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Comments to ORTP 2030 modifications

Link: <http://www.oahumpo.org/ortp/ORTP2030/ORTP%202030%20Modifications%20to%20Projects.pdf>
ORTP 2030 Link: <http://www.oahumpo.org/ortp/ORTP2030/Draft%20ORTP%202030.pdf>

Rail is unfriendly to elderly, disabled and transit dependents -

The plan's Environmental Justice statement is just talk, an empty promise. The OMPO plan prioritizes transit for the physically fittest, with no specific acknowledgement of the travel needs for the severest physically challenged: the elderly and disabled. The needs of transit dependents —the elderly, poor, women, minority and handicapped — are subordinated to rail travel for affluent commuters.

EJ Curry on OMPO CAC has made repeated requests to enhance and add services for disabled, and her concerns on behalf of the disabled community have not been satisfactorily addressed. Making it regular practice for Handi-Van riders to call for appointments two days in advance is totally unacceptable. While the plan points to Pedestrian and Bike projects, no specific projects are identified for children, seniors and disabled people.

Waiting for an efficient traffic light signal synchronization system that works –

Traffic light signal synchronization system must be a top priority, to make it work effectively as soon as possible. The motoring public should not be expected to wait any longer for a “traffic control center.” Inadequate staffing of the traffic light control system has been a problem for too many years, causing needless accidents, traffic congestion delays and costs for motorists.

Waikiki is snarled in traffic congestion all day long every day –

FHWA funds were used for enhancement (beautification) projects in Waikiki that created severe and more frequent congestion problems of longer durations. Waikiki is the heart of Hawaii's tourism industry and businesses struggle daily all day long in traffic congestion. Proliferation of potholes and narrowed traffic lanes worsen dangerous driving conditions as drivers swerve and squeeze into adjacent lanes. In many cases, walking is faster

It is imperative to provide a realistic evacuation plan, as all of Waikiki is in a tsunami inundation zone. Prevailing conditions are already unacceptable. In case of impending disaster, evacuation will take longer and jeopardize many lives. It is very troubling to rely on a plan mostly for pedestrians to escape into hotels. Due to the many bottlenecks and with Ala Wai already bumper to bumper from morning to night, motorists need practical exit routes to evacuate. The public including private transportation operators

have not been provided with a clear, publicly advertised evacuation plan that includes reversing lane directions or physical changes to roads and directions.

Among many other possibilities, we suggest:

Ala Wai Boulevard – remove four landscaped “bulb outs” on mauka curb lane to restore a through lane of traffic for peak hour travel and for parking in non-peak hours. The elimination of the mauka curb lane has created congestion from early morning to about 10 p.m. daily, clogging down traffic within Waikiki proper as this exitway is clogged.

Kuhio Avenue at Kaiulani – remove the Jeremy Harris administration’s widened bulbout(s), most particularly at the intersection of Kaiulani and Kuhio, on both sides of the street. This chronic bottleneck backs up traffic on Kuhio. This intersection is the entranceway to Koa Street Hyatt Regency and the surrounding Sheraton properties including Princess Kaiulani, Moana & Surfrider on Kalakaua. In addition to delivery and private transportation services, valet parking add to volume of traffic in the heart of Waikiki. The street directional patterns must be reevaluated for evacuation and to permit delivery activities sufficient to service these hotels. The bulb out at Maile Skycourt causes a bottleneck.

Kalakaua Avenue at Kaiulani – this bottleneck is a death trap. Remove the bulbout and open up laneage on Kalakaua to Uluniu or beyond, and prohibit police and entertainers’ parking at and around the Kuhio police station to restore lane capacity to relieve that bottleneck. Several severe accidents and a number of terrible pedestrian fatalities have occurred in that area due to elimination of the makai curb lane, creating a bottleneck at that high volume traffic area of Outrigger / Duke’s, Moana / Surfrider on the makai side, and PK and Hyatt on the mauka side.

Kapahulu Avenue, Monsarrat, Kalakaua – take off expansive sidewalk areas on both sides of the street corners, to add another traffic lane headed makai into Kalakaua and Monsarrat. That lane has been at level D or F ever since that two lanes turning left, one for Monsarrat and one for Kalakaua, were reduced to one lane for both Monsarrat and Kalakaua, backing up traffic on Kapahulu past Kuhio and to Paki Ave.

Waikiki side streets – the bulb outs and on street planters have narrowed the side streets to practically one lane. For example, Namahana is so narrow that motorists have to stop to allow the buses and trucks to pass. Trees were planted on several streets including Namahana, Olohana, Keoniana, etc. Opening up the curb lanes and providing alternate route to Ala Wai is vital for exit not only for evacuation but also for Waikiki big events and parades.

Taxpayer Funding for Transit-Oriented-Development Projects not disclosed –

The plan fails to inform the public that the huge rail transit subsidy is in addition to a huge taxpayer subsidy for Transit Oriented Developments at and around the train stations. The public has not being educated or notified about the risk and burden to place

further increased taxes upon the people of Honolulu and Hawaii. None of the proponents are talking about the huge subsidies involved and the history of waste of public subsidies that pervades the concept elsewhere.

HOTway between Ewa and Downtown Honolulu is only hypothetical –

We note that a two lane reversible grade separated hotway — a highway for transit and traffic relief — is in the plan, albeit only as an unfunded “illustrative project.”

The public review and discourse has been inadequate, the process is rushed and closed. We strenuously object to the Policy Committee’s April 4th approval of the plan when the public comments due March 15th have not even been publicly disclosed and with only four days between today’s comment deadline and the final vote, again without the benefit of public review.

In any case, compared to numerous long range plans elsewhere, Oahu’s RPT is superficial, showing little promise for traffic relief, economic vitality and quality of life and work on Oahu.

Respectfully submitted,

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President

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