (October 3 – 10) along the Farrington Highway median and shoulder between Acacia Road and Kualakai Parkway.

In addition, work will be done along Ala Ike St at Leeward Community College and 96-157 Kamehameha Highway.

Work will require some nighttime lane and intersection closures Sundays through Fridays between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. for both westbound and eastbound lanes. One lane of traffic in each direction along Farrington Highway will remain open during the work.

For additional information, visit Honolulustransit.org or call the Honolulu Transit's information line at 566-2299.



West O'ahu/Farrington Highway Guideway Contract

SOIL TESTING PUBLIC NOTICE TO MOTORISTS (As of October 10, 2010)

The City & County of Honolulu and Kiewit Infrastructure West Co. want drivers to know that preliminary engineering field work continues along Farrington Highway in Waipahu as part of the Honolulu Rail Transit Project.

Soil sampling work will be conducted next week (October 10 – 17) along the Farrington Highway median and shoulder between Acacia Road and Kualakai Parkway.

In addition, work will be done along the eastbound shoulder of Farrington Highway between Waipahu Depot Road and Aniani Place.

Work will require some day and nighttime lane and intersection closures Sundays through Fridays between 7 a.m. – 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. – 6 a.m. for both westbound and eastbound lanes. One lane of traffic in each direction along Farrington Highway will remain open during the work.

For additional information, visit Honolulustransit.org or call the Honolulu Transit's information line at 566-2299.



West O'ahu/Farrington Highway Guideway Contract

SOIL TESTING PUBLIC NOTICE TO MOTORISTS (As of October 17, 2010)

The City & County of Honolulu and Kiewit Infrastructure West Co. want drivers to know that preliminary engineering field work continues along Farrington Highway in Waipahu as part of the Honolulu Rail Transit Project.

Soil sampling work will be conducted next week (October 17 – 24) along the Farrington Highway median and shoulder between Acacia Road and Ala Ike Street.

In addition, work will be done along Farrington Highway between Old Fort Weaver Road and Leoku Street and Ala Ike St at Leeward Community College.

Work will require some nighttime lane and intersection closures Sundays through Fridays between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. for both westbound and eastbound lanes. One lane of traffic in each direction along Farrington Highway will remain open during the work.

For additional information, visit Honolulustransit.org or call the Honolulu Transit's information line at 566-2299.



West O'ahu/Farrington Highway Guideway Contract

SOIL TESTING PUBLIC NOTICE TO MOTORISTS (As of October 24, 2010)

The City & County of Honolulu and Kiewit Infrastructure West Co. want drivers to know that preliminary engineering field work continues along Farrington Highway in Waipahu as part of the Honolulu Rail Transit Project.

Soil sampling work will be conducted next week (October 24 – 31) along the Farrington Highway median and shoulder between North South Road and Kahualii Street. In addition, work will be done at Leeward Community College.

Work will require some nighttime lane and intersection closures Sundays through Fridays between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. for both westbound and eastbound lanes. One lane of traffic in each direction along Farrington Highway will remain open during the work.

For additional information, visit Honolulustransit.org or call the Honolulu Transit's information line at 566-2299.



West O'ahu/Farrington Highway Guideway Contract

SOIL TESTING PUBLIC NOTICE TO MOTORISTS (As of October 31, 2010)

The City & County of Honolulu and Kiewit Infrastructure West Co. want drivers to know that preliminary engineering field work continues along Farrington Highway in Waipahu as part of the Honolulu Rail Transit Project.

Soil sampling work will be conducted next week (October 31 – November 7) along the Farrington Highway median and shoulder between North South Road and Kahualii Street.

Work will require some daytime lane and intersection closures Sundays through Fridays between 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. for both westbound and eastbound lanes. One lane of traffic in each direction along Farrington Highway will remain open during the work.

For additional information, visit Honolulustransit.org or call the Honolulu Transit's information line at 566-2299.



West O'ahu/Farrington Highway Guideway Contract

Traffic Update
Week of October 3, 2010
Kiewit Preliminary Engineering Field Work

Traffic Impacts:

- Crews will be working 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. along Kamehameha Highway and Farrington Highway between Acacia Road and Kualakai Parkway on the median and shoulder with potholing, and boring activities. Potholing allows Kiewit to locate existing utilities, and boring for exploratory soil samples.
- Crews will be working 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 96-157 Kamehameha Highway.
- Crews will be working 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Ala Ike St at Leeward Community College.

Traffic Plan:

- Work will require lane closures during non-peak traffic hours and shoulder work signage/cones along the side of the road to delineate work area.
- One lane of traffic in each direction along Farrington Highway will remain open.
- Between Old Ft. Weaver Road Loop and Aloun Farms the two lane highway will be counter flowed using one lane.
- The two lane Ala Ike Street end at Leeward Community College will be counter flowed using one lane.

Contact Us:

For more information, community members can visit honolulustransit.org or call the information line at 566-2299.

Summary:

Last year, Kiewit Infrastructure West Co. was awarded the contract to build the first 6.5 miles of the Honolulu Rail Transit Project from East Kapolei to Pearl Highlands. The City and County of Honolulu recently issued a notice to proceed to Kiewit for design and pre-engineering activities including surveying and potholing to locate existing utilities and exploratory soil sample borings in East Kapolei and along Farrington Highway in Waipahu. During the pre-engineering field work, crews will be working on Farrington Highway between Waipahu High School and Fort Weaver Road along the median and shoulder lanes. Kiewit continues safety, public information and environmental training for all Kiewit staff, craft, subcontractors and consultants related to the project. Kiewit and the City continue with community relations efforts by keeping the public informed of lane closures and possible impacts.



West O'ahu/Farrington Highway Guideway Contract

Traffic Update
Week of October 10, 2010
Kiewit Preliminary Engineering Field Work

Traffic Impacts:

- Crews will be working 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. along Farrington Highway between Acacia Road and Kualakai Parkway on the median and shoulder with potholing, and boring activities. Potholing allows Kiewit to locate existing utilities, and boring for exploratory soil samples.
- Crews will be working 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. along Farrington Highway (eastbound) between Waipahu Depot Road and Aniani Place.
-

Traffic Plan:

- Work will require lane closures during non-peak traffic hours and shoulder work signage/cones along the side of the road to delineate work area.
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- Between Old Ft. Weaver Road Loop and Aloun Farms the two lane highway will be counter flowed using one lane.

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West O'ahu/Farrington Highway Guideway Contract

Traffic Update
Week of October 17, 2010
Kiewit Preliminary Engineering Field Work

Traffic Impacts:

- Crews will be working 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. along Farrington Highway between Acacia Road and Ala Ike St. on the median and shoulder with potholing, and boring activities. Potholing allows Kiewit to locate existing utilities, and boring for exploratory soil samples.
- Crews will be working 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. along Farrington Highway between Old Ft Weaver Road and Leoku Street.
- Crews will be working 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. Ala Ike St and Leeward Community College.

