

Public Involvement Overview

September 2008

	Month
Hotline Calls*	15
Comment Sense Comments/Inquiries*	25
FOIA requests	0
Speakers Bureau	43
Presentation/Events	34
Neighborhood Boards	9
TAC	0
Workshops	0

Hotline and Comment Sense reporting includes requests for additions/changes to the project mailing list.

Neighborhood Board reporting includes both full presentations and project briefings.

September 1, 2008

Letters to the Editor

mass transit

Commuters can't wait for relief of rail system

Since so many people signed the "stop rail transit" petition, please post their names — it should be interesting if it is stopped when their children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren do research and come across their relative's name.

I'm sure they would be so disappointed because they will be stuck in traffic, which only will get worse. I'd also like to see if some of my own relatives have signed the petition.

Living in Central O'ahu, I surely don't want double-decker highways and freeways, since it will cause more of a traffic jam while building, along with not getting vehicles off the road.

We can't wait for the rail to be built and running. I sure would love to be able to ride it in my lifetime, and knowing that our future here on O'ahu, the Gathering Place, won't be known only as one with terrible traffic jams filled with cars, vans, trucks, buses and taxis, and no traffic-free rail system.

Please wake up, "stop rail transit" folks!

Julie Lee | Mililani



Vol. 13, Issue 245 - Monday, September 1, 2008

Letters to the Editor

Gridlock will get worse without rail system

We want rail! I do not believe that anyone who sits in Honolulu traffic at 7:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. daily can be against the proposed rail system.

Four years ago during rush hour it took me 20 minutes to get from Aina Haina to the airport. Now it takes one hour.

There are rail systems in most major cities in the world, such as Portland, San Francisco, New York, Boston, Sydney, Hong Kong, Washington, Amsterdam, Chicago and Paris, just to name a few.

The only reason that there is less traffic in downtown San Francisco is because of BART. And the argument that a rail system will destroy Honolulu's landscape and view is bogus. I personally do not get satisfaction out of watching the freeway turn into a virtual parking lot!

I challenge people to take off their blinders and see the situation for what it is: gridlock on a daily basis, and it is not going to get any better.

Please do not live in denial, vote for rail.

Debra Witteveen
Honolulu

September 2, 2008

Letters to the Editor

traffic

Gridlock a good reason to support rail system

I do not believe that anyone who sits in Honolulu traffic at 7:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. daily can be against the proposed rail system. Four years ago during rush hour it took me 20 minutes to get from 'Aina Haina to the airport. Now it takes one hour.

There are rail systems in most major cities in the world, such as Portland, San Francisco, New York, Boston, Washington, Amsterdam, Chicago and Paris, just to name a few.

The only reason that there is less traffic in downtown San Francisco is because of the BART system. As for the argument that a rail system will destroy Ho-nolulu's landscape and view: I personally do not get satisfaction out of watching the freeway turn into a virtual parking lot! I challenge people to take off their blinders and see the situation for what it is: gridlock on a daily basis, and it is not going to get any better!

Please do not live in denial. Vote for rail.

Debra Witteveen | Honolulu

September 3, 2008

Letters to the Editor

'Ewa

Residents kept their end of deal, state didn't

Thirty-plus years ago I and others were told, "Go west, young man, go west." We did.

We were told businesses will come. They did. We were told government will come. It did.

Unfortunately, the improvements in freeways didn't.

For example, it's taken the state 25 years from planning to almost completing the four-mile North-South road. During those same years, thousands of homes have been built in 'Ewa.

What used to be a five- or seven-minute commute out of 'Ewa now can take 45 minutes.

Now it's our fault there is all this traffic coming out of the west?

So let's create a toll road and make me pay for government's failures.

I'm all for toll roads, but with a little twist. When I pull up to that toll booth, the state should pay me and all the people on the west side (especially those who live in 'Ewa) for the continual deterioration of our quality of life because of their poor planning and incompetence. We kept our end of the deal. The state failed miserably in keeping its end of the deal.

Mike Freitas | Kapolei

September 3, 2008

City asks input on rail-transit contracts

By SEAN HAO

Advertiser Staff Writer

The city is soliciting feedback on how to craft future design and construction contracts for Hono-lulu's train project.

Companies have until 4 p.m. tomorrow to provide suggestions and express an interest in working on the \$3.7 billion elevated commuter train. According to a solicitation posted on the city's Web site on Aug. 21, the city wants input on the scope of the contemplated contracts, which are expected to be awarded in late 2009.

The city is strongly suggesting companies respond to the request for information. However, firms that fail to respond may still participate in future transit procurements, according to the posting.

Details on how to respond to the RFI are available on the city's Web site at www.honolulu.gov/pur/.

In addition to seeking comments on the 20-mile system, which would link East Kapolei to Ala Moana, the city revealed further details about what's being called phase one of the transit project.

Phase one includes construction of the guideway and stations from East Kapolei to a proposed station/park-and-ride near Pearl Highlands. Phase one also includes building a maintenance facility.

The city is considering three major components in phase one. These include:

- A 3.5-mile Farrington Highway design build contract. This section would include seven segments of 200 feet or longer and about 140 foundations.
- A 3-mile West O'ahu design build contract. This segment will include about 105 foundations.
- A 124,000-square-foot maintenance facility.

Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann hopes to break ground on the project in December 2009. Phase one is expected to open in December 2012.

September 3, 2008

Clerk to say today if rail ballot issue passes muster

Advertiser Staff

The Honolulu city clerk expects to announce today whether Stop Rail Now has enough valid voter signatures to place an anti-rail question on the November ballot.

However, it's unlikely the group has the 44,525 signatures the city says are needed to place the anti-rail ordinance on the ballot.

An official announcement from City Clerk Denise De Costa is expected to come sometime today.

Stop Rail Now's ballot issue reads: "Honolulu mass transit shall not include trains or rail."

Separately, a Circuit Court judge today will hold a hearing on the issue of how many signatures are required to place that ordinance on the ballot.

Stop Rail Now maintains it needs only about 30,000 signatures.

Yesterday, Stop Rail Now announced that it has independently verified that more than 35,000 signatures on its petition are from registered voters.

September 3, 2008

Supreme Court rejects Stop Rail Now's effort to save election ballot measure

Group already said it doesn't have enough signatures to meet court standard

Advertiser Staff

The Hawaii Supreme Court has rejected Stop Rail Now's request for emergency relief from an earlier court ruling. That lower court ruling and the City Clerk's count of the number of valid signatures on Stop Rail Now's petition effectively kills the group's effort to get its question on the November ballot.

However, Honolulu voters will still get to vote on rail in November. That's because the City Council has already approved a ballot measure that asks voters whether the city shall "establish a steel wheel on steel rail transit system."

The council's wording was to be placed on the ballot only if Stop Rail Now's ballot effort failed. Honolulu Circuit Court Judge Karl Sakamoto this morning reinforced his earlier ruling stating that Stop Rail Now would need about 44,500 valid signatures to get its anti-rail ordinance on the November ballot. The decision means the group's proposed ordinance stating "Honolulu mass transit shall not include trains or rail," will not be on the ballot. Stop Rail Now maintained it needs only about 30,000 signatures. Later today Honolulu City Clerk Denise De Costa is expected to announce whether Stop Rail Now's petition, which was submitted earlier this month, contains the necessary signatures. However Stop Rail Now has already conceded that its petition does not contain 44,500 valid voter signatures. The deadline to collect more signatures has passed.



Vol. 13, Issue 247 - Wednesday, September 3, 2008

Deadline hits for city to vet anti-rail petition

By Laurie Au
lau@starbulletin.com

An anti-rail group should find out today whether its version of a question opposing the city's proposed \$4 billion rail transit system will make the November general election ballot.

Today is the deadline for City Clerk Denise De Costa to determine if enough registered voters signed Stop Rail Now's petition. Today is also the group's last chance to get a state judge to rule in its favor on the number of signatures needed to get the issue on the ballot.

De Costa said yesterday she did not have a final count and gave no indication whether the group had enough signatures.

Meanwhile, Stop Rail Now said yesterday it expects to have about 35,000 verified signatures, according to its own process of checking the signatures with an online voter registration site.

While that number is unofficial, Stop Rail Now has to go back and ask Circuit Judge Karl Sakamoto to reverse his previous ruling saying the group needs about 45,000 verified signatures.

The group contends it needs about 30,000.

Regardless of the outcome, there will be a ballot question for voters in November. The City Council and Mayor Mufi Hannemann have already approved creating a question to ask voters whether the city should build a "steel wheel on steel rail" system. That question will appear only if Stop Rail Now fails in its petition initiative.

"There's a possibility we could fail," said Dennis Callan, co-chairman of Stop Rail Now. "If that does happen, then the alternative is there with the City Council's version. But the City Council's action is a direct result of what we have done. Our work will not be in vain."

Callan said he prefers Stop Rail Now's question to be on the ballot after the group collected 49,041 signatures

over the last four months.

[Read 1 comment »](#)

Type in your comments to post to the forum

Name
(appears on your post)
You are currently logged in as . [Not ?](#)
Name
(appears on your post)

Comments

Type the numbers you see in the image on the right:



*Please note by clicking on "Post Comment" you acknowledge that you have read the [Terms of Service](#) and the comment you are posting is in compliance with such terms. **Be polite.** Inappropriate posts may be removed by the moderator. [Send us your feedback.](#)*

Article URL: <http://starbulletin.com/2008/09/03/news/story08.html>
© 1996-2008 The Honolulu Star-Bulletin | www.starbulletin.com

MidWeek

Mufi Takes His Train To Church

September 03, 2008

By Midweek Staff

Now that "we, the people" can vote on rail, another of our precious First Amendment rights is being affronted: freedom to practice our religion without input from government.

Mayor Hannemann is actively lobbying pastors of Hawaii's churches to make his pro rail case, saying their parishoners should be informed on this "non-political, quality of life" issue. The mayor's pro rail team has already made a strong one-sided pitch to a Oahu pastor's forum. Non-political? Really? The mayor is running for reelection and the issue is on the ballot. And thank goodness.

One thing I've learned from doing mission work in Africa is to appreciate the freedoms our our Constitution guarantees.

Our "Bill of Rights," the first 10 Amendments, is like the American Express platinum card of freedom. And, it's no coincidence the very first amendment our nation's founders conceived guarantees freedom of religion, press and expression, which ensures our right of speech, petition and assembly.

{embed="elements/box_ad"}

To petition government is fundamental. Unlike California, in Hawaii we don't have a "referendum" that allows citizens to recall elected officials and repeal and enact state laws by initiative. The only way we can effect change in a law or action by elected officials is to gather signatures on petitions.

It takes a herculean effort to organize and run a petition drive, especially if thwarted by the elected officials whose program the petition drive could "derail."

We've just witness "freedom of expression" action our founding fathers would've cheered: Stop Rail Now. And whether we're for or against the mayor's rail project - I'm against - we should give the folks that gathered 49,000-plus signatures a standing ovation. In barely three months with limited financial resources, they've proven citizen action can work.

But it's been like David against Goliath.

When Mayor Hannemann vowed to "do everything legally possible to see that this (voter initiative) doesn't go through," he meant it, and true to his word, City Clerk Denise DeCosta rejected the petitions saying they were past deadline.

But Judge Karl Sakamoto ruled. "The voice of the people should not be suffocated by the erroneous readings of the law by its own government," he announced sternly, saying that the people who gathered these signatures "would suffer irreparable harm" if the initiative couldn't go on the general election ballot.

Every attempt by the mayor and City Council members favoring the \$5 billion (inflation adjusted), minimum 10-year rail project to squelch its opposition has only made people wonder why such fear of the ballot box?

{embed="elements/google_ad336x280"}

"Rail transit is not appropriate for Honolulu ... too much money for too little result ... it is disturbing that so much of the funds are going for high-powered public relations efforts," says former Hawaii governor, Ben Cayetano.

Using our own tax dollars to run expensive television ads to convince us to approve a rail project we're already paying for through a GET raise flies in the face of the democratic spirit.

Now after four years, contractors and even the mayor publicly admit the Rail Mass Transit is a development project, not one to alleviate traffic like 2004 campaigns promised.

There's no shame in wanting to develop land prudently. Shame comes in the misleading.

Because other viable and far less expensive alternatives to steel-on-steel rail have been so explicitly laid out by experts on mass transit (at their own expense, with nothing to gain financially or politically), it's clear that giving commuters from Ewa Oahu a faster-implemented, less-expensive, more-flexible commute isn't the motive, it's development - and it's hardcore politics. Labor unions, developers, contractors and others who stand to gain financially by rail are willing to spend any amount to convince us that this massive project will end traffic woes and give us a better life. A large, loud (eventually dirty) train slicing across West Oahu at 25 mph stopping at 26 stations (surrounded by high rises) appeals to some. Fair enough.

Construction corporations and unions have donated heavily to the mayor's campaign. I point out Parsons Brinckerhoff Inc. to watch as the campaign on rail unfolds. This worldwide transit projects builder has paid thousands to the Hannemann campaign, through its staff and PAC. While legal, it's shocking that rail line work isn't restricted to the normal competitive bidding process, rather "political discretion."

Interpretation: Mufi decides. (Click on Special Report at <https://nc.csc.hawaii.gov/CFSPublic/Index.php> and search special candidate contributions, or go to www.stoprailnow.com).

Find this article at: http://www.midweek.com/content/columns/susanspage_article/mufi_takes_his_train_to_church/

MidWeek

Ways To Improve Riding TheBus

September 03, 2008

By Jade Moon

Quick note: Last week you read this stupidly constructed sentence at the top of my column: "I *recently* expressed support for rail in a *recent* column ..."

My red-faced apologies, especially to all of my former English teachers out there.



I received some interesting e-mails from bus-riding readers who had their own suggestions for TheBus. Most were positive about their experiences but pointed out there is room for improvement.

Yvonne, who recently got her senior pass, commented about the recorded messages announcing the street names. She says they're often garbled or too soft to hear. "One day I was on Kuhio on a double bus, sitting on the part where the two buses are joined, and was unable to see out any window or hear the street names as they were called out. The sound often doesn't get to the back of the bus whether it's a single or double. I had to ask someone in one of the regular seats where we were so I knew where to get off."

{embed="elements/box_ad"}

One elderly couple said they love the convenience of the bus but often feel unsafe and uncomfortable at the bus stops. "Many of the stops are filthy, smell of urine, and have shopping carts with plastic bags full of junk and no place to sit. Yesterday we were approached by one man begging for money. One in particular that is the worst is the stop at King and Kalakaua Waikiki-bound. Once I went to sit on the bench and a homeless man was sleeping on the ground behind me with another sitting on the bench smoking. The smell is horrific. They are there every day. They even have a desk chair behind the bench that they sit in as well.

"Believe me I have 100 percent empathy for the homeless, and I would hope the city/county can assist them in any way possible. It just appears to me that when we are waiting for TheBus the homeless act as if we are invading 'their' space and make it very uncomfortable for us."

A few riders pointed out that some of the drivers should be sent back to customer service school. Ron says, "Although most drivers are courteous, there are some that have no public service skills. When tourists or locals are asking if they stop at a certain stop, they just say "No" and not tell them what bus to catch. It's embarrassing and rude. If you make more money than teachers, at least educate riders what bus to catch."

I agree with this reader. Our aloha spirit has been a selling point, touted by the mayor and stressed as a priority by the folks who run TheBus. A few bad apples among your drivers can trash your best efforts and discourage countless people from coming back.

Most of the readers who wrote to me are hoping that as more people hop on board, the city will take note and address these legitimate concerns in order to turn the first-timers into true bus converts.



After watching the Democratic National Convention on cable (forget the major networks, they set records for political irrelevance. Were they even there?) I have come to the conclusion that next time I will watch C-Span or stick to PBS. The reason? Those pundits and so-called analysts yammering and hammering and trying really hard to turn the proceedings into the political equivalent of a trash-talking, pro wrestling smackdown.

{embed="elements/google_ad336x280"}

"Give us red meat!" they yelled after Michelle Obama's lovely speech.

"Hillary vs. Barack!" they speculated as they hunted down the three or four most die-hard PUMAs in the crowd of thousands of devoted Obamafans.

"Will Bill put aside his bitterness? Can the party come together?" they asked over and over and over, phony concerned looks on their faces as they ignored the loud and persistent declarations of unity from 98 percent of the delegates.

I think it's important to ask the questions, but all that mindless repetition and narrow focus on the negative gets old.

Let's face it, conflict makes for good TV. But, hey, this isn't a movie or a sporting event, and this year's election is way too important to trivialize with fake drama and artificial hype. The reality of this historic moment in time is dramatic enough, and compelling for watchers on both sides of the political spectrum.

Notice I didn't say "political divide." We've had enough of that.

Find this article at: http://www.midweek.com/content/columns/moonlighting_article/ways_to_improve_riding_thebus/

MidWeek

Why We Must Vote On The Rail Plan

September 03, 2008

By Rick Hamada

The recent ruling by Circuit Court Judge Karl Sakamoto affirming the Stop Rail Now organization petition and signature submission to City Clerk Denise DeCosta as legal is a breath of fresh air in a debate that has become acrid and odious. With this ruling, it appears that a vote on rail will take place in November.

Or will it?

The Honolulu City Council has determined the language of the ballot question and, thankfully, rejected the proposal to create a transit authority. However, the objective of Stop Rail Now differs from the council. Their initiative dictates that no trains or rail will comprise a mass transit project. The judge directed that the city clerk accept the Stop Rail Now petitions, so the ballot question is a done deal, right? The public will be able to vote on rail, right?

Not so fast.

Judge Sakamoto is now being asked to determine the legal number of verifiable signatures needed to qualify the Stop Rail Now question. This is the critical determination. One would think there would be no ambiguity in the Honolulu City Charter regarding this issue, but with so much at stake and lawyers on both sides, it is almost natural to have the court determine the definition. The bottom line is if the court says 10 percent of registered voters (approximately 44,500 signatures) signing the petition is required, the Stop Rail Now initiative is dead. If, however, the court says 10 percent of those who actually voted (approximately 29,500) signatures are sufficient, then the Stop Rail Now question will appear.

{embed="elements/box_ad"}

We have to remember there are billions of dollars at stake with this project. Millions of dollars will be flowing into the coffers of developers, architects, construction companies, contractors and consultants with major entities benefitting from its construction and maintenance. Are we all aware of the impact of \$6 billion? This amount of money is the Gross Domestic Product of some countries. Unions are clamoring for this project because it ensures revenue for their members. Why do you think so much money has been spent crafting clever and influential commercial messages not to inform, but to convince you that rail is the only real transportation alternative? Oh, and by the way, the thousands and thousands of dollars spent on this propaganda campaign was paid by you.

I appreciate the fact that Mayor Hannemann is supportive of the process. However, it is no secret that he is a vociferous supporter of this project. He has invested a great deal of his political capital in ensuring rail is approved, ground is broken and the project is well on its way even after he leaves office. I believe the mayor thinks the rail project is best for Honolulu. But as supportive as he says he is of the process, it's the process itself that is the basis of the ire found in rail opponents. It seems to me if you are going to ask people to fund a public works project to the tune of billions of dollars, you would allow them to exercise their right to vote yes or no. Why was this opportunity not afforded to the people of the City and County of Honolulu? If the answer is that duly elected officials representing the people made the decisions then, yes, that is an answer. But it's not an adequate answer.

{embed="elements/google_ad336x280"}

The City and County charter provides for initiative referendum. That means the city government anticipated issues would arise demanding a direct response from the people. Our current elected officials understand our laws provide for direct democracy. The administration and the council knew other communities placed rail transit questions on their ballot. The city should have had the common courtesy to include the people of this community in the direct decision-making process. Excluding the same people who will have their lands condemned, view planes altered, endure countless hours of disruption and then pay for it all seems like just plain bad manners. (Before you go rushing to their defense, let's all remember the mayor said he would do everything legally possible to stop this initiative from getting on the ballot, and the council never considered allowing the community to vote on this issue until it was clear the Stop Rail Now petition drive was succeeding).

Whether a question appears on the ballot or not, you still have a voice regarding the rail project. Choose the mayoral candidate who represents your position on this issue. Choose the council candidate who represents your position on this issue. Then vote.

Find this article at: http://www.midweek.com/content/columns/ace_article/why_we_must_vote_on_the_rail_plan/

September 3, 2008

Letters to the Editor

grassroot institute

Group is 'wolf in sheep's clothing'

We have spent most of our lives advocating for the betterment of Hawaiians, Hawai'i residents and the preservation of Hawaiian culture, and are compelled to offer our views relating to the Grassroot Institute of Hawaii.

The institute would have you believe that it is advocating for the "little guys." In its opposition to self-determination for Hawaiians, its mantra is "aloha for all."

In its support for the lawsuits against Kamehameha Schools' admissions policies and the intent of a private trust, its goal is to destroy one of the most successful institutions working for the betterment of Hawaiians.

In its alliance with Stop Rail Now and the Hawai'i Highway Alliance it, under the guise of transparency, has created another contentious situation among Hawai'i residents. Its support of a toll road clearly demonstrates its lack of concern for the less-wealthy residents of Wai'anae and the Leeward Coast.

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii is a negative and detrimental force in our efforts to maintain the integrity and preservation of Hawaiian culture.

How can anyone hold organizations like these accountable when their actions are designed to confuse and mislead, all under the guise of protecting the "have-nots" from the "haves"?

In reality, the Grassroot Institute of Hawaii is the wolf in sheep's clothing, advocating for the "haves" and misleading the "have-nots."

Look beyond the rhetoric and measure the truth and sincerity of their message, and then don't be fooled by the wolf.

A. "Frenchy" DeSoto | Wai'anae William J. AilA Jr. | Wai'anae

September 3, 2008

Letters to the Editor

transit

Parsons Brinckerhoff did not construct H-3

In regard to the Aug. 24 letter by Garry P. Smith ("H-3 and transit offer important similarities"):

The estimates of the construction cost for H-3, according to the official project documents, were \$742 million in 1984 and \$960 million in 1992, and the actual cost when completed in 1997 was \$1.3 billion. I think most people could accept that inflation caused most of the differences.

Parsons Brinckerhoff has never been a construction company and did not construct any portion of H-3. It served as the prime design and construction management consulting firm for the state Department of Transportation. The name of the consulting firm assisting the city Department of Transportation Services is InfraConsult LLC, not Parsons InfraConsult, and has no relationship to Parsons Brinckerhoff.

It is true some of the principals and staff of that firm are former employees of Parsons Brinckerhoff. It is not unusual for people of any firm in any business to leave the firm, particularly after a major reorganization, which Parsons Brinckerhoff has undergone several times in the past three years, and join another firm.

Parsons Brinckerhoff has provided professional services for infrastructure since 1885 and is proud of its many contributions, including the first subway line in New York City shortly after the turn of the 20th century.

Parsons Brinckerhoff has been in Hawai'i since 1966 and is proud of some of the signature projects in which it has been privileged to participate, including H-3 and Admiral Clarey bridge to Ford Island.

Tadahiko "Tad" Ono | Vice president, Parsons Brinckerhoff

September 3, 2008

Letters to the Editor

transit

Rail critics are trying to have it both ways

It's ironic how the pendulum is now swinging the other way in the debate over rail transit.

When the Stop Rail campaign was launched, Cliff Slater and other rail critics were convinced of an anti-rail majority and pushed for a vote to "let the people decide."

Now that several polls have revealed a strong majority supports rail transit for Honolulu, we're hearing that the polling is flawed, the public has been misled and the average person can't possibly make an "informed" decision on the issue.

On July 22, an Advertiser article ("Anti-rail will bow to voters") documented Mr. Slater's promise to stop attacking the rail project if the public voted in favor of it.

Unfortunately, Mr. Slater has already flip-flopped on this commitment, as evidenced by his comments on The Advertiser's Hot Seat blog discussion (Aug. 27) where he reserved the right to continue protesting rail even if the public votes for it in November.

It's clear that Mr. Slater is trying to have it both ways: demanding a vote and then calling the results into question if it doesn't produce his desired results. So much for letting the people decide.

Daniel Stringer | Mililani



Vol. 13, Issue 248 - Thursday, September 4, 2008

Anti-rail group's effort denied by courts, clerk

By Laurie Au
lau@starbulletin.com

An anti-rail group failed yesterday to get its proposal on the November ballot to block the city's proposed \$4 billion rail transit system, ending a four-month-long fight that created widespread community debate and spurred aggressive attack campaigns.

- Stop Rail Group Short Of Signatures



Honolulu city clerk says that the "Stop Rail Now" group is 10,000 signatures short of putting the rail ban on the voting ballot.

[[Watch](#)]



Stop Rail Now lost in all of its last-minute, desperate attempts to create a ballot question asking voters to prohibit the city from building a rail transit system.

Circuit Judge Karl Sakamoto upheld yesterday morning his earlier decision that the group needed 44,525 signatures from registered voters to be successful in its petition drive. As its last hope, the group, which wanted the threshold lowered, went to the Hawaii Supreme Court, which issued a ruling yesterday that it would not intervene in this case.

In a final but expected blow to the group, City Clerk Denise De Costa ruled yesterday afternoon that the group collected only 35,056 signatures from verified voters, nearly 10,000 below the requirement.

"I honor their hard work," De Costa said. "We were never against having the question on the ballot."

De Costa said it cost about \$45,000 to \$50,000 for her office to certify the signatures over the last two weeks. About 20 city employees and contract hires worked for 2,800 hours to double-check each signature against the city's voter database.

A large chunk - 11,309 signatures - was deemed invalid because voters were not registered or properly registered.

However, Oahu residents will still be able to vote on another question created by the City Council, which will ask whether the city should build a "steel wheel on steel rail" system for the 20-mile system from Kapolei to Ala Moana.

Organizers of Stop Rail Now have remained firm that they preferred their question on the ballot as opposed to the City Council's, but said yesterday they are pleased that voters have an opportunity to vote.

"I still consider our efforts successful," said Cliff Slater, an organizer of Stop Rail Now, who is seen as the longtime leader of Honolulu's anti-rail efforts. "We still get to vote on rail. If we hadn't done what we did, there wouldn't be an opportunity to vote on rail."

In April, when the group first announced its petition efforts, organizers said the goal was to collect 70,000 signatures since they knew a bulk would be deemed invalid. The final tally submitted to the city clerk was 49,472, De

Stop Rail Now's Petition results

The City Clerk's Office spent \$45,000 to \$50,000 to certify signatures submitted by Stop Rail Now attempting place a question on the November general election ballot. Here are the office's results:

» Number of signatures submitted	49,472
» Number of qualified signatures	35,065

Disqualifications:

Costa said.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann and several City Council members said the outcome is crucial and will determine the fate of the system. Rail supporters said they are confident a majority of voters will approve the system, after citing favorable independent polls conducted by the two Honolulu daily papers.

On the other hand, city leaders also said if voters reject the system, while there is nothing legally to stop them from continuing the project, it would essentially kill the system because there would be a fallout of local political support and federal funding.

"If we hiccup one more time, that's it," Hannemann said in a recent interview. "The federal government will not promise funding for Honolulu, and we will have to deal with traffic gridlock."

Now that it will be the City Council's question on the November ballot, the pro- and anti-rail forces will step up an "educational" campaign through another media blitz in the next two months.

Since it is a ballot issue, all groups need to disclose their finances to the state Campaign Spending Commission. Previously, many of the groups were able to hide their contributions and advertising expenses, including the Hawaii Carpenters Union and Stop Rail Now.

[Read all 35 comments »](#)

Type in your comments to post to the forum

Name

(appears on your post) You are currently logged in as . [Not ?](#)

Name

(appears on your post)

» Not registered or improperly registered	11,309
» Illegible	1,036
» Only P.O. Box address provided	676
» Miscellaneous (no signature, too young to vote)	693
» Duplicates	629
» Withdrawals	64

Source: City Clerk's Office

September 4, 2008

Letters to the Editor

transit

Alternatives make more sense than rail

Cliff Slater has been studying transit systems for a long time. If you listen carefully, you will be convinced that "rapid" transit is not rapid, has a negative environmental impact, and does not reduce traffic. HOT lanes, expandable buses and other options are obvious solutions. Nonetheless, a "rapid"-transit "system" remains emotionally and politically attractive.

Our common sense should tell us this project will take decades and cost many times the billions estimated.

Honolulu rapid transit will slash through where most of us live and work. It will be an unbelievable mess and a major impact on street traffic for decades.

In a few short years, we could implement the alternatives Mr. Slater and others propose. The choice is between long-term agony without progress or real solutions we can implement quickly with obvious benefits.

Buses can be expanded during rush hour and scheduled as needed. HOT lanes can be adjusted. A rapid-transit system will be sitting there 24/7, mostly under construction and subsidized by all of us.

Brian Barbata | Kailua

September 4, 2008

Letters to the Editor

transit

Rail will mean slower service, higher taxes

Why is tax money being used for a media blitz to convince me that I need rail?

Supporters of rail, viewing ads depicting sleek high-speed trains, actually think that rail will get them into town faster than a car or bus. Guess again.

A person in Makaha can walk to a bus stop, board an express bus at 5:50 a.m. and arrive at Ala Moana Center at 7:30 a.m. — one bus, nine stops, 1 hour and 40 minutes.

With rail, the Makaha rider can take the local bus from Makaha to Kapolei, making many stops, wait for the train to Waipahu, then take another local bus to Ala Moana. She had better plan to leave home at 4 a.m. for this new and improved service, since express bus service will be eliminated to encourage rail ridership.

The train travels east in the morning full of passengers, then travels back, empty, for more passengers. The scenario is reversed in the afternoon. Trains cannot be used for other routes.

Buses come into town and are then used locally. Consider the energy cost per mile for trains and double it, since half of the time they will be empty.

The train offers slower service, less convenience, higher taxes and less efficiency. What a deal.

Bob Freeman | Honolulu



Vol. 13, Issue 248 - Thursday, September 4, 2008

Letters to the Editor

Find affordable, viable transit alternative

I wish rail supporters would take a ride along the rail's route, snaking its way through the city and down narrow streets, displacing hundreds of families and businesses. I wish they would realize that cities like San Francisco have millions of people to subsidize their rail, which cost far less than ours will, that this island has no money to fix existing road and infrastructure problems, let alone a multibillion-dollar new project that the city itself admits will not solve the traffic problem!

While gas prices are going up, I can choose whether to drive, carpool or take the bus, but I will have no choice when my property taxes go up. There are many alternatives to rail that will be cost-efficient and not bankrupt our island. I found Panos Prevedouros has some compelling arguments against the rail and some viable alternatives. Take the time to get informed.

Lois Zygowicz
Honolulu

September 5, 2008

Mayor fends off challengers' attacks at forum

Accusations ignored as top candidates share stage for the first time

BY PETER BOYLAN

Advertiser Staff Writer

WAIPAHU — For the first time, the three front-runners in the Honolulu mayor's race met on the same stage yesterday to discuss issues ranging from rail transit to the infrastructure needs of growing O'ahu communities.

The challengers, City Council member Ann H. Kobayashi and University of Hawai'i engineering professor Panos D. Prevedouros, attacked Mayor Mufi Hannemann on several fronts. They accused him of spreading misinformation about the proposed \$3.7 billion commuter rail project.

Hannemann didn't bite. He ignored the accusations and directly answered the questions posed by the moderator, KHNL News 8 anchor Howard Dashefsky, without jabbing back at his opponents.

More than 200 people came to the Filipino Community Center for the forum, which was sponsored by the Kapolei Chamber of Commerce and the West Oahu Economic Development Association.

It was not a debate, so there was no back and forth among the candidates. Each was allowed an opening and closing statement, and one to two minutes to answer Dashefsky's questions. Candidates were allowed to pose one question to their opponents.

Many of the questions dealt with issues facing Leeward O'ahu.

During his opening statement, Hannemann spoke of the work he's done for Kapolei and Leeward O'ahu as a businessman, City Council member and mayor.

"Long before I was the mayor, I promoted the growth of the 'Ewa development plan. Long before I was the mayor, I saw the need to keep water on this side of the island. Long before I was mayor, you all saw me out here, you saw me in the community, in the churches, in the schools. After I became mayor, I was sworn into office at Kapolei Hale. I broke a tradition.

"I have an office here (in Kapolei) that I work out of regularly. ... This is a mayor who has been (working) constantly and regularly in West O'ahu."

Prevedouros, who owns a condo in Kapolei that he and his fiancée rent out, said he wants to fix roads, sewers and streets not only on the west side, but all over the island.

"Traffic to and from Kapolei is terrible," he said. "Your travel times with rail will be substantially worse in the future. I am speaking to you as one of our nation's traffic experts."

"Are you better off now since you were in 2004?" he asked. "Taxes are up 46 percent. Have you seen city services improve by 46 percent? No."

Kobayashi said she had great admiration for the work done on and at the Filipino Community Center and spoke of how she helped approve funding for its construction.

"Over the past year, many people have asked me to run for mayor," she said. "I could stay in my council race, unopposed, but instead I have to run for mayor because I worry about the direction the city is heading in.

"I care about the economy. I decided to jump into the race to represent the people. Money power is great but people power is greater. We have a real grassroots network."

Hannemann and Kobayashi both said they support mass transit to alleviate traffic and congestion for Leeward O'ahu residents while Prevedouros maintained his position that mass transit is too expensive and will not solve congestion issues.