Traffic Plan:

- Work will require lane closures during non-peak traffic hours and shoulder work signage/cones along the side of the road to delineate work area.
- One lane of traffic in each direction along Farrington Highway will remain open.
- The two lane Ala Ike Street end at Leeward Community College will be counter flowed using one lane.

Contact Us:

For more information, community members can visit honolulutransit.org or call the information line at 566-2299.

Summary:

Last year, Kiewit Infrastructure West Co. was awarded the contract to build the first 6.5 miles of the Honolulu Rail Transit Project from East Kapolei to Pearl Highlands. The City and County of Honolulu recently issued a notice to proceed to Kiewit for design and pre-engineering activities including surveying and potholing to locate existing utilities and exploratory soil sample borings in East Kapolei and along Farrington Highway in Waipahu. During the pre-engineering field work, crews will be working on Farrington Highway between Waipahu High School and Fort Weaver Road along the median and shoulder lanes. Kiewit continues safety, public information and environmental training for all Kiewit staff, craft, subcontractors and consultants related to the project. Kiewit and the City continue with community relations efforts by keeping the public informed of lane closures and possible impacts.



West O'ahu/Farrington Highway Guideway Contract

Traffic Update
Week of October 24, 2010
Kiewit Preliminary Engineering Field Work

Traffic Impacts:

- Crews will be working 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. along Farrington Highway between North South Road and Kahualii Street on the median and shoulder with potholing activities. Potholing allows Kiewit to locate existing utilities, and boring for exploratory soil samples.
- Crews will be working 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. at Leeward Community College.

Traffic Plan:

- Work will require lane closures during non-peak traffic hours and shoulder work signage/cones along the side of the road to delineate work area.
- One lane of traffic in each direction along Farrington Highway will remain open.

Contact Us:

For more information, community members can visit honolulutransit.org or call the information line at 566-2299.

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West O'ahu/Farrington Highway Guideway Contract

Traffic Update
Week of October 31, 2010
Kiewit Preliminary Engineering Field Work

Traffic Impacts:

- Crews will be working 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. along Farrington Highway between North South Road and Kahualii Street on the median and shoulder with potholing activities. Potholing allows Kiewit to locate existing utilities.

Traffic Plan:

- Work will require lane closures from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. and shoulder work signage/cones along the side of the road to delineate work area.
- One lane of traffic in each direction along Farrington Highway will remain open.

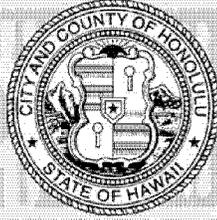
Contact Us:

For more information, community members can visit honolulustransit.org or call the information line at 566-2299.

Summary:

Last year, Kiewit Infrastructure West Co. was awarded the contract to build the first 6.5 miles of the Honolulu Rail Transit Project from East Kapolei to Pearl Highlands. The City and County of Honolulu recently issued a notice to proceed to Kiewit for design and pre-engineering activities including surveying and potholing to locate existing utilities and exploratory soil sample borings in East Kapolei and along Farrington Highway in Waipahu. During the pre-engineering field work, crews will be working on Farrington Highway between Waipahu High School and Fort Weaver Road along the median and shoulder lanes. Kiewit continues safety, public information and environmental training for all Kiewit staff, craft, subcontractors and consultants related to the project. Kiewit and the City continue with community relations efforts by keeping the public informed of lane closures and possible impacts.

NEWS RELEASE



Office of the Mayor

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 12, 2010

MAYOR CARLISLE TO SUPPORT RAIL TRANSIT IN WASHINGTON

(Tues., Oct. 12, 2010)—Mayor Peter Carlisle and other Honolulu officials will travel to Washington DC tomorrow to express their strong and unified support for the City's rail transit project.

"We are firmly committed to making this project the best that it can be," Carlisle said.

Carlisle, City Council Chairman Todd Apo, Councilmember Ikaika Anderson and Deputy Transportation Director Toru Hamayasu will meet Friday with Federal Transportation Administrator Peter Rogoff.

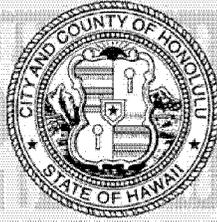
The Federal Transit Administration expects to provide at least \$1.55 billion for the project in total, and President Barack Obama included \$55 million for it in the 2011 federal budget.

City Managing Director Douglas Chin will serve as Acting Mayor during Carlisle's absence. Carlisle will remain in contact with his office and staff during the trip. He will return to Honolulu on Saturday.

-30-

Contact: Jim Fulton, Mayor's Office, 768-6928

NEWS RELEASE



Office of the Mayor
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 20, 2010

MAYOR CARLISLE THANKS ALL WHO HELPED WIN \$2.3 MILLION RAIL GRANT

(Wed., Oct. 20, 2010)—Mayor Peter Carlisle today expressed his appreciation to everyone who helped Honolulu secure a \$2,383,424 federal grant to implement a strategy for creating affordable housing along the City’s rail transit line.

“This is wonderful news for our community, and it reflects the hard work and cooperation of many people,” Carlisle said. “We are committed to making sure rail transit and Transit Oriented Development projects are done right, and this grant will be a big help.”

The Sustainable Community Challenge Planning Grant is being provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Honolulu received the fifth largest grant amount among the 44 grant recipients. The grants are provided to help communities address local challenges to integrating transportation and housing.

Carlisle thanked HUD, U.S. Senator Daniel Inouye and the other members of Hawaii’s congressional delegation who have strongly supported the rail project.

The mayor also expressed his appreciation to former Acting Mayor Kirk Caldwell and the staff of the City departments of Planning and Permitting, Transportation Services, and Community Services for helping prepare the grant application; and to community partners who assisted and/or wrote letters of support, including EAH Housing, Castle and Cooke, Pier Management Hawaii, Kamehameha Schools, Bank of Hawaii, the Trust for Public Lands, the local HUD office, and the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation.

The Federal Transit Administration expects to provide at least \$1.55 billion for the rail project, and President Barack Obama’s 2011 federal budget includes \$55 million for the project.

-30-

Media contact: Louise Kim McCoy, Mayor’s Office, 768-7798.

AR00078627



2010 GENERAL ELECTION TRANSIT AUTHORITY CHARTER AMENDMENT QUESTION

The Facts

On November 2nd, the voters of O`ahu will be asked to vote on a proposed amendment to the City Charter. Its passage will lead to the establishment of a public transit authority to govern the activities of the Honolulu Rail Transit Project.

The question on the ballot will read: *"Shall the revised City Charter be amended to create a semi-autonomous public transit authority responsible for the planning, construction, operation, maintenance, and expansion of the City's fixed guideway mass transit system?"*

What does this mean?

Voters will have the opportunity to decide whether a public transit authority should be established. A **YES** vote means that you support creating the transit authority. A **NO** vote means you do not support creating the transit authority. A **BLANK** or **SPOILED** ballot will not be counted. Regardless of the outcome of the vote, work on the project will continue.

Will this cost more money?

No, there would be no additional cost to create the transit authority as it utilizes existing staff and facilities. Members of the transit authority's board of directors would be volunteers.

What are the benefits of creating a new public transit authority for the rail transit system?

As the City Council determined in putting this question on the ballot, if established, an appointed transit authority would provide for timely and efficient management of the planning, construction, operation, maintenance, and expansion of the rail transit system, with sound principles and objectives for project delivery. A transit authority would have the ability to make decisions more quickly because of its singular focus: the success of the rail transit system.

The transit authority would manage the rail transit system's budget and fares, and be required to properly maintain the agency's financial status. It would also work hand-in-hand with the City Council and include the public in crucial issues such as setting fares and adopting a budget, further enhancing transparency and accountability.

For more information on the charter amendment, visit

www.HonoluluTransit.org



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Transit Authority

- Honolulu City Council approved placing a City Charter Amendment question on November 2 ballot:
“Shall the revised City Charter be amended to create a semi-autonomous public transit authority responsible for the planning, construction, operation, maintenance, and expansion of the City’s fixed guideway mass transit system?”

What is a Transit Authority?

- Single focus – success of the rail system: planning, construction, operation, and maintenance
- Appointed board of business and transit leaders
- Manage rail's budget, fares and maintain financial status
- Regardless of the vote on the Transit Authority, work on the project will continue.

What are the Benefits?

- Timely and efficient management
- No additional cost to create the authority; volunteer members; use existing staff and facilities
- Fiscal autonomy and accountability
- Checks and balances – requires City Council approval for funding and public meetings for crucial issues
- Transparency and accountability
- For more detailed information on the Charter Amendment, visit HonoluluTransit.org

Public Transit Authority Media Coverage

- Newspaper/Online stories
 - Star-Advertiser transit authority story by Gene Park “Proposal would create board to oversee rail” (Oct. 11, 2010)
 - Star-Advertiser transit authority mention in B.J. Reyes story “BOE’s future among amendment issues” (Oct. 17, 2010)
 - Civil Beat article “City asks voters: Have a HART?” (Oct. 22, 2010)
 - Civil Beat article “In newspaper ad, neutrality isn’t black and white” (Oct. 27, 2010)
 - Civil Beat article “Professors question need for transit authority” (Oct. 28, 2010)
 - Star-Advertiser story “Transit authority, housing office pass” (Nov. 3, 2010)
- Editorials/op-eds (print/online)
 - Star-Advertiser editorial “Yes to Transit Authority” (Oct. 24, 2010)
 - Civil Beat op-ed “The Last Word: Todd Apo on why Honolulu needs a transit authority” (Nov. 1, 2010)
 - Civil Beat op-ed “The Last Word: Cliff Slater on why voters should reject transit authority” (Nov. 1, 2010)
- TV interviews (taped)
 - PBS Island Insights interview with Toru (aired Sept. 30, 2010)
 - Mayor Carlisle discusses Transit Authority ballot initiative with TV media following Oct. 11 swearing-in
- TV morning talk shows
 - Channel 2 “Wake Up 2Day” (Oct. 12, 2010)
 - Hawaii News Now “Sunrise” (Oct. 19, 2010)

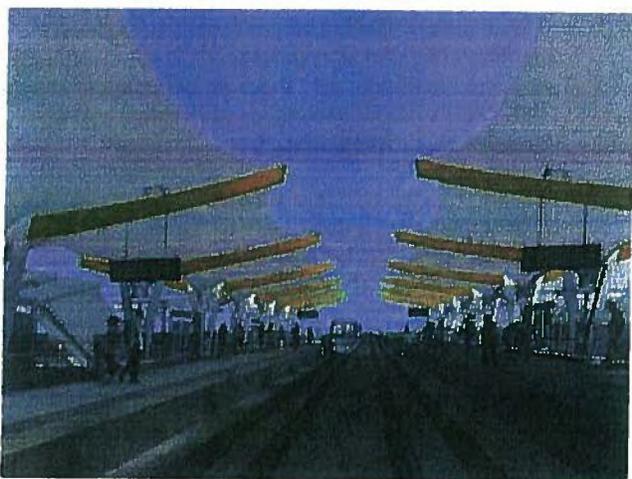
- Radio talk shows
 - Mike Buck (Mayor Carlisle)
 - Rick Hamada (Mayor Carlisle) (Oct. 26, 2010)
 - Perry & Price/KSSK (endorsement of transit authority) (Oct. 26, 2010)
- Ethnic media (Ads announcing ballot initiative)
 - Fil-Am Courier (Sept. 16, 2010)
 - Hawaii Filipino Chronicle (Sept. 16, 2010)
 - Hawaii Herald/Hochi

Star Advertiser

Proposal would create board to oversee rail

By Gene Park

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 11, 2010



A ballot question asks whether an agency should oversee the \$5.5 billion project.

Voters will decide next month whether to centralize oversight of the \$5.5 billion rail project under a 10-member authority.

Some City Council members argue that an appointed board of directors would depoliticize the project.

"When you have a group of people selected for the specific purpose of having jurisdiction over an entity like the mass transit project, I think you will get better decisions that way," said Councilman Ikaika Anderson, who is among the three who introduced the Council resolution last year to place the City Charter amendment on the general election ballot.

New board: What it is, what it would do

The following question will be on the general election ballot for Oahu voters:

"Shall the revised City Charter be amended to create a semiautonomous public transit authority responsible for the planning, construction, operation, maintenance and the expansion of the city's fixed guideway mass transit system?"

If enacted, the agency will be called the Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation. Its responsibilities include:

- » Making and executing contracts and labor agreements.
- » Acquiring property for the project by eminent domain, purchase, lease or other means.
- » Directing the planning, design and construction of the system.
- » Preparing annual operating and capital budgets for the system.
- » Creating, promoting and assisting transit-oriented development projects near the system that would promote ridership.

Source: City Council Resolution 09-252, CD1

Rail opponents, however, question whether the system, which only serves Oahu, needs what they characterize as "another layer of bureaucracy."

"When it crosses many political jurisdictions, it becomes really necessary," said Cliff Slater, a vocal critic of the project and chairman of HonoluluTraffic.com. "But we don't have that problem here. It's tough enough for Council members to get information out of the city directly without having to go through another layer."

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The proposed Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation, or HART, would govern rates, execute rail-related contracts and acquire property for the project through condemnation. Currently, the city and City Council are the administrative and decision-making bodies of the project.