Hannemann also said the local economy will benefit from the construction project and developments that will be built along the transit route.

"You've been in perpetual traffic gridlock seven days a week. It's all about having choices, because that is what we're lacking," he said.

Kobayashi, who favors the mass-transit technology of rubber tires on concrete, said she is a longtime supporter of mass transit and would like some form of the project to move forward.

"I've always advocated for mass transit. I spent 14 years in the state Senate and there we recognized the problems, especially on this side of the island," she said. "We (on the City Council) know that mass transit is necessary. What we haven't agreed upon is the type of vehicle.

"I think that what the most important thing for this project is to let the people vote. As soon as that vote is taken, we must move forward and get this done."

Prevedouros, citing his experience as an engineer specializing in traffic control, said rail transit will cost taxpayers too much money and will do very little to alleviate traffic.

"This is the biggest misperception perpetrated here. Rail is a terrible idea and a tax sinkhole," Prevedouros said. The candidates talked about the complexities inherent in developing roads, sewers, schools and electrical grids needed to sustain all the new communities sprouting in the area.

"They build homes but they don't build roads. That is an amazing lack of doing the fundamentals," Prevedouros said.

Kobayashi said building the UH-West O'ahu campus would help reduce traffic by keeping students, faculty and staff on that side of the island.

Hannemann said he has formed partnerships between developers and city government to ensure infrastructure is built.

He pointed to the recent agreement between Kapolei Property Development and the city, in which the developer agreed to pay for \$172 million in infrastructure in exchange for an expedited permitting process.

"That's what it takes, a leader who can work with business and labor," Hannemann said.



Vol. 13, Issue 249 - Friday, September 5, 2008

OUR OPINION

Voters should support rail transit's completion

THE ISSUE

Opponents of the rail transit system have failed to collect enough signatures to place their proposal on November's ballot.

Opponents of a rail mass transit failed to sign up enough voters on a petition to place on the ballot their proposal to stop it. Instead, voters will have an opportunity to vote in favor of the "steel wheel on steel rail" system planned by the city, which they have endorsed in recent polls and should do so again at the polls in November.

The Stop Rail Now organization members gathered signatures of their petition and applied a convoluted reading of the City Charter for ordinance initiatives provision on required names. The group gathered more than 35,000 legitimate signatures, but that came far short of the more than 49,000 required.

The Charter requires that such petitions need at least 10 percent of the number of voters registered in the last mayoral election or, in cases of special elections, 15 percent of the number of votes actually cast for mayor. Stop Right Now read that as meaning 10 percent of the number of registered voters in the last election would be sufficient. Circuit Judge Karl Sakamoto recognized that revisionism as nonsense, as did the state Supreme Court.

The City Council, recognizing the sentiment for putting the issue to voters, agreed last month to put a measure on the ballot asking if the steel-on-steel system should be built from Kapolei to Ala Moana. A telephone survey taken for the Star-Bulletin and KITV by SMS Research showed that 60 percent of Oahu residents favor continuing development of the rail transit system.

Much of the opposition to the rail system is based on misinformation, and the city should make an effort to correct faulty assertions during the weeks ahead.

Honolulu Star-Bulletin

ONLINE ★ EDITION

Oahu Publications, Inc. publishes
the Honolulu Star-Bulletin, MidWeek
and military newspapers

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**David Black, Dan Case, Dennis Francis,
Larry Johnson, Duane Kurisu, Warren Luke,
Colbert Matsumoto, Jeffrey Watanabe, Michael Wo**

HONOLULU STAR-BULLETIN

Dennis Francis, Publisher **Lucy Young-Oda**, Assistant Editor
(808) 529-4762
lyoungoda@starbulletin.com

Frank Bridgewater, Editor **Michael Rovner**, Assistant Editor
(808) 529-4791 (808) 529-4768
fbridgewater@starbulletin.com mrovner@starbulletin.com

Mary Poole, Editorial Page Editor
(808) 529-4748; mpoole@starbulletin.com

The Honolulu Star-Bulletin (USPS 249460) is published daily by Oahu Publications at 500 Ala Moana Blvd., Suite 7-500, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813. Periodicals postage paid at Honolulu, Hawaii. Postmaster: Send address changes to Star-Bulletin, P.O. Box 3080, Honolulu, Hawaii 96802.

[**Read all 16 comments »**](#)

Type in your comments to post to the forum

Name
(appears on your post) You are currently logged in as . [Not ?](#)

Name
(appears on your post)



Vol. 13, Issue 249 - Friday, September 5, 2008

Letters to the Editor

Car expenses much higher than rail costs

In response to [Janet Jensen's letter \(August 23\), it's cars that don't work out, not rail.](#) Two of my coworkers said they spent \$100 a week on gas and \$60 a month on parking. If we estimate that they spend \$1,200 a year for insurance, \$200 a month on car payments, and say \$120 a year for car registration and safety checks, that means they spend about \$10,000 a year on their cars! Multiply that by about 500,000 drivers on Oahu and you get \$5 billion a year spent on cars! That's far more than the cost of rail. Downtown the median price of parking is more than \$300 a month! Compare the cost of your car, even just for the commute to work, to the amount of rail and you will probably find that the cost of rail is far cheaper. At the median income of \$12 per hour, even if you spend 100 percent of your gross income on rail it only comes to \$10 a month. That's less than the cost of gas increase in the last four years.

Terrence Ching
Honolulu

September 7, 2008

Mufi Hannemann offers clearest vision for O'ahu

Honolulu has come a long way in four years, and a long job list for the next four is beginning to unfurl.

The city is coming to grips with its responsibility to maintain its sewers, roads and other municipal systems — the essentials of city government.

Going forward, Hono-lulu is on the brink of building, at long last, a metropolitan transportation network that will help its residents get where they need to go, beginning at O'ahu's burgeoning "second city." It will reshape all the communities in its path.

And while tourism and the military remain the bedrock employment engines, there is a critical need to build a more robust economy with diverse sectors. At the same time, O'ahu must grow and thrive within the strict boundaries of a beautiful, but fragile, tropical island.

Making these transitions successfully will take a mayor with resolve and drive. The best candidate to lead our city forward is incumbent Mufi Hannemann. Compared to his closest competitor in the race, City Council member Ann Kobayashi, Hannemann has the more focused plan for maintaining and improving the city's infrastructure and improving quality of life for its residents. Voters should return him to office.

In his first four years, Mayor Hannemann has left the city in better shape than when he began:

- Honolulu is in healthy financial condition, with a better bond rating than it had at the start of the term.
- The community has moved closer to a more sustainable relationship with the environment, the curbside recycling program being a welcome addition.
- Finally, the wheels are rolling toward the development of a multimodal transportation system that will help make the city more livable in the 21st century, in which reliance on the automobile will become increasingly untenable.

Arriving at this point has not been an unfailingly smooth ride.

Right out of the gate, Hannemann was hit with a major tempest: the failure of the municipal sewer system in the midst of Waikiki, culminating in the controversial decision to discharge raw effluent into the Ala Wai Canal.

It was not the glamorous moment of executive power a mayor might imagine for his first year. Nor have the ensuing maze of torn-up streets around the island, as the sewer lines have been replaced — or the increase in sewer fees to pay for it all — added much of a rosy glow.

But perhaps that perfect storm helps to define why Hannemann deserves re-election. Rather than settling for a localized patch job, his administration embarked on a comprehensive program to bring a horribly decayed system back to standard, explaining to taxpayers why it had to happen and why they must pay for it.

That's the thankless work of effective city management, and Hannemann shouldered rather than shirked the job.

Raising adequate funds for this work has strengthened Ho-nolulu's financial foundation, and that's essential for a city about to embark on major public works projects.

Principal among these is the rail-transit project, the centerpiece of an enhanced network of buses, ferries and other links. Although the public has not yet formally endorsed the rail project on the ballot, the City Council has, narrowly, authorized it.

Hannemann showed leadership and political brokering skills to move this city off the dime to construct this critical improvement to municipal services. And polls indicate Hannemann now has the popular support needed to get going on a technology proven to be the most cost effective.

Assuming the project will move forward, taxpayers deserve complete transparency about all the related contracts. Hannemann, as well as the council, must be held accountable for the procurement process being conducted ethically and above board.

Also looking ahead:

- Hannemann, who has been an active ambassador for the city in forging networks with other mayors and in Washington, D. C., is right to advocate for economic development. As former head of the state's top business agency, he should parlay some of his experience and contacts into benefits for the city during a second term.
- The mayor will need to finish closing the loop on Honolulu's waste reduction and management. That means carrying out the expansion of the curbside recycling program, looking for ways to further reduce the waste stream and settling on a plan to cope with remaining landfill materials for the long term.
- He will need to refine Honolulu's role in solving the island's housing crisis. That will mean cooperation with state officials; residents have the right to expect more productive and less fractious relations between the governor and the mayor of its largest city.
- Hannemann has laid out some blueprints for environmental sustainability — his "21st Century Ahupua'a" plan, for instance — that hold out some promise. He will need to push harder to keep O'ahu green and clean.

In the past four years, Mufi Hannemann has made considerable progress in addressing many of the critical issues facing Honolulu. His leadership and dedication have earned him the chance to keep that progress going.

September 7, 2008

Time for rail-transit critics 'to see the big picture'

By Jeanne Mariani-Belding

Each week Editorial and Opinion Editor Jeanne Mariani-Belding hosts The Hot Seat, our opinion-page blog that brings in elected leaders and people in the news and lets you ask the questions during a live online chat.

On The Hot Seat last week was transit supporter Alicia Maluafiti, from Support Rail Transit. Maluafiti, an 'Ewa Beach resident, is the featured spokeswoman for Support Rail Transit and appears in the organization's television spots.

Here is an excerpt from that Hot Seat session. To see the full conversation, go to The Hot Seat blog at www.honoluluadvertiser.com/opinion and click on "The Hot Seat." (Names of questioners are screen names given during our online chat.)

Joe M: Why not toll roads; why not just double-deck the freeways?

Alicia Maluafiti: Rail is simply the best long-term solution for O'ahu. Rail addresses how our island community will live and grow. Affordable workforce housing, air pollution, urban sprawl and redevelopments, rising oil prices and energy costs, an aging population. Your choice is to pile on more cars onto our already congested roadways or let rail take us into the 21st century.

Cristina: Critics say that a rail system won't alleviate traffic congestion. What do you say to this?

Maluafiti: The critics are incorrect. Studies have repeatedly shown that rail will take people out of their cars and reduce traffic from what it would have been. It will be like driving when school is out. I'm ready to get on this choo-choo train. Are you?

Leeandra: Isn't rail just a sweetheart deal for developers that will create more houses in West O'ahu?

Maluafiti: Rail will keep the country country. People who cry the loudest about development already own their piece of paradise and aren't interested in the next generations' ability to afford their own home. Transit-oriented development — with the help of developers ready to commit to affordable housing — will ensure that my children and grandchildren have a place to live. I say "mahalo" to the developers that are willing to make that investment.

Comma'aina: The anti-rail groups say HOT lanes are a better option. As you know, those lanes keep traffic flowing by increasing the tolls charged at any given time to literally drive vehicles away from those lanes. What's your opinion on HOT lanes?

Maluafiti: Discussion about HOT lanes really burns me up! So, the island says "Go West" and develop to accommodate the growth on O'ahu. And now that we're out here — with the longest commute of any other location, sitting in traffic longer than anyone else — you want us to pay for a toll to use the roads.

If I can afford the toll or HOT lane, it'll get me into town quicker, then dump me onto the same congested roads where I can sit in traffic again. Oh — and by the way — where am I going to park once I get there?

D: (Mayoral candidate) Panos Prevedouros says that rail will be worse for the environment than letting people drive their cars. Is this true?

Maluafiti: There is no credible research that shows this. On the contrary, rail uses electricity from a single power source, which would be tightly regulated by the EPA. It is more efficient, cuts CO2 and other pollutant emissions, and reduces our overdependence on foreign oil. And with all the attention recently around renewable energy, we need to stop assuming that that our society is going to rely on fossil fuels to provide electricity in the future.

Stewart: We've heard banter from both sides of the rail issue and we know that both sides have done their individual polls, however, polls are sometimes not very accurate. From your discussions with people on the west side, is there an overwhelming support for rail transit or are they talking about a rubber on concrete system? Also, will people on the west side and Central O'ahu really use rail transit on a daily basis if it's put into place?

Maluafiti: The only people on the west side that I've heard are opposed to rail are the people that are NOT making the commute into town. But the support is overwhelming and for once we are rallying for what's best — not just for West or Central O'ahu, but for the entire island! This is about the greater good and we are ready for the ride.

Aloha: Is the cost of rail transit worth it?

Maluafiti: Rail simply comes down to long-term affordability and sustainability. We can't afford NOT to do this. It makes economic and financial sense to most families living on O'ahu. It costs the average family \$8,100 to own and operate a car compared to paying for rail at about \$581 for a family of four. And don't forget all the money that's being wasted sitting in traffic — talk about lost productivity.

Dennis: The city official studies show that with rail, traffic congestion from Leeward will be much worse by 2030, increasing from the current 15 percent overload to 80 percent overload, leading to gridlock. By advocating a train instead of more effective HOT lanes, aren't you condemning your neighbors to permanent traffic hell? With HOT lanes, an express bus could pick up a rider in Kapolei near their home, drive on the freeway to the HOT lane, proceed nonstop to Downtown or Waikiki in half the time it would take for a similar rail journey. Why would you not prefer that? Do you realize that HOT lanes would have three times the passenger capacity of rail, or can you prove otherwise?

Maluafiti: Whoa, Dennis. What assumptions are you making? As I've said, this has never been only about traffic congestion. Rail transit provides better service quality that attracts more riders — especially discretionary riders. Rail carries more passengers per vehicle, which reduces labor costs, requires less land per peak passenger-trip, and causes less noise and air pollution compared to diesel buses. Rail is more suitable for the most congested corridor in the nation! It will provide a catalyst for urban redevelopment and more compact development. How can we possibly envision an island with more cars? It's just not fair to the next generation.

Joeseeph: I have seen three different polls in the news showing solid support for rail. How confident are you that voters will support rail?

Maluafiti: I've heard over and over again from people from Wai'anae to Waimanalo; from Hale'iwa to

Hawai'i Kai. They have risen above the rhetoric. They see that this isn't about "I won't use, so I don't want to pay for it." This is social justice in action. The bottom line is people in Hawai'i care about our neighbors. It's part of our culture, to malama.

James: What should be done about congestion? It's all right if you are not concerned by future traffic, but what about the people actually on the roads?

Maluafiti: I'll tell you how we could better manage congestion. How about moving development around the island instead of concentrating it in West O'ahu? Last time I checked, nobody seemed interested in that option. But since we get to absorb all the development, and we are saying "Give us rail" so we don't have to sit in traffic, then it would seem fair to give us that alternative. Bottom line is our population is going to continue to grow — and so will congestion. But this is about "choice." Give us the choice. We are ready to ride!

Anthony: I want rail, but I don't think much about all the technologies being talked about. Do you agree that steel on steel is the best technology?

Maluafiti: I really leave that to the experts. A panel of experts overwhelmingly agreed that steel on steel was the best choice. In 20 years, we may be at a point in which to look at expanded lines that use other technology. And at that time, I'll trust the experts again. I have faith in them. I hope you do, too.

Gary: I've lived in 'Ewa Beach for over 30 years and you say you're from 'Ewa Beach also. You know the closest rail station will be four miles away in Kapolei. How does that help 'Ewa Beach commuters when we will still have to ride to Kapolei on a bus?

Maluafiti: We'll have the North-South Road open long before our line is in. And the long-term plan is to extend a line through Kalaeloa. And I'd rather sit through a short 5-minute drive to Kapolei than sit in a 90-minute commute to town. It's a no brainer.

Lola: Since you are a registered lobbyist in the state of Hawai'i could you tell us who is paying you? Why should we believe someone whose paycheck is dependent on being pro-rail?

Maluafiti: I wish I was getting paid for sitting on the Hot Seat with you folks! But that's exactly why I want rail. Do you know how many hearings I've missed because I couldn't get to town, or couldn't find a place to park? Do you know how much better our democratic process would be if more people could come down to the Capitol and engage in the process? Don't equate my profession with my passion. I need rail. And so does the rest of this island — regardless of the job you're in.

John: You said rail will "keep the country country." How does more development preserve green space?

Maluafiti: Transit Oriented Development would focus development along the rail line — more dense, mixed-use development of residential, commercial and retail spaces, and development that is walkable, pedestrian friendly. People choose to live along the rail line to give up that extra car. It comes down to creating places that people can "live, work and play." So instead of developing the North Shore, or Kailua, or Hawai'i Kai — we focus on the urban corridor of Honolulu. That preserves green spaces, agricultural lands and keeps the country country.

Gordon: You're asking taxpayers to fund billions and billions of dollars to build a rail system that won't do anything to relieve traffic congestion. It doesn't make sense.

Maluafiti: It's too bad that you view rail from a silo that simply comes down to direct costs. But it is the indirect cost savings in the long run that are incredible. Savings from wasting time sitting in traffic, paying for a car, paying for roads, paying for gas, paying for parking, paying in the lives lost due to accidents. We — in Hawai'i — have one of the fastest aging populations in the nation. We need mobility for people of all ages, so that they can age in place. How do you put a price on those things? It really comes down to philosophical differences that you and I will never agree on. You don't want to pay for it — because you don't see the long-term benefits. Time to see the big picture.



Vol. 13, Issue 251 - Sunday, September 7, 2008

OUR OPINION

Mayor Hannemann's accomplishments merit a second term

THE ISSUE

Mayor Mufi Hannemann is seeking a second term in Honolulu Hale.

Mufi Hannemann has found success as Honolulu's mayor, achieving in the past four years what his predecessors failed to accomplish - approval of a much-needed mass transit system. He deserves to be elected to a second term, despite the probability that he will leave Honolulu Hale in two years to run for governor.

Unlike past City Councils, current city legislators approved of the mass transit system, although divided about what technology should be used. The Council finally dropped its resistance to Hannemann's steel-wheel technology in May, although Ann Kobayashi abandoned her Council seat to run for mayor, pushing for a rubber-tire-to-cement bus system.

A panel of experts appointed by Hannemann found that the steel system, while more expensive to build than other systems, would be cheaper to operate and maintain. That means any property-tax revenue, which supports TheBus system, would be less likely to go to the transit system in large amounts.

The only panel expert to dissent from steel-to-steel was Panos Prevedouros, a University of Hawaii professor who favored elevated high-occupancy-toll, or HOT, lanes. Prevedouros, who is taking a leave of absence to run for mayor, claims - unconvincingly - not to be a one-issue candidate.

Kobayashi complains that the steel-on-steel transit system would stop 26 times and take an hour to travel from Kapolei, its western tip, to downtown. Actually, only 19 stops are in the design, and Hannemann administration

officials expect a 40-minute trip from Kapolei to the end of the line, at Ala Moana.

Changing technologies would require starting over, persuading the Legislature to broaden the use of the 0.5 percent surcharge to the 4 percent excise tax approved in 2005 to be spent on mass transit for Honolulu. That will not happen, and trying to start over would end the federal government's patience in subsidizing the project.

The City Council has agreed to place on the ballot a City Charter amendment authorizing a steel-on-steel transit system. More than 60 percent of Oahu residents indicated in a Star-Bulletin poll in July that they favor the system. They should now approve the amendment at the ballot box.

Hannemann has recognized that mass transit isn't the only way to ease traffic congestion. He has found success in launching TheBoat as a ferry system from Barbers Point Harbor to Aloha Tower. While similar efforts have failed in past years, Hannemann coordinated TheBoat with TheBus to make it work.

Not entirely consumed by dealing with traffic congestion, Hannemann has made progress in expanding the curbside recycling program. Voluntary curbside recycling began in Hawaii Kai and Mililani last October and is scheduled to be available on the entire island by mid-2010.

After years of indecision, Hannemann also has decided to build a third boiler for the H-Power garbage-to-energy plant and has called for bids to ship at least 100,000 tons of trash to a mainland facility. Under his administration, the city also has made steady progress on upgrading the island's long-neglected sewage system.

Gov. Linda Lingle will finish her second term in two years, and Hannemann is likely to seek the governorship. He also has his eyes on Washington, D.C. - he owns a house in nearby Falls Church, Va. - in case an opening in Hawaii's congressional delegation occurs. At age 54, he is young enough to accrue effective seniority in Congress.

Honolulu Star-Bulletin

ONLINE ★ EDITION

Oahu Publications, Inc. publishes
the Honolulu Star-Bulletin, MidWeek
and military newspapers

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**David Black, Dan Case, Dennis Francis,
Larry Johnson, Duane Kurisu, Warren Luke,
Colbert Matsumoto, Jeffrey Watanabe, Michael Wo**

HONOLULU STAR-BULLETIN

Dennis Francis, Publisher

Lucy Young-Oda, Assistant Editor
(808) 529-4762
lyoungoda@starbulletin.com



Vol. 13, Issue 252 - Monday, September 8, 2008

Letters to the Editor

Bill for rail system will keep coming

The big difference between toll lanes and a rail system is who ultimately pays for them. With a toll lane, or HOT lane, the actual users pay per use - the fee going toward repaying the cost of the construction. The HOT lane also removes many vehicles from the nontoll lanes, reducing traffic congestion. Over many years a toll road pays for itself, and the toll can be removed. Call them "Lexus Lanes" if you want, but they actually take cars off the free roads, thereby providing real congestion relief.

A rail system does not pay for itself. Users only pay a token fare, just like TheBus, which does not come close to covering the cost of the service. A rail system is subsidized by taxpayers forever, like TheBus. The billions spent to build the thing are only the beginning, the taxes to operate and maintain the system will continue forever.

I favor rail, but only if it is privately funded. Let a private business finance it, build it and operate it at a profit, and I'll be all for it.

Scott Noltie
Mililani



Vol. 13, Issue 252 - Monday, September 8, 2008

Letters to the Editor

Stop Rail Now met its goal in names

Your story Thursday on the signatures needed for our initiative question to appear on the November ballot was appalling. It gives the impression that we failed miserably in our attempts to get 70,000 signatures. The opposite is true. From the first we said that we needed 30,000 valid signatures and that to ensure that we would need to get 40,000 to 45,000 before weeding out the invalid ones. In the end we exceeded our goal by nearly 5,000. All that is clearly documented.

If you set out to discourage our hard-working volunteers, you could not have done a better job of it.

Cliff Slater
President
Stop Rail Now

September 9, 2008

Letters to the Editor

mayoral race

Prevedouros a wise choice for mayor

It seemed too good to be true, but now it actually seems possible. An expert of world reputation in the field of urban planning and management could be the mayor of Honolulu.

This is the person we would have paid for a consultation, for an evaluation and recommendation about any of our city's pressing problems. We are fortunate that this man lives here and loves this city and is not only willing, but apparently bursting with enthusiasm, to bring his experience and skill to develop 21st century solutions for our crumbling infrastructure. This man is Panos Prevedouros.

The immediate problem is the looming specter of the rail system. Though the idea for mass transit is both environmentally sound and a solution we must seek, the current plan is an expense approved at a time of prosperity and budget surplus. That bubble has certainly burst and we now face the prospect of huge excise taxes to meet those costs. Our people cannot be burdened with a regressive tax of that kind.

Prevedouros has proposed a solution that is much more flexible in application and will cost less than a quarter of the rail as it currently stands.

Be sure to vote on Sept. 20 and support Panos Prevedouros for mayor.

Sherre Ftacilas | Hawai'i Kai

September 10, 2008

Debating rivals not easy call for mayor

By Jerry Burris

Last night, three candidates for mayor of Honolulu got together for a live televised debate sponsored by this newspaper and KGMB9.

It was one of the few times the three — Mayor Mufi Hannemann, City Council member Ann Kobayashi and University of Hawai'i professor Panos Prevedouros — are likely to appear together in any kind of structured format during this campaign.

Hannemann, the front-runner in name recognition and money and by mere fact that he is the incumbent, has little to gain and more than a little to lose by spending much time on stage with the other two.

He could take an above-it-all approach and ignore his challengers altogether. You can bet some of his advisers are suggesting this course. But people would notice this and take offense. And then, if one or more of the others managed to sandbag the incumbent into some kind of appearance, it would take on out-of-proportion relevance.

That happened to former Mayor Eileen Anderson, who managed to unseat veteran Mayor Frank Fasi in 1980 but then lost in a rematch in 1984. One of the factors in that loss was Anderson's refusal to debate or appear with the scrappy Fasi, only to agree to a single appearance at the last minute.

The event took on oversized importance, with live television coverage and huge public attention. Fasi did well in that debate and because it was the only time most voters had a chance to see the two side by side, his performance was magnified.

So Hannemann has a delicate task ahead. He must maintain his aura of front-runner and avoid giving his underfunded but determined challengers more credibility. At the same time, voters expect their candidates to be answerable and available.

In the case of this election, there is practically only one topic: mass transit.

Kobayashi likes mass transit, but is doubtful about Hannemann's tried-and-true steel-on-steel rail technology. Prevedouros, an engineer, thinks the rail transit project is a loser and would instead construct elevated guideways that could handle buses and car-pool lanes.

In most elections, fundamental demographics are the final deciding factor. People tend to vote the way they do because of their age, their education, their ethnicity and most of all, their income.

Any smart campaign can analyze those demographic factors and come up with a winning formula given enough effort, time and money. But if a campaign allows the demographics to get overrun by a particular issue — perhaps a simple refusal to debate often enough or a one-off subject like mass transit — then all the money and planning are for nothing.

That's the nightmare that the Hannemann campaign has to deal with.

Jerry Burris' column appears Wednesdays. See his blog at <http://akamaipolitics.honadvblogs.com>. Reach him at jrryburris@yahoo.com.

September 10, 2008

Honolulu mayoral debate covers rail, city spending, tactics

Mayoral opponents spar over rail project, throw a few personal jabs, too

BY PETER BOYLAN

Advertiser Staff Writer

The three leading candidates for Honolulu mayor last night traded sharp questions and personal attacks while engaging in a contentious debate on issues ranging from the proposed commuter rail project to public safety and the fiscal condition of the city during difficult economic times.

In their only scheduled debate before the Sept. 20 primary election, Mayor Mufi Hannemann, Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi and University of Hawai'i engineering professor Panos Prevedouros met onstage at the Hawai'i Theatre before more than 250 supporters and others.

The televised debate was sponsored by the state Office of Hawaiian Affairs, The Honolulu Advertiser and KGMB-TV.

The candidates answered questions first from panelists, then the audience before responding to viewers' e-mails. Each candidate was then allowed to ask questions of the others.

The debate took a contentious tone early when Kobayashi accused Hannemann of "bullying" and Prevedouros called Kobayashi and Hannemann career politicians not offering plausible change. Hannemann was peppered with accusations of cronyism, theft of campaign signs and wasteful spending.

Hannemann, for the most part, took the high road and ignored the attacks.

Supporters for each candidate filled various sections of the theater and their raucous cheers and boos lent the debate the air of a professional sporting event.

In her opening statement, Kobayashi, dressed in a blue sport coat and a green blouse, and sporting a new hairstyle, cited her experience in the state Senate and on the City Council and said there is a need for the city to better manage its money.

"I know fiscal responsibility, and I don't see that in the way Mufi runs the city. Four years ago, I supported Mufi but began to see that Mufi was taking us down the path of wasteful spending," she said. "I don't see courage, I don't see integrity, I don't see leadership. I see blame, bullying and excuses."

'take the heat'

Hannemann, dressed in a black suit and blue shirt, flashed two shaka signs to supporters as he took the stage, and initially ignored Kobayashi's accusations.

He thanked his team of city employees for successfully fulfilling the promises he made while running for

office in 2004.

"Four years ago, the people of Honolulu gave me the honor and privilege of serving them. I always said the easiest thing about that job is identifying the problem. The challenge is getting people together to get things done. The proof in the poi is we've done it," he said. "We're getting the job done. The roads are being fixed, the roads are being repaved. We are the safest big city in America."

Prevedouros, dressed in a blue shirt and black sport coat, chose to distance himself from the politicians on stage by emphasizing his engineering experience and his desire to repeal the general excise tax increase implemented to help pay for mass transit.

"You can vote for politicians who have loaded O'ahu's people with the largest excise tax increase in Hawai'i history or you can vote for an engineer," Prevedouros said. "O'ahu's problems are significant, but as a civil engineer, I can address these tough issues in the right way."

Later in the evening, Hannemann calmly fired back at Kobayashi's accusation of bullying.

"It saddens me," he told her, that she used that term. "You bring dishonor to my parents when you do that. My parents raised me to be honorable and respectful. That is really something that you should be careful in how you use that word and describe it."

The debate became heated as Prevedouros accused Hannemann of misleading the public about the true cost of the transit project, while Kobayashi accused Hannemann of stealing campaign signs and running a negative campaign behind the scenes.

Speaking after the debate, Hannemann said he felt no need to respond to the attacks in a negative manner because he felt it distracted from discussion of issues.

"I didn't want to go over the top," Hannemann said. "I think it was clear who showed leadership and judgment, to stand in the kitchen and take the heat."

Kobayashi said she was aggressive because she has been hearing from supporters that Hannemann has been attacking her campaign and defending his territory in a negative fashion.

"People have told me worse, but bully seems to be the overall community sense," she said.

A split on transit

Hannemann and Kobayashi both said they support mass transit to alleviate traffic and congestion for O'ahu residents while Prevedouros maintained his position that mass transit is too expensive and will not solve congestion problems.

Prevedouros said a mixture of high-occupancy lanes and toll roads is a far better solution to the proposed system.

"They are far superior in capacity and in performance cost options than the light rail: HOT (high-occupancy toll) lanes and a high-occupancy expressway," Prevedouros said. "Rail doesn't do anything to address our No. 1 problem, which is congestion."

"Congestion with rail will be far worse than it is today. What is the point of spending \$6 billion for a nonsolution?"

Hannemann said the rail system has been needed for years, and that it is vital to the future development of O'ahu as well as a means to alleviate stifling traffic congestion.

"We need to build a light-rail system. The alternative analysis report we spent millions of dollars on, done by engineers who know the subject, says HOT lanes are not the answer," he said.

"We need to do this sooner rather than later. Working families are going to have to pay a toll, \$12 coming in, \$12 going out, on top of higher gas prices? Uh-uh."

alternatives to rail

Kobayashi, who favors the mass-transit technology of rubber tires on concrete, said she is a longtime supporter of mass transit and would like some form of the project move forward.

"We do need mass transit. However, a train going through our city is not the answer. There are so many other answers," she said. "There are so many systems that are half the cost of rail and will accomplish the same thing. Let's look at the alternatives."

All candidates promised to support whatever decision the voters make when they vote on the rail transit ballot amendment in November.

Playing off of the transit debate, Kobayashi asked Hannemann how he could award more than a dozen non-bid contracts worth more than \$20 million for transit-related projects.

"Ann, you're on the City Council, you should know the rules," Hannemann said. "There is a system in place. To suggest I somehow hand-picked these companies is a distortion of the truth."

Article URL: <http://starbulletin.com/2008/09/10/news/story01.html>
© 1996-2008 The Honolulu Star-Bulletin | www.starbulletin.com



Vol. 13, Issue 254 - Wednesday, September 10, 2008

mayor's race: Candidates seek an edge



FL MORRIS / FMORRIS@STARBULLETIN.COM

Mayoral candidates Panos Prevedouros, left, Mufi Hannemann and Ann Kobayashi listened to a question from the panel during last night's televised debate at the Hawaii Theatre.

Mayoral debate turns raucous

Challengers Ann Kobayashi and Panos Prevedouros attack incumbent Mayor Mufi Hannemann

STORY SUMMARY »

Mayor Mufi Hannemann and his proposed \$4 billion rail-transit system took the brunt of

criticism last night as the three top candidates for mayor took part in their first debate.

The program, which allowed the candidates to ask each other questions, also focused on Hannemann's leadership style and what City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi called "bullying."

More than 300 supporters watched the debate, moderated by members of the news media, at the Hawaii Theatre ahead of the Sept. 20 primary.

Kobayashi and University of Hawaii civil engineering professor Panos Prevedouros remained critical of Hannemann, but tossed each other mostly softball questions.

"There was a lot of collaboration and tag-teaming going on," Hannemann said afterward.

[FULL STORY »](#)

By Laurie Au
lau@starbulletin.com

The three top candidates for Honolulu mayor sparred in their first debate last night, with most of the attacks directed at Mayor Mufi Hannemann on his proposed \$4 billion rail-transit system and on his leadership style that City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi described as "bullying."

Kobayashi took a more aggressive approach from the beginning of the debate, sharply criticizing the mayor in a manner different from her typically friendly tone.

"With Mufi, I don't see results," Kobayashi said. "I don't see courage and I don't see integrity. I see blame, bullying and excuses."

Hannemann, who is known for his debating skills, remained calm for most of the night and didn't respond to many of the attacks. On the "bullying" comment though, Hannemann shot back at Kobayashi.

"It really saddens me every time you talk about me being a bully," Hannemann said. "I want you to know that you bring dishonor to my parents when you do that. ... I really think you should be very careful in using that word in describing me."