"This board will be directly accountable for those things," said Toru Hamayasu, general manager of the city Rapid Transit Division. "It will almost be like the Board of Water Supply."

Creating the board through City Charter amendment is necessary because it is the Charter that grants control over the project to the City Council and the mayor, Hamayasu said.

The board would still answer to the City Council during the budgeting process and for approving bond sales and land acquisition through condemnation. But the authority would prepare its own capital budget and maintain the rail accounts.

It would also be required to hold public hearings before it can adopt a proposed budget, and before it can adjust fares.

"So there's always a check and balance," said City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi.

The board would be made up of three members appointed by the mayor and three by the City Council. The directors of the state Department of Transportation and the city Department of Transportation Services would be ex-officio voting members of the board.

Those eight members would vote for a ninth member. The city Department of Planning and Permitting director would be a 10th nonvoting member.

The City Council approved the question for the Nov. 2 ballot, in part, to minimize politics in the rail system, Council members have said.

"I wish we could've had this earlier in the process to really help coordinate all our transportation issues," Kobayashi said. "Although the appointing bodies are political, they'll be answerable to the public. Hopefully there will be more transparency in how the money's spent, especially when it comes to rail."

Panos Prevedouros, a University of Hawaii civil engineering professor and rail critic, said he believes forming an authority is a "political move from seasoned politicians beginning to shield themselves

from responsibility."

"It is to absolve the politicians of the boondoggle," said Prevedouros, who came in third place in last month's mayoral election.

Like Slater, Prevedouros said the board would be unnecessary given the size of the population and area the rail projected would serve. He cited TriMet, the Portland metropolitan transit agency that serves three counties, or the Chicago Transit Authority, which serves Chicago and 40 surrounding suburbs.

An organization of religious and community leaders said it supports the idea of having a rail board that does not have to run for re-election every few years.

"If you look at (former Mayor Mufi) Hannemann's administration and the rail project, it felt to me that it was very political," said Drew Astolfi, state director for Faith Action for Community Equity Hawaii, which supports rail construction.

"It would be nice to have an extra layer of distance. Most cities have a transit authority because it's just too big of a task to be left to the day-to-day work of the City Council, who is already doing a lot of other things."

Anderson said creating a board not made up of politicians would be an asset to the rail system's development. Political ambition and worries about re-election would not hamper the decision-making process, he said.

"These people will be making decisions on what's best for Honolulu's public, rather than what's best for their

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individual careers, as we've seen over the years," Anderson said. "We're not sure what kind of City Council or mayoral administration we're going to be facing over the outlying years."

Hamayasu said an authority will not cost much because the Rail Transit Division that is under the city Transportation Services Department would be the authority's staff.

Hamayasu said other jurisdictions have created boards to perform different functions.

"Some of them focus more on the operation because it crosses so many jurisdictions, while some are focused only on the construction part of it because they're still building," he said.

Hamayasu said although the city will not be doing any advocacy on the ballot question, his department is planning to disseminate information to the public, since excitement from the primary election has cooled.

For passage, the amendment needs 50 percent plus one vote. A blank or spoiled vote on the question will not be factored into the count, he said.

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Star Advertiser

BOE's future among amendment issues

By B.J. Reyes

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 17, 2010



STAR-ADVERTISER / JULY 2010

An artist rendering shows the proposed Waipahu light rail station. Among amendments on the Nov. 2 ballot is: "Shall the Revised City Charter be amended to create a semiautonomous public transit authority responsible for the planning, construction, operation, maintenance, and expansion of the city's fixed guideway mass transit system?"

RELATED STORIES

Voter's choice

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The future of the elected state Board of Education is one of two state constitutional amendments Hawaii voters will be asked to decide in this year's election.

At the county level, establishing a semiautonomous public transit authority responsible for oversight of a

fixed guideway mass transit system is among the issues before Oahu voters, along with a proposal to establish an Office of Housing directly under the mayor.

Statewide, the Board of Education question was among the most debated at the Legislature as lawmakers sought answers and accountability in the aftermath of Furlough Fridays for public school students.

The question: "Shall the Board of Education be changed to a board appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate, as provided by law?" could fundamentally change the statewide school board, which sets education policy and has been elected by voters since 1964.

Gov. Linda Lingle unsuccessfully fought for a constitutional amendment to give the governor power to appoint the schools superintendent, believing that authority would make the governor more accountable for education. But she also favors an appointed school board.

Lawmakers ultimately settled on an amendment approving an advice and consent process similar to the way the governor appoints members to the University of Hawaii Board of Regents.

Statewide, voters also will decide how the Legislature should spend surplus money if general fund revenues exceed 5 percent growth in two successive fiscal years.

In good economic times, lawmakers would be given the choice of providing taxpayers with a refund or credit — as mandated now — or depositing excess

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revenue into various state funds to supplement the state's general fund in times of emergency or severe economic downturn.

On Oahu, the public transit authority would be responsible for planning, construction, operation, maintenance and expansion of the city's fixed guideway system. The authority would have nine voting members with the ability to enter into contracts, acquire property and promote transit-oriented development.

The vote on the Office of Housing — to tackle homelessness and affordablehousing issues — would re-establish an agency that was eliminated by voters in 1998 as part of a government streamlining reorganization initiated by former Mayor Jeremy Harris in the wake of the Ewa Villages scandal.

Honolulu voters will decide a total of six Charter amendments on Nov. 2.

Maui voters have three charter amendments before them, including whether 2 percent of real property tax revenues from fiscal years 2008 to 2015 should be placed in an affordable housing fund.

Among the seven charter amendments being put to Kauai voters is one to double Council members' terms to four years with a limit of two consecutive terms.

Big Island voters face 19 Charter amendment questions, including proposals to reduce the number of signatures required for recall petitions of elected officials and increase the time allowed for gathering signatures, as well as measures aimed at natural resource preservation.

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Wednesday, November 3rd, 2010

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City Asks Voters: Have a HART?

By Adrienne LaFrance 10/22/2010

Voters' decisions on six charter amendment questions will shape the way Honolulu manages its operations. The first ballot question has generated the most attention because it pertains to the city's [rail transit plan](#).

The amendment would create a semi-autonomous agency that would have the power to set fares, buy and sell land, make contracts and issue revenue bonds pertaining to the rail project. Critics argue that the agency would have too much independence from the City Council.

Member Content: 2010 General Election Free Content Day brought to you by Civil Beat
Here's what you'll read when you vote:

"Shall the Revised City Charter be amended to create a semi-autonomous public transit authority responsible for the planning, construction, operation, maintenance, and expansion of the City's fixed guideway mass transit system?"

As listed in the question, above, the Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation (HART) would be responsible for:

- Planning
- Construction
- Operation
- Maintenance
- Expansion

It's a straightforward list that carries with it some serious and complex responsibilities.

As it stands, the city's director of the transportation services department, Wayne Yoshioka, is charged with supervising transportation systems in that capacity.

If passed, this charter amendment would transfer those directorial duties to a 10-member transit authority board, and any staffers currently in the department's rapid transit division would instead work for HART.

"It is configured in a way so that the rapid transit division would not be part of my department any more," Yoshioka said. "I think it's a good thing. My department would get smaller, and it allows (transit division staffers) to focus on their primary activity, which would be to build the rail."

Yoshioka said the separation from the rest of the department would make it easy for the public to track costs and spending on rail.

"As a semi-autonomous authority, the finances are isolated," Yoshioka said. "They're not mixed in with everything else."

But transit division finances are already parsed out in Yoshioka's departmental budget: "Every single line in the budget, how much we spend on office supplies and everything," he said.

It appears one of the most significant changes would be the City Council's involvement. Specifically, the transit authority would make and execute contracts and labor agreements. It would be able to enter into agreements with public and private agencies as it sees fit.

HART would also establish all fares, fees and charges for the rail line. It would oversee and manage all financial accounts pertaining to the line, and develop corresponding operating and capital budgets each year.

"I always thought the transit authority was alright, and I voted for it, but we're talking about very large sums of money," said Honolulu City Councilmember Ann Kobayashi, who is a vocal rail skeptic. "This is the largest project ever, and I worry about transparency."

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About the Author

Adrienne LaFrance
Honolulu Reporter-Host



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The new agency would still have to filter some of its decisions through the City Council. For example, it would have the power to purchase land for the rail line after notifying the council. The City Council would have 45 days to draft and approve a resolution objecting to the property acquisition, if it chooses.

The authority may also recommend to the City Council the sale of real property — all proceeds would go to the

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The authority would be charged with seeking federal assistance through grants, and would be allowed to issue revenue bonds, subject to council approval.

"I think elected officials want accountability, especially with a visible project like this," Yoshioka said. "They want to help but they get too much involved maybe. With (a transit authority), there's less detail to the council but all that detail shows up in the annual report but it's not intermingled with everything."

At least one city councilmember said the distance from the council that a semi-autonomous agency promises worries her.

"Whenever we spend taxpayers' money, then there should always be a check and balances," City Councilmember Ann Kobayashi said. "Because now the transit fund is still in the city budget, which goes through the City Council. There's that check and balance. But the letting of the contracts and how the money's being spent would be decided by the transit authority. And it always comes down to who the people on the board are."

Driving the Train

HART would be made up of 10 board members — nine voting members and one non-voting member — as follows:

- State Department of Transportation director
- City Department of Transportation Services director
- City Department of Planning and Permitting director (non-voting member)
- Board member appointed by mayor
- Board member appointed by mayor
- Board member appointed by mayor
- Board member appointed by City Council
- Board member appointed by City Council
- Board member appointed by City Council
- A tenth board member will be appointed by the eight voting board members

The board would choose its own executive director, and would have the right to remove that person after appointing him or her. Board members would be required to file an annual performance evaluation to the mayor and the City Council about its executive director, and about the authority's overall activities. All board members would be considered part-time staffers.

If Honolulu voters opt for the creation of a transit authority, one of its first tasks will be to develop a six-year capital program. That has to happen within the first six months of the authority's existence.

It's a lot of responsibility for 10 people, but there are external checks and balances built into the charter amendment. In addition to required annual reports filed by the authority, an annual financial evaluation by a certified public accountant — paid with the authority's funds — would also be mandatory.

But anytime the agency would want to expand the rail line — or make alterations to the line as it's planned thus far — the charter question specifies that the authority must seek council approval for "any new alignment, extension or addition to the fixed guideway system."

Comparisons with the Honolulu Board of Water Supply

Yoshioka said the authority would operate much like the semi-autonomous Honolulu Board of Water Supply, which split off from what was then the city's Sewer and Water Commission in 1929.

Kobayashi said, even with these checks and balances built in, comparisons to the Board of Water Supply make her nervous.

"The Board of Water Supply, I don't know what goes on there because a lot of what they do doesn't need Council approval or public hearings," Kobayashi said.

The Board of Water Supply does have public meetings, though, and some open records.

"The biggest difference (compared to city agencies) is that we are financially self-sufficient because we rely not

VIEWS

OUR VIEW

CHARTER AMENDMENTS



'Yes' to transit authority

For 40 years, rail transit for Oahu has been debated, studied, rejected, planned for, planned against, anguished over, voted on and finally approved. Now comes the hard part.

Barring extraordinary circumstances, work on Hawaii's biggest public works project — a 10-mile, \$5.5 billion guideway that will change the way Oahu residents commute between Kapolei and downtown — will proceed. And Honolulu voters have a chance to decide how this massive project will be managed.

Question No. 1 on the Nov. 2 ballot reads, "Shall the revised City Charter be amended to create a semi-autonomous public transit authority responsible for the planning, construction, operation, maintenance, and expansion of the city's fixed guideway mass transit system?"

Voters should choose "Yes."

The engineering, design and construction challenges will be unprecedented for Hawaii. The rail system will traverse, literally and figuratively, a landscape fraught with political landmines: vacant farmland on the Leeward side, urban areas now occupied by homes and businesses, potential Iwi burial sites in Kakaako.

A transit authority, with its semi-autonomy and singular focus, can respond to these inevitable hurdles far more efficiently than the current management structure, without eliminating reasonable safeguards for transparency and public input. Among its key components:

>> **Leadership:** The authority would be overseen by a 10-member board of directors including the state director of transportation, the city director of transportation services, three members selected by the City Council and three by the mayor, plus a ninth member selected by the first eight; the 10th member would be the city

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>> To view candidates on video, see www.olelo.org/whatson_vote_clf.htm.

director of the Department of Planning and Permitting, who would not have a vote.

>> **Management:** An executive director, appointed by the board, and supporting staff — mostly the city employees already working on rail — would comprise the front lines of the transit authority.

>> **General powers:** The authority could obtain property needed for the rail project, including condemning property through eminent domain, provided the City Council does not act within 45 days to stop it. The authority could also make and execute contracts, issue revenue bonds with Council approval, set fares and otherwise handle all aspects of the construction and management of the rail system.

The authority would not have unlimited powers. The City Council would have to approve the authority's budgets, its eminent domain decisions and bond sales. Public hearings would be required for the authority's budget and fare adjustments. The authority's accounts and financial status would be audited every year.