More than 300 supporters watched the debate in the audience of Hawaii Theatre, with Hannemann's supporters standing out dressed in red, his campaign color.

The debate comes a week and a half before the primary election on Sept. 20. If a candidate receives more than 50 percent of the votes, the candidate wins outright. Otherwise, the top

two vote-getters go on to the general election.

The debate last night showed that Kobayashi could take a more aggressive approach and that University of Hawaii at Manoa engineering professor Panos Prevedouros is attempting to shed his image as a one-issue candidate.

The biggest issue of the night, which took up much of the 90-minute debate, was Hannemann's proposed elevated 20-mile rail system running from Kapolei to Ala Moana.

Hannemann defended his selection of a steel wheel on steel rail system, while Prevedouros and Kobayashi criticized him for the way the contracts totaling more than \$100 million were awarded.

"We have to make sure the money isn't being spent excessively, the contracts should not be a nonbid contract," Kobayashi said. "We have to make sure there is fiscal integrity."

Hannemann responded, saying, "Ann, you've been on the Council, you should know the rules. The administration is not involved in the procurement process. ... To somehow say that I handpicked these companies is a distortion of the facts."

Hannemann has been critical of whether his opponents would have enough experience to be mayor - Prevedouros has no political experience, while Kobayashi has never had power as an executive. Hannemann did not ask that question last night. The candidates also did not debate the island's only landfill, a contentious issue for Leeward Oahu residents who want it closed.

In an unusual format that allowed for lively debate, the candidates had the opportunity to ask each other questions. Prevedouros and Kobayashi remained critical of Hannemann, but asked each other questions on less controversial topics.

"There was a lot of collaboration and tag-teaming going on here," Hannemann said after the debate. "There was a lot of two-on-one."

Prevedouros and Kobayashi both denied that there was any coordination going on. Prevedouros said he believes Hannemann is his main competitor and remained more critical of him.

Kobayashi questioned Hannemann on his failure to commit for the full four-year term as mayor. Hannemann countered with his own accusations of political gamesmanship, questioning Kobayashi's last-minute filing for mayor that led to a series of election mishaps and allowed for Hannemann's former opponent, Duke Bainum, to run in an uncontested race for her seat.

The debate last night was co-sponsored by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and The Honolulu Advertiser and was aired on KGMB-9.

Mayoral Debate: Fireworks and Laughter



Written by Stacy Loe - sloe@kgmb9.com
September 09, 2008 10:55 PM

The political drama was high at Tuesday night's 90 minute debate aired live on KGMB9.

Rail was the hot topic, but each candidate answered questions about other issues too. Sometimes with humor, other times with an edge.

Right from the start, Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi went on the attack in describing the mayor.

"I don't see courage, I don't see integrity, I don't see leadership. I see blame, bullying and excuses," said Kobayashi.

Later, Mufi Hannemann responded.

"Ann it really saddens me every time you talk about me being a bully or when you make negative accusations to things I try to do in this community. I want you to know you bring dishonor to my parents when you do that," said Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann.

"Oahu's problems are significant but as a civil engineer I can address tough issues in a cost effective way," said UH Civil Engineer professor Panos Prevedourous.

Much of the 1 and a half hour debate was devoted to the divided issue of rail. The mayor supports a steel on steel system. Kobayashi likes other alternatives, like rubber on concrete.

And Prevedourous, a civil engineer, is against all versions.

Questions were split between a panel and e-mails from viewers.

One asking the mayor would happen to those who live along the proposed rail route drew a sharp response from the audience and his

opponents.

"We are not going to force anyone out of there and so this is process we are going to follow along the way and which we will real amicable settlement," said Hannemann.

"The director of transportation has accused the stop rail people of misinformation and lies and I think those lies are coming from a different source," said Kobayashi.

"About the positions the mayor took on condemnation of land. Banana patch forget about it," said Prevedouros.

Twice, the candidates got to ask each other questions. And there were fireworks.

Mufi: "But you are distorting the facts.

Panos: "No I'm not."

Mufi: "You are distorting the facts."

The candidates also talked about taxes, development and the homeless.

"First of all, I don't think pushing people from park to park is a humane way to treat them," said Kobayashi.

"We are in a good place today because we have the state now focused on that solution. That's why we're cleaning up our parks, returning them to all our families," said Hannemann.

We need to identify the needs for these people and then take measures that satisfy their needs," said Prevedouros.

But will the debate satisfy the voters? We'll see when they head to the polls on September 20th.



Last Updated (September 09, 2008 11:11 PM)

Close Window



Powered by Clickability

Click to Print

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Government

Mayoral Forum Focuses On West Oahu

By Andrew Pereira

STORY SUMMARY>>>

The West Oahu Economic Development Association and the Kapolei Chamber of Commerce held a forum Thursday at Waipahu's Filcom Center featuring the three most viable candidates for Honolulu mayor: incumbent Mufi Hannemann, Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi, and U.H. Civil Engineering Professor Panos Prevedouros.

The most top of mind issue for members of the two organizations was the future of rail transit, a proposed 20-mile elevated railway from East Kapolei to Ala Moana that's estimated to cost \$3.7 billion in 2006 dollars.

The first question asked to the three candidates: What will you do to make sure rail or other forms of mass transportation happen and serves the needs of West Oahu residents?

"Rail will never solve any congestion problems whatsoever," said Prevedouros. "At best rail will increase public transit ridership from 7% to 9% - a drop in the bucket."

Prevedouros said high occupancy toll lanes, or HOT lanes are a better and less expensive solution to Oahu's traffic congestion.

"Whether it's steel on steel, rubber on concrete (or) HOT lanes," said Kobayashi in response to the same question, "whatever is selected we must move forward and get this done."

Kobayashi prefers using rubber tire on concrete technology on the proposed fixed guideway system, which she says is a more cost effective alternative to rail.

Hannemann did not rebut Prevedouros' claim that rail would do little to solve Oahu's

congestion. Instead the mayor focused on the proposed rail system as another option for commuters.

"It's all about having choices because that is what we are lacking," Hannemann told the crowd. "We don't have choices other than our vehicle and our excellent bus service, so rail will be the centerpiece of an integrated multi-mode system."

The three mayoral candidates will take part in their first true debate on September 9 at the Hawaii Theatre from 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Hawaii's primary election is Saturday, September 20.

For more information on who's donating to each candidate, click [here](#)

Andrew may be reached at apereira@khon2.com or ph. 591-4263.

Story Updated: Sep 4, 2008 at 6:44 PM HDT

Find this article at:

<http://www.khon2.com/news/government/27896519.html>

 [Click to Print](#)

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

©2007 KHON-TV. All Rights Reserved.



Powered by Clickability

Click to Print

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Government

Stop Rail Now Loses Petition Battle

By Andrew Pereira

STORY SUMMARY>>>

It was a wicked Wednesday for Stop Rail Now. The anti-rail group was turned away by two separate Hawaii courts in its effort to get its ballot question on the November ballot.

In Circuit Court, Judge Karl Sakamoto denied Stop Rail Now's motion for partial reconsideration of his early ruling last month. Sakamoto upheld his previous decision saying the group needed 44,500 valid signatures, or ten percent of registered Oahu voters in the 2004 election, to get its anti-rail question before voters.

The Hawaii Supreme court ruled a few hours later, denying the group's request for emergency relief from Sakamoto's decision.

The high court's position effectively killed Stop Rail Now's ballot question, which would have read: Shall an ordinance be adopted to prohibit trains and rail transit in the City and County of Honolulu?

Also Wednesday Honolulu City Clerk Denise De Costa announced 35,065 of the signatures collected by Stop Rail Now's were certified by her office as valid out of the 49,472 the group submitted.

Although the anti-rail group failed to get its question on the November ballot Oahu voters will still decide whether they want a 20-mile commuter rail line that will cost an estimated \$3.7 billion in 2006 dollars.

Last month the Honolulu City Council and Mayor Mufi Hannemann approved a question that reads: Shall the powers, duties and functions of the city through the director of Transportation

Services include the establishment of a steel wheel on steel rail transit system?

With no more legal bullets to shoot Stop Rail Now will turn its focus to educating the public about the Council's question and alternatives to rail.

"For the most part it's a question of getting the truth to the voters," said Stop Rail Now supporter Cliff Slater. "The big issue for everybody is reduction in traffic congestion and we don't get that with rail transit."

Meanwhile mayoral candidate and Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi failed to pass a resolution Wednesday that demanded the city stop using taxpayer funds for radio ads that promote rail transit.

With Council Chairwoman Barbara Marshall absent due to health reasons the measure failed to pass by a 4-4 vote.

Transportation Services Director Wayne Yoshioka told the Council's Executive Committee that the ads, along with printed materials and community meetings, are part of the city's federally mandated campaign to inform the public about its mass transit project.

Councilman Charles Djou argued the ads amount to propoganda and pointed to a Hawaii Supreme Court decision in March of last year which said City Prosecutor Peter Carlisle could not expend taxpayer monies to promote a ballot issue unless authorized to do so by city ordinance.

"You believe that a reasonable person looking at your advertising will not believe that it's slanted, bias, or favors a pro or anti-rail position," Djou asked Yoshioka. "It just merely provides information," Djou added.

Yoshioka responded to Djou that in his opinion the radio ads provide unbiased information and are designed to counter "misinformation" by anti-rail forces.

Andrew may be reached at apereira@khon2.com or ph. 591-4263.

Story Updated: Sep 3, 2008 at 10:17 PM HDT

Find this article at:

<http://www.khon2.com/news/government/27844244.html>

 Click to Print

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) |

[Close](#)

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

KITV.com

Candidates For Honolulu Mayor Debate

Candidates Disagree On Solution For Traffic Congestion

POSTED: 5:33 am HST September 10, 2008

UPDATED: 5:56 am HST September 10, 2008

HONOLULU -- The three major candidates for mayor of Honolulu squared off Tuesday night in a televised debate that included the issue of Oahu's traffic problems.

[Video: Watch The Story](#)

City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi and University of Hawaii engineering professor Panos Prevedouros sided with each other against incumbent Mayor Mufi Hannemann's proposed rail system. It would run 20 miles from Kapolei to Ala Moana.

Kobayashi said Oahu's traffic is bad and mass transit is needed, but a train going through the city isn't the answer. She called for consideration of alternatives, such as high occupancy toll, or HOT lanes.

Prevedouros called rail "a non-solution," saying it doesn't address the top problem of traffic congestion.

Hannemann disagreed, saying a light rail system needs to be built now.

Copyright 2008 by The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or

Related To Story



- [Video: Honolulu Mayor Candidates Debate The Issues](#)

September 10, 2008

Letters to the Editor

election 2008

We shouldn't trust Hannemann on rail

Thank goodness for Lee Cataluna's explanation on Mayor "Hanuman's" latest media blitz where he attempts to gain credit from presidential candidate Barack Obama's recent speech at Ke'ehi Lagoon. I've seen the quote she writes about in print, but recently saw it on TV. What a farce! The mayor should be ashamed of himself for attempting to mislead the public into thinking that Obama was actually endorsing him versus merely being very courteous.

But then again this is Mufi Hannemann we are talking about. His true colors show similarly as he attempts to sway the public into thinking his railway is justified. The important thing to note is that his embellished re-election ads parallel his vision and propaganda on rail.

Is this a person you can trust spending your tax dollars and to be honest about a train costing more than \$5 billion will work? No, he's just someone who is indebted to the unions and large contracting firms that stand to earn those billions.

His ads say it all and the funny thing is they are his ads! The emperor's new clothes have just gotten more transparent.

B.M. Cupp | Kaimuki

September 11, 2008

Rail EIS release date still October

By *SEAN HAO*
Advertiser Staff Writer

The draft environmental impact statement for Honolulu's elevated commuter train still has a "target" release date of October, a project consultant said yesterday.

Parsons Brinckerhoff clarified the release date a day after an employee said on a radio show that the draft EIS would be released about the beginning of November. A November release date would mean residents may have little or no time to review the key document before a Nov. 4 vote on whether to build the \$3.7 billion, steel-wheeled train system.

The draft EIS is expected to contain a host of new information about the train project, including updated capital and operating cost estimates, along with information on the location and number of potentially affected properties.

Conflicting remark

On Tuesday's city-sponsored "Honolulu on the Move" radio show on KHVH 830-AM, a Parsons Brinckerhoff manager said the document may be released to the public in early November. That prompted program host Mike Buck to ask whether residents will have time to digest the document before voting on a train referendum.

"Will the public be able to absorb some of this — of that statement by then?" Buck asked. "Will it be of value in their decision-making process?"

Radio show guest Art Borst, a Parsons Brinckerhoff facilities design manager, then backtracked.

"I'm not sure of the exact timing," he said. "We can get back to you, because that's a little bit of a dynamic date right now."

Yesterday, Mark Scheibe, deputy project manager at Parsons Brinckerhoff, said Borst misspoke.

"Art Borst is the facilities design manager on the project and not involved on a regular basis with the production of the environmental impact statement," Scheibe said in an e-mail to the Advertiser. "This might explain why he misspoke yesterday. The target release date for the (draft environmental impact statement) ... remains the same."

Earlier during the hourlong program, Borst said the point of the draft EIS is to apprise the public of potential areas of concern.

"That's the main purpose of it is to bring to light areas that are (of) concern and how the project is going to mitigate them," he said.

Already delayed

Rail project critics have accused the city of purposely delaying the release of the draft EIS.

"We won't see it before the election because there are going to be unpleasant things there," said Cliff Slater, an outspoken critic of the project.

According to Scheibe, the release date of the draft EIS is driven by an ongoing federal review process.

"An administrative draft of the document was transmitted to the (Federal Transit Administration) ... and is under review," Scheibe's e-mail stated. "The usual practice is for FTA to complete its review and send us comments on the draft, which would be revised as appropriate. That revision goes back to FTA for another review and then the document goes to print."

The draft EIS, which will assess, among other things, noise and visual impacts, was initially was supposed to be completed this spring.

That date has since been pushed back to October. Despite the delay, the environmental review process is proceeding on a schedule that should allow construction to begin on the 20-mile transit project between East Kapolei and Ala Moana as planned in December of next year, according to the city.

Once the draft environmental impact statement is released, the city plans to provide at least 45 days for public comments. At least one public hearing will be held.

The city hopes to open the rail transit system in phases from 2012 to 2018.

September 11, 2008

Letters to the Editor

Wants a mayor who will restore bus stops

I'm very happy to know we will have a choice in electing our mayor and also that some are interested in improving the bus system.

So many bus stops have been removed that it is getting to be a hardship riding TheBus.

I say, "Give us a mayor that will give us our bus stops back," especially in Waikiki.

Millie Zeibig | Honolulu



Vol. 13, Issue 255 - Thursday, September 11, 2008

Letters to the Editor

Trams, bigger buses could ease traffic

There is something illogical about the pro-rail decision. If people on West Oahu are willing to wait for 10 or more years for their traffic congestion problem to be solved, and choose not to do anything to ease the long hours of commuting - and to save tens of thousands of dollars in gas money - perhaps the traffic problem is not as urgent and intolerable as they claim. Bus rapid transit trams and double-decked buses can be quick solutions for the traffic problem. Since there is no massive construction cost involved, bus rapid transit can be established quickly, and costs much less than the rail system. Trams use electricity and are environmentally friendly. Double-decked buses provide a better view of the city, and are beneficial for the tourist industry.

Some cities in California are planning to incorporate bus rapid transit into their mass transit systems. Hong Kong has been successfully using trams and double-decked buses to transport millions of people for decades. Should we not seriously consider those transportation alternatives?

Cecilia Graybeal
Honolulu

September 12, 2008

Professor stood his ground

By Lee Cataluna

There is that climactic scene in the movie where Napoleon Dynamite takes to the stage with a cassette tape, some herky-jerky dance moves and an odd but earnest belief that he's doing the right thing. At first, the high school audience is aghast. How dare someone who is so far out of the "in" crowd dare to dance at the assembly? But his sincerity is disarming and endearing. Instead of embarrassing himself or making the audience cringe, he proves something.

There's a saying that all of life is like high school, and that certainly came to mind Tuesday night during the televised debate between the top three candidates for Honolulu mayor.

The Hawai'i Theatre is certainly much nicer than any high school auditorium in this town, but it might as well have been a beat up gym for all the jeering and hollering in the audience.

And there was Panos Prevedouros, the Napoleon Dynamite of the evening, daring to say things no politician would ever say because he is not a politician.

Prevedouros was asked if he were elected mayor but the voters supported steel-on-steel rail, would he then back the project? His answer was no, he would educate the voters so they realized what a bad idea that was and he would hold another vote.

The correct response for a politician would have been, "I will go with the will of the people" even if they don't plan to do that. It just sounds better. But Prevedouros, ever the professor, said he would just have to work harder to teach people so they know better. Some in the audience laughed at that. He looked surprised that he might have been expected to say something he didn't believe in.

To withstand the rigors of a debate format where questions were hurled from multiple sources, including one's opponents, and answers timed using yellow and red lights; to hold your ground against two veteran politicians with years of experience answering, flipping and dodging questions; to come out the other end 90 minutes later smiling like it was sort of fun takes either a kind of true-heart bravery or the ego-less Zen of someone who has nothing to lose.

Prevedouros may not have won the debate, he may not win the mayor's office, but he won something Tuesday night. He went in the ring with the heavyweights and made it to the final bell. No one had to look away while he pathetically bled. He didn't bleed. He smiled and he even landed a couple of punches.

Does it make him the best candidate for mayor? Maybe not. But it makes him a hero to all outsiders and underdogs.

September 12, 2008

Letters to the Editor

mayoral race

Another reason people are fed up with politics

At the mayoral debate Tuesday, we got a glimpse into Ann Kobayashi's version of transparency in her administration should she be elected mayor.

What shocked me most was when she told us that when she made her last-minute decision to run for mayor she only called five people. She didn't call a press conference so everyone in her district would know about her decision and there would be time for people to ponder the possibility of running for her office.

Never did I think that if you wanted to run for public office, Ann needed to have your home phone number. Especially since Ann had done a good job representing her district, which was demonstrated by the fact that she was running unopposed.

All of her good work was thrown out in my eyes when she tried to name her successor with those five phone calls.

Ann's last-minute stunt is just one of the many reasons people become disillusioned with those who run for public office.

Michael Golojuch Jr. | Kapolei

September 12, 2008

Letters to the Editor

mayoral race

Mayor must say now if he will serve full term

At the mayoral debate Tuesday night, Ann Kobayashi asked Mayor Mufi Hannemann the same question he asked of then-mayor Jeremy Harris: "Will you run for governor before your term is up?"

Hannemann's response was that he wanted to keep his options open and be able to entertain the idea of running for governor. He wants to be able to put his talents where they are needed.

What is there to entertain? The seat will be open. There is no incumbent so it's a wide-open race. It's already expected that Lt. Gov. James "Duke" Aiona will run. So again, what is there to entertain?

The filing deadline to run for governor is July 2010. If he is reelected as mayor, he must resign as mayor to run for governor. That means he will only be serving as mayor for 19 months.

The people of Honolulu have the right to know before going to the polls if he will be a 19-month mayor or a 48-month mayor.

Steven Loretero | Kane'ohe



Vol. 13, Issue 256 - Friday, September 12, 2008

Letters to the Editor

We need a mayor who will stick around

After watching Tuesday night's broadcast of "Honolulu Mayor: The Debate" live from the Hawaii Theater and hearing Mayor Mufi Hannemann confirm his future political career plans, which he said might mean a change of office as soon as two years away, I decided at that moment not to vote for him. I, we, the people of Oahu need a full-time mayor tending to our critical needs and around long enough to be held accountable. In other words, do we need a part-time mayor? No! Can we afford a part-time mayor? No! Can we sustain a part-time mayor? No!

Thank you, Ann Kobayashi and Panos Prevedouros, for applying for the full-time job (it is four years, not two) to be our next mayor.

Sara Lesmez
Mililani

September 14, 2008

Mayor races perk up Hawaii vote

Analysts say higher turnout likely within counties, not statewide

By *DERRICK DePLEDGE*
Advertiser Government Writer

On O'ahu, the issue is a \$3.7 billion mass-transit project. On the Big Island, it is the economy and how to replace a popular icon. On Kaua'i, it is about growth and a chance for a new direction after an untimely death.

After a primary season that has been like a slow burn, voters on Saturday will select mayors on three islands and pick their party's finalists for state House and Senate campaigns in the general election in November. Several county council and state Board of Education campaigns will also be decided.

Voter turnout in primaries had steadily fallen over the past decade but moved up slightly in 2006 — to 42.2 percent — because of the U.S. Senate primary between U.S. Sen. Daniel Akaka, D-Hawai'i, and then-U.S. Rep. Ed Case. With no comparable attraction on the ballot this year, political analysts believe it will be the mayoral campaigns that influence turnout.

Although the presidential election has many people talking politics this year, the local races have not produced similar interest, and analysts doubt primary turnout statewide will be substantially higher than 2006. Voter registration is up just 1.8 percent statewide from two years ago, and elections officials predict that about 40 percent of voters who participate in the primary will cast ballots via absentee or walk-in voting before Saturday.

Island-by-island turnout may be higher because of the mayoral campaigns. On the Big Island, for example, voter registration is up 6 percent.

"I think there are some hot races in a number of counties that will bring out people in the primary, so I would expect turnout to be above average," said Rick Castberg, a political science professor at the University of Hawai'i-Hilo.

John Hart, a communications professor at Hawai'i Pacific University, said he does not expect primary turnout to be much different than recent trends.

"I think we have a chance for a big bump in the general. You not only have a presidential election, but you have the Hawai'i connection in the race, which I think is going to get people out to vote," he said of Hawai'i-born U.S. Sen. Barack Obama, the Democrats' presidential nominee, who graduated from Punahou School.

"When someone goes to high school here, I think there is going to be more of a pride factor, and people are going to go out, one way or the other."

dominating issues

On O'ahu in the primary, Mayor Mufi Hannemann was gliding to re-election before UH-Manoa engineer Panos Prevedouros and City Council member Ann Kobayashi entered the race late, mostly to challenge Hannemann's plans for a steel-on-steel rail project. Voters will have a chance in November to have a voice on the project through a ballot question, but the mayoral campaign has served as sort of a proxy for the rail debate and Hannemann's leadership.

With a compressed campaign because of the late filings, other issues — such as the city's response to a growing homeless population, an expensive federal mandate on wastewater treatment and an aging landfill — have largely been submerged.

If Hannemann does not get more than 50 percent of the vote, the threshold for re-election in the primary, the dynamics of the campaign could change quickly and the challenger who survives would likely be seen as a more credible rival come November.

Voter registration on O'ahu is up less than 1 percent over 2006.

On the Big Island, where popular Mayor Harry Kim is leaving office due to term limits, former Kim aide Billy Kenoi and state Sen. Lorraine Inouye, D-1st (Hamakua, S. Hilo), are considered the favorites, although County Council members Angel Pilago and Stacy Higa are also contenders in the eight-candidate field. A downturn in the economy, particularly in tourism and construction, has been an issue for voters, along with improving government relations across the island when the center of power is in Hilo on the east side.

"You've got gender and age and education and experience and the whole thing. So that makes it quite interesting," Castberg said of the candidates.

On Kaua'i, where the death of Mayor Bryan Baptiste in June created an unexpected vacancy, Council members JoAnn Yukimura and Mel Rapozo, parks and recreation director Bernard Carvalho and school computer technician Rolf Bieber are trying to replace him. While the economy and improvements to city services have been issues, the pace of new development and whether to welcome back the Hawaii Superferry, which was blocked by protesters last year, have also been themes.

Voter registration is up 2.7 percent on Kaua'i.

aces to watch

The primary also will break down the candidates for state House and Senate in November. With Obama the presidential nominee, Democrats are optimistic that higher voter turnout will help them hold the seats at the Legislature they picked up in 2004 and 2006. A wave of new Democratic voters for Obama could also help the majority party pick up additional seats.

But because the party has to defend so many seats, most analysts predict Democrats could lose two seats in the House to Republicans but gain one seat in the Senate in November. Democrats now have a 44-7 majority in the House and a 21-4 majority in the Senate.

Overall, there are five open House seats and two open Senate seats, and about 20 House and Senate

seats are considered by analysts to be competitive.

"We're very excited about the candidates that we're presenting to the people of Hawai'i this year," said Willes Lee, the state GOP chairman, who believes Republicans may pick up four House seats and break even in the Senate.

Brian Schatz, the chairman of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i, said Democrats would still consider it a good year even if they end up dropping a few House seats. "Because we have 44 seats (in the House), we're going to have to play more defense than offense," he said.

Among the more interesting primary campaigns to watch:

- State Sen. Clarence Nishihara, D-18th (Waipahu, Crestview, Pearl City), is being challenged by state Rep. Alex Sonson, D-35th (Pearl City, Waipahu), in a rare intraparty skirmish between two sitting lawmakers. With no Republican contender, the winner goes to the Senate.
- State Rep. Karen Awana, D-44th (Honokai Hale, Nanakuli, Lualualei), is going before voters for the first time since switching from the Republican Party. Her challenger, Hanalei Aipoalani, a former biotechnology executive, impressed many Democrats during his unsuccessful run in the primary for the 2nd Congressional District in 2006.
- Carol Philips, a small business owner, and Gil Riviere, a mortgage broker, are up against each other in the Republican primary for a chance at state Rep. Michael Magaoay, D-46th (Schofield, Mokule'ia, North Shore). Magaoay has primary challengers in former state representative Ollie Lunasco and activist Dawn Wasson.
- State Rep. Josh Green, D-6th (N. Kona, Keauhou, Kailua, Kona), is facing former state representative and County Council member Virginia Isbell for an open Senate seat. Green is favored, but Isbell is well known in the district. No Republican challenger entered the race, so the winner goes to the Senate.

September 14, 2008

Letters to the Editor

rail

Construction will be tough for those in area

I really got a kick out of Mayor Mufi Hannemann's response to the question of how he would handle the poor victims of land condemnation if his transit plan prevails.

He said he would sit them down and talk with them. Sounds real pono and upfront of him, doesn't it? Hannemann failed to mention that notification letters won't disclose affected properties, that they won't be mailed until October (after the primary election) and that the city had yet to decide whether property owners even had the right to appeal condemnation, as noted in the Advertiser's Aug. 29, article, "Landowners in rail's way notified."

Talk to anyone who has lost customers or lost their business and livelihood as a result of city road construction with endless delays, miserable traffic congestion, blocked parking lots, walkways and doorways, and you'll get a more accurate picture of how open and sympathetic our mayor is when it comes to dealing with property owners.

The Kaimuki revitalization project lasted only several months, while rail construction is conservatively estimated at 10 years.

One has only to ask the Wai'alaie business owners what they went through during revitalization construction to get an accurate picture of what it will be like for those unfortunate residences and businesses in rail's path.

Remember also that sizeable chunks of property will be needed for the rail stations alone.

Are you listening, Dillingham property owners?

Cinde Fisher | Honolulu

September 15, 2008

Engineer Prevedouros says background can fix Honolulu

BY PETER BOYLAN

Advertiser Staff Writer

University of Hawai'i civil engineering professor Panos Prevedouros says he has the skills best suited to lead Honolulu.

What the city needs, he says, is a chief executive with the know-how to fix its aging sewers and deteriorating roads and to plan for its transportation needs.

Politicians, he says, have led Honolulu into disrepair and wasted millions in taxpayer dollars.

Prevedouros — vying to be the first engineer elected as mayor of Honolulu since John H. Wilson took the job in 1920 — has no experience as an elected official.

Instead of spending years on the campaign trail, he was author of an engineering study that he says is the state's largest-ever simulation of five alternatives to relieve traffic congestion.

"We have to use proper engineering to fix our problems otherwise it gets terribly expensive," said Prevedouros. "It's really upsetting to see an administration that does not understand the technical aspects of running a city wasting taxpayer money."

Prevedouros' focus on engineering — especially his opposition to the city's proposed rail system — has led to criticism that he is a one-issue candidate.

His campaign is backed primarily by anti-rail forces, and he's had little success at fund-raising, with \$19,495.32 raised through Sept. 5.

'a political unknown'

Some of the harshest criticism has come from incumbent Mayor Mufi Hannemann, who in the past has said Prevedouros' anti-rail stance is purely "political," and that Prevedouros' claims that Hannemann has been inattentive to infrastructure are "preposterous."

Prevedouros was a leader in the anti-rail campaign before announcing his intent to challenge Hannemann. The engineer said pro-rail advertisements by Hannemann targeting him and other rail opponents motivated him to run.

However his chances of unseating Hannemann, who is backed by an 80 percent approval rating and a nearly \$3 million war chest, appear slim.

Neal Milner, a political scientist at the University of Hawai'i, summed up the outlook for the engineer in

Saturday's primary:

"He's a political unknown. He doesn't have a lot of political experience and he doesn't have a lot of money and he's running against a formidable candidate."

Milner nevertheless acknowledged Prevedouros "can have some effect on the mass-transit issue and he can bring someone new into the political process."

He added: "He can do some interesting things. Does he have chance? I would bet a lot of money against it."

Unlike Hannemann and the other top candidate for mayor, City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi, Prevedouros' 19 years in Honolulu have been spent exclusively teaching and mentoring engineers at the University of Hawai'i.

Not that the 46-year-old native of Patras, Greece, let his lack of public policy experience or dearth of time in front of television cameras affect his performance in a recent debate against the two veteran politicians.

The political novice scored some verbal points as he sought to prove he is more than a voice against rail transit.

Prevedouros was on the offensive, labeling the proposed \$3.7 billion commuter rail project a nonsolution and calling the second city of Kapolei — which Hannemann has supported — a failed vision and infrastructure nightmare. Prevedouros accused Hannemann of misleading the public about the true cost of the transit project, which he pegged at \$6 billion.

Prevedouros also interjected humor and came off as the everyman who responded to a moderator's prompt to ask a question of his fellow candidates by saying he would ask "a tough one."

infrastructure expert

Prevedouros, with the most advanced degrees of the three candidates, believes that it takes an engineer to understand the science behind the core services that keep a city running.

"Infrastructure is my strength and infrastructure is the weakness of this city," said Prevedouros. "I am quite a diverse and well-educated person. My expertise is infrastructure and I know how to make these services operate efficiently."

Cliff Slater, the retired founder of Maui Divers Jewelry and an ardent anti-rail activist credited with pushing Prevedouros to run, said he believes Prevedouros will get a lot of support from the business community when it comes time to go to the polls.

"Virtually all of our problems are civil engineering problems. Whether it be sewers, water, highways, or rail lines, these are all multibillion-dollar problems," said Slater. "That's where the really hard work needs to be done. He's a very, very competent guy. He has a lot to learn about politics but that doesn't strike me as a disadvantage from a citizen's standpoint."

Instead of building a train that "won't relieve traffic congestion," Prevedouros proposes synchronizing

traffic signals and building high occupancy toll lanes to better manage rush-hour commutes.

"No one is talking about the real cost of this project. It is a completely unaffordable project that is a nonsolution," said Prevedouros, in an interview with The Advertiser. "We would be literally throwing money out of the window."

Other targets are what he sees as out-of-control development, and to develop Kapolei into a sustainable city so that those living in the area won't have to commute into town to work, live and play.

Prevedouros champions "sustainable solutions" and believes that he can marshal the power of science to develop waste-to-energy conversion methods that will negate the need for a landfill.

He also believes that he can save money and improve road repairs by developing a new type of recyclable top layer of asphalt that will last much longer than the mixture currently used.

Unlike many who participate in public policy debates, however, Prevedouros has extensive technical expertise, and he's not shy about demonstrating it publicly.

When he released his transportation alternatives study in March, he did so not in a scholarly journal, but at a presentation at the state Capitol.

The study concluded that a system of high-occupancy toll lanes, bus rapid transit, highway underpasses and a Pearl Harbor car ferry would cost a third of the price of a starter rail system while moving people and traffic quicker and more efficiently.

technical background

At the time, Hannemann blasted Prevedouros, saying his study was political, not objective, and the ideas "have not been able to generate any momentum and support."

Prevedouros' journey to the public eye began in Patras, Greece's third-largest city, with a population of more than 200,000.

His family shares his technical bent, with a brother and a sister who are electrical and industrial engineers.

Prevedouros earned his undergraduate degree from the engineering college at Aristotle University in Thessaloniki, Greece, before moving to the United States, where he earned a master's degree and a doctorate in transportation engineering from Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill.

He joined the civil engineering department at UH in 1990 and has served as the chair of its civil engineering graduate program since 2003.

He regularly lectures at international symposiums and conferences and has shared his expertise in 10 countries and 33 cities including Beijing, Chicago, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, London, Munich, New York, Paris, Tokyo, Venice, Vienna and Washington, D.C.

Prevedouros took a leave of absence from his post as a tenured professor, which pays more than

\$125,000 a year, to run for mayor.

talented and efficient

Ron Riggs, chairman of the civil engineering department, said Prevedouros is an efficient and talented engineer.

"He's very efficient at what he does in terms of what he's done in the department," said Riggs. "It's a characteristic that is easily ascribed to him. I consider him to be a contributive and productive member of the department. He came here as an assistant professor and he is now a tenured professor."