Even so, accountability is a concern. A

project this size must invite scrutiny of how the billions of dollars are spent. Elected officials may find it tempting to hide behind the authority's quasi-autonomous status to avoid taking responsibility for the inevitable problems that arise. Those who run the authority, the elected officials who ultimately oversee them and the private contractors and unions who contract with them should expect and welcome full public disclosure of the authority's activities. With that understanding, Oahu voters should approve creation of the transit authority.

OTHER City Charter amendment questions of interest to Honolulu voters include:

Question 2: This tightening of conflict-of-interest rules would restrict a newly appointed city department head's ability to make decisions using information gained from that person's previous employer.

Question 3: This is an attempt to strengthen the Liquor Commission's oversight, giving it more authority to hire or fire its administrator and deputy administrator.

Question 4: This clarifies inconsistent language in rules governing the public initiative process for creating new city ordinances.

Question 5: This would liberalize the city's rules in disposing of personal property.

Question 6: This would create a city office of housing to address affordable, senior and special needs housing and homelessness. The Star-Advertiser has endorsed this amendment (see www.staradvertiser.com/editorials/20101018_City_needs_an_Office_of_Housing.html).

For more information, go online to www.honoluluelections.org and click on the "2010 Proposed Charter Amendment" link.

Wednesday, November 3rd, 2010

HONOLULU CIVIL BEAT

Honolulu, HI 4:50 PM

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In Newspaper Ad, Neutrality Isn't Black and White

A recent newspaper ad touting the benefits of a proposed transit authority raised a question about how the city can spend taxpayers' money on a ballot issue.

It makes sense that city officials see a need to educate the public on what they're being asked to decide. But where should the line be drawn between education and advocacy?

This year we've seen different approaches coming out of Honolulu Hale.

Member Content: 2010 General Election Free Content Day brought to you by Civil Beat

City Clerk Bernice Mau told Civil Beat her office spent \$368 using in-house printing and a pamphlet-folding service to produce about 1,400 pamphlets detailing each of the six ballot questions. The pamphlets are available at Honolulu Hale, and the resolutions in question are also [posted online](#).

One of those questions — a resolution [to create a transit authority](#) to manage Honolulu's rail project — has also been presented to the public in a separate campaign.

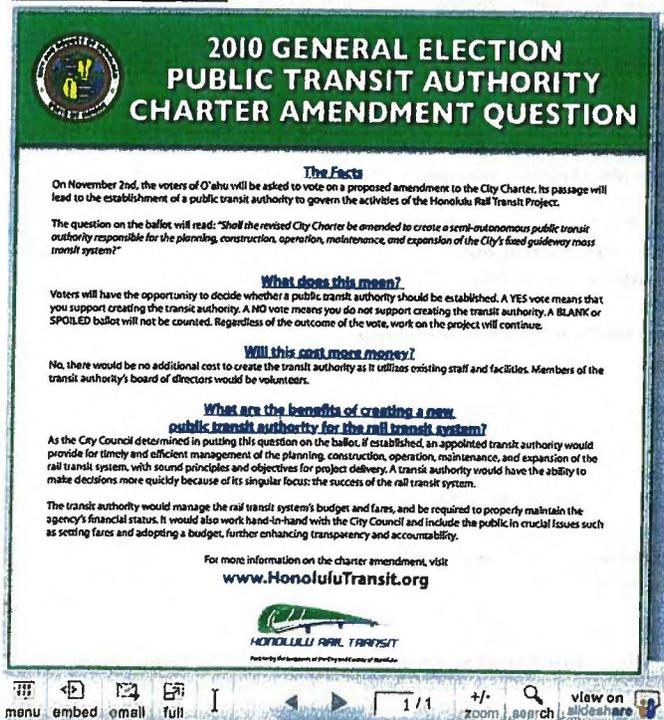
The city's rail transit division has shelled out \$40,898 for ads in the [Honolulu Star-Advertiser](#), MidWeek and some smaller community newspapers over the course of "a couple of months," said Jim Fulton, executive assistant to the mayor.

Mau appeared surprised when she heard the cost of the transit division's ad campaign.

"That's different than what we're doing," she said. "They have an agenda. It's different. Ours is just a reprint of the resolutions. We don't want to get into interpreting anything."

Given the estimated cost of the project — \$5.5 billion — rail transit staffers say the widespread outreach is not only justified but a basic responsibility given the project's scope.

Honolulu Charter Amendment Ad



2010 GENERAL ELECTION PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITY CHARTER AMENDMENT QUESTION

The Facts
On November 2nd, the voters of O'ahu will be asked to vote on a proposed amendment to the City Charter. Its passage will lead to the establishment of a public transit authority to govern the activities of the Honolulu Rail Transit Project.

The question on the ballot will read: "Shall the revised City Charter be amended to create a semi-autonomous public transit authority responsible for the planning, construction, operation, maintenance, and expansion of the City's fixed guideway mass transit system?"

What does this mean?
Voters will have the opportunity to decide whether a public transit authority should be established. A YES vote means that you support creating the transit authority. A NO vote means you do not support creating the transit authority. A BLANK or SPOILED ballot will not be counted. Regardless of the outcome of the vote, work on the project will continue.

Will this cost more money?
No, there would be no additional cost to create the transit authority as it utilizes existing staff and facilities. Members of the transit authority's board of directors would be volunteers.

What are the benefits of creating a new public transit authority for the rail transit system?
As the City Council determined in putting this question on the ballot, if established, an appointed transit authority would provide for timely and efficient management of the planning, construction, operation, maintenance, and expansion of the rail transit system, with sound principles and objectives for project delivery. A transit authority would have the ability to make decisions more quickly because of its singular focus: the success of the rail transit system.

The transit authority would manage the rail transit system's budget and fares, and be required to properly maintain the agency's financial status. It would also work hand-in-hand with the City Council and include the public in crucial issues such as setting fares and adopting a budget, further enhancing transparency and accountability.

For more information on the charter amendment, visit www.HonoluluTransit.org

HONOLULU RAIL TRANSIT
Providing the backbone of the city's rail transit system.

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About the Author

Adrienne LaFrance
Honolulu Reporter-Host



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City Asks Voters: Have a HART?

Primary Topic Pages

Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project

The content of the half-page ad in the Sunday paper raises more questions. There are four subheads:

- The facts
- What does this mean?

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taxpayer money to present only the benefits of a charter amendment put to the public for a vote?

Given that the city is prohibited from advocating passage or defeat of charter amendments, is it even legal?

City officials say there's no question the ad is legal.

"The public involvement team consulted with Corporation Counsel to be sure that the wording was taken nearly verbatim from the resolution," Fulton said. "It conforms with the prohibition against partisan advocacy."

One of the city's transit spokesmen, Bill Brennan, also emphasized that the language of the ad comes directly from the resolution. Some of it does, but many of the benefits are paraphrased to laud a potential transit authority's "singular focus," how its board members would use "sound principles and objectives for project delivery," and their ability to "make decisions more quickly." None of that language comes directly from the resolution.

But Brennan argued the language in the ad is actually less glowing than that in the resolution itself.

"Read the actual resolution," Brennan said. "It says, 'whereas, it is prudent and in the best interest of the City to establish a semi-autonomous public transit authority.' Prudent and in the best interest!"

But resolutions are written to be passed, and the language used in a resolution is meant to support that goal. There isn't a law prohibiting a resolution's inherent advocacy. There is a law prohibiting the city from encouraging voters to cast ballots one way or the other.

By only presenting the benefits of a possible transit authority, isn't the city lobbying for its passage?

A former State elections officer said, in legal terms, no.

"It doesn't sound like advocacy," said Robert Watada, former executive director of the Hawaii Campaign Spending Committee. "It would have to say, 'we want you to vote this way' or 'we want you to vote that way,' for it to be advocacy."

This isn't the first time the issue has come up. City Ethics Commissioner Chuck Totto was out of the office when Civil Beat called this week, but his office issued a decision on a similar matter two years ago.

Residents had called into question a glossy flier that former Mayor Mufi Hannemann's administration characterized as public information about a ballot question on rail. It cost more than \$100,000 in taxpayer money, and some taxpayers saw it as partisan advocacy. The ethics commission issued an opinion explaining it was not. That opinion echoes what Watada said about cut-and-dry cases of partisan advocacy.

"Partisan advocacy is easy to identify when it is express. Exhortations urging voters to vote in a certain way on an election matter -- 'vote Yes' or 'vote No' -- are clear cut examples of partisan advocacy.

'Vote for,' 'vote against,' 'elect,' 'support,' 'cast your ballot for,' 'defeat,' and 'reject,' are other examples of express partisan advocacy. ... Appeals to vote a particular way that uses these express words of partisan advocacy constitute political activities that clearly cannot be funded with public resources."

The commission also explained that the mayor had "implied power to spend public funds to inform and educate the public about matters of public concern, including matters that are subject to a vote."

But interpretation of the law isn't always so straightforward. The ethics commission went on to explain some of the nuances that got us asking about the transit ad in the first place:

"Not all partisan advocacy, however, is so blunt. Certain communications can implicitly urge voters to vote a particular way on an election matter even though they eschew express words of advocacy. For example, a communication can present information that is so heavily one-sided, or make arguments that favor one side of the debate, that it can only be reasonably interpreted as an unspoken appeal to vote a particular way.

These communications are, in other words, the 'functional equivalent' of express partisan advocacy, since they serve the same political purpose -- influencing voters to vote a certain way."

So we asked an increasingly exasperated Brennan to explain: Why did the city only explore the presumed

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The Last Word: Todd Apo on Why Honolulu Needs a Transit Authority

By Todd Apo 11/01/2010

Vote YES on the first Charter Amendment Question to create a Transit Authority for Honolulu's High Capacity Mass Transit System. The bottom line – a YES vote will help insure that our project is done right and with the least amount of political interference or motivation.

A Transit Authority takes the development and operations of the rail system out of the City Department of Transportation Services ("DTS"). Two immediate benefits are (i) It provides focus - DTS is charged with all of the other City transportation needs and projects already; and (ii) a Mayoral appointee will no longer be directly in charge of the project.



Courtesy of Honolulu For Rail Growth

The proposed Transit Authority would include a mix of members, appointed by both the Mayor and the City Council, providing a check and balance between the two branches of city government. Granted, politics will never be completely removed from any project of this magnitude. However, this separation from direct City department implementation is a much better format than would otherwise exist.

A Transit Authority is a model used successfully throughout the country for mass transit projects. In meeting with the Federal Transit Administration and Congressional Staff in early October, all were interested to hear about the prospects of our Transit Authority vote and expressed their positive view of such an authority for a project like ours. Over the years, I have met with transit authorities in cities like Denver, Salt Lake City, and New York, all of which have used authorities to develop and operate large scale projects like ours. The Transit Authority will be able to work WITH the Mayor and Council – not FOR them. The Authority will bring in expertise, specific to our rail project, with the necessary focus to provide success. This is a prioritization that cannot otherwise be guaranteed.

The Transit Authority will also be able to guide our Transit Oriented Development ("TOD") throughout the project. While rail brings needed transportation solutions, perhaps more important is the land use benefits that will significantly improve our island for generations to come. The cry to "keep the country, country" continues to grow. In order to avoid continued urban sprawl in areas that should remain open, we must be able to develop and grow in appropriate locations. TOD will provide such benefits, and the Transit Authority, tasked with coordinating TOD within the development of the rail project, is another important reason to vote YES.

Opponent arguments against the Transit Authority are misplaced. Some attempt to use this proposal to yet again argue against the rail project itself. This is not a vote on the rail project. That vote was taken and passed in 2008. This is a vote about how we implement the project, and even if this proposal fails to pass, the project keeps moving forward. A no vote only means that we will have a more difficult time developing and operating the system, leading to inefficiencies and issues that even rail opponents would not like to see.

Second, some argue that since our project does not cross jurisdictional lines (i.e. it is solely within the City and County of Honolulu), there is no reason for a Transit Authority. Not true. Certainly, one of the benefits of transit authorities implemented in other state is that they did help administer project across county and city boundaries. However, that's just one benefit of an Authority. The many others necessitate a YES vote for this proposal.

Whether or not you support that rail project, you should vote YES and support the creation of the Transit Authority. It is the best way to develop and operate our rail project. A no vote will not stop the project. Please vote YES and together, we will move Honolulu into a brighter future for all of us.

DISCUSSION: [Share your thoughts about the transit authority and read what others have to say about it in our rail discussion.](#)

Todd Apo is chairman of the City Council.

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The Last Word: Cliff Slater on Why Voters Should Reject Transit Authority

By Cliff Slater 11/01/2010

One of the November 2nd ballot question reads:

"Shall the revised City Charter be amended to create a semi-autonomous public transit authority responsible for the planning, construction, operation, maintenance, and expansion of the City's fixed guideway mass transit system?"



Kimberly Lee

The City tries to sell us on a Transit Authority with this:

"If established, a transit authority would have the ability to make decisions more quickly ... would also provide for timely and efficient management of the planning, construction, operation, maintenance, and expansion of the rail transit system ... and include the public in crucial issues ... further enhancing transparency and accountability."

In reality, what a Transit Authority will do is protect our elected councilmembers from accountability for the future rail calamities such as cost overruns and ridership shortfalls. And when the voters go ballistic over the additional traffic congestion caused by rail's construction, their ire will have to be directed at the semi-autonomous, semi-anonymous Transit Authority since elected officials will not be found anywhere near it.