Larry Head, an engineering professor at the University of Arizona and a colleague of Prevedouros, compared his campaign to that of Bob Walkup, the mayor of Tucson. Walkup is an industrial engineer by training and worked as an engineer for Hughes Aircraft Co. for almost 30 years.

"I believe he (Walkup) is very effective because he is able to understand the technical as well as the political issues involved in running a city. I don't believe consultants can 'dazzle' him with technical details to sell a point. He truly understands the technical side of the issues," said Head. "I hope Panos is successful."

Prevedouros was married for 13 years but divorced in 2005. He said he maintains an amicable relationship with his ex-wife.

He is engaged to Katie O'Donnell, a Radford High School graduate and Kahuku native, and the couple is expecting a baby boy in September. They live in a rented house near Triangle Park in Kahala but also own a rental property in Kapolei.

His stepson is a senior in the UH civil engineering department and works daily with Prevedouros on projects and research.

September 15, 2008

Expect ad blitz over rail question

Supporters and critics of transit plan focusing on winning over voters

By SEAN HAO

Advertiser Staff Writer

Technically it will be the fourth City and County of Honolulu question on the ballot given to voters on Nov. 4. However, for most people it will be known as "The Rail Question."

If residents don't know what that question is now, chances are they will by general-election day. That's because forces for and against the \$3.7 billion elevated commuter rail plan to work from now until Election Day persuading voters to support or kill the project.

That's likely to make The Rail Question one of the more lively political campaigns this election season.

Just which rail question was going before voters was only settled last week when Stop Rail Now's anti-rail ordinance failed to make the ballot. Instead, the city will ask voters whether to "establish a steel wheel on steel rail transit system." The answer to that question could have a profound impact on the state for decades.

Among those in favor of rail are labor unions, land developers, the city, Mayor Mufi Hannemann and groups such as www.gorailgo.com. On the other side are grass roots groups such as Stop Rail Now, www.Honolulutraffic.com and www.therailscam.com.

Both sides said they're focusing on winning public opinion on the rail transit issue. Starting this month, the Hawai'i Carpenters launched a second wave of TV ads touting the benefits of rail.

"Certainly now that we know what the question is, now that the Stop Rail Now petition has failed, we're going to encourage everyone to vote yes on the question," said Ron Taketa, business representative for the Hawai'i Carpenters, which has 7,800 members. "We'll continue it through until the general election."

Rail proponents argue the city needs to give commuters an alternative to highly congested H-1 Freeway. They contend that the commuter line with its 19 stations will encourage more sustainable urban development, reduce suburban sprawl and spur Hawai'i's flagging economy.

Opponents point to the costs, aesthetics and noise as potential problems. They argue that not enough people will use the trains and that cheaper alternatives would do more to reduce traffic congestion.

Groups such as the Hawai'i Carpenters have declined to disclose how much they are spending on an extensive pro-rail TV ad campaign. However the Carpenters, coupled with another union-backed group, Support Rail Transit, and Hannemann's campaign committee appear to have outspent anti-rail groups by a large margin.

Just how that ad blitz has shaped voter opinion is unclear. However, recent polls suggest that a majority of residents support the train project, which would connect East Kapolei to Ala Moana.

Anti-rail groups acknowledge that there's a tough battle ahead. Stop Rail Now said it's mobilizing volunteers who helped gather more than 49,000 signatures on the group's anti-rail petition. They'll be formed into teams that will canvass neighborhoods, distribute fliers and send out letters, said Stop Rail Now co-founder Dennis Callan.

The group, which says it has raised and spent about \$60,000, also will begin soliciting support from petition signers, which could help fund a small-scale print and radio ad campaign.

"That's part of our base of support," Callan said. "There's 49,000 names and addresses there. We'll be hoping they send in an average of \$5 or \$10. That'll add up to something.

"It's a political campaign and we're going to be doing what we can to educate the public."

The rail question will be the last of four proposed city Charter amendments appearing on the Nov. 4 ballot. The language of the City Council resolutions behind those Charter amendments is available on the city's Web site at www.honoluluelections.us.

However, the job of educating voters on the pros and cons of each won't be conducted by the City Clerk's Office, said Honolulu elections administrator Glen Takahashi.

"There won't be a pamphlet or anything like that," he said. "The questions are pretty straightforward I think. We do our best to provide information as a service, but we won't do any explanation or interpretive clarification just because things can be interpreted in many different ways."

September 15, 2008

Three major contracts for Oahu rail project linked to same firm

City downplays dominance by Parsons Brinckerhoff; critics question lack of bids

By SEAN HAO

Advertiser Staff Writer

The city has awarded three major contracts worth nearly \$108 million as it prepares to build a new commuter rail system, and all three winners were linked to one company: Parsons Brinckerhoff.

The New York-based engineering firm has been active in Hawai'i since the 1960s and had a major role in designing H-3 Freeway.

Still, that Parsons Brinckerhoff and a firm formed by its former employees are dominating the contracts has raised concerns that the city doesn't do enough to solicit competition. That's a charge the city denies.

Construction of the 20-mile, \$3.7 billion elevated train connecting East Kapolei to Ala Moana Center is still in the planning phase, and scrutiny of rail contracts will only increase as it moves into the more expensive building phase.

The train system, Honolulu's largest public works project ever, will be the subject of a city audit later this year and voters will have an opportunity to voice their opinion on the plan on Nov. 4.

The first contract, for \$10.2 million, was awarded to Parsons Brinckerhoff in August 2005. That was followed by a \$11.5 million contract given in March 2007 to InfraConsult LLC, which was formed by three former Parsons Brinckerhoff employees. In August 2007, PB Americas Inc., a unit of Parsons Brinckerhoff, won the largest contract to date, for \$86 million.

Parsons Brinckerhoff and the city have defended the company's success in winning Honolulu transit contracts, citing extensive experience in the field locally and internationally. In addition to work on H-3 Freeway, Parsons Brinckerhoff was a key consultant on a prior plan to build a Honolulu rail system in the 1990s and a bus rapid transit project pursued earlier this decade.

Parsons Brinckerhoff is one of the biggest, oldest and most widely recognized transportation engineering firms in the world. The company's founder, William Barclay Parsons, helped break ground on New York's first subway on March 24, 1900. Today, the 123-year-old privately owned company generates about \$1.4 billion in annual revenues and has 9,000 employees worldwide and about 100 in its Honolulu office.

"PB is a global firm with local staff who live and work in the Honolulu community" said city Transportation Services Director Wayne Yoshioka in an e-mailed statement. "PB professionals have been involved in the planning, design and construction of Hawai'i infrastructure projects since PB's Honolulu office opened in April 1966."

Hundreds, if not thousands, of businesses likely will work on the transit system by the time it's completed, with the largest contracts going to construction companies and the manufacturer of the trains. Those contracts are expected to draw more intense competition than the early contracts, which are mostly for design and planning.

lack of bidders

The decision to award the largest contract, for \$86 million, to PB Americas was made by a four-member committee composed of government and private-sector individuals. The group met on July 12, 2007, to decide who was best qualified for the contract.

One of the biggest questions at that meeting wasn't who would get the contract, but why there weren't more than two bidders. According to minutes of the meeting, some members expressed disappointment that only two firms sought the contract — PB Americas and Morristown, N.J. -based Louis Berger Group Inc.

Normally, the city would require at least three bidders for contracts of this type, however, just two days before the July 12 meeting, then-Transportation Director Melvin Kaku waived that requirement. Kaku said potential competitors had a month to apply for the contract, which covers preliminary engineering and environmental studies, according to city documents.

However, committee member Lorrie Stone said the city should have done more to publicize the contract, which was posted on the city's Web site on June 5, 2007, and in a newspaper classified ad, according to minutes of the meeting. Stone didn't return a call seeking a comment for this story.

Committee members were told by a city transportation official that their role was to decide which firm was better qualified, rather than to question city solicitation procedures.

PB Americas was rated highest on all criteria by all members and got the contract.

new firm awarded

That deal followed the March 2007 contract awarded to InfraConsult LLC. The \$11.5 million, 2 1/2-year contract was to provide management support on the project, which included oversight of the work done by Parsons Brinckerhoff.

InfraConsult was formed in the summer of 2006 by three former Parsons Brinckerhoff executives. Two had previously worked on Honolulu transit projects.

Only one other company — Parsons Transportation Group — submitted a qualified competing bid. Parsons Transportation is part of Los Angeles-based Parsons Corp., which has no connection to Parsons Brinckerhoff.

The city selected InfraConsult over Parsons Corp. even though InfraConsult had a shorter track record.

Parsons Corp. had \$2.5 billion in sales and 13,500 employees in 2007, according to Gale Group, a research company. Parsons Transportation registered to do business in Hawai'i in May 1980, according to state records.

InfraConsult, which was founded in June 2006, did not register as a Hawai'i business until March 16, 2007 — just days after the company was selected the winning bidder for the city contract. The Honolulu transit deal is the company's biggest contract to date.

InfraConsult, which was ranked highest by all evaluation committee members, won the contract even though its bid of \$11.5 million was higher than Parsons Transportation's bid of \$9.4 million. InfraConsult's proposal was "very detailed" while Parsons was "shallow," according to minutes of a March 8, 2007, evaluation committee meeting.

InfraConsult's job under the contract will essentially be to augment the city staff in overseeing the work conducted by Parsons Brinckerhoff. In effect, former Parsons Brinckerhoff employees will be helping the city oversee the work of current Parsons Brinckerhoff employees.

Michael Schneider, managing partner for InfraConsult, said it is wrong to expect that his company will cut Parsons Brinckerhoff any slack.

Schneider said he left Parsons Brinckerhoff following a difference of opinion about the company's future direction that "was not particularly friendly."

Schneider also said he didn't form InfraConsult specifically to bid on the Honolulu contract and has no intention of going easy on Parsons Brinckerhoff.

"It had absolutely nothing to do with Honolulu," he said. "That was serendipity to some extent, which came along at least a year after I decided to leave the company and form an organization.

"Let us just say that if anybody thinks we split off so we could benignly manage the people at PB, they have no concept of what went on at Parsons Brinckerhoff," Schneider said.

working relationships

It's unclear why more companies haven't competed for city rapid transit contracts.

The request for proposals for the contract awarded to InfraConsult was posted on the city's Internet site on Jan. 23, 2007. Posting the request for proposals on the Internet is the minimum posting requirement for contracts, according to the State Procurement Office.

The city exceeded posting requirements for the PB Americas contract by placing a classified ad in the June 16, 2007, Honolulu Star-Bulletin. Bidding for the contract closed about two weeks later, on July 5.

State Rep. Cynthia Thielen, R-50th (Kailua, Kane'ohe Bay), thinks some potential bidders may be intimidated by what appears to be a decadeslong close working relationship between Parsons Brinckerhoff and the city. That perception may have been augmented when Wayne Yoshioka, a former Parsons Brinckerhoff manager and engineer, took over as city transportation director on Dec. 1, 2007. The train project is run by Yoshioka's department.

Yoshioka, a high-school classmate of Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann, has promised to recuse himself from key decisions regarding his former employer.

Current and former Parsons Brinckerhoff employees also have been reliable contributors to Hannemann's re-election campaign, giving \$30,175. Hannemann, who's made the train a top priority — has received a total of nearly \$3 million in campaign contributions during the current election cycle. Hannemann has said there's no link between campaign contributions and the awarding of city contracts.

Thielen said the city needs to work harder to solicit more bidders for Honolulu's rail system given the project's scope and cost. Thielen battled Parsons Brinckerhoff as an attorney for Stop H-3 Association.

"In this instance it would take someone from this administration going out and aggressively seeking other bids and I don't think they were interested in doing that," she said. "Large companies from outside the state may decide not to bid because they feel the system is somewhat wired and they're not going to have the opportunity to have a successful bid. So it may be that Hawai'i, at least for those transportation projects, is known as a closed operation."

The lack of competition on major transit deals may not be in the best interest of taxpayers, Thielen said. "Does that get the best price for the taxpayers?" she said. "I don't think so."

Based on an internal city estimate, the contract for preliminary engineering and environmental impact studies was expected to cost \$70.5 million. That included a 9 percent, or \$5.4 million, profit margin for the company conducting the work. The final contract with Parsons Brinckerhoff was valued about \$86 million.

City officials did not respond to questions regarding that discrepancy.

However, a city official did say that Honolulu's rapid transit contracts are treated no differently than any other contracts.

"This is standard procedure for the city," Yoshioka said in an e-mail. "The size and scope of projects do not influence announcement requirements and the city posts all bid announcements the same way."

As for more aggressively seeking out bidders, Yoshioka said, "It is inappropriate for the city to contact individual firms in an attempt to solicit responses."

InfraConsult's Schneider said many potential Mainland-based competitors are in no position to legitimately compete with Parsons Brinckerhoff.

"There really isn't anybody that has PB's breadth and depth — 50 to 60 people in transportation on the island," he said. "Nobody has made that commitment. If there were other companies who chose to make the investment and have local people in Honolulu who could do what PB does, there would probably be more competition."

transit audit planned

City rail transit contract management and procurement practices are likely to be scrutinized under an audit planned for later this year, said City Auditor Leslie Tanaka. The rapid transit audit was requested by five City Council members who called for more transparency and accountability.

"We're probably going to be looking at the contracts, (but) we're not exactly sure how we're going to slice the audit pie," Tanaka said.

Council member and rail opponent Charles Djou lamented the lack of competition for city rapid transit contracts.

"We get more bids for an \$800,000 water pump than an \$80-plus-million contract for a multibillion-dollar rail system and that's, at a minimum, disappointing," he said. "I had a big problem with that whole process. I'm not accusing the administration necessarily of acting illegally, but I mean everything looked like it was slanted to deliver the result of Parsons Brinckerhoff, PB Americas getting the contract."

The city and Parsons Brinckerhoff said that criticism is unfounded.

"PB openly and fairly competed for the (preliminary engineering/environmental impact statement) contract and based upon that open competition was selected for the assignment," said Parsons Brinckerhoff spokeswoman Judith Cooper in an e-mail.

Parsons Brinckerhoff's history has not been without controversy. The company played a major role on Boston's "Big Dig," which was the nation's most expensive highway project. The Bechtel Group and Parsons Brinckerhoff partnered to manage the \$14.6 billion tunnel project, which experienced massive cost overruns along with quality and safety issues.

Under a settlement agreement announced in January, Bechtel/Parsons Brinckerhoff paid \$407 million to settle a state-filed lawsuit covering a tunnel collapse, which resulted in one death, as well as cost and design issues relating to the Big Dig.

Parsons Brinckerhoff also was a program manager and coordinator on the 11-mile urban train in San Juan, Puerto Rico. That system cost \$2.23 billion when it opened in late 2007. That was more than double the \$1.09 billion cost that was predicted during the project's planning phase. According to an April Federal Transit Administration study of 19 recently opened federally subsidized train projects, the urban train project experienced the largest cost overrun and one of the biggest ridership disappointments.

vast experience

Among its achievements Parsons Brinckerhoff helped build the 173-mile Garden State Parkway, which was completed in 1956. The New Jersey toll road has more than 400 bridges. Parsons Brinckerhoff also was instrumental in building San Francisco's 75-mile Bay Area Rapid Transit system, which opened in 1972.

Martin Rubin, one of the BART project managers, opened the firm's Hawai'i office in 1966. That business was a joint venture between what was then known as Parsons Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas and Sam Hirata, a former deputy director of transportation for the state.

The company's Hawai'i history dates back to a 1962 study on interisland ferry services, which was conducted for the state. Since then Parsons Brinckerhoff has worked on numerous local projects including the Halawa viaduct, the Ke'ehi interchange, the Admiral Clarey Bridge in Pearl Harbor and the widening of Kalia Highway.

The firm's most high-profile Hawai'i project was H-3 Freeway. Parsons Brinckerhoff served as program manager and primary design consultant on the project, which was delayed for decades by legal and

environmental concerns.

Stanley Kawaguchi, who headed the firm's Hawai'i office from 1979 through 2003, attributed Parsons Brinckerhoff's local success to a focus on three key principles — quality, innovation and responsiveness. That was augmented by Rubin's focus on hiring a Hawai'i-area manager with local ties.

"That's what we did and that's why I'd like to think the firm started getting a lot of very large work of course focused on transportation," said Kawaguchi, a University of Hawai'i graduate.

In 2003 Parsons Brinckerhoff joined other Hawai'i architects and engineers in pushing the state and city to award professional services contracts based on a firm's qualifications and experience, rather than on costs. Under that process, government agencies use committees of independent professionals to pick the most qualified company based on published criteria. A procurement official then negotiates the scope and value of a contract.

That change benefited Parsons Brinckerhoff, which is Hawai'i's top transportation engineering firm, Kawaguchi said.

September 16, 2008

Hawaii rail project motivated Kobayashi's run for mayor

BY PETER BOYLAN

Advertiser Staff Writer

Honolulu City Council member Ann Kobayashi wants to be known as the mayoral candidate of change, the individual with the experience to bring transparency and accountability back to Honolulu Hale.

After working to elect Mayor Mufi Hannemann in 2004, Kobayashi said she decided to challenge him this year in large part because of his handling of the proposed \$3.7 billion commuter rail project and what Kobayashi views as inefficient spending of public money.

"The rail project is going to cause a lot of heartache for many people, especially those of low income," Kobayashi said. "I just had to do this. I love the city too much to just sit by and watch someone cause this kind of heartache for so many people."

The 71-year-old Kobayashi decided to run for mayor just before the filing deadline on July 22, giving up her uncontested seat on the council, which she has held since 2002.

She ran unsuccessfully for mayor in 1994, and, if elected, would be the second woman to serve as the city's top executive. Eileen Anderson held the post from 1981 to 1985.

Defeating Hannemann, a former friend and political ally who has an 80 percent approval rating and a \$3 million war chest, won't be easy.

Kobayashi has to hope that she and University of Hawai'i civil engineer Panos D. Prevedouros can deny Hannemann more than half the vote in Saturday's primary election and force a runoff. The top two vote-getters would then go head to head on Nov. 4.

Kobayashi, who was a state senator from 1981 to 1994, has to overcome a late start in the mayor's race.

"She hasn't really been able to use her past political experience and her good name and reputation in an effective way because she got started too late in all this," said Neal Milner, an ombudsman and a political scientist at the University of Hawai'i.

"It takes more time and more money than she has," Milner added. "This always had the feeling to me that this was something at the last minute she was convinced to do by a group of politicians who didn't like Mayor Hannemann too much. That's a way to get into a race but not a way to win a race."

Kobayashi had told friends and colleagues that she had no interest in running for mayor. She surprised many when she filed on July 22, the last day to enter the race. She had met the night before with high-ranking members of the Democratic party, including state Senate President Colleen Hanabusa and former Gov. Ben Cayetano, who helped persuade her to go for it.

"I care about what is happening to our city," Kobayashi said. "I love Honolulu and I can't see it going in this downward direction. People are afraid; it's not a good situation."

Her decision to run created a mad scramble as candidates frantically worked for the right to replace her on the nine-member City Council. In the end, former Councilman Duke Bainum flew back from the Mainland, rented a condo in her district and filed nominating papers. He will run unopposed, and Kobayashi said during last week's mayoral debate that she had not coordinated with Bainum before deciding to run for mayor.

Kobayashi has focused much of her criticism of Hannemann on the rail project. She said the system for awarding transit-related projects lacks transparency and backed a resolution by the council asking the city auditor to perform an audit of all transit related contracts.

"The same engineers get the same contracts. We should give everybody a chance to make money," Kobayashi said. "It shouldn't be based on how many tickets you buy to a fundraiser. Everyone should have an equal chance to get a contract with the city."

She has long favored greater openness when it comes to awarding city and state contracts and was part of a bipartisan committee of state legislators that looked into the awarding of nonbid contracts during the administration of former Gov. John Waihee.

A staunch advocate of the public's right to choose, Kobayashi thought the public should have been allowed a greater opportunity to provide input on the rail project.

As a council member, Kobayashi voted against the city's current \$1.9 billion operating budget and made it known she believed the administration could have trimmed more and offered greater relief to tax payers.

She is for mass transit but against the steel wheels-on-steel rail technology selected by a city advisory panel and favored by Hannemann. She instead favors the rubber tire-on-concrete option, saying it is more cost-effective and aesthetically preferable to running elevated train tracks through Honolulu.

But whatever the voters decide on the rail issue on Nov. 4 is what she will support, Kobayashi said.

Her supporters say she is one of the most honest brokers in Hawai'i politics, a woman with decades of legislative experience who shuns rhetoric and is adept at building consensus among opposing parties.

Described as fiscally prudent, they say her time spent as chairwoman of the Senate Ways and Means Committee and as city finance chairwoman could help heal Honolulu as the economy stumbles.

"She's transparent and not one to use rhetoric. What you see is what you get which is why I'm really supporting her. I don't think the other guy (Hannemann) is like that," Cayetano said. "Ann is one of the few politicians who basically tells you what the score is."

a young volunteer

Ann H. Kobayashi was born to Mori and Florence Hayashi, on April 10, 1937, in Honolulu.

Kobayashi grew up in Punchbowl with her brother, Roy Hayashi, and the family later moved to Nu'uuanu.

She graduated from Roosevelt High School and later attended Pembroke College (now Brown University) in Rhode Island and Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill.

From age 5, she helped her mother at the Red Cross and as a teenager, volunteered at Kuakini and Queen's hospitals.

She remains active in numerous charitable organizations and even spent time helping former prisoners re-enter society.

Her parents "always taught me to always give back to the community and to do as much as you can for those who cannot help themselves and to be grateful for what we have," Kobayashi said. "There are so many people with less. We should share and do what we can for those who have less."

Kobayashi was married to Dr. Paul Kobayashi, with whom she raised three children — Mark, Dale and Susan. She later divorced and is now single. She has six grandchildren.

Long POLITICAL career

Kobayashi represented the Manoa area in the state Senate from 1981 to 1994.

She developed a reputation as a caring Republican, then switched to the Democratic Party in 1988, partly because of the Republican position on abortion.

She sat for seven years on the Senate's powerful Ways and Means Committee, serving as chairwoman from 1992 to 1993.

When she ran for mayor in 1994, she finished third to Jeremy Harris with 19 percent of the vote. Harris was mayor from 1994 to 2004.

After a brief stint as an executive assistant to Harris, she served as a special assistant to Cayetano from 1997 to 2002.

Former state Sen. Matt Matsunaga, who said he looks favorably upon both Hannemann and Kobayashi, described Kobayashi as "fiscally prudent" and lauded her ability to build consensus across partisan lines.

"Ann is a veteran politician with terrific people skills. She can bring together opposing factions to achieve a consensus, which is an absolute necessity in today's political world of opposite views," Matsunaga said. "One person whose word you can always trust is Ann Kobayashi's. She's always kept her word; that's what I remember about her."

Kobayashi has served on the boards of at least a dozen nonprofit organizations, an experience that she credits for shaping her fiscally prudent approach to legislating.

Her links to nonprofits brought criticism in 2002 when it came to light that the Fresh Start structured living facility for prison parolees and others — an organization she once did volunteer work for — was under criminal investigation by the state attorney general's office for allegedly pressuring their clients and families for money and threatening to have them returned to prison or jail.

When Kobayashi was campaigning in late 2001 for the City Council seat vacated by Andy Mirikitani, as many as 50 Fresh Start residents were transported in the program's vehicles from Waipahu to the Manoa-Makiki area to wave political signs for her.

In 2004, Kobayashi and City Council member Donovan M. Dela Cruz campaigned for Hannemann. The pair appeared in advertisements for Hannemann and supported his run against Bainum.

Kobayashi said one of her goals as mayor would be to make the city more sustainable.

Kobayashi received the endorsement of the Sierra Club and supports the creation of a seven-year tax holiday for businesses that use green technology and a majority of recycled materials.

"We should try and make businesses flourish by offering incentives for companies that specialize in recycled items," Kobayashi said. "We need new technology that reduces waste and doesn't send 30 tons of waste to the landfill each year. There is a lot of new technology out there for getting rid of waste, and if we find the right technology for H-power and beef up our recycling, we can continue to start to look to closing the landfill."

Kobayashi would like to settle the city's long-standing dispute with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency by working with the EPA and the Sierra Club rather than continuing to pay a San Francisco law firm to fight the case.

"We should start working with them to see if there is a compromise," she said. "We've spent millions in attorneys' fees and we're still in the same spot."

September 16, 2008

Stop Rail appeals Circuit Court ruling

Advertiser Staff

Stop Rail Now yesterday appealed to the state Intermediate Court of Appeals in an effort to get its anti-rail ordinance on the Nov. 4 ballot.

The group wants the court to overturn a Honolulu Circuit Court ruling declaring that Stop Rail Now needs nearly 45,000 valid signatures to place its proposed ordinance before general-election voters. The group has only collected about 35,000 valid signatures.

Stop Rail Now attorney Earle Partington yesterday said he believed the group had about a two-week window to resolve the issue before the Nov. 4 ballots are printed.

The Hawai'i Supreme Court already has declined Stop Rail Now's prior filing seeking emergency relief. However, Stop Rail Now can still file a formal appeal to the Supreme Court if needed, Partington said.

November voters will still get to vote on whether to proceed with building a steel-wheel-on-steel-rail train even if Stop Rail Now's appeal fails.

September 16, 2008

Letters to the Editor

mayoral race

Hannemann knows rail is only way to go

This morning, Sept. 15, I received a recorded message telling me to vote for Panos Prevedouros because of stop rail, etc. I take offense at this call to my home phone, telling me who to vote for.

Mr. Prevedouros and his supporters think that because he is an engineer, he will solve all the city's problems. Does he really think that there are no engineers working for the city? Mayor Mufi Hannemann has done an excellent job as our mayor. He had to undo a lot of our previous mayor's cosmetic approach to everything. He is working on the sewers, the streets, etc.

He is looking into the future of this island and the traffic situation. Rail is the only way left to go and he knows it. If it had been started a long time ago, it would have been a lot less expensive.

Ann Kobayashi was on the City Council and they have the final say on any project that the city wants to undertake. She states that people call her to tell her there needs to be a change. She didn't do it then, so why would we think that she can do it now?

My vote goes to Mayor Mufi.

Adrienne Wilson-Yamasaki | Wahiawa

September 16, 2008

Letters to the Editor

mayoral race

Hannemann policies bad for environment

O'ahu's sustainability can't withstand another four years of Mufi Hannemann. On nearly every key environmental concern, Hannemann's policies have been devastating.

On energy, the city's electricity use has surged by 8 million kilowatt-hours annually and little has been done to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

On recycling, Hannemann couldn't be much worse. In 2005 he canceled the planned curbside recycling program. Then he opposed a measure at council to start curbside. Then he opposed the Charter amendment to require islandwide curbside recycling. Fortunately, that amendment passed. Hannemann was then forced by City Charter to begin curbside recycling — a task that he's begun with all the haste of an 'opihi race.

Our sewage collection system is still a leaky mess, despite the raw sewage spill into Waikiki waters and a string of losses in federal court against citizen groups trying to protect O'ahu's clean waters. And when the Environmental Protection Agency asked that Honolulu upgrade its sewage treatment facilities to 21st century standards, Hannemann fought it.

There's more: Hannemann also opposed an initiative to make Honolulu bike- and pedestrian-friendly. He initially supported a plan to develop Waimea Valley into private lots. He has supported development along Kahuku coastline and Turtle Bay.

Our environment and our future deserve better than Mufi Hannemann.

Randy Ching | Sierra Club, O'ahu Group chair

September 16, 2008

Letters to the Editor

mayoral race

Kapolei cannot be called a partial failure

I attended the mayoral debate last Tuesday and was surprised to hear Panos Prevedouros claim that Kapolei is a "partial failure."

As chairwoman of the Kapolei Neighborhood Board, I know he obviously has not been to Kapolei recently because all you need is a quick drive around Kapolei to realize that there is a lot happening in the retail and commercial sector. There are no fewer than six commercial projects actively under construction that will bring 2,300 jobs to Kapolei.

The most notable of those projects is Kapolei Commons, the large regional shopping center that will house Target and the state's Kapolei court complex. There are five other projects close to breaking ground that will bring another 2,500 jobs.

Kapolei has made tremendous strides in the last decade toward becoming a city. Kapolei is home to 1,200 businesses and 28,000 jobs.

In the next 20 years, the total number of jobs is expected to be about 70,000.

Mr. Prevedouros needs to check his facts before he makes statements that demonstrate his ignorance and lack of vision.

Maeda C. Timson | Kapolei

September 16, 2008

Letters to the Editor

mayoral race

Prevedouros would be great change for O'ahu

UH civil engineering professor Panos Prevedouros as Hono-lulu's mayor would be a great change that would benefit the majority of our residents.

He appears to be highly intelligent with good common sense, an honest person without obligation to special-interest groups.

His many ideas and recommendations would not increase financial hardships, such as increased taxes on the majority, especially residential owners on fixed incomes.

Former mayor John H. Wilson was a civil engineer, and in my opinion, a great mayor who benefited the common man.

Wilbert W. W. Wong Sr. | Kane'ohe

September 16, 2008

Letters to the Editor

mayoral race

Vote for sensible solutions this election

I heard Panos Prevedouros, the candidate for mayor who is a civil engineer, speak, and for the first time I understood that there really are other ways to solve our traffic problems besides steel-on-steel rail.

They are less expensive and will take less time than the rail Mufi Hannemann is proposing.

Mufi's system will cost about \$6 billion and we'd have a big construction project to welcome our visitors for close to 20 years. It makes no sense.

We don't need Mufi's costly system, we can't afford it and we can't maintain it.

This election, we have to vote for sensible solutions.

Jan O'Donnell | Honolulu



Vol. 13, Issue 260 - Tuesday, September 16, 2008

Letters to the Editor

Mayoral hopeful shows ignorance of Kapolei

I attended the mayoral debate and was surprised to hear Panos Prevedouros claim Kapolei is a "partial failure." He obviously has not been to Kapolei recently because all you need is a quick drive around to realize that there is a lot happening in the retail and commercial sector. There are no fewer than six commercial projects actively under construction that will bring 2,300 jobs to Kapolei. The most notable of those projects is Kapolei Commons, the large regional shopping center that will house Target, and the state's Kapolei court complex. There are five other projects close to breaking ground that will bring another 2,500 jobs.

Kapolei has made tremendous strides in the last decade toward becoming a city. Kapolei is now home to 1,200 businesses and 28,000 jobs. In the next 20 years, business interest in Kapolei is expected to bring even more companies with the total number of jobs growing to about 70,000. So Mr. Prevedouros needs to check his facts before he makes statements that demonstrate his ignorance and lack of vision.

Maeda C. Timson
Chairwoman
Kapolei Neighborhood Board

September 17, 2008

H-1 Freeway to open afternoon Zipper Lane in about 3 years

'Ewa-bound motorists may be using new lane by early 2011, DOT says

*By Dave Dondoneau
Advertiser Staff Writer*

The state plans to create an H-1 Zipper Lane for the afternoon rush hour that may open in 2011, the state Department of Transportation said yesterday.

The existing H-1 Zipper Lane uses a concrete divider to convert two 'Ewa-bound lanes into one diamondhead-bound lane during morning rush hour, then restores the 'Ewa-bound lanes afterward. Though the idea has been discussed for years, there is no Zipper Lane for heavy 'Ewa-bound traffic during afternoon rush hours.

The new PM Zipper Lane would run from Radford Drive, near Aloha Stadium, to the Waiawa Interchange, where the freeway splits into H-1 Wai'anae-bound and H-2 Wahiawa-bound.

Tammy Mori, a DOT spokeswoman, said a consultant has already completed a feasibility study. Bidding for the project, estimated to cost \$45 million, would begin by March.

"The project design will take an estimated seven months after a contract is awarded and construction is projected to take a year," Mori said. "Basically, it will take less than two years to design and construct the project ... which puts us at an early 2011 completion date."

To further assist west-bound traffic, a related construction project will begin a short time later, Transportation Director Brennon Morioka said. That would create a fourth west-bound lane of H-1 from the Waiawa Interchange to the Waikele off-ramp using the existing, right-side shoulder lane by the Waikele shopping center, he said.

Eventually, a Zipper Lane or some other contraflow measure to help afternoon west-bound traffic would start at the Nimitz Highway/Ke'ehi Interchange, Morioka said.

Most of the PM Zipper Lane project will be paid for by the federal government, Mori said.

"We are implementing the PM Zipper Lane because we believe the AM Zipper Lane has been a success," Mori said. "We want to continue to offer an incentive to drivers who choose to carpool, as well as help alleviate some of the congestion in the afternoon rush hour."

When Zipper Lane rules changed in July so that only vehicles with at least three people could use the lane, Zipper Lane use dropped by an average of nearly 2,000 vehicles a day during morning rush hours.

Since then, Zipper Lane use has climbed and now averages 2,546 vehicles daily. It is open from 5:30 to 8:30 a.m. on weekdays.

Maeda Timson, chairwoman of the Makakilo/Kapolei/Honokai Hale Neighborhood Board, said she thinks the PM Zipper Lane is a bad idea, as long as the state continues to use three people as the threshold for vehicles in the Zipper Lane.

Much more people would carpool, and the Zipper Lane would be better used, if vehicles with two people were allowed, she said.

"It's unnecessarily causing more traffic," Timson said, adding that she's miffed the department did not take the plan to the neighborhood boards of the affected communities before deciding to proceed. "It's just making congestion worse."

September 17, 2008

Hannemann focusing on rail, core city services

BY PETER BOYLAN

Advertiser Staff Writer

He is as comfortable in a corporate boardroom as he is at a beach park picnic in La'ie.

The man who always introduces himself as "Mufi" is in constant motion with a seven-day-a-week public schedule that spans breakfast meetings to Little League opening ceremonies to late-night bon dances.

The pace doesn't bother Mayor Muliufi Francis "Mufi" Hannemann. In fact he's hoping voters will give him another four years on Saturday.

The 54-year-old Hannemann has been running for office for more than two decades and has lost as often as he has won. But that could change this week as he is favored to win the 2008 mayoral race, if not outright on Saturday, then in a runoff on Nov. 4.

Despite the controversy over Hannemann's proposal to build a \$3.7 billion commuter rail project, the mayor's approval rating sits at 80 percent and he has raised nearly \$3 million during his re-election campaign.

His two opponents, University of Hawai'i civil engineer Panos Prevedouros and City Council member Ann Kobayashi, combined have not raised a 10th of what Hannemann has accumulated.

"I never at any time thought this election was going to be a cakewalk," Hannemann said. "I never, never thought for one second that someone would not emerge to challenge me. I treat everybody legitimately and with deference. As far as I'm concerned, there are nine people vying for this and I have to prove I deserve to be rehired."

Hannemann's popularity is a testament to his tireless campaigning and a genuine desire to get out and meet with the people.

At 6 feet 7, he is recognized nearly everywhere he goes on O'ahu and he makes an effort to shake every hand he can.

He is serious when discussing policy and political issues but can quickly turn on a smile and is always a prompt away from breaking into song.

The former student body president and basketball standout at 'Iolani School worked his way from the streets of Kalihi to the classrooms at Harvard, earning a Fulbright Scholarship to New Zealand before taking his talents to the White House and eventually to the boardrooms of C. Brewer Co. Ltd., one of Hawai'i's "Big Five" companies.

After two unsuccessful runs for Congress, Hannemann won a seat on the City Council in 1994 and re-

election in 1998.

He eventually gave up the seat to run unsuccessfully against former Mayor Jeremy Harris in 2000.

In 2004, he narrowly defeated former City Councilman Duke Bainum in a run-off election despite Bainum's sizable fundraising advantage.

Despite the rail protests and public clashes over the expansion of the Waimanalo Gulch Landfill that put him at odds with state Senate President Colleen Hanabusa, and an ongoing dispute with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency over wastewater treatment criteria, Hannemann has maintained solid support from the public.

Hannemann brushed off attacks from Prevedouros and Kobayashi during a live debate at the Hawai'i Theatre on Sept. 9. As the frontrunner, he played it safe.

"He took an exalted, enlightened posture" during the debate, said Neal Milner, ombudsman and a political scientist at UH.

"There doesn't seem to be anything to throw a person with a gazillion-dollar campaign chest off course on this one."

If Hannemann wins a second term, he said he will focus on getting the rail project on track and wants to use it as part of a plan to revive Honolulu's ailing economy.

Construction of the elevated commuter line is to begin late next year if voters approve it on Nov. 4.

Rail opponents gathered nearly 50,000 signatures on a petition to place the issue on the ballot and, in the process, criticized Hannemann's handling of the project.

Hannemann said he supports having the issue on the ballot but was upset with how rail opponents characterize the project.

He said the opponents made it sound as if the project was "being rammed down people's throats" by him.

While he did push hard for steel wheel on steel rail technology, Hannemann said there was good reason for that.

"It's what the federal government funds. Ninety percent of the projects funded since 1992 have been steel on steel. That's the big compelling reason why I don't want to revisit the issue."

Other priorities in a second Hannemann administration would include improving the city of Kapolei. The so-called Second City needs to be built up and backed by increased infrastructure so that the second city vision is realized.

Hannemann said there is also much work that needs to be done to core city services, and that sewer, road and critical infrastructure repairs remain a focus.

He wants to continue to explore new technology that would allow for more recycling and decrease the

flow of waste heading into the Waimanalo Gulch Landfill.

All of the work that is necessary to run a city must be balanced with maintaining Waikiki and world-class attractions such as the Honolulu Zoo and Honolulu's beach parks and public spaces.

"I want to continue to do the work that we set out to do in 2004. I made a campaign pledge to be much more fiscally accountable, and to focus on basic city services," Hannemann said. "With the economy starting to soften, we're going to have to ramp up our efforts on the economic side."

FAITH, FAMILY

Born in Honolulu in 1954, Hannemann was the sixth of seven children in a family of Samoan, German and English ancestry. His parents emigrated from American Samoa to Guam then moved to Kalihi in 1953. As with his parents, Gustav and Faiaso, Hannemann is a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

He does not impose his religion on others and is welcoming of all faiths, said David Hannemann, Mufi's uncle and the former president of the Polynesian Cultural Center.

"The Samoans are noted for giving themselves to the service of others, for losing ourselves in the service of others, just as the Hawaiians do and the Polynesians are that way. Mufi was brought up in that atmosphere," David Hannemann said.

Gustav Hannemann worked two jobs, one at the Foremost Dairy and the other in the shoe department at Sears Roebuck.

Faiaso Hannemann, was the daughter of a Samoan Chief, and taught her brood the value of hard work and sharing.

The family was musical, as Gustav played the flute and Faiaso the guitar while singing with their children while playing various instruments.

Gus Hannemann, Mufi's eldest brother, recalls how quickly his little brother, known as "the kid," overtook the talents of his other brothers and sisters.

Gus Hannemann said he was known as the family orator, but that Mufi took it to another level. He said that brother Nephi Hannemann was known as the singer, but Mufi soon surpassed his skills.

Gus and Mufi Hannemann speak every day and Mufi Hannemann often consults his older brother when confronted with difficult issues.

"Whenever he calls for my opinion I give him my opinion and I say Mufi you have to pray about it. I don't always agree with him and I tell him what I think," Gus Hannemann said.

Mufi and Gail Mukaihata Hannemann were married in 1992, the first wedding for each. Mukaihata Hannemann runs the Girl Scout Council of Hawai'i. The couple live in 'Aiea and have no children.

POLITICAL calling

Hannemann made his first bid for public office at the age of 32, when he ran for Congress as a Democrat in 1986 to replace Cec Heftel, who decided to run for governor and stepped down from the House seat that represents urban Honolulu.

Hannemann lost but was not deterred and four years later, he ran for the U.S. House district that represents rural O'ahu and the Neighbor Islands. He lost that race to Patsy Mink in the Democratic primary.

In 1991, Hannemann joined the administration of Gov. John Waihee as head of international relations, and soon became director of the state Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

"Mufi was the kind of person who liked to get things done," Waihee said.

In 1994, Hannemann ran for City Council to replace Arnold Morgado, winning more than 51 percent of the vote in a race that included five other candidates. He won re-election in 1998 unopposed and decided to take on Harris, the incumbent mayor, in 2000 — a race he lost.

Hannemann says he has no regrets about the 2000 mayoral race.

"I was upset with the way the administration was treating the city but I didn't sit around and complain. I gave up my safe seat and I ran," Hannemann said.

In 2004, he defeated Bainum by roughly 1,300 votes out of the more than 294,000 cast. Hannemann won 50.2 percent to Bainum's 49.8 percent.

'Bully' label

Political opponents have called Hannemann a "bully."

Kobayashi, a former friend and political ally, used the word during the campaign's only televised debate at the Hawai'i Theatre last week.

During his second mayoral campaign in 2004, former City Councilman Steve Holmes said Hannemann became so heated on one occasion, he thought a council meeting would degenerate into a fistfight.

The reputation has lingered but Hannemann says the assessment is the misinterpreted opinion of his passion.

"The description of bully is one that people use when they cannot outdebate me or when they cannot outsmart me. They go to bully because that's a convenient term to use when someone is 6 feet 7 inches and Polynesian and has a sports background," Hannemann said. "Everybody knows I love to debate. I love to sit at a table and go back and forth. I'm not afraid to have my ideas discussed and vetted."

Milner, a longtime political observer, said despite opponents' attempts to paint him as a bully, Hannemann has been able to nurture and maintain a different public persona.

"There may be a lot of politicians who think he's a bully but that doesn't carry into the broader public,"

Milner said.

Longtime supporters of Hannemann say the bully label is unwarranted.

Bert T. Kobayashi Jr., a Honolulu attorney who has known Hannemann for more than 20 years and has hosted fundraisers for him at his private home, said he has never once seen or heard of Hannemann using intimidation as a tool.

"I've never seen him bully anyone. I think he's a passionate leader but if you're 6 feet 7 inches and you're Samoan and you're on the other side of a position, I guess you could be considered a bully even if he is not. He's physically imposing and that could be misinterpreted," Kobayashi said.

September 17, 2008

Hoping for a mayoral race runoff

By Jerry Burris

Honolulu voters go to the polls Saturday understandably perplexed when they get to the part that asks them to choose a mayor.

Among the leading candidates, should they go with the incumbent Mufi Hannemann, who slipped into office four years ago by the slimmest of margins? Or should they choose a veteran, Honolulu Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi? Or should they go with Panos Prevedourous, a university professor who wants the election to be a referendum on Hannemann's push for a steel-on-steel rail transit system?

By all accounts, including money, incumbency and name recognition, Hannemann should not have to worry. But that leaves out the lingering concern among many in Honolulu that things are just not going as well as they should.

In that instance, Hannemann has the unfortunate burden of incumbency. As the national and Hawai'i economy turn sour, people will naturally — if unfairly — wonder if the incumbent leadership could have done something about it.

Let's be clear. Neither Prevedourous nor Kobayashi has even the slightest chance of winning the contest for mayor outright on Saturday. Their hope is to keep the incumbent from winning an outright majority so that the campaign will continue on to the general election.

That would give the two challengers a second bite at the apple and a chance to make their case that a change is needed at City Hall.

When the three appeared at a statewide televised debate last week, sponsored by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, KGMB-TV and The Honolulu Advertiser, the lines of the campaign could not have been clearer.

Hannemann, as the incumbent, was put on the defensive from the first opening shot until the closing comments. Prevedourous stuck primarily to his message that Hannemann's beloved steel-on-steel fixed rail transit system would be bad for Honolulu. Kobayashi took a far more personal turn, arguing that Hannemann lacks the temperament or integrity to be mayor of the state's dominant city.

Is that enough to decide an election that will chart the course of Honolulu for at least the next two years? (We say two, because Hannemann is clear he would jump into a campaign for a different office if the right opportunity presented itself). The answer is no.

The best hope for a thoughtful dialogue on Honolulu's future would be for a result that forced a runoff election between Hannemann and one of his challengers. That wouldn't be a happy prospect for the incumbent, who sees no need to spend extra money and energy on a race he will likely win. But it might sharpen and clarify the issues of character and growth options for Honolulu that are part of this

campaign. Is that such a bad thing?

September 17, 2008

Letters to the Editor

transit

Story on rail contracts negative, inflammatory

We are pleased, but not surprised, that The Advertiser's Sept. 15 examination of contracts awarded in relation to the rail mass-transit project found no evidence of impropriety.

Project officials explained the procurement process to reporter Sean Hao in detail and assured him all regulations were adhered to, yet he chose to ignore the facts and attempted to paint a negative picture. Such distorted representations tarnish this important project and suggest to Washington that Honolulu will stumble again on mass transit.

The federal Brooks Act requires that professional service contracts be awarded based on the qualification of the provider rather than a low bid.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann and his appointees were excluded from the selection committees, which adhered to state procurement rules. Political influence was completely absent.

Speculative and uninformed comments by Rep. Cynthia Thielen and Councilman Charles Djou added nothing but sensationalism. Since Djou has packaged himself as a political opponent of Mayor Hannemann, and is campaigning for a rival in Saturday's mayoral election, it's troubling that your reporter would not seek a more objective source.

Much of the factual information in the article, including details about the contracts, had already been described in The Advertiser's pages months or even years ago, so we're puzzled by your decision to rake over such old coals at this point in time.

You have done your readers a great disservice by publishing such inflammatory material.

Richard Torres | Deputy director, Department of Transportation Services

Mark Oto | Deputy director, Department of Budget and Fiscal Services

MidWeek

Getting Raucous At Mayoral Debate

September 17, 2008

By Dan Boylan

The Hawaii Theatre may be the loveliest place in the state to hold anything - dance recital, concert, you name it. But last week it was the site of the only prime-time, televised debate between the principal candidates in Honolulu's 2008 mayoral contest.

Incumbent Mayor Mufi Hannemann arrived with half of Honolulu Hale. They wore Hannemann red T-shirts and aloha garb, and they made a lot of noise. Their "Mufi! Mufi! Mufi" routinely drowned out criticism from other parts of the audience.

Of which there were two: the partisans of anti-rail engineer and University of Hawaii professor Panos Prevedouros and those of anti-rail Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi. And they made a lot of noise as well, with chants of "Panos! Panos! Panos," "Stop rail now!" and boos for Hannemann on any number of issues.

The debate, or forum - or whatever you wish to call it - was more than loud. It was downright raucous. So much so that at times neither questioner nor the audience in the hall could hear the candidates' answers.

{embed="elements/box_ad"}

And if they did, they might still leave the hall at debate's end - were they the scattering of non-committed folks who found their way to the Hawaii Theatre - still scratching their heads, for they had witnessed three intelligent, good-hearted people offer three significantly different answers to two-thirds of Oahu's most pressing daily issue: traffic.

Hannemann - backed by 30 years of city studies, legislative taxing authority and poll numbers - defended his administration's proposed 20-mile steel rail transit system that would connect the second city of Kapolei with downtown.

Kobayashi, a veteran both state and county office, argued for a system that "fits our pockets and fits our city." In her telling, that would be "rubber on concrete" or anything else that would be cheaper than the \$3.7 billion solution the mayor favored.

Prevedouros, the university engineer, said that "hot lanes" and good engineering would relieve the congestion more effectively and that it was "more important to fix sewers than build rail." He also rejected Hannemann's advertised price tag for rail. The professor insisted it would cost \$6 billion.

The three couldn't agree, but Kobayashi at least said that she was happy the issue was on the ballot in November and that she was "not an obstructionist," that as mayor she would "rein in expenses" on the project and not do it with non-bid contracts.

Prevedouros, whose candidacy in part grew out of the stop rail movement, didn't express much faith in the will of the people on the issue. Should the people approve steel-on-steel as an option in November, a Mayor Prevedouros twice said that he would disregard their vote. Rail, he insisted, "is a non-starter." He would "educate the public" on other solutions to Oahu's traffic congestion.

Hannemann, of course, played defense all night long. From the night's opening statements, the popular, well-funded mayor faced charges from Kobayashi that he was "not fiscally responsible," that he was guilty of "wasteful spending," and "bullying" to get his way.

Prevedouros, the professor, accused Hannemann and Kobayashi - horror of horrors - of being "politicians" which he, of course, was not.

{embed="elements/google_ad336x280"}

From wherever you sat in the lovely Hawaii Theatre, the bad blood between Kobayashi and Hannemann was clearly visible. It ran its deepest shade of red late in the evening when Hannemann chastised Kobayashi for "bringing dishonor on my family" with her charges that he was a bully. He insisted that his parents had brought him up to be "fair to everyone."

Kobayashi replied, "I say bully because that is what I hear wherever I go."

Stylistically, Prevedouros came off best. He proved congenial and skilled in the professorial arts of making his points clearly and succinctly.

And he appeared to be having fun.

Hannemann seemed in control and confident, but weary of blocking shots from both sides of the basket.

Kobayashi's performance was, perhaps, the least noteworthy. Negativity weighed her down.

They all meet on this coming Saturday in a debate that counts: primary election day 2008.

Find this article at: http://www.midweek.com/content/columns/mostlypolitics_article/getting_raucous_at_mayoral_debate/

Rail is ugly

Stopping the rail project is about saving our beautiful Honolulu from becoming a congested, industrialized, bankrupt, urban ghetto. The steel on steel heavy rail plan calls for 22 massive stations (graffiti targets), elevated tracks, huge pillars, and the train will travel at an average speed of 25 mph and has nothing to do with solving traffic problems.

It appears to be about campaign contributions from those who will make money to those in power.

Stopping rail will allow us to focus on fixing the sewers and the roads, and develop real solutions to solve the congestion problem that will help those in the leeward areas who are stuck in traffic every day.

The city is allowing 60,000 homes to be built on the Ewa plain, with no plans for road improvements. If rail is built some of those folks may use it, what about the current mess? Traffic will be much worse.

The real solution includes a fleet of modern buses that travel at higher speeds on improved roads, including an elevated road with multi on and off ramps, allowing cars to use it as well for a toll to help cover expenses and to clear congestion from other roads. Save Honolulu from those who want to ruin it!

Nancy Nagamine

Kailua

Senseless rail

Back in the 1970s, I supported a rail transit system. It made economic and logistical sense to me then. It's now some 35 years later, and the current project makes no sense to me.

Back then, we had an opportunity to plan and control growth in the central plain. Now, we have to undo some of these homes and businesses to make room for a heavy, elevated rail line. Back then, the federal government was willing to fund the majority of the cost. Now, we may receive 10-20 percent of the cost in federal funds if we can even get on the list of programs.

The city estimates land acquisitions will cost \$70 million and that construction costs will be \$3.7 billion. These estimates are in 2006 dollars with no consideration for inflation. The final cost could very well be closer to \$5 billion or \$6 billion. I have yet to see any accounting of the .5 percent GET surcharge. This costly and unfettered project could very well bankrupt our city.

I look forward to some honest answers by the city and the perceived users of the rail.

Will you take the rail to work, to school or to the bank? Will you take it to Longs, Safeway, Foodland, Times or Costco? Is the line close to schools or Kaiser, Straub, Kapiolani, Kuakini or Queens? Does it pass by your mom and dad's or your in-laws' homes? Will you take it to child or adult daycare, to soccer practice, to your favorite surf spot, to dance lessons? Will you take it to get to your part-time jobs, on your date or in an emergency?

*Cathe Meier, CPA
Honolulu*

MidWeek

Rail Rules In The Mayoral Race

September 17, 2008

By Rick Hamada

It is no surprise that Mayor Mufi Hannemann is the presumptive favorite to win a second term at Honolulu Hale. And why not? The mayor's public persona is ideal for a successful politician. He is physically impressive, has a penchant for singing and is as articulate as any public servant in the state.

Mufi has an ideal homegrown story. A Kalihi boy, he eventually graduated from Harvard University and served in Washington, D.C. He went on to run for Congress, work for the state and briefly chaired the Honolulu City Council. Based on what the public sees and hears, how can you not support Mayor Hannemann?

You may want to ask City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi. She called out the mayor in the recent televised debate. In her opening statements, Kobayashi alleged, "I don't see courage. I don't see integrity. I don't see leadership. I see blame, bullying and excuses."

{embed="elements/box_ad"}

Ouch. Whether you agree or disagree with her statements, Kobayashi does have a unique perspective. She's gone toe-to-toe with the mayor on a myriad of issues, mostly on fiscal matters. Mayor Hannemann must be feeling a bit of karmic payback. While budget chair during the Harris administration, Hannemann (along with City Council colleague Donna Mercado Kim) shredded Harris over spending proposals and policies. As budget chair, Kobayashi has done the same to Hannemann as mayor.

UH professor Panos Prevedouros is not only in the race, but many believed he outperformed the two political veterans in their only joint television appearance. His sense of humor, coupled with direct answers to direct questions, endeared him to those who had no idea who he was. His area of expertise is civil engineering. When you think of the most pressing issues facing our community, a majority of them deal with infrastructure - traffic, road conditions, water, trash, etc. - it's clear he would hit the ground running in dealing with the frustrating deficiencies we experience every day.

Will he win? Probably not. But Prevedouros and, for that matter, Kobayashi, should be applauded for ensuring the mayoral election of 2008 is not a coronation.

{embed="elements/google_ad336x280"}

However, Prevedouros and Kobayashi are not in this race to lose. They are representative of so many in our community who believe their interests are not being served by the present administration. As indicated by the dominance of the topic at the aforementioned debate, rail is the top-of-mind issue this election year.

Despite recent polling results claiming a majority of Honoluluans want rail, the fact remains that more than 40,000 people were compelled to sign a petition in opposition to the proposed multibillion-dollar system. Recognizing this unprecedented groundswell of opposition, the City Council was forced to take action, ensuring the general public had the chance to vote on the biggest public works project ever.

Debates between political candidates can prove to be beneficial to voters. One can assess the information provided and consequently make a better decision at the

oral candidates' stand on mass transit is an excellent starting point for information on this issue.

Find this article at: http://www.midweek.com/content/columns/ace_article/rail_rules_in_the_mayoral_race/

September 18, 2008

Cheaters hogging Honolulu freeway's HOV car-pool lane

Officials unsure what to do about thousands of cheating motorists

*By Dave Dondoneau
Advertiser Staff Writer*

H-1 Zipper Lane users have cut 17 to 20 minutes off their average morning commute since the ridership minimum went from two to three people per vehicle in July, the state Department of Transportation says.

That's the good news.

The bad news is police and DOT officials aren't sure what to do about the thousands of solo drivers every day who abuse the HOV lanes that are meant only for vehicles carrying at least two people between 5:30 and 8:30 a.m. on weekdays.

An unscientific Advertiser count confirmed what morning commuters have seen with their own eyes — that many, maybe most, of the drivers in the H-1 HOV lane are breaking the law.

"We get more calls and complaints on HOV violations than the Zipper Lane," said Lt. Gordon Shiraishi of the Honolulu Police Department's Traffic Division. "That's probably because once you get in the Zipper it's not like you can duck away from the violation if you're caught.

"With the HOV lane, you can duck in and out. It's difficult to enforce for a number of reasons. First and foremost, our officers' responsibility is traffic management. Keep the traffic flowing.

"On an HOV violation, it's hard to pull them over without causing a traffic jam so you have to pick and choose your locations."

We counted cheaters

On Tuesday morning, a reporter and a photographer from The Advertiser conducted an unscientific audit of the H-1 HOV and Zipper lanes. If the pair couldn't determine whether passengers were in the backseats, the vehicle was counted as meeting the minimum requirement, just as a police officer does.

From 6:30 to 8:30 a.m., during several two- and three-minute intervals at observation spots ranging from the Kaonohi Overpass to the Wahiawa Overpass and during a drive on H-1 into town, The Advertiser observed the following:

- The Zipper Lane, at least on this day when traffic flowed very well, appeared to be underused. Several times up to a minute passed between vehicles. After one 57-second interval, two cars passed under the Kaonohi Overpass and both had only a single occupant. However, nine out of 10 vehicles audited during other intervals appeared to have at least three occupants. Zipper Lane violations were scarce.

- Out of about 80 vehicles that passed under the Kaonohi Overpass in the HOV lane at 7:05 a.m., 49 had at least two people in the vehicle and 31 had only a single occupant. Several other interval checks revealed similar numbers.
- Out of about 45 vehicles that passed under the Wahiawa Overpass in the HOV lane at 7:30 a.m., 31 had at least two people in the vehicle and 14 had a single occupant.
- Driving back into town, starting at Kamehameha Highway and going past the airport viaduct, 10 cars passed The Advertiser team using the HOV lane. Nine had a single occupant. This high ratio of violators when The Advertiser team had the clearest view of a vehicle's rear seat indicates that many of the vehicles that got the benefit of the doubt at other locations were actually in violation.
- Pickup trucks seemed to be the biggest violators, though all kinds of vehicles violated the HOV rule, including some business-owned vehicles with company logos on the side.

Commuters are upset

The findings, though unscientific, match what morning commuters have told The Advertiser: There are a lot of HOV violations and little enforcement.

"It's difficult for the police to catch somebody when they abuse the HOV lane because there's no shoulder or anywhere to pull them over unless they get off near Nimitz," said Mary Jean Castillo-Barkley, a member of the Mililani Neighborhood Board who commutes into town regularly. "It does bother me seeing it. If it's against the rule, you shouldn't do it."

Short of adding cameras that could record car license numbers for tickets that would be mailed later, police are at a severe disadvantage when enforcing the HOV law.

The H-1 HOV lane is the inside lane next to the concrete Zipper Lane barrier, so there is no shoulder to pull violators over without disturbing traffic. Police also must be certain there is no one but the driver in the vehicle, which is not easy to determine when traffic is often flowing at 55 mph or more.

HPD's Shiraishi said that unless violators are found at the end of the HOV lane, they are often only ticketed if a police officer follows the vehicle until it's clear to pull the driver over.

"The funny thing is, our officers like to give the HOV violators tickets when they can because they know what it's like to commute," Shiraishi said. "But they have other responsibilities, like clearing traffic accidents and stalls. We enforce it whenever we can."

The Advertiser team saw a police vehicle directly behind an HOV violator near the Kaonohi Overpass, but did not see the vehicle get pulled over. However, there was nowhere for the officer to safely pull over the violator.

Violators abusing either carpool lane risk a \$75 ticket for the first offense and \$150 for a second offense in the same year. A third or further violation within a year carries a \$200 fine.

"There are other technologies to curb cheating like photo enforcement and infrared monitoring, but we would need legislation to authorize us to do so and these kinds of laws have been controversial in the

past," said Tammy Mori, spokeswoman for the DOT. "Other jurisdictions have had some success with this in enforcement."

Save time with Zipper

The only clear solution for drivers looking to legally speed their commutes is to start carpooling and using taking advantage of the open road that the Zipper Lane offers.

Mori said that since the new ridership rules were implemented in July early-morning Zipper Lane commuters have seen their time on the road greatly reduced.

"During the first half of the morning commute, until about 6:30 a.m., it used to take 15 to 20 minutes longer to travel in the Zipper Lane than it did to drive in the general-purpose lanes," Mori said. "It took about 42 minutes to travel from Kapolei into town on TheBus. Now it takes an average of 23 minutes to travel the same distance."

The DOT monitors traffic flow daily and its statistics show an average of 20,369 vehicles commuting from Kapolei into town on the H-1. HOV use is at 5,258 per day and Zipper Lane use is 2,546. Mori said that before the rule change, Zipper Lane use was 3,584 vehicles per day.

"We made that switch in order to encourage more to consider carpooling," Mori said. "That was one of our goals — to reduce the commute time for those who choose to carpool.

"We believe the numbers are very promising."



Vol. 13, Issue 262 - Thursday, September 18, 2008

Mayor's absence criticized

Mayoral candidates discuss rail and more at a college forum

By Laurie Au
lau@starbulletin.com

Two mayoral challengers appeared at the last scheduled public forum yesterday and criticized Mayor Mufi Hannemann for not showing up and missing most of the few appearances together.

"I wouldn't miss this for the world," City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi said at yesterday's forum at Honolulu Community College, sponsored by its student government. "I was supposed to be at another event, but you are very important to me."

Hannemann's other opponent, Panos Prevedouros, a first-time candidate and University of Hawaii at Manoa engineering professor, also opened his remarks to a crowd of about 150 on Hannemann's noticeable absence.

"I really regret that the current mayor is not here to explain his positions to you," Prevedouros said.

For most of this election year, it had appeared that Hannemann would face no major opponents. But at the last minute in June and July, Prevedouros and Kobayashi entered the race, leaving little time for the three to appear in many debates.

Hannemann's campaign said he had tried to make yesterday's forum. The primary reason there weren't many debates is because of scheduling conflicts, campaign officials said last week.

"I love to debate," Hannemann said. "It's never a problem with me to debate or have an open discussion. But once again, you're talking about coordinating time with two candidates that

jumped in very late. I could have done what most incumbents do and say I'm not going to debate. That's not my style."

At yesterday's forum, Prevedouros and Kobayashi had talked about the most critical issues - Hannemann's proposed \$4 billion rail transit system, the city's aging sewer system and the island's only landfill.

Mary Militante, vice president of the Associated Students of the University of Hawaii, who helped put on yesterday's event, said she doesn't feel there have been enough debates and public appearances for voters to get to know the candidates sufficiently.

"I think it's unfortunate that Mayor Hannemann couldn't attend, and I know that it did disappoint a lot of the students," Militante said. "We haven't seen much of the candidates in the public and that's why we wanted them to come to our forum."

The three have appeared together at least twice - once at a cordial forum at the Filipino Community Center two weeks ago and a televised live debate that became contentious at the Hawaii Theatre last week.

"Unlike the other candidates, he (Hannemann) has a city to run," said Hannemann's campaign coordinator A.J. Halagao. "He cannot accept every invitation to attend an event."

[Read all 33 comments »](#)

Type in your comments to post to the forum

Name

(appears on your post)

You are currently logged in as . [Not ?](#)

Name

(appears on your post)

Comments

Star-Bulletin

mobile edition

Vol. 13, Issue 263 - Friday, September 19, 2008



CRAIG T. KOJIMA / CKOJIMA@STARBULLETIN.COM

The three front-runners for the mayor's race appeared yesterday on KHNL News 8's morning show. Panos Prevedouros sat in a back room while clips of his campaign aired.

Candidates stand ground in TV forum

The front-runners include personal jabs while discussing rail and city infrastructure

By Laurie Au
lau@starbulletin.com

The three front-runners for the mayor's race made their final appearance together yesterday on a local morning news show two days before tomorrow's primary.

The late entrance of Mayor Mufi Hannemann's opponents - City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi and University of Hawaii at Manoa engineering professor Panos Prevedouros - allowed for only two months of campaigning and few public appearances with all three candidates.

Speaking separately to KHNL News 8's morning show anchor Kristine Uyeno, the candidates reiterated their stances on the largest issues of the race: Hannemann's proposed \$4 billion rail transit system, the declining economy and Oahu's aging infrastructure system.

Hannemann, appearing last of the three during a 30-minute live segment, said, "This is not the time for on-the-job training," referring to the recent meltdown on Wall Street.



CRAIG T. KOJIMA / CKOJIMA@STARBULLETIN.COM

Ann Kobayashi shook hands with Mayor Mufi Hannemann after her interview.

Prevedouros, a first-time political candidate and a staunch rail critic, said he would help boost the economy by prioritizing and staggering major projects in Honolulu, such as fixing the sewers and major water mains.

"That's the No. 1 solution of generating jobs," Prevedouros said.

Kobayashi has been a constant critic of Hannemann's rail transit plan, saying that information on the multibillion-dollar rail plans is cloaked in secrecy.

The candidates also took jabs at each other.

Responding to a question by Uyeno on why there isn't a planned stop at the airport for the rail system,

Hannemann placed some of the blame on Kobayashi.

"Ann could have been the fifth vote but she chose not to," Hannemann said referring to a critical 5-4 vote by the City Council in 2005 for the alignment to go to Salt Lake instead of the airport.

Kobayashi has remained critical of Hannemann's repeated dismissals to commit to stay in office four years if re-elected.

"I promise four years of open, honest government," Kobayashi said. "I'm not using this as a stepping stone. I'm not trying to leave a legacy behind."

The campaign was relatively quiet over the past two months. Hannemann ran the most advertisements and had the largest campaign fund: more than \$2.5 million raised. The candidates appeared together in events reported by the media only twice - at a mayoral forum at the Filipino Community Center and a live televised debate last week.

"The personal insults, the attacks and the distortion of my record are not working," Hannemann said after yesterday's TV appearance. "You can't answer every petty criticism that they put up there."

At yesterday's taping, the three were friendly to each other but had little interaction. Hannemann said a quick "Good morning, Ann," and told Prevedouros good luck on the birth of his child expected just a week after the primary election.

[Read all 24 comments »](#)

Type in your comments to post to the forum

Name

**(appears
on your
post)**

You are currently logged in as . [Not ?](#)

Name

**(appears
on your
post)**

Comments



Powered by Clickability

Click to Print

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Local Top Stories

Rail will play major role in Primary

By Marisa Yamane

The Honolulu Mayor's race is riding heavily on the topic of rail.

Mufi Hannemann is for rail, Panos Prevedouros is against rail, and Ann Kobayashi wants rubber tire on concrete.

On this day before the primary election, the group that has been making noise in opposition to rail, made more noise today on the streets of Honolulu in a final effort to get more votes.

This what you will hear if a steel on steel rail is built, say members of Stop Rail Now.

The group drove a sound truck through Downtown Honolulu today, demonstrating what 80 decibels sounds like.

"There's many, many issues regarding this rail but noise, especially for our communities that are close to the line, this is very significant," said Dan Douglass, Stop Rail Now.

"They're resorting to gimmicks, scare tactics and things like rigging up a truck and running around town. I got better things to do with my time," said Justin Fanslau, Go Rail Go.

The City's plan to build an elevated rail line from Kapolei to Ala Moana has been a hot button topic, and the Honolulu Mayor's race is heavily riding on the rail.

"I believe like me they're going to cast their vote for the one person who's going to put people back to work, money back in my pocket and allow me to ride rail transit," said Fanslau.

"It's going to affect our property value, it's going to affect our way of life," said Douglass.

We asked folks in Kailua for their thoughts on the proposed rail.

The proposed route won't pass through Kailua.

"I can see why people don't want to overdevelop the island but I think if it's needed that it has to be," said Carol Tribbey, Kailua resident.

"I think it's a disfavor for the whole island. I think there's other routes and other ways of doing it," said Mamo Trueman, Kailua resident.

Mixed reaction from folks in Kapolei as well, and the proposed route will start in Kapolei.

Case in point -- the Gamboas -- he wants it, she doesn't.

"I believe if we start now it'll help out with our young ones in the future," said Tony Gamboa, Kapolei resident.

"I kind of like the island the way it is, I don't like progress," said Cyndy Gamboa, Kapolei resident.

"I mean we need something but I don't think we need the rail. I think we need other alternatives. I know there are other alternatives," said Cher Kaliikuli, Kapolei resident.

Regardless of what people think, one thing's for sure, rail will be at the front of many voters minds tomorrow.

Story Updated: Sep 19, 2008 at 10:26 PM HDT

Find this article at:

<http://www.khon2.com/news/local/28690944.html>

 **Click to Print**

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

©2007 KHON-TV. All Rights Reserved.

September 18, 2008

Letters to the Editor

transit

Other ways besides rail to reduce traffic

As alternatives to rail or elevated freeways, why not address the actual problem: Everyone is trying to get in and out of town during rush hour. Instead, we could use the money that the city is collecting for rail to reduce the cause of traffic itself.

For example, we give companies \$50,000 per employee who is moved to an office in Kapolei, and the employee should get some of that, too. Or give companies money to change an employee's schedule to 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., or night shift. There are many employees doing things that don't need to be done between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Give companies \$50,000 per employee to switch to a four-day workweek. They work earlier and stay later, which also reduces traffic even on days they work.

Switch government offices to seven days a week, 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. The entire island would become more productive and even save office space. And people wouldn't have to take work off to go to a government office anymore.

There are probably tons of logistical concerns and difficulties, but surely not as many as there would be to build rail.

Tony Kawaguchi | 'Aina Haina

September 19, 2008

Letters to the Editor

transit

Rail is just too costly for O'ahu residents

I have issues with Ms. Alicia Maluafiti's logic and figures as stated in the Hot Seat on Sept. 7.

The average family will not give up their car because there are kids' activities, doctor appointments and shopping to be done. The cost of gas may be a savings, but the major expenses for a car of insurance and maintenance will still be there.

As to her rail cost of \$581 for a family of four, I can only conclude that that figure refers to annual fares.

It is the exorbitant cost to build this proposed rail system that makes it a drain on O'ahu residents. At a cost of \$4,694 per person on O'ahu, this system will be more than 10 times higher per capita than the highest-cost system in the U.S. (\$409 in Pittsburgh). It's a lot of money.

According to The Honolulu Advertiser (Aug. 31), \$3.7 billion could buy gas for all of us for 2 1/2 years, or 140,000 Toyota Prius cars (one for every four licensed drivers on O'ahu), and at an average yearly income of \$39,239, it would take our hard-working citizens 76,000 years to earn \$3 billion. Again, it's a lot of money.

If we end up with the proposed rail system, our roads will clear up — because everyone will have moved to the Mainland, unable to afford living here.

Jane Au | Honolulu



Vol. 13, Issue 264 - Saturday, September 20, 2008

Westbound ZipLane project in works

State officials say the construction will be carried out in phases and finished in 2011

By Rosemarie Bernardo
rbernardo@starbulletin.com

State transportation officials plan to put some zip into the westbound trip home on the H-1 freeway.

Plans for a \$45 million project are in the initial stages to create a ZipLane from the Keehi Interchange to Waikele for westbound motorists during the late afternoon.

"We believe this is going to bring tremendous relief for commuters trying to get home on the west side," said Department of Transportation Director Brennon Morioka.

The project is expected to be completed in 2011. The state will begin accepting bids in the spring.

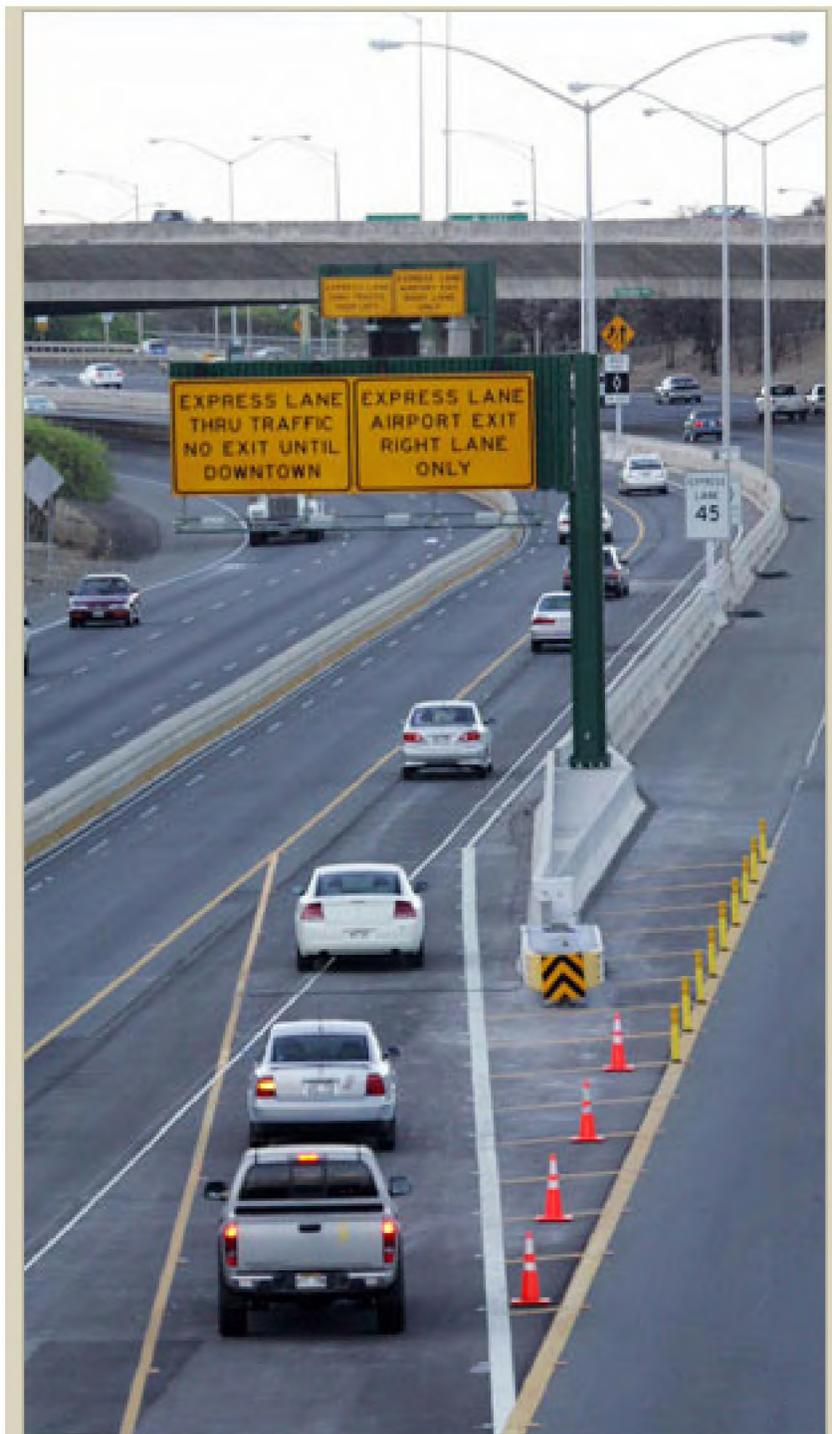
The project will be done in phases. In the initial phase, a contraflow will be built between Radford Drive near Aloha Stadium and the Waiawa interchange in Waikele. Later, a fourth lane will be built in the westbound direction through the interchange.

Since the ZipLane opened in eastbound lanes in 1998 to ease morning rush-hour traffic, commuters have asked for the same feature for afternoon westbound commuters, Morioka said.

Details of the project such as minimum occupancy and times the lane will be open to motorists have yet to be determined. State transportation officials are also determining whether the lane will have a retractable barrier or a fixed barrier. A fixed barrier will significantly reduce maintenance and operation costs for the state because there

won't be a need for the Zip Mobile.

"We would save a lot of money," Morioka said.



Star-Bulletin / 2005

The state is in the early planning stages for a westbound ZipLane from the Keehi Interchange to Waialeale during the afternoon. Here, motorists enter the eastbound ZipLane near the Hickam offramp.

Since the minimum occupancy changed on the ZipLane in July from two people to three people, travel time was

cut by almost half, according to Department of Transportation spokeswoman Tammy Mori.

Some neighborhood board members in Central and Leeward Oahu believe the project will benefit westbound commuters.

"It's good news," said Richard Oshiro, chairman of the Waipahu Neighborhood Board. Traffic conditions are just going to get worse as growth of residential development continues, he added.

"It's bad already. No question about that," he said, adding that alternatives like the ZipLane for afternoon commuters is needed.

Jyun Yamamoto, a member of the Wahiawa Neighborhood Board, said he is glad to hear about the state's plan. Yamamoto, who regularly commutes to Wahiawa from town, said it takes him about an hour or more to reach home if he leaves after 3:40 p.m. as traffic backs up in the Pearl City and Aiea area.

Maeda Timson, chairwoman of the Makakilo/Kapolei/Honokai Hale Neighborhood Board, said she wants transportation officials to get community feedback on the project. "I would really hope that the state would come to the community for input because their statistics and their readings and their engineers are not quite the same as the actual commuters that drive the nightmare every day," Timson said.

She recommended the state provide an additional lane for all westbound commuters, not one with a minimum occupancy requirement. "The best for all commuters would be an additional lane so everybody benefits from it. At the end of the day, people just want to go home and be with their families. It's all about the quality of life," she said.

[Read all 11 comments »](#)

Type in your comments to post to the forum

Name

(appears on your post)

You are currently logged in as . [Not ?](#)

Name

(appears on your post)

Comments

September 21, 2008

Jerry Burris: Where does this leave Mufi in 2010?

By Jerry Burris

Special to The Advertiser

The voters in Honolulu broke open several basic political questions yesterday when they apparently chose to deny Mufi Hannemann's bid for outright reelection in the primary.

The results were so painfully close to the treasured 50 percent mark. But it was hardly the clear mandate Hannemann and his supporters wanted.

Now, the odds are Hannemann will prevail in the end and will continue as Honolulu's leader, at least for the next two years.

After all, he did just about as well as his two main opponents, combined.

But the election results leave open several questions which take more than a little time to resolve.

First, many in the Hannemann camp hoped this would be the first decisive step in the launch of another Hannemann campaign either for governor or for Congress.

Second, this election, for better or worse, was a referendum on Hannemann's devoutly sought rail transit system. The rail project was seen as a major subtext of this campaign. How seriously should the public's decision to give the project another look be read as a rejection — or at least serious doubt — about the transit project?

On the political front, Hannemann has been admirably frank about his political intentions. Rather than indulging in the usual duck-and-run response that ambitious politicians use, Hannemann has made clear he reserves the right to jump to another race two years from now.

The primary results suggest Hannemann has some work ahead tending his current garden before he looks to bigger crops. The big prize, obviously, is the governorship, which becomes available when incumbent Linda Lingle steps down in 2010. It's natural for the mayor of the state's biggest city, with four-fifths of the population, to assume the pole position in the run for governor.

(That logic didn't work for former Mayor Frank Fasi, but never mind.)

If Hannemann feels he has been of service as mayor, it's natural he would step up to the governor's race. In the Democratic Primary, he would likely face either or both of Senate President Colleen Hanabusa and Congressman Neil Abercrombie, who are among the many looking at the race.

But don't assume that the governorship is Hannemann's only option. He has long wanted to serve in Congress, and should that option become available, he would jump at the chance.

Remember, too, that Hannemann can run for Congress without giving up his city position. But if he runs for governor, he must obey the state resign-to-run law.

The second big question is whether this settles, in any way, the issue of rail transit. Officially, no, since a rail transit question will be on the November general election ballot. But this was a referendum on transit, in very personal terms.

Candidate Panos Prevedouros made his opposition to Hannemann's transit program the long and short of his campaign.

If opposition to the project motivates you, you voted for Prevedouros. Now, it is likely that there are some anti-transit folks out there who went for Hannemann anyway, for other reasons, but by and large every vote for Panos was an anti-transit vote.

In the case of Councilmember Ann Kobayashi, the case was a bit more muddled. Kobayashi is opposed to the project Hannemann wants, but she says she is generically in favor of some kind of transit system — just not his.

Kobayashi focused on Hannemann's personal and political style.

She also represented a faction that is uncomfortable with Hannemann and his political ambitions.

Obviously, these messages had some resonance with the voters. There's no question the incumbent is popular with the voters. But there is less than a complete sale here. On the one hand, apparently, they want more information and answers about this \$6 billion rail transit project.

On the other, they want to know more about the man who will likely represent them in Honolulu for the next two years but

clearly might be moving on after that.
Voters like a little excitement, apparently.

■

September 21, 2008

Rail issue driving race for mayor

BY DERRICK Depledge
Advertiser Government Writer

Honolulu's \$3.7 billion mass-transit project was not on the ballot yesterday, but it was on the minds of voters and political analysts as the subtext to the mayoral campaign.

The mass-transit project, an elevated steel-on-steel rail design connecting Kapolei to Ala Moana Center, would be the largest public-works effort in Honolulu history. Voters will have the opportunity to consider the project through a ballot question in November, but rail has been the issue that has driven the mayoral campaign.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann fell just under the threshold for re-election last night and will have to contend with a runoff against City Councilmember Ann Kobayashi, who finished second in the primary ahead of University of Hawai'i-Manoa engineering professor Panos Prevedouros.

Hannemann has placed his legacy as mayor and his political popularity on the success of the project, and both Kobayashi and Prevedouros based their underdog challenges on opposing the steel-on-steel design in favor of alternatives to combat traffic congestion.

"There is no doubt the mayor has made it one of his key projects, something that's going to impact generations to come. It is an issue that he strongly supported and put his reputation on and invested in," said state House Majority Leader Kirk Caldwell, D-24th (Manoa), who voted for Hannemann and favors the rail project.

"We're talking about an investment here. Not for just one or two generations. We're talking a hundred years out. And that does require statesmanship, by the way. To get a politician to say, 'I'm going to do something that I'm not going to be around to benefit from as the mayor,' it's real statesmanship."

Dan Douglass, a Salt Lake Realtor associate and the campaign coordinator for Stop Rail Now, a group fighting the rail project, said a runoff combined with the ballot question will increase the attention on rail.

"(Hannemann) has to defend himself," he said. "Of course, strategically, we're in a better position. It means more debates. It means more discussion. It means more forums for the public to become educated."

Dean Okimoto, Hannemann's campaign chairman, said rail was always going to be a contentious issue. "We're confident that the people really want it," he said. "It would have made it easier if he had won and we could concentrate on the rail issue, but if we've got to do both, we'll do both."

conflicted over rail

Many voters said they are struggling with rail and, while many see the logic behind the project, they worry about the cost and the disruption from construction.

"I've heard all sides of the issue and I'm still pretty much undecided," Edileo Alcalde, who lives in Kalihi and is studying to be an engineer, said as he was leaving his precinct at Farrington High School. "I'm for it because it could alleviate a lot of the traffic on O'ahu. But, I'm not for it because the construction would take so much time, and the money to build it is a big factor."

Eric Brown, of Mililani, said he voted for Hannemann even though he differs with him on rail. "I think Mufi's doing a good job. I disagree with him on rail. And I don't like the way they went about it — shoving it down our throats, quite frankly. But, otherwise, he's doing fine. I think everyone's got a right to their opinion."

Although lower voter turnout generally favors incumbents, the poor turnout yesterday likely depressed Hannemann's vote total.

With more than \$3 million in campaign money and high job approval ratings, Hannemann was heavily favored to win re-election, so his more casual supporters had less incentive to vote in the primary than voters who preferred Kobayashi or Prevedouros.

Grassroots organizing by anti-rail activists also likely helped Kobayashi and Prevedouros by motivating a portion of the electorate that might otherwise have skipped the primary. Independents and conservatives moved by issues such as taxation and the size of government, for example, had no obvious choice in the race but may have been lured toward one of the challengers because of the rail debate.

Since both Kobayashi and Prevedouros entered the campaign late and did not have widespread name recognition, much of their support came from voters disappointed with Hannemann's leadership or opposed to the rail project or a combination of both.

'anybody-but-mufi'

Several political observers said privately that despite Hannemann's high approval ratings, the mayor upset enough people during his first four-year term that a generic "anybody-but-Mufi" candidate would start with over a third of the vote. In that sense, Kobayashi and Prevedouros diluted the anti-Hannemann vote and fragmented rail opponents.

Their most significant tactical mistake, however, was not launching their campaigns with enough time to adequately introduce themselves to voters and broaden their differences with Hannemann on issues other than rail.

But by forcing a runoff, Kobayashi exceeded expectations and now has several weeks to build momentum.

"For a candidate like Kobayashi, the storyline shifts in her favor for a while," said Neal Milner, an ombudsman at UH-Manoa, who believes Kobayashi needs to do more to distinguish herself from Hannemann.

Lower voter turnout also suggests that the campaigns were ineffective at identifying and delivering their voters. Voter registration increased just 1.8 percent statewide over 2006, driven mostly by the Neighbor Islands, especially the Big Island — with 6 percent growth — which observers believe shows either a lack of interest in local races this year or a sign the state is close to registering most people engaged by politics.

The registration numbers remained low even with the record turnout in the February Democratic caucuses because of the intensity of the contest between Hawai'i-born U.S. Sen. Barack Obama and U.S. Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Voter turnout was more positive on the Big Island, which had a more competitive mayoral campaign, showing that voter behavior can be influenced by the nature of the campaigns.

Turnout usually increases in the general election and, with Obama the Democrats' presidential nominee, local Democrats are

predicting a significant surge in voter interest.

Staff writers Will Hoover and Kevin Dayton contributed to this report.

September 21, 2008

Vindication for the lone railster

By Lee Cataluna

If it rained on election night, Mufi Hannemann would have taken it personally and demanded an apology from the clouds.

As it turned out, the skies were clear for the mayor's reelection and the stars foretold a journey toward higher office.

Hannemann, the well-financed, popular and smart incumbent, became so thin-skinned in this election, you'd think he was afraid of losing. Hannemann said that he was going to campaign like an underdog because that's how you win the game. But Hannemann played more the mad dog than underdog.

Maybe it's because for four years Hannemann has had to stand alone behind the rail project. The City Council didn't back him up, and even the ones who voted for it only sort-of supported it. They didn't stake their careers on it the way Hannemann did. Of course, Gov. Lingle certainly hasn't been an ally. It's been Hannemann alone taking all the slings and arrows, and lately it seemed like it was getting to him.

Hyper-sensitivity permeated the Hannemann campaign. His supporters hissed and booed at candidate forums as if insulted by differing opinions. His campaign volunteer Keith Rollman was talking lawsuits and issuing indignant statements this week saying he was not involved in a Panos Prevedouros-bashing Web site. Meanwhile Prevedouros himself, the target of the Web site in question, was being compared to Hitler and just shrugged off the insult, calling it stupid.

No one in the Hannemann camp thought anything was too stupid to ignore. Every buzzing fly was chased down and swatted with a vengeance.

This primary was fascinating from a social standpoint as it provided a measure of online activity versus real-life interaction on voting. The Stop Rail Now and Panos For Progress groups were busy with e-mails and Web sites. Panos had a blog with photos of potholes you know all too well. If you believed what popped up in a Google search, Prevedourus had a legion of anti-rail supporters. Meanwhile, Hannemann was at every community festival and cultural center shaking hands and singing medleys.

When it came down to election day, all the online chatter didn't translate to votes.

Spoiler candidate Ann Kobayashi made Hannemann's camp wait late into the night to see if they had to run a campaign for the general election.

But as for the November ballot question on rail, Hannemann can now make the argument that he is not alone; that Honolulu voters stand with him on his project.



Vol. 13, Issue 265 - Sunday, September 21, 2008

honolulu mayor



JAMM AQUINO / JAQUINO@STARBULLETIN.COM

Mayor Mufi Hannemann addressed backers at his Dole Cannery Square headquarters last night after the third printout, which showed he fell short of an outright win. He faces Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi in a Nov. 4 runoff.

Hannemann and Kobayashi reset sights for Nov. 4

It's on to round 2

[STORY SUMMARY »](#) | [READ THE FULL STORY](#)

By Richard Borreca and Laurie Au
rborreca@starbulletin.com lau@starbulletin.com

Mayor Mufi Hannemann failed to win re-election last night and will battle Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi in a runoff in the Nov. 4 General Election.

Hannemann led the voting last night, but fell 924 votes short of winning outright. He needed to get more than 50 percent of the vote to avoid a runoff.

Challenger Kobayashi, who jumped into the race on the last day to file to run, staged an impressive last-minute campaign with little organization and money, especially compared to Hannemann.

"We did pretty well for starting late and it is too early to quit," she said.

Another underfunded Hannemann rival, University of Hawaii professor Panos Prevedouros came in a distant third with nearly 18 percent.

"Change will come, but it will come a little bit later," he said in his concession speech to supporters.

Even though Hannemann was not successful in ending the race last night, he will still enjoy a big advantage in a general election because he has the power of incumbency and controls a campaign chest of \$3 million.

Two other counties are also selecting new mayors. On Kauai, former Mayor JoAnn Yukimura is in a November runoff with county Parks and Recreation Director Bernard Carvalho.

On the Big Island, Billy Kenoi, a lawyer and the former executive assistant to Mayor Harry Kim, will face a runoff against either County Councilman Angel Pilago or former Mayor Lorraine Inouye.

The state Legislature's biggest surprise was the defeat of Sen. Ron Menor, who lost his race to newcomer Michelle Kidani. Menor had been convicted of drunken driving during the last legislative session.

[FULL STORY »](#)

By Laurie Au
lau@starbulletin.com

Mayor Mufi Hannemann will face off with City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi in the general election after he fell just short of his goal of winning re-election in yesterday's primary.

His challengers were able to hold off Hannemann from receiving the more than 50 percent of votes needed to win the election outright in the primary.

Hannemann received 49.4 percent of the votes cast for mayor. Kobayashi garnered 30.16 percent while University of Hawaii at Manoa engineering professor Panos Prevedouros conceded the race after getting 17.72 percent.



JAMM AQUINO / JAQUINO@STARBULLETIN.COM

Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann and wife Gail Mukaihata Hannemann greeted the crowd at his Dole Cannery headquarters last night after an early printout.

"In my whole career, nothing has come easy," Hannemann told supporters at his campaign headquarters in Dole Cannery last night. "In 2004, we went all the way to the general and we won and we're going to do the same thing this year."

Throughout the night, Hannemann maintained a considerable lead and supporters kept expressing confidence that Hannemann would win the race outright. But after the second printout that showed Hannemann dipping below 50 percent, supporters began to doubt the outright win.

Hannemann supporters had relied on the last printout, which contained results from the Leeward Coast and the North Shore with a stronger support base, to push Hannemann over the 50 percent mark.

Kobayashi told supporters she is happy she will be in the runoff, "because we had so little time, so little money and we made it this far."



FL MORRIS / FMORRIS@STARBULLETIN.COM

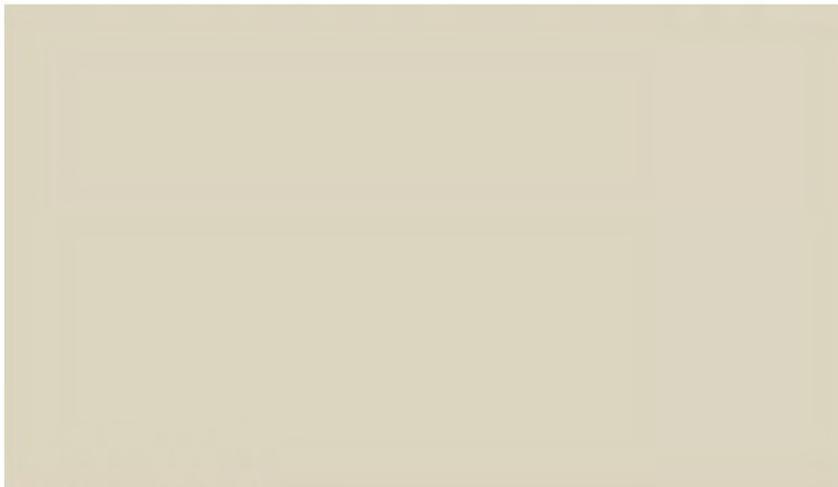
Mayoral candidate Ann Kobayashi, with supporters in Kakaako last night, talked with Martin Schiller.

This will give her campaign more time to tell the people there are alternatives to steel-on-steel rail transit and how to improve the economy.

Prevedouros, whose poorly funded campaign was based on his opposition to rail transit, was far behind in third place with nearly 18 percent.

Prevedouros thanked his supporters about 10:30 p.m.

"We raised quite a few important issues in this campaign," he said, listing the need to fix the city's infrastructure and help the homeless. And Prevedouros once again criticized Hannemann's push for a \$4 billion transit system, saying it would create "a tax black hole."





FL MORRIS / FMORRIS@STARBULLETIN.COM

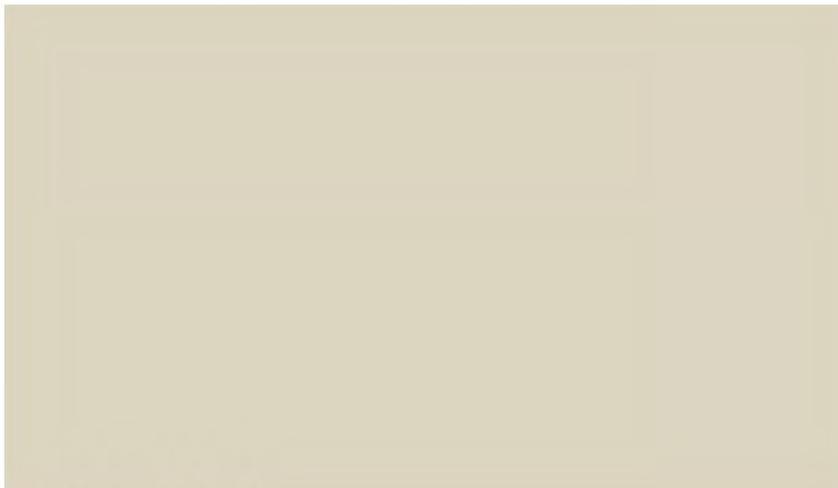
Panos Prevedouros was hugged by supporter Lydia Maeshiro in Kakaako last night.

A.J. Halagao, Hannemann's campaign coordinator, said he believes that low voter turnout ended up hurting Hannemann.

"I'm happy we are almost 20 percent ahead of our opponent," Halagao said. "Obviously, we would have liked to end it tonight. But we have six more weeks. We're going to roll up our sleeves and campaign even harder."

Halagao said they will likely have to change strategies by more aggressive campaigning and messages to get voters out.

Hannemann remained low-key for most of the night, making his first appearance at 8:30 p.m. before disappearing in the back to eat dinner with his wife, Gail. He shook hands with supporters briefly but waited until the final results before making his final speech.





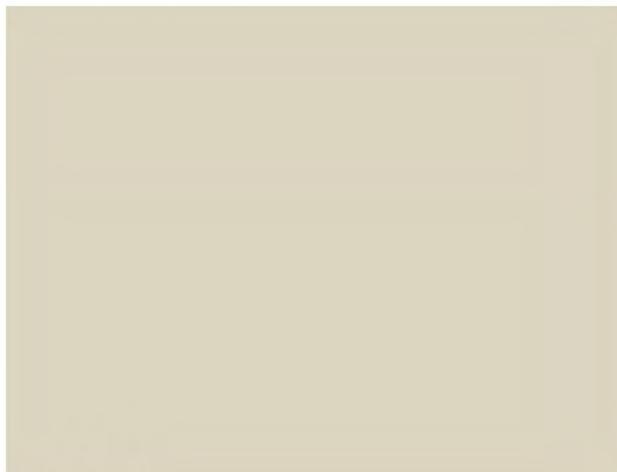
JAMM AQUINO / JAQUINO@STARBULLETIN.COM

Annie Corpus, left, Frances Cadoy and Lynn Gutierrez were among the dozens of Mufi Hannemann supporters reacting to first-printout election results last night at Dole Cannery Square in Iwilei.

"We have a few more weeks," Hannemann said. "We have a great record ... and we'll be able to correct many of the falsehoods. We came oh-so-close in getting that 50 percent plus one. We ran a classy campaign. We took the high road. We didn't resort to personal attacks and name-calling."

Though Hannemann didn't outright criticize Kobayashi, this remark was clearly directed at her. The campaign had become contentious at times, most notably at the only televised debate, during which Kobayashi called Hannemann a "bully."

Hannemann had hoped to win the race outright to focus his efforts on campaigning for Democratic presidential nominee Sen. Barack Obama and on a ballot question deciding the fate of his proposed \$4 billion rail transit system.





JAMM AQUINO / JAQUINO@STARBULLETIN.COM

Officials moved in a slow-exposure blur as ballots were counted on the Senate floor.

The rail transit system had become the center of the mayoral race. Hannemann's only formidable opponents, Kobayashi and Prevedouros, entered the mayor's race in the summer, which gave them little time to raise funds and campaign against Hannemann.

The mayor had name recognition and a considerable campaign fund working in his favor.

VOTER VOICES

Honolulu Mayor

PAUL MEYER

Age: 57

Home: Manoa

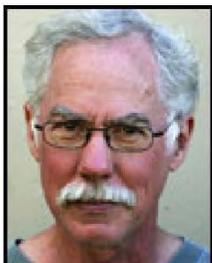
Voted for: Mufi Hannemann

Why: "I'm in favor of rail, and he's done a decent job of infrastructure and getting spending under control after the last administration."





JAN BECKET



Age: 59

Home: Manoa

Voted for: Ann Kobayashi

Why: "I like her.

Over the years, I've watched her positions on issues. She is solid, sensible and not open to special interests, and the rail thing is a draw, too."

JON ABBOTT

Age: 33

Job: Renewable energy designer

Home: Manoa

Voted for: Ann Kobayashi

Why: "I've been following what's been going on the past couple years and not liking what I've seen. I like her contributions for her current seat and she would take them to the next level. She has a good, level head on her shoulders. Transportation is a huge energy issue. It needs to be addressed on a citywide level."



DEXTER ZANE



Age: 55

Job: Sales-hand tools

Home: Palolo

Voted for: Mufi Hannemann

Why: "I like what he's been doing. I agree with his rail plan. I've used rail systems when I travel, particularly in Oregon. Portland has a good rail system. I can see the convenience of it."

SCOTT WERKMEISTER

Age: 49

Job: Farrington High physical education teacher

Home: Palolo

Voted for: Mufi Hannemann

Why: "I think he's working hard on sewers — just the opposite of Mayor Harris — he's trying to fix infrastructure. I did kind of wish he'd forget about rail and do other things. In Palolo, we will never use it. It is very expensive. There are other solutions, like the HOV lane, with more motorcycle police on the freeway to look for guys cheating, and tow trucks."



ERIC LEE



Job: UH medical school student

Home: Palolo

Voted for: Mufi Hannemann

Why: "I like the idea of the rail because we need a solution to the problem, even though it doesn't come to Palolo. The population is increasing ... and we need to do something. It is one of the better solutions. It takes one to two hours to go to the other side. It's a waste of my time and productivity."

ROBERT SEUFERT

Age: 57

Job: Semi-retired handyman

Home: Kaimuki

Voted for: Ann Kobayashi

Why: "A lot because of stop-rail. She was one of the earliest people I can remember (speaking against Hannemann's rail plan). I'm from New York and I know what a train looks like ... it would be like making a big scar on the land. It's not a Disneyland monorail."



**KATHERINE
KIM**



Age: 55

Job: Health
educator

Home: Kaimuki

Voted for: Mufi
Hannemann

Why: "I think he's
on the right track.
When he took over,
there were a lot of
things he had to fix
and some of it has
not been glamorous. I
do feel we need relief
in transportation and
mass transit is the
way to go."

AIDA APUYA

Age: 62

Job: Technician at Title Guaranty Hawaii

Home: Waipahu

Voted for: Mufi Hannemann

Why: Rail transit plan: "It will benefit younger generations."



**JOEY
ALCANTRA**



Age: 32

Job: Licensed
contractor

Home: Waipahu

Voted for: Ann

Kobayashi

Why: "The

incumbent mayor

promised to appoint a

qualified Filipino in

his Cabinet. He didn't

keep his promise.

Ann, she keeps her

promise. You can

trust her."

RODRIGO FLORA

Age: 71

Home: Waipahu

Job: Retiree from the U.S. Navy

Voted for: Mufi Hannemann

Why: "I like the transit. In the future, it's going to be useful in the state of Hawaii."



ASHTYNE

RABANG



Age: 18

Home: Waipahu

Job: Student at

Leeward Community

College and first time

voter

Voted for: Panos

Prevedouros

Why: "He's against

the rail. I just don't

think it's going to help

anything. Once kids

get their driver's

license, they want to

drive themselves, not

catch the rail."

September 21, 2008

Letters to the Editor

rail

Spread the pain, build homes elsewhere

Last Sunday's ad for Stop Rail Now says correctly that 45,000 new homes are planned for the 'Ewa plain.

Since Stop Rail Now does not want to give the 'Ewa plain any relief, there is a solution. Let's spread the aloha and the traffic. Let's put the next 25,000 homes on the Windward side and also the following 20,000 homes in East O'ahu.

Nancy Roemer | Makakilo

September 22, 2008

Fate of Honolulu rail system placed in hands of voters

Ballot issue boils down to whether people want transit or more roads

By *SEAN HAO*

Advertiser Staff Writer

With the primary election behind us, the debate over Hono-lulu's \$3.7 billion elevated commuter rail project now moves to center stage.

After months of discussion, including a drawn-out battle over whether the issue should be on the ballot, voters will finally get to voice their opinion on Nov. 4.

The results of Saturday's primary election suggest the vote on the rail issue could be close. Mayor Mufi Hannemann, who has been the rail project's No. 1 proponent, was forced into a runoff against Ann Kobayashi, an opponent of Hannemann's transit plan.

In November, voters will be asked if they favor "establishment of a steel wheel on steel rail transit system."

Hannemann favors the steel rail system, while his most vocal opponents support building an elevated highway with high-occupancy toll lanes.

The so-called HOT lanes are designed primarily for express buses and other high-occupancy vehicles. Single-occupant autos can use these lanes if they pay a toll and if the added traffic doesn't interfere with the free flow of high-occupancy traffic.

Proponents of HOT lanes contend that a new freeway from Waiawa to Iwilei will alleviate more traffic congestion for a lower price than a train.

Rail proponents argue that a train from East Kapolei to Ala Moana will do more than just move people across the island. Train stations, and the potential for nearby economic activity, also could help change development patterns and curb urban sprawl.

The real issue before voters in November is whether the city should move beyond current land development and commuting trends, said Peter Flachsbart, who teaches urban and regional planning at the University of Hawai'i.

"Highways serve cars and that facilitates the development of more single-family dwelling units, whereas rail is more likely to lead to transit-oriented development, which is moderate- to high-density, mixed-use, walkable communities," he said. "That's the difference I see."

A 2006 city-sponsored study called the Alternatives Analysis concluded the train is the best option for Honolulu, and opinion polls suggest the majority of residents may support the project. The popularity of mass transit also has received a boost after a recent spike in gasoline prices.

However, a train is not expected to cause a major shift in commuting patterns, which overwhelmingly favor people driving to work alone.

In Honolulu, mass transit was the preferred means of getting to work for 5.4 percent of commuters in 2006, according to the Census Bureau. Honolulu's proposed train is expected to boost that to 7.4 percent by 2030, according to the Alternatives Analysis prepared by city consultant Parsons Brinckerhoff.

The train could reduce traffic delays by 11 percent. However, even with the train system, there will be an estimated 57 percent increase in traffic on H-1 Freeway during morning rush hour in 2030 compared with 2003, according to the city.

Growth surge in 'Ewa

Most of the increase would be caused by growth in the Kapolei area. In the next two decades, there will be a surge in the number of homes on the 'Ewa plain from about 25,000 today to about 60,000, according to city estimates.

The H-1 corridor already contains two of the 100 worst traffic bottlenecks in the country, according to a June report by INRIX Traffic Services. The Moanalua Freeway near H-1 Freeway ranked 41st, while H-1 near Kalihi Street ranked 87th.

The anticipated increase in traffic, more than any other reason, has fueled opposition to rail.

Trains aren't conducive to lifestyles that involve transporting children to private schools, attending sporting events and shopping at big-box retailers, said Cliff Slater, a critic of rail and HOT lane supporter. As a result, efforts to alter people's auto-centric lifestyles in favor of rail will fail, he said.

A multilane, 12-mile or so managed highway would help reduce congestion by driving more people to carpool and by increasing public transit ridership by reducing bus commuting times, Slater said.

"Today, you really can't do much without individual transportation," he said. "Public transportation is just not there for most folks. To think that we're going to change a 90-year-trend, I think, is wishful thinking in the extreme."

an option elsewhere

So why is the city planning to build rail rather than new lanes? The city's Alternatives Analysis determined the train reduced traffic congestion and increased public transit ridership more than managed highway lanes. A new elevated highway also would cost more to build on a per mile basis and cost more to maintain, according to the city's study.

Building new roads also sends commuters the wrong message, said Michael Schneider, managing partner for InfraConsult LLC, which provides management support on the train project.

Still, several cities are moving forward with the HOT lane concept, which was developed in the early 1990s by the Libertarian think tank The Reason Foundation.

HOT lanes are operated in at least six locations ranging from California to Minneapolis. They're also under consideration in cities such as Dallas, Miami and San Francisco.

In Honolulu, the peak toll on a HOT lane would be \$6.40 in 2006 dollars, according to the city.

The high toll prompted critics to dub them "Lexis lanes," arguing that they're tailored to the affluent. However, a March 2003 Federal Highway Administration guide on HOT lanes reported that the benefits of HOT lanes are enjoyed widely at all income levels.

In most cases, HOT lanes were created by converting existing high-occupancy vehicle, or HOV, lanes to make more efficient use of highway capacity, said InfraConsult's Schneider. That's because the cost of building new highways cannot be recouped by toll charges, he said.

It's unclear whether Honolulu would be able to get federal funds for a HOT lanes project. State taxes that are being collected to pay for construction of a train system cannot be used to build a HOT lanes system without a change in state law.

Schneider argued that Honolulu's best opportunity to garner federal funds is to build a transit project such as rail rather than a highway project.

"On the transit side, we have a good chance, on the highway side we have no chance" of getting federal funding, he said. "That's an important factor."

Proponents of new highway construction contend the city did not conduct a rigorous, good-faith analysis of the managed lane option. Their biggest complaints are that the city overestimated the cost of building managed lanes and underestimated how much they would reduce traffic congestion.

Among the concerns raised is how the city eliminated the Kapolei-to-Nimitz Highway high-occupancy vehicle Zipper Lane in its analysis of the traffic impacts of the managed lanes alternative. That meant the new highway would result in only one net new in-bound lane of traffic, said Slater, the rail critic.

In addition, the cost of a two-lane, reversible elevated highway was estimated at \$2.6 billion, according to the city. That's more than the cost of the four-lane, 16.1-mile H-3 highway, which was built for \$1.3 billion and completed in 1997. The city's HOT lane cost estimate also is far greater than the construction costs for comparable Mainland highway projects, Slater said.

Both examples illustrate a lack of due diligence on the part of the city, he said.

"You would never see that in the private sector," Slater said. "You would never see it anywhere where there's honest government. If you put back in the Zipper Lane and you reduce the cost to whatever — a billion dollars — suddenly the numbers go upside down (in favor of managed lanes)."

analysis defended

Both the city and Parsons Brinckerhoff defend the cost estimate for a managed lane system and denied allegations they pushed rail as a preferred transit alternative.

"The Federal Transportation Administration and its independent project management oversight team concluded that the content of the (Alternatives Analysis) is unbiased," city transportation director Wayne Yoshioka said in an e-mail to The Advertiser.

That assertion is supported by a December 2006 Transit Advisory Task Force report that found the city's assessment of the rail and managed lane alternatives fair and accurate. However, the report also noted that other versions of the managed lane alternative could make it more attractive than the version studied by the city.

The report also questioned why the city eliminated the H-1 Zipper Lane when it studied the reversible managed lane option. The city did not respond to questions regarding the removal of the Zipper Lane from the estimate.

September 22, 2008

Mayoral candidates gear up for Round 2

Experts say Kobayashi will struggle to close gap with Hannemann

By *DERRICK DePLEDGE*
Advertiser Government Writer

Mayor Mufi Hannemann missed an opportunity to lock up re-election in Saturday's primary, political strategists said, leaving an opening for City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi to turn public unease about mass transit to her advantage in the November runoff.

Hannemann and his campaign aides said yesterday that record low voter turnout kept the mayor from breaking the 50 percent threshold for victory. They were confident that higher turnout in November would push him over the top against Kobayashi.

"I think there is just difficulty in getting people out to vote in a primary election. Everybody wants to wait for the general election," Hannemann said. "Despite our best efforts to get our voters out and get a higher turnout, it didn't occur."

But several political strategists, speaking privately, said Hannemann's campaign should have had a more extensive get-out-the-vote operation or more persuasive advertising that would have capitalized on his voter identification list and high job approval ratings. The strategists found Hannemann's tactics odd given he had more than \$3 million in campaign money available for field operations and television, radio and direct mail.

Now, the strategists say, the mayor will likely have to spend more campaign money than necessary and push back harder against Kobayashi to compensate for the perception he did not take his challengers more seriously in the primary.

Don Clegg, a political consultant who did some polling for Kobayashi, said he did not understand why Hannemann was not more aggressive in his get-out-the-vote operation. He said Hannemann's campaign knew turnout was likely to be below average and that motivated anti-rail voters would boost the vote for Kobayashi and University of Hawai'i-Manoa professor Panos Prevedouros.

"His supporters were pretty sure he was going to win so they didn't make the extra effort to get out," said Clegg, who believes there was more urgency behind the challengers.

A.J. Halagao, Hannemann's campaign coordinator, said the campaign had a credible get-out-the-vote operation through telephone calls, e-mails and friend-to-friend cards sent to likely Hannemann voters. Hannemann also voted early to send a message about the importance of voting and appeared at dozens of community events and sign-waving efforts.

Halagao acknowledged, however, that the campaign chose not to blanket O'ahu with campaign signs or take a sharper tone against the mayor's opponents in advertising. He also conceded that perhaps some of Hannemann's supporters were overconfident.

"I think people said, 'Well, I think we've got it in the bag,' or 'maybe he's got this thing sewn up,' " he said. "So I think a lot of people thought he had such a big lead that it wasn't as critical to come out and vote."

november strategies

Despite some of the post-mortems about tactics, Hannemann remains in an excellent position for re-election. He has campaign money, is popular with the broader electorate, and beat Kobayashi by more than 30,000 votes on Saturday. Hannemann pulled in more than 80,000 votes in the primary, which was more than the 78,000 he took when he fell behind former Councilman Duke Bainum in the 2004 primary. Hannemann won the general election in 2004 with 147,000 votes, which shows the potential difference between primary and general election turnout.

"We took the high road. There was a lot of misinformation that was put out there and, I think, a distortion of our record," Hannemann said. "Now, as we go into the general election, it's going to be very different."

The mayor said voters "will now be able to really examine us side by side. And that's what I like."

Kobayashi, who entered the campaign at the filing deadline in July and has not been able to compete financially, did not move beyond the base level of support that private polls identified when she first announced.

Although the precinct-by-precinct vote will provide more details in the coming days, analysts believe that a slightly higher than expected showing by Prevedouros and several of the lesser-known candidates likely cost Hannemann victory. Prevedouros based his campaign on his opposition to Hannemann's plans for a \$3.7 billion steel-on-steel rail project, and he was the favorite choice among anti-rail voters.

Kobayashi said yesterday that she would use her differences with Hannemann on rail to distinguish herself from the mayor in the coming weeks. Kobayashi has supported a rubber tire-on-concrete option for mass transit but said she is also open to high occupancy toll lanes and other alternatives to help reduce traffic congestion.

"Mass transit doesn't have to be steel-on-steel and that's a message we've been trying to get out there because we know there's a traffic problem, we want some sort of mass transit, but steel-on-steel is not the answer," she said. "I think the economy — and the steel-on-steel would really affect our economy and the visual impact on our city, the environmental impact — there are many issues that need to be brought up.

"And now we have the chance to keep talking about them."

Neal Milner, a political analyst and ombudsman at the University of Hawai'i-Manoa, described Kobayashi's position on mass transit as "fuzzy" and said she would have to do better in explaining her differences with the mayor to have a chance in the runoff. Other analysts and strategists, speaking privately, believe Kobayashi will struggle to catch Hannemann unless public-opinion polls that show substantial support for the rail project are wrong.

Prevedouros said he would meet with Kobayashi this week about a possible endorsement. With a ballot question on rail before voters in November, the professor said he would continue to speak publicly against Hannemann's steel-on-steel proposal.

Prevedouros predicted that most of his voters would go to Kobayashi. "Although our positions are not really that close, they are much closer than my positions with the incumbent mayor," he said. "Ann clearly didn't pledge to stop rail but she is open to alternatives."

'nothing is inevitable'

Reaction to the mayoral primary showed that Hannemann was not only dealing with Kobayashi and Prevedouros, but also expectations about his future political strength. The mayor has not committed to serving out the full four years of a second term

and is considered the Democrat with the most options for higher office in 2010 and beyond.

"I think rail is going to become a major issue now because of the ballot question," said state Senate President Colleen Hanabusa, D-21st (Nanakuli, Makaha), who helped persuade Kobayashi to run. "The general election is going to be a completely new situation. She's a very legitimate candidate."

Hanabusa said the primary may have ended any idea that Hannemann was invincible. "Our hope is that if there is anything that comes out of it, it's that he realizes that he's got to listen to people and he's got to keep his word," she said. "He can't just basically take the attitude that it's my way or the highway, which has been his style, no matter what anybody says. That has been his style."

Gov. Linda Lingle, speaking to Republicans at a unity lunch at state GOP headquarters on Kapi'olani Boulevard, cited comments by Hannemann to the news media on Saturday night that his re-election was "inevitable" as a cautionary example for Republican state House and Senate candidates and GOP volunteers.

"Inevitable means 'certain to happen.' Well, as we know, only one thing is certain to happen to us in life, we're going to go to the next life, if you will," the governor said. "People say taxes are inevitable, but even there you can get an extension."

"This is a lesson to you incumbents. Nothing is inevitable."

keeping election local

Leaders from both major political parties were troubled by the low voter turnout in the primary, which, at 35 percent statewide, was the lowest since statehood. Higher turnout is expected in the general election, but some Democrats who had been predicting unprecedented voter interest because Hawai'i-born U.S. Sen. Barack Obama is the Democratic presidential nominee are now talking more cautiously.

Democrats hope that an Obama wave helps their candidates down the ballot and preserves gains the party has made over the past few election cycles in the state House and Senate. Democrats hold a 44 to 7 majority in the House and a 22 to 3 majority in the Senate, but could lose between two and five House seats in November unless turnout is strong.

"I think the folks who are for Obama are going to turn out. They're not going to miss out on being part of this history-making event," said U.S. Rep. Neil Abercrombie, D-Hawai'i, who has been campaigning for Obama on the Mainland and believes his voters want to make a statement. "They're just not going to miss it."

Maya Soetoro-Ng, Obama's sister and a history teacher at La Pietra Hawai'i School for Girls, told Democrats at a unity breakfast at the Ala Moana Hotel of the importance of helping Obama in Nevada and other potential swing states in the West in addition to the Islands.

"Please encourage all of your constituencies, all of your people, neighbors and families, to continue to work for Hawai'i, to make sure that we bring in the largest percentages of any state in the union," said Soetoro-Ng, who will campaign for her brother on the Mainland in October.

Lt. Gov. James "Duke" Aiona, at the Republican lunch, told state Republican candidates to fight back against Democratic attempts to nationalize local campaigns. In 2006, when Lingle swept to re-election, Democrats were able to make gains at the Legislature by largely ignoring Lingle and linking state Republican candidates to an unpopular President Bush.

"You can't get caught up in a lot of the rhetoric that's going to come out in the next month. And part of that rhetoric is going to be on the national scene," Aiona said. "They're going to try to draw us in to Barack Obama and national politics and national

policies, and it's entirely different here in Hawai'i.

"And what you as candidates need to understand is that you have to focus, you really have to focus now on your race. It should only be you and the people in front of you, and nothing else."

Article URL: <http://starbulletin.com/2008/09/22/news/story01.html>
© 1996-2008 The Honolulu Star-Bulletin | www.starbulletin.com

Star Bulletin mobile edition

Vol. 13, Issue 266 - Monday, September 22, 2008

CAMPAIGN 2008



Mike Burley / mburley@starbulletin.com

Hawaii Democrats met yesterday for their annual unity breakfast and rally at the Ala Moana Hotel. Mayoral candidate Ann Kobayashi, right, with daughter Susan sitting next to her, applauded during the rally.

Races on, gloves off: Offices hang in the balance

Hannemann prepares an aggressive campaign to demand accountability going forward

[STORY SUMMARY](#) | [READ THE FULL STORY](#)

A moribund primary election that saw record-low turnout gives way today to a more energized fall campaign, with three mano-a-mano matchups for mayor and a host of potential smack-downs in the Legislature.

Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann vowed to take the gloves off yesterday in his runoff against City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi, who has accused him of bullying.

"The general feeling is that we tried to maintain the high road and we paid a price for it," said Keith Rollman, Hannemann's campaign media adviser, after Hannemann failed Saturday to win the mayor's race outright.

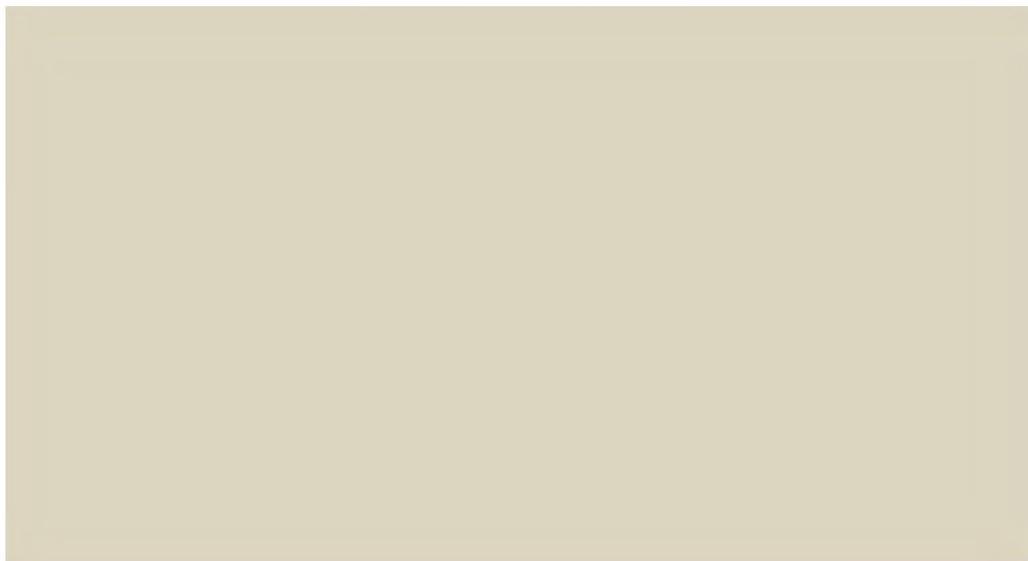
"We felt there was a potential of a backlash if he went negative -- then he becomes the bully that he's accused of being."

On the Big Island, Billy Kenoi, a former aide to outgoing Mayor Harry Kim, will face County Councilman Angel Pilago after state Sen. Lorraine Inouye, a former mayor, came in third in the primary.

And on Kauai, former Mayor JoAnn Yukimura, a member of the County Council, is in a runoff with former Miami Dolphins lineman Bernard Carvalho, who outpolled her 40 to 30 percent.

In the Legislature, seven of 12 Senate seats in play will be decided Nov. 4. And in House District 51, Lanikai-Waimanalo, observers are watching the race pitting newcomer Chris Lee against well-funded former House Republican leader Quentin Kawananakoa.

STAR-BULLETIN





Cindy Ellen Russell / crussell@starbulletin.com

Gov. Linda Lingle received a standing ovation yesterday as she began her address at Hawaii Republican Party headquarters.

[FULL STORY »](#)

By Laurie Au
lau@starbulletin.com

Mayor Mufi Hannemann says he will start more forcefully confronting City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi on attacks directed at his record and leadership style as the two head into what is likely a more contentious race toward the November general election.

- [Hannemann Mayoral Wrap Up](#)



Mayoral candidate Mufi Hannemann dominated during the primary election but came short of the 50% plus one results.

[[Watch](#)]



Hannemann's remarks came a day after he failed to win re-election outright in Saturday's primary election by falling just short of the majority needed to end the race. Hannemann received 49.4 percent of the votes cast for mayor, while Kobayashi garnered 30.16 percent.

"I'm going to hold her accountable to every statement she made in the primary," Hannemann said yesterday. "This will be a very focused one-on-one comparison against Ann Kobayashi. She did a lot to distort my record and those things will change because I will be able to rebut them directly."

Hannemann blames voter turnout, at a low of 37 percent of registered Oahu voters, for the reason he was unable to secure an outright win. Hannemann expected a larger turnout from his stronger support areas, such as the Leeward Coast, but had anticipated his opponents to get more votes from the Windward side and East Honolulu.

Hannemann mostly refrained from his usual aggressiveness while campaigning for the primary election. Kobayashi has lodged attacks at Hannemann's leadership style, which she described as "bullying," and his handling of the most contentious issue, his proposed \$4 billion rail transit system.

But Hannemann and campaign aides say that will change in the six weeks left until the Nov. 4 general election.

"The general feeling is that we tried to maintain the high road and we paid a price for it," said Keith Rollman, Hannemann's campaign media adviser. "We felt there was a potential of a backlash if he went negative -- then he becomes the bully that he's accused of being."



Jamm Aquino / jaquino@starbulletin.com

Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann addressed supporters Saturday at his campaign headquarters at the Dole Cannery Center in Iwilei.

Hannemann has questioned Kobayashi's entrance into the race on the last day of the candidate filing deadline, causing a flurry of confusion that allowed a former opponent, Duke Bainum, to fill Kobayashi's City Council seat in an uncontested race. Just a few days before the primary election, Bainum wrote a letter to supporters telling them to vote for anyone but Hannemann.

- Kobayashi Heads To General Elections



With Panos Prevedouros out of the mayoral race, Ann Kobayahshi heads to the general elections against incumbent Mufi Hannemann.

[[Watch](#)]



"Mayor Hannemann has a history of spreading untruths," Bainum's letter said. "In just a few days, you will have the opportunity to choose our next mayor. Please, just say NO to Mufi Hannemann."

"There's no way you're going to convince me that Bainum and Kobayashi did not strike some sort of deal," Hannemann said. "Why is it that Ann promises an open and honest government when she hasn't been open and honest about her entrance into the race? Those are the things that will come under greater scrutiny."

Hannemann has the campaign funds -- totaling more than \$1.8 million -- to launch aggressive advertisements quickly versus Kobayashi's balance of \$126,000.

"Now, any time a bit of misinformation is thrown out there, we're going to hammer it back into the woodwork," Rollman said. "We're going to use our own media ability. There won't be any more of this nonsense going out."

Meanwhile, Kobayashi needs more campaign contributions to prepare for a more combative race with Hannemann.

"I think we're going to keep reaching out to people, keep building our grass-roots effort, because that has proven to work so far," Kobayashi said.

Hannemann and Kobayashi both said they would agree to appear in a debate. The campaign leading up to the primary election had focused on the elevated rail transit system, for which Kobayashi favors a rubber-tire system, while Hannemann is moving forward on a steel rail system. But the candidates began focusing on other issues, such as the island's infrastructure problems, the landfill and the economic downturn after Wall Street's recent implosion.

State Senate President Colleen Hanabusa said Kobayashi, who once led the City Council Budget Committee, needs to start distinguishing herself more from Hannemann.

"What Ann is going to have to convince the voters about is that she truly is the better manager for the City and County of Honolulu," said Hanabusa, a Kobayashi ally. "Now is the time to talk about the economic issues. With her experience in budget, she has to tell the people that she can truly prioritize government."

Kobayashi will also likely try to attract supporters of Panos Prevedouros, a University of Hawaii at Manoa engineering professor who dropped out of the mayoral race Saturday night after receiving 17 percent of the votes in the primary.

Prevedouros' main support base came from the anti-rail faction in Honolulu, particularly among the older voters. On the campaign trail, Kobayashi was supportive of Prevedouros, who said yesterday he has no plans to endorse her.

"I like Ann very much, but we have a significant disagreement when it comes to the fixed guideway project," Prevedouros said. "I suspect in the future we will be talking."

[Read all 12 comments »](#)

Type in your comments to post to the forum

Name
(appears on your post)
You are currently logged in as . [Not ?](#)
Name
(appears on your post)

Comments

Type the numbers you see in the image on the right:



*Please note by clicking on "Post Comment" you acknowledge that you have read the [Terms of Service](#) and the comment you are posting is in compliance with such terms. **Be polite.** Inappropriate posts may be removed by the moderator. [Send us your feedback.](#)*

Article URL: <http://starbulletin.com/2008/09/22/news/story01.html>
© 1996-2008 The Honolulu Star-Bulletin | www.starbulletin.com

September 23, 2008

Court ruling on anti-rail measure expected today

Appeals panel will decide if ordinance goes to voters Nov. 4

By *SEAN HAO*

Advertiser Staff Writer

The state Intermediate Court of Appeals is expected to rule today on whether Stop Rail Now's anti-rail ordinance can appear on the Nov. 4 ballot.

The group wants the court to overturn a Honolulu Circuit Court ruling declaring that Stop Rail Now needs nearly 45,000 valid signatures to place its proposed ordinance before general election voters. The group, which has collected about 35,000 valid signatures, maintains it needs about 30,000 signatures to get on the ballot.

Stop Rail Now sued Honolulu City Clerk Denise De Costa in August after she refused to process the group's petition to place the following question before voters: "Honolulu mass transit shall not include trains or rail."

Attorneys for the city and Stop Rail Now yesterday stated their cases for about an hour before the appeals court about the meaning of seemingly conflicting statements in the charter. A three-judge panel is expected to issue a decision today. That decision likely will be appealed to the state Supreme Court.

Stop Rail Now is seeking an injunction to place its proposed ordinance on the ballot in place of a City Council-initiated charter amendment question that asks whether the city shall "establish a steel wheel on steel rail transit system."

Stop Rail Now has criticized the City Council's charter amendment question because it would not prevent the city from proceeding with the project regardless of the vote results. The group also argued that its ordinance allows voters to kill all forms of rail transit as opposed to the city question, which would only prohibit building a steel-wheeled train.

The city has argued that Stop Rail Now's petition should not be placed on the November ballot because the group specifically asked for a special election. By asking for a special election, the city said, Stop Rail Now was trying to get on the November ballot by gathering fewer signatures than if it had asked to be on the general election ballot.

That "front door" to the general election ballot requires more signatures than Stop Rail Now has gathered, the city argued. In addition, the city argued that it is too late to put Stop Rail Now's initiative on the November ballot because those ballots are already being printed.

Mark Recktenwald, chief judge on the appeals court, said the court would issue a ruling today.

The options facing the court include denying Stop Rail Now's request for an injunction, which would result in the City Council question remaining on the ballot. Or the court could decide in Stop Rail Now's favor, which would knock the City Council question off the ballot. The court yesterday also discussed the possibility of allowing both questions on the ballot pending a final resolution by the Hawai'i Supreme Court.

If the third scenario took place, both issues would appear on the ballot. However, vote results would be tallied for only one

question, depending on how the Supreme Court may rule on the issue.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann hopes to start construction on the 20-mile elevated commuter rail project in late 2009 or early 2010. The project is expected to cost an inflation-adjusted \$5 billion and take nearly a decade to complete all phases.

September 23, 2008

Hawaii mayor won 90% of voting precincts during primary election

Low turnout cited for Hannemann's failure to win re-election outright

BY PETER BOYLAN

Advertiser Staff Writer

Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann won more than 90 percent of the voting precincts during Saturday's primary election, capturing 198 of the 212 polling locations while totaling more than 80,000 votes.

While winning most precincts, Hannemann failed to get more than half of the total vote and will face City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi in a runoff on Nov. 4.

A precinct-by-precinct analysis of the mayoral campaign released yesterday shows that Hannemann did well across the island, but that his percentages increased in Central O'ahu and on the west side.

Hannemann lost 14 precincts, eight to Kobayashi and six to Panos Prevedouros, a University of Hawai'i engineering professor.

Most of the 14 precincts were clustered in Kobayashi's Manoa council district, on the North Shore or the Windward side, according to data released by the state Office of Elections.

The election was marked by low turnout, as only 35 percent of O'ahu voters went to the polls.

Hannemann fell just shy of the 50 percent mark, taking 49.39 percent, while Kobayashi got 30.17 percent and Prevedouros 17.71 percent.

Neal Milner, a UH political scientist, said the low voter turnout may have conspired to keep Hannemann below the majority needed to win re-election outright, but that the presidential contest on Nov. 4 will drive more voters to the polls.

"Let's face it, by any majority rules standards, he creamed her," Milner said. "The story is he didn't get 50 percent plus one, but he beat her by a big margin. I think a lot of this is going to be about turnout and getting your voters out and figuring out a way to get the presidential voters out there, and somehow get them to vote in the mayor's race."

Hannemann collected more than 80,000 votes in the primary, which was more than the 78,000 he took in the 2004 primary when he fell behind former Councilman Duke Bainum. Hannemann went on to win the general election in 2004 with 147,000 votes, which shows the potential difference between primary- and general-election turnout.

all-around wins

Hannemann campaign officials said they were pleased with the precinct data released yesterday.

"Mayor Hannemann is in a strong position to prevail in November," said A.J. Halagao, co-chairman of Hannemann's re-election campaign. "We learned today that Mayor Hannemann did beat council member Kobayashi in all nine City Council districts,

including her own. That's a testament to the mayor and his administration for their hard work the past four years."

Also yesterday, Prevedouros said he will vote for Kobayashi in the general election but wants to discuss her transportation plan before formally endorsing her and mobilizing his supporters behind her campaign.

Prevedouros based his campaign on his opposition to Hannemann's plans for a \$3.7 billion steel-on-steel rail project, and he was the favorite choice among anti-rail voters.

Kobayashi has supported a rubber tire-on-concrete option for mass transit but said she is also open to high-occupancy toll lanes and other alternatives to help reduce traffic congestion.

Prevedouros said he believes that HOT lanes and other options can be mixed to help alleviate traffic congestion.

Prevedouros said he will meet with Kobayashi and her advisers this week to discuss her position on transportation and a possible endorsement.

"It is my understanding that her transportation position is not strong, and Hannemann is going to hit hard on that. Hannemann's plan is specific, and hers is not specific, and I'd like to help her with that," Prevedouros said. "I have been working with Ann since 1998 very closely. She is an intelligent person and an open-minded person. It's important how she arranges her position so the people voting for me will be comfortable voting for her."

Kobayashi said Sunday that she would use her differences with Hannemann on rail to distinguish herself from the mayor in the coming weeks.

gaining supporters

Councilman Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Kobayashi's campaign co-chairman, said Kobayashi is committed to doing whatever the voters decide when they vote for or against the transit system during the general election Nov. 4.

"No matter what the voters decide in November, we have to be fiscally responsible and environmentally friendly, and it has to be an actual solution that works (to reduce traffic congestion)," Dela Cruz said. "We're going to work hard to really listen to what Panos' supporters have to say, because we want to work with them and join them in making a better city."

Hannemann's campaign said they will do what they can to court Prevedouros' supporters.

"While we disagree on how best to solve Honolulu's traffic congestion problems, we congratulate professor Prevedouros on his hard-fought campaign and bringing about a spirited discussion of the issues. We wish him and his family well as they prepare for the birth of their child," Halagao said.

Star Bulletin

mobile edition

Vol. 13, Issue 267 - Tuesday, September 23, 2008



JAMM AQUINO / JAQUINO@STARBULLETIN.COM

Stop Rail Now and city attorneys presented arguments yesterday before the Intermediate Court of Appeals on the anti-rail group's appeal to have its ballot question presented to voters in the November election. Don Kitaoka, deputy city corporation counsel, spoke yesterday before the three-judge panel.

Clock ticks on rail issue

A group presses its case to get its question on November's ballot

By Laurie Au
lau@starbulletin.com

An anti-rail group is running out of time and options as it continues to push to create a ballot question attempting to stop the city's proposed \$4 billion rail transit project.

- Judge Plans To Rule On Rail Ballots Soon



The state intermediate court of appeals is promising to rule Tuesday on Oahu's rail transit vote.

[[Watch](#)]



The issue has been tangled up in the courts for several weeks. A panel of three judges from the state's second-highest court, the Intermediate Court of Appeals, is expected to rule today in the case, which could force the city clerk to include Stop Rail Now's ballot question in the November election.

Stop Rail Now has failed, after a ruling from a lower court, to place a ballot question asking voters to create an ordinance banning the city from building a train or rail system. Meanwhile, it appears that a City Council-created ballot question on the rail system is moving forward unless the appeals court intervenes.

The judges gave no hint through their questions as to what they might rule today, though they raised several concerns about siding with Stop Rail Now.

The case is expected to go to the Hawaii Supreme Court regardless of the appeals court's decision.

If the appeals court were to rule in favor of Stop Rail Now, the group's question would knock the City Council's version off the ballot because only one can appear.

However, if the Hawaii Supreme Court were to later overturn that decision, there is a chance that no ballot question would be valid because of deadlines to print ballots.

"Why is it more harmful to the voters of the City and County of Honolulu to leave your question off the ballot than to risk having no ballot question on the issue of rail transit?" Judge Katherine Leonard asked Earle Partington, attorney for Stop Rail Now.

Given the limited time left - the state Elections Office is expected to begin printing sometime this week - there

would be little time to wait for the Supreme Court.



JAMM AQUINO / JAQUINO@STARBULLETIN.COM

Stop Rail Now backer Cliff Slater, left, and attorney Earle Partington spoke to the media after yesterday's hearing.

Partington said he would prefer that both questions appear on the ballot, and that, depending on later decisions, one of them could be deemed invalid later.

But the city and Chief Judge Mark Recktenwald said that would be confusing for voters and potentially problematic.

"We're not in favor of having two questions," said Don Kitaoka, deputy city corporation counsel. "Basically, it's impractical to (change the question) now. It's too late and it would be a huge burden on the city clerk."

[Read all 19 comments »](#)

Type in your comments to post to the forum

Name
(appears on your post) You are currently logged in as . [Not ?](#)

Name
(appears on your post)



Vol. 13, Issue 267 - Tuesday, September 23, 2008

OUR OPINION

Hannemann needs bigger turnout for November win

THE ISSUE

Mayor Mufi Hannemann came short of the "50 percent plus one" votes needed to avoid a runoff election in November for a second term.

A record-low percentage of registered voters casting ballots in a primary election might have kept Mayor Mufi Hannemann from winning re-election outright. Instead, he will face City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi in a November runoff, and his supporters should not be complacent.

Only 37 percent of Oahu's registered voters - and less than 35 percent statewide - voted in Saturday's election. Hannemann needed one vote more than 50 percent of those cast to win re-election. Instead, he received 49.4 percent, while Kobayashi received 30.16 percent and Pano Prevedouros, a University of Hawaii engineering professor, garnered 17.72 percent.

That means Hannemann received barely 1.5 percent more votes than the Kobayashi and Prevedouros totals combined - and their supporters might very well join forces on Nov. 4. Both Kobayashi and Prevedouros oppose Hannemann's rail transit project from Kapolei to Ala Moana, so opponents of the rail plan were motivated to vote.

That motivation might exist even more in the November election, which will include on the ballot a proposed City Charter amendment that would give the city transportation director the authority to go ahead with the "steel-wheel-on-steel-rail transit system." Rejection of the amendment, while not legally derailing the plan, would make it difficult for the mayor to proceed with it.

Kobayashi, who favors a rubber-tire-on-concrete system, has been critical of the expense and adequacy of Hannemann's transit plan. She told the Star-Bulletin editorial board that the \$4 billion line would take a commuter 26 stops and an hour of traveling time to get from Kapolei to downtown.

Actually, said Wayne Yoshioka, director of city transportation services, the 19-station rail system as planned would take 40 minutes to reach Ala Moana from Kapolei. Hannemann, who was less than aggressive in the weeks leading up to the primary, said he will hold Kobayashi accountable for "every statement she made in the primary."

City Councilman-elect Duke Bainum, who narrowly lost to Hannemann in the 2004 mayoral race, asked his supporters before the primary to vote for anyone but Hannemann. Bainum's entry into the fray during the general-election campaign could increase interest in the race, which might actually help Hannemann, who needs a heavy voter turnout. Polls have shown that 60 percent of registered voters favor the rail transit and even a higher percentage support the mayor overall.

Those who stayed home on Saturday might be lured to the polling places by the presidential candidacy of Honolulu-born Barack Obama, the issue of whether to authorize a state Constitutional Convention and general election races between opponents who faced little if any opposition during the primary.

Honolulu Star-Bulletin

ONLINE ★ EDITION

Oahu Publications, Inc. publishes
the Honolulu Star-Bulletin, MidWeek
and military newspapers

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**David Black, Dan Case, Dennis Francis,
Larry Johnson, Duane Kurisu, Warren Luke,
Colbert Matsumoto, Jeffrey Watanabe, Michael Wo**

HONOLULU STAR-BULLETIN

Dennis Francis, Publisher **Lucy Young-Oda**, Assistant Editor
(808) 529-4762
lyoungoda@starbulletin.com

Frank Bridgewater, Editor **Michael Rovner**, Assistant Editor
(808) 529-4791 (808) 529-4768
fbridgewater@starbulletin.com mrovner@starbulletin.com

Mary Poole, Editorial Page Editor
(808) 529-4748; mpoole@starbulletin.com

The Honolulu Star-Bulletin (USPS 249460) is published daily by Oahu Publications at 500 Ala Moana Blvd., Suite 7-500, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813. Periodicals postage paid at Honolulu, Hawaii. Postmaster: Send address changes to Star-Bulletin, P.O. Box 3080, Honolulu, Hawaii 96802.

Star-Bulletin mobile edition

Vol. 13, Issue 267 - Tuesday, September 23, 2008



JAMM AQUINO / JAQUINO@STARBULLETIN.COM

Automobiles waited to fill their gas tanks at Costco in Iwilei yesterday. With regular unleaded at \$3.84 a gallon, vehicles packed the wholesale outlet's gas station and overflowed into the street.

Isle gas prices slowly drop

But the downward trend could be ending as oil prices spike

STORY SUMMARY »

Hawaii gasoline prices have been in slow decline over the past two months and even dropped below \$4 a gallon in at least one location, but that trend could soon be over.

Last week, AAA Hawaii reported that the average price for regular, self-serve unleaded in Hawaii had declined for the eighth straight week.

Prices already had gone as low as \$3.84 a gallon for regular unleaded at Costco yesterday.

Yesterday's statewide average of \$4.28 a gallon was the lowest price in the islands since mid-June, but still second-highest in the country to Alaska's \$4.30 a gallon, according to AAA's Fuel Gauge Report.

Hawaii gasoline prices historically are higher than on the mainland and follow trends at a slower pace.

Yesterday's national average for regular self-serve unleaded was \$3.74 a gallon, down 2 cents from the previous day.

But the downward trend is in danger after crude oil prices spiked more than \$25 a barrel yesterday.

[FULL STORY »](#)

By B.J. Reyes
bjreyes@starbulletin.com

After a summer of \$4-plus gasoline, Hawaii's pump prices showed signs of potentially dipping below the barrier by next month.

Prices already had gone as low as \$3.84 a gallon for regular unleaded at Costco yesterday.

On Friday, AAA Hawaii reported that the average price for regular, self-serve unleaded in Hawaii had declined for the eighth straight week.

"This is relief to Hawaii drivers because prices have been amongst the highest in the nation and we hope there is more relief in the near future," AAA Hawaii Regional Manager Richard Velazquez said in a news release.

The downward trend could be coming to an end as crude oil prices spiked more than \$25 a barrel yesterday, shattering the record for the biggest one-day gain amid investor concerns over the government's \$700 billion economic bailout plan.

Light, sweet crude for October delivery jumped as much as \$25.45 to \$130 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange before falling back to settle at \$120.92, up

A look at prices

A look at trends in gas prices in Hawaii and across the country. Prices are per gallon for regular, self-serve unleaded.

National average

Yesterday: \$3.739
Last week: \$3.854
Last month: \$3.692
Last year: \$2.810

Hawaii average

Yesterday: \$4.281
Last week: \$4.305
Last month: \$4.418
Last year: \$3.213

\$16.37 from Friday's closing price.

Given the dire economic outlook, some analysts questioned whether oil prices would keep rising.

"We've already seen that the world can't afford oil at these prices. If it keeps going up, demand will drop off again," said Phil Flynn, an analyst and oil trader with Alaron Trading Corp. in Chicago.

However, he cautioned that oil's future direction hinged on the outcome of the government bailout plan and its effect on the U.S. economy.

Yesterday's national average for regular self-serve unleaded was \$3.74 a gallon, down 2 cents from the previous day.

Honolulu average

Yesterday: \$4.194

Last week: \$4.305

Last month: \$4.322

Last year: \$3.102

Source: AAA Fuel Gauge Report



JAMM AQUINO / JAQUINO@STARBULLETIN.COM

Customers filled up their gas tanks yesterday at Costco in Iwilei. The wholesale outlet's gas station is often crowded, and with regular unleaded at \$3.84 a gallon, consumers waiting to gas up caused even more traffic.

Yesterday's statewide average of \$4.28 a gallon was the lowest price in the islands since mid-June, but still second-highest in the country to Alaska's \$4.30 a gallon, according to AAA's Fuel Gauge Report.

Hawaii gasoline prices historically are higher than on the mainland and follow trends at a slower pace.

The national average dipped below \$4 a gallon on July 26, and went as low as \$3.65 in August before steadily rising again. Crude oil during that time went from \$124.73 a barrel to as low as \$91.15 a barrel last week.

Since July 26, Hawaii's prices have slowly but steadily declined from \$4.49 a gallon to yesterday's price of \$4.28.

By comparison, when the national average first hit \$4 a gallon on June 8, it marked a 35-cent increase over the preceding month.

Hawaii's statewide average first topped \$4 on May 23, increasing 22 cents in the preceding month.

Oil companies have long maintained that Hawaii's higher prices and slower-moving trends are a result of the market's isolation and higher costs of doing business. Critics have argued that oil companies keep prices artificially high to take advantage of the small market in the islands.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

[Read all 18 comments »](#)

Type in your comments to post to the forum

Name

(appears on your post)

You are currently logged in as . [Not ?](#)

Name

(appears on your post)

Comments

Type the numbers you see in the image on the right:



Please note by clicking on "Post Comment" you acknowledge that you have read the [Terms of Service](#) and the comment you are posting is in compliance with such terms. **Be polite.** Inappropriate posts may be removed by the moderator. [Send us your feedback.](#)

Article URL: <http://starbulletin.com/2008/09/23/news/story03.html>
© 1996-2008 The Honolulu Star-Bulletin | www.starbulletin.com

Star-Bulletin

mobile edition

Vol. 13, Issue 267 - Tuesday, September 23, 2008



Showdown

Primary results boost Kobayashi's supporters even though Hannemann won her Manoa district

By Laurie Au
lau@starbulletin.com

City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi pulled off an unexpected success in Saturday's primary election, giving her campaign a recent boost in interest and hope, though results show that she was missing support from her own

district of Manoa.

- Honolulu Mayoral Candidates Prepare For General Election



Hannemann was 991 votes short of winning the race outright, re energizing the Kobayashi campaign.

[[Watch](#)]



Mayor Mufi Hannemann won five of the six precincts in Manoa and early absentee voting, according to final polling results. Hannemann received 2,765 votes, or about 43 percent of the votes in Manoa, over Kobayashi's 35 percent totaling 2,262 votes.

"I know the mayor has been concentrating in Manoa and has gotten (state Rep.) Kirk Caldwell to help him," Kobayashi said yesterday. "We have other districts to contend with where I'm not as well-known. We're trying to get out there in every community."

Hannemann, who promised a more aggressive campaign compared to his laid-back approach before the primary, was sign-waving in Manoa yesterday.

"We campaigned there just as hard as other districts," said A.J. Halagao, Hannemann's campaign coordinator. "The fact that he was able to defeat Ann Kobayashi in her own back yard, I think, is a testament to the hard work of Mayor Hannemann and his team."

Detailed results show Hannemann did well in most parts of the island, including the Leeward Coast, which typically supports him. However, that support wasn't enough to make up for the lack of votes in his weaker support areas, such as East Oahu, to carry him over the 50 percent of votes he needed to end the race Saturday.

"The energy, the excitement, the enthusiasm is with Ann," said City Councilman Charles Djou, a Kobayashi supporter and a vocal Hannemann critic. "It was a huge letdown for Mufi Hannemann and huge push for Ann."

State Senate President Colleen Hanabusa, who had encouraged Kobayashi to run for mayor, said people will now start taking Kobayashi seriously as she faces off with Hannemann in the general election.

Kobayashi has had a late start in her campaign for mayor after filing on the last day possible in July with little funds compared to Hannemann, who raised about \$3 million in his re-election campaign.

"I think, before, people were holding back," Djou said. "Saturday night proved that she is very competitive and I think campaign contributions will begin to flow her way."



JAMM AQUINO / JAQUINO@STARBULLETIN.COM; FL MORRIS / FMORRIS@STARBULLETIN.COM

Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann and City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi will face off in the Nov. 4 general election for the mayor's seat.

Kobayashi, who has spent most of the funds raised before the primary election, said her campaign is planning a fundraiser soon.

Meanwhile, both campaigns will try to capture supporters of University of Hawaii at Manoa engineering professor Panos Prevedouros, who came in third in the race after receiving just 17 percent, or 28,782 votes.

Many of Prevedouros' supporters, who are critics of Hannemann's proposed \$4 billion rail transit system, will likely go to Kobayashi.

Kobayashi supports a mass-transit system, unlike Prevedouros, but said she prefers a rubber-tire bus system. Kobayashi said she would support Hannemann's selection of a steel-rail system if voters approve a proposed City Charter amendment up for a vote in November.

Cliff Slater, who encouraged Prevedouros to run for mayor, said he would likely shift his support to Kobayashi because her views on rail transit are more aligned with those of Prevedouros.

Halagao said Hannemann will try to appeal to Prevedouros supporters on other issues, including the declining economy and the environment.

[Read all 18 comments »](#)

Type in your comments to post to the forum

Name
(appears on your post)

You are currently logged in as . [Not ?](#)

Name
(appears on your post)

Comments

Type the numbers you see in the image on the right:



*Please note by clicking on "Post Comment" you acknowledge that you have read the [Terms of Service](#) and the comment you are posting is in compliance with such terms. **Be polite.** Inappropriate posts may be removed by the moderator. [Send us your feedback.](#)*

Article URL: <http://starbulletin.com/2008/09/23/news/story03.html>
© 1996-2008 The Honolulu Star-Bulletin | www.starbulletin.com

Letters to the Editor

energy efficiency

Higher tax on oil, gas a win-win situation

How can Hawai'i cut pollution and traffic congestion, ensure packed ridership on Mufi Hannemann's fixed rail, take the lead in alternative energy, and stop wasting billions on oil imports? Do what advanced economies around the world have done — raise consumption taxes on oil and gas.

High oil-tax countries like Japan and Germany are decades ahead of the U.S. in energy efficiency, are reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and lead the world in alternative energy technologies and utilization. These countries are not destroying their domestic economy by piling up debt to fund excessive oil imports.

To counter the burden of higher oil taxes, Hawai'i could lower other taxes by an equal amount. For example, a \$2 per gallon state tax on oil/gasoline consumed by cars and electric power plants would pay for both a drastic reduction in wage taxes and elimination of the general excise tax on food.

To help ensure fairness, a majority of the wage tax breaks (credits where necessary) would go to lower-income working households and commercial vehicle drivers. This tax realignment (not increase) would reward workers with higher after-tax pay, drastically reduce traffic and trigger a boom in locally produced alternative energy, thereby creating thousands of new jobs — as solar, wind and bio-fuels achieve cost competitiveness and cut our dependence on imported oil.

For a brighter, greener future, let's get rid of high taxes on Hawai'i's labor force and food supply and tax oil instead.

Benjamin Bystrom | Honolulu

September 23, 2008

Letters to the Editor

transit

Rail is a black hole we will pour taxes into

We cannot afford rail. Without rail, my property tax (I live in an old neighborhood) went from \$1,008 in 2004 (when Mufi Hannemann became mayor) to \$1,548 in 2007, a 54 percent increase.

My bimonthly sewer charge went from \$49.70 in 2004 to \$88.94 in my July 2008 bill, a 79 percent increase. Mufi says the federal government will pay for part of rail, yet refuses to say that it will not necessitate increasing our property taxes. The federal government is projecting a huge deficit this year. The Federal Highway Fund is in trouble.

In five years, I will be retired and living on a fixed income. I do not need another black hole to pour my taxes into. Selfish? Perhaps, but I need to protect what little money I will have when I retire. The government will not hesitate to put a lien on my house should I have trouble paying these taxes.

Mufi cannot even commit to seeing this project through, because he cannot even commit to another full four-year term as mayor. Isn't there something wrong with this picture?

B. Lee | Honolulu

September 24, 2008

Court rejects Stop Rail Now's plea for Honolulu balloting

By Sean Hao

Advertiser Staff Writer

The nonprofit Stop Rail Now lost a court appeal yesterday in seeking to get its anti-rail ordinance on the Nov. 4 general election ballot.

Voters will still be able to voice their opinions on rail, although the ballot question likely will be written by the City Council instead of Stop Rail Now.

The council's charter amendment question asks whether the city shall "establish a steel wheel on steel rail transit system."

Stop Rail Now wanted the question to read: "Honolulu mass transit shall not include trains or rail."

Stop Rail Now attorney Earle Partington said the ruling was a "great disappointment."

City deputy corporation counsel Don Kitaoka said, "We are pleased the court ruled the way it did."

The state Intermediate Court of Appeals' 32-page ruling said Stop Rail Now did not show that significant irreparable harm would be caused if its proposed ordinance is not placed on the ballot. Meanwhile, granting the request could create serious, negative consequences for the upcoming general election, according to the ruling.

The city argued that it is too late to put Stop Rail Now's initiative on the November ballot because those ballots are already being printed.

The court did not decide on the underlying merits of the case, which involves a lawsuit against the city clerk over the question of how many signatures are needed to place the Stop Rail Now measure on the ballot.

Stop Rail Now collected 49,000 signatures on petitions calling for placing the rail issue on the ballot. Of those, about 35,000 were deemed valid signatures.

Stop Rail Now argued that it needs about 30,000 signatures to get on the ballot.

A Circuit Court ruled earlier that the group needs nearly 45,000 valid signatures to place its proposed ordinance before general election voters. Stop Rail Now asked the appeals court to overturn that ruling.

Partington said Stop Rail Now would decide today whether to appeal yesterday's ruling to the Hawai'i Supreme Court. He acknowledged that time is running out if the proposed ordinance is to be voted on in the upcoming election.

"If we decide to go to the Supreme Court and it doesn't rule it in a week, we're dead," Partington said.

Stop Rail Now has criticized the city council's charter amendment question because it would not prevent the city from proceeding with the project regardless of the vote outcome.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann hopes to start construction on the 20-mile elevated commuter rail project in late 2009 or early 2010. The project is expected to cost an inflation-adjusted \$5 billion and take nearly a decade to complete all phases.

Court derails ballot initiative

Stop Rail Now ponders high court foray in wake of defeat

STORY SUMMARY | [READ THE FULL STORY](#)

A state appeals court ruled against an anti-rail group, which has still not yet admitted defeat in its five-month-long attempt to create a ballot question to block the city's proposed \$4 billion rail transit project.

The state's second-highest court yesterday rejected a motion by Stop Rail Now to order the city clerk to place its question on the November ballot asking voters to prohibit the city from building a rail or train system.

The court said granting the group's request would have posed too much of a risk to voters since the City Council has already placed a related question on the ballot. Meanwhile, the group's organizers say they are debating whether to appeal to the Hawaii Supreme Court or start campaigning against the city's project.

FULL STORY >>

By [Ken Kobayashi](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Sep 24, 2008

An anti-rail group has failed on one of its last chances to create a ballot question attempting to stop the city's proposed \$4 billion rail transit system.

• Court Denies Commuter Rail Question On Ballot

It looks like Honolulu voters will have a chance to ban Rail Transit in the next election.

The state appeals court rejected Stop Rail Now's last-minute attempt yesterday, giving the

group the option of appealing to the Hawaii Supreme Court, though time is running out.

Oahu voters will still have the opportunity to vote on rail transit in the November general

election on a question created by the City Council that would amend the City Charter.

"We may have to, in the end, fall back on the City Council question," said Cliff Slater, one of Stop Rail Now's organizers and a vocal anti-rail critic. "That would not have been on the ballot if not for us."

Earle Partington, Stop Rail Now's attorney, said the group will decide today whether to go to the Supreme Court.

"It is a great disappointment," Partington said. "This is a matter of public interest and the refusal to order it on the ballot is extremely disappointing for the people."

A three-member panel of the Intermediate Court of Appeals unanimously ruled that if the

question were placed on the ballot, it would "engender unintended, serious, negative

consequences" in the general election. Those consequences include the logistical impact on

the election as well as "voter confusion," the court said.

In response yesterday, Don Kitaoka, city deputy corporation counsel, said in a statement: "We

are pleased the court ruled the way it did, because the (appeals court's) decision actually

ensures that the voters will have the right to vote on the rail issue in the upcoming general election."

The court also noted the public will still be able to vote on the issue of mass transit, a

reference to the City Council's question.

The Council's question on the ballot will ask voters if they want the city to continue building

Mayor Mufi Hannemann's proposed "steel wheel on steel rail" technology.

If a majority of the

voters rejects the system, it would essentially kill the system, many city officials have said,

because the federal government would be unlikely to fund a system without public support.

Stop Rail Now was seeking to overturn a Circuit Court judge's ruling earlier this year that said

Stop Rail Now did not have enough signatures to place the issue on the ballot.

Circuit Judge Karl Sakamoto upheld the city clerk's determination that the group needed about

45,000 signatures. The group maintained that it needed only about 30,000 signatures.

The appeals court noted that if it were to issue an injunction placing the Stop Rail Now

question on the ballot and it was later determined that the group's interpretation was wrong,

the votes cast on that issue would not count.

The 32-page opinion was issued by Chief Appeals Judge Mark Recktenwald and appellate

Judges Corinne Watanabe and Katherine Leonard.

The ruling is at

<http://www.state.hi.us/jud/opinions/ica/2008/ica29354ord.pdf>.



Gathering Place

Environment can't take much more Hannemann

[By Randy Ching](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Sep 24, 2008

Oahu's sustainability can't withstand another four years of Mayor Mufi Hannemann. On nearly every key environmental concern - energy, recycling, land protection, clean water, safe streets - Hannemann's policies have been devastating. Let's look at three.

» **Energy.** Energy costs and dependency on petroleum are on top of everyone's minds. But despite talk of signing the "Mayors Climate Protection Agreement," Hannemann has barely lifted a finger to achieve its goal of 7 percent reduction in greenhouse gas from 1990 levels by 2012: no inventory of current emissions, and no tangible plan to achieve the energy efficiency or clean energy usage to meet the target.

So what has he done? First, he fired the previous administration's expert in energy savings. Then he effectively cancelled an \$8 million "solar bond" initiative that would have reduced the city's energy costs. The result? Annual city electricity usage surged by 8 million kilowatt hours since he took office, contributing an additional 16 million pounds of greenhouse gas into our atmosphere.

» **Recycling.** Let's review how those "blue bins" came to be. First, Hannemann canceled the planned curbside recycling program in 2005. Then the City Council stepped in, passing a measure to slowly implement some form of mixed-recyclables recycling at the curbside. The Hannemann administration opposed this. The city Charter Commission then forwarded an amendment to compel the Department of Environmental Services to implement islandwide curbside recycling. The Hannemann administration repeatedly opposed this amendment. Fortunately, the amendment passed overwhelmingly with more than 153,000 voters supporting it. So finally the Hannemann administration was forced to begin curbside recycling - a task it began with all the haste of an opihi race. Bear this in mind when Hannemann boasts about bringing you curbside recycling.

» **Sewage.** Yes, Hannemann inherited a decrepit old sewage system. He also inherited a consultant's report warning of a potential disaster at the Beach Walk force main. But instead of working with the Environmental Protection Agency and community groups (including the Sierra Club) who were seeking to remedy the sewage threat as quickly as possible, he worked with a

\$460-per-hour mainland attorney to fight the lawsuit with delay tactics. A 50-plus-million-gallon raw sewage spill into Waikiki waters spurred some action. But apparently it wasn't enough of a wake-up call - the administration continues to fight the community groups in court over a timeline for sewage improvements.

The EPA also decided that protection of Hawaii's ocean water demanded that the city's main sewage treatment facilities be upgraded to 21st-century standards. Hannemann fought the EPA, and he's now suing the EPA to force it to disclose who it talked to about its sewage improvement decision. If clean ocean water is important to you, think twice about another Hannemann term.

Other sustainability issues have suffered under Hannemann. He opposed the Charter amendment to make Honolulu bike- and pedestrian-friendly (and has done nothing to execute the new mandate). He initially supported a plan to develop Waimea Valley into private lots. He has supported development along Kahuku coastline and Turtle Bay. He has done little to transform Honolulu into a world-class sustainable city.

This is the only Oahu we have. Our environment and our future deserve better than Mufi Hannemann.

September 24, 2008

Letters to the Editor

Parsons Brinckerhoff

InfraConsult not associated with firm

Typically, we at Parsons Brinckerhoff do not respond to the many articles written about the firm, but due to some false impressions created by Sean Hao's Sept. 15 article, "Three major contracts for O'ahu rail project linked to same firm," we are compelled to respond to several of those items.

InfraConsult LLC is not associated with PB, nor does PB have any control over, or connection to, the former PB employees with InfraConsult.

Every other consulting firm mentioned in the article also has professional staff who previously worked at PB and PB has many employees who were formerly with other firms. It is the nature of the engineering/architectural consulting business.

PB openly and fairly competed for the Alternatives Analysis and the Preliminary Engineering/Environmental Impact Statement contracts. Both procurements were run in strict compliance with federal and state laws following the Qualifications Based Selection process designed to select the consultant that provides the best value combination of experience, skill and cost.

Further, PB only provided program management services for certain portions of the Tren Urbano rail project in San Juan, Puerto Rico. PB was not the program manager for the entire project nor was PB involved in the planning phase of the project, as the article implies. As a subcontractor to Siemens, PB provided certain interface coordination services for the systems and test track turnkey contract, including vehicles, train control, electrification, trackwork and communication systems.

PB has been a continuous member of the Honolulu community for more than 40 years. Our staff live and work in the Honolulu community. PB's team for the transit project includes 39 local subconsultants whose staff also live and work in Honolulu.

PB is proud of the service it has provided to the people of the City and County of Honolulu over the past 40 years and will continue to serve the people of our community.

James R. Van Epps | Vice president, PB Americas Inc.

September 25, 2008

Rail funds should hold in crisis

Consultant says federal backing remains strong despite financial chaos

By SEAN HAO

Advertiser Staff Writer

Ongoing turmoil on Wall Street and debate over a massive federal bailout of the financial sector could cast added uncertainty over the availability of federal funds for Honolulu's elevated train.

However, the current economic malaise should not adversely affect Honolulu's chances of getting an inflation-adjusted \$925 million in federal funds for the train, an official for the project's biggest consultant said yesterday.

Mort Downey, chairman for PB Consult Inc., which is a subsidiary of city contractor Parsons Brinckerhoff, also reiterated reasons why Honolulu should be confident its \$3.7 billion transit project will get strong federal support.

Details and a timetable for passage of an unprecedented \$700 billion financial federal intervention in the capital markets remain to be settled. However, the heart of the recently unveiled plan involves the government buying up sour assets of tottering financial firms to keep them from going under and to stave off a potentially severe recession and the accompanying lost jobs and further home foreclosures.

There's some concern that such a massive bailout could detract from infrastructure spending in the long term.

However, Downey, a former U.S. deputy secretary of transportation, said the nation's current financial problems shouldn't affect the prospects of Honolulu's rail project receiving federal funding.

That's "unless it's worse than we all understand," he said. "Then I would argue if it's really worse than we all understand, the outcome will be not only a bailout, but a strong public works investment."

Honolulu taxpayers already are expected to bear about \$4 billion of the project's costs via a half-percentage-point excise tax surcharge that expires in 2022. That means the city needs the federal government to provide about 25 percent of the project's funds, assuming the project stays on budget.

However, Honolulu isn't expected to find out how much federal funding it will get until 2011. Meanwhile, the city plans to start construction on the East Kapolei to Ala Moana train in fall 2009.

The city has argued that a faster timetable will help reduce costs while allowing limited service to launch in late 2012. Critics contend the city's timetable is not realistic and could result in a major burden for local taxpayers, if federal funds don't come through as planned.

Downey yesterday defended the city's strategy. He said Honolulu is in a strong position to attract federal

funds for several reasons, including that the city plans to pay the majority of project costs. Normally communities ask the federal government to pay 50 percent to 80 percent of transit project costs, he said. Honolulu is seeking 25 percent.

Honolulu "has a good case, (but) it's not a slam dunk," Downey said. "The thinking is ... if the local contribution creeps up from 20 to 50 (percent) or whatever, there's going to be a lot more local concern about (having) a good project, about (having) a deliverable project and in effect as a federal agency you're minimizing your risk."

September 27, 2008

Letters to the Editor

transit

Proposed rail system will be an eyesore

Imagine an elevated concrete rail bed 30 feet wide snaking through our towns and countryside, blotting out the beauty of our green mountains, palm trees and blue skies.

This is the mayor's multi-billion-dollar planned blight on the beauty of our Hawai'i. There are alternatives that are much less costly, such as San Francisco's HOT lanes, which are not such an eyesore.

If we have a rail system, it should be a beautiful system similar to that in Hong Kong, with its marble, granite and polished brass stations, wonderful state-of-the-art trains and all underground. Keep in mind that Hong Kong is also an island with a high water table like O'ahu.

Remember that we will have to live with this monstrosity for the rest of our lives. We must stop the mayor's horrific eyesore blunder now before it goes any further.

Zan Dawson | Honolulu

September 28, 2008

Tax take for Hawaii rail system shrinks along with economy

Slowdown has caused collections to decline during past 2 months

By *SEAN HAO*

Advertiser Staff Writer

A slowing state economy could mean lower than expected tax revenues for Honolulu's planned elevated commuter train.

Plunging visitor arrivals and slumping real estate and construction sectors are forcing the state to reduce tax collection forecasts and reduce spending. Honolulu city officials also are seeking to cut costs amid an economic downturn that's expected to continue well into, and quite possibly beyond, next year.

The slowdown is likely to have an impact on tax collections needed to build the elevated train from East Kapolei to Ala Moana. City officials hope to raise an inflation-adjusted \$4 billion between 2007 and 2022 to pay for the 20-mile rail system. That, coupled with \$925 million in anticipated federal funds, is expected to pay the \$5 billion in capital costs associated with rail, according to the city's financial plan.

But that financial plan is based on tax-revenue forecasts generated in September 2006, when more robust economic growth was anticipated.

This year's declines in visitor arrivals mean lower than expected excise-tax collections and less money for rail, said Carl Bonham, executive director of the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization. Visitors account for 20 percent to 30 percent of the state's economic activity.

"We're shaving 600,000 or so visitors off the forecast (this year) and every one of those people would have stayed eight, nine, 10 days and spent hundreds of dollars every day, so the revenues forecast for the train are obviously going to come in low," Bonham said.

Signs of concern already have surfaced.

Through August, transit tax collections rose 32 percent to \$109.6 million, versus \$83 million in the same period a year ago, according to state Department of Taxation records. That excludes a 10 percent fee kept by the state to cover transit tax collection expenses.

However, July marked the first month that year-over-year transit tax collections were down. The city's portion of the transit tax dipped 32 percent to \$11.4 million versus \$16.8 million in July 2007. That trend continued in August, when year-over-year collections fell nearly 5 percent to \$14.3 million.

catching up later

Project officials are monitoring the economic slowdown's impact on transit tax collections. Even with the slowdown, the city is still collecting much more than it's spending, said Mark Scheibe, deputy project

manager for city transit consultant Parsons Brinckerhoff. That's because construction isn't scheduled to begin in earnest until late 2009.

In addition, the project's budget includes \$1 billion to cover potential cost overruns, which could provide some budget leeway if tax revenues are lower than expected.

The city hopes that any near-term revenue shortfall could be offset by an economic rebound in future years.

"A couple of bad years in and of themselves wouldn't totally destroy the financial plan, if we catch up later," Scheibe said. "Obviously if it stays far below what we expected then that's much more of an issue."

However, "If we're looking at a long-term downturn in the economy, I think we could also expect it would start to show up on the cost side as well" by resulting in benefits such as greater labor availability and lower labor costs, Scheibe added.

The current economic climate is far different than what economists predicted in late 2006. Then, the cost of living in Hono-lulu had just spiked in response to surging housing and energy prices. Home prices were still rising, but sales activity was slowing. Hawai'i's visitor industry, which is the biggest sector of the economy, remained healthy, but was experiencing slower growth.

Today, Honolulu home prices are declining and visitor arrivals are down sharply. Job and income growth are expected to essentially remain flat or slightly down this year and next.

Hawai'i's sluggish economy has prompted the state Council on Revenues to make a series of cuts in its growth forecasts for future tax income. Those estimates are based in large part on lower-than-anticipated growth in excise tax collections. For example, in September 2006 the state Council on Revenues expected general excise and use tax collections would grow by 7.3 percent in fiscal 2008 and 9.4 percent in fiscal 2009. Actual excise tax collections in fiscal 2008, which ended June 30, rose just 2.5 percent. Estimated excise tax collections in the current 2009 fiscal year now are projected to rise by less than 1 percent.

Similarly, forecast growth rates for excise tax collections in the fiscal years 2010 through 2013 are now lower than they were in September 2006.

Gap in Estimates

The city's current publicly available financial plan for the transit system is based on 2006 Council on Revenues forecasts for fiscal 2007 through 2013. The city's forecast assumes that after 2013, Honolulu's excise tax base will grow at the historical average rate of about 4 percent. That's the rate of growth experienced from 1990 to 2005.

That means the city's transit tax estimates are likely too high in the early years, and too low in the later years, assuming the state does not experience a 1990s-style prolonged economic slowdown, said economist Bonham.

"The near term (economic outlook) could easily be much worse, then at some point there's going to be a rebound that's probably stronger than what we think now and will actually be stronger than what the

steady-state trajectory was