What are the supposed benefits of a Transit Authority? The only real necessity to create a Transit Authority is when there are adjoining cities or counties which wish to merge their various transit operations into one entity. Our authority is not even going to merge rail and bus operations. Since the City promised that there will be a common transit pass for both rail and bus, one wonders how they will allocate the revenues.

The City tells us that the Authority can "make decisions more quickly." By that they really mean that the Authority will be authorized to bypass many of the safeguards in place to prevent overly quick decisions on eminent domain, bond issues, and large expenditures.

A Transit Authority for "enhancing transparency and accountability?" Now we know they are kidding. In reality, the Transit Authority is to shield elected officials from being accountable. At least with the Council we can listen in to their actions on 'Olelo. When did you last know about the goings on at the semi-autonomous, semi-anonymous City Board of Water Supply? We would love to listen in to hear how they justify allowing every precious drop of rain water to go downstream to the ocean through concrete culverts carefully designed to ensure that this pure mountain water never contaminates our aquifer — and then they beg us to use less water?

The City tells us that the Authority will provide, "efficient management of the ... maintenance ... of the rail system." Let's look what has happened with maintenance at other authorities.

Last year the Federal Transit Administration released a study that had been requested by a number of U.S. Senators whose states contain the nation's seven largest rail transit systems. Together, these seven authorities "serve more than 80 percent of all rail transit riders."

In the aggregate, the study found that to bring these systems up to a State of Good Repair (SGR) will cost the nation's taxpayers slightly more than \$50 billion. FTA's definition of State of Good Repair means only halfway between "marginal" and "adequate." To be fully "adequate," "good," let alone "excellent" would take much greater funding. This is misleading; FTA should have called the program a State of Marginal Repair.

Note that it was "Authorities" that were responsible for the existing seven rail lines being \$50 billion behind in maintenance.

And if you think that our councilmembers would not be shielded from blame, do an internet search for newspaper coverage on these problem authorities. Note that it is the authorities that are being blamed, not the elected officials. This is why elected officials want a "Transit Authority." When there are unexpected hits on the City Budget, it will be the semi officials in the semi-anonymous "Transit Authority" that will take the heat.

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Discussion: Honolulu Rail

It is the known elected officials we see on 'Olelo that need to be held accountable for the misfortunes that will overtake rail, not an appointed board of unknown, unelected, group of the usual suspects.

Require our elected Councilmembers to be accountable; vote NO on November 2.

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- [Council Resolution](#)
- Honolulu Rail Transit Update, email. City and County of Honolulu. October 8, 2010
- The seven agencies are Chicago, Massachusetts, (New York) Metropolitan Transit Authority, New Jersey, San Francisco, Southeastern Pennsylvania and Washington. Note that they are all either an "Authority," or in the case of San Francisco's BART "District" and New Jersey's Transit "Corporation," they are the same type of semi-autonomous public organizations as the "Authorities."

DISCUSSION: *Share your thoughts about the transit authority and read what others have to say about it in our [rail discussion](#).*

Cliff Slater is a leader of the group [HonoluluTraffic.com](#).



Have feedback? Suggestions? Email Us!

..., Chang onents

wisely so it can less."
ayo, 29, won out over Moepono, 60, in the district, which includes own Honolulu, Liliha, alley and a portion il.
ayo, a first lieutenant Hawaii Army National was 21 in 2002 when came the youngest or ever elected to te se.

DAUGHTER of state ke Gabbard and forward of Education er Carol Gabbard, o pointed to her ord experience" in lfferent areas, comvith the "freshness" d voters are looking he Council.

echoed Chang's ts on voters picking ates with new ideas. een an amazing gn, and (yesterday a wonderful day e out," Tamayo said. sign-waving at each precincts, I worked through the entire, ending in Kalihi Val had over 30 sign-were."

istrict 2, White and traded the lead, with eading early and pulling slightly n returns. th intout gave the edge over White. in, 50, is an attorney s worked for the city

for 23 years, most recently as acting director of community services, a job that pays \$112,000. A City Council member receives about \$52,000, he said.

Martin said his platform is built on preserving open space, and constituents have told him to fix basic services in the district, including keeping restrooms clean at parks, having the rubbish emptied and improving the roads.

District 2 is the biggest and most agricultural of Oahu's nine Council districts and includes Milliani Mauka, the North Shore and parts of Windward Oahu down to Heela.

Four new members will be on the nine-person Honolulu City Council come January, and a fifth will be added with Chairman Todd Apo's impending resignation.

Former Board of Education member Breene Harimoto ran unopposed in the primary election for the District 8 seat, which includes Aiea, Pearl City and Waipio Gentry.

The Council newcomers will have to perform yeoman's duty to balance financial realities with citizen needs.

The city's \$5.5 billion planned rail transit project, meanwhile, is undergoing a state review to determine the financial "reasonableness" of the city's plans to



Stanley Chang:
His canvassing found residents wanted "a fresh start, fresh ideas."



John White:
He is an advocate of renewable energy and sustainable agriculture.



Tulei Gabbard Tamayo:
She cites "real-world experience" combined with "freshness."

fund the largest, most expensive public works project ever undertaken in Hawaii.

[CITY CHARTER AMENDMENTS]

Transit authority, housing office pass

STAR-ADVERTISER STAFF

Oahu voters approved yesterday the creation of new city government agencies to oversee the \$5.5 billion rail transit project and to coordinate public housing programs.

In all, voters approved all six proposed amendments to the Honolulu City Charter.

The question with the highest profile was the proposal to create a Public Transit Authority to oversee the construction and operation of Oahu's rail transit system, the biggest public works project in state history.

It will be a semi-autonomous city agency, similar to the Board of Water Supply. There would be a 10-member board of directors — including the city and state transportation directors — and an executive director chosen by the board.

The transit authority's powers will include acquiring land via condemnation (subject to City Council approval), executing contracts, issuing bonds and setting fares.

The initial phase of the rail line will run 20 miles from Kapolei to Ala Moana Center.

Mayor Peter Carlisle appeared in a TV ad in support of the transit authority question.

Voters also approved a

proposed amendment to create a new city Office of Housing, whose tasks are now handled by the Department of Community Services.

The office will administer projects regarding affordable housing, senior housing, special-needs housing and homelessness.

The office will also secure and administer funds, grants and loans for affordable housing for low- to moderate-income people or homeless people.

Voters also approved amendments to:

>> Tighten conflict-of-interest rules to prohibit a newly appointed city officer from participating in a matter involving that officer's previous employer for one year.

>> Strengthen the Liquor Commission's oversight and give it more authority to hire or fire its administrator and deputy administrator, who would become nonunion employees on July 1.

>> Clarify inconsistent language in rules governing the public initiative process for creating new city ordinances. This will clear up issues such as when a petition may be filed.

>> Liberalize the city's rules on selling off small, no-longer-used items such as office supplies and equipment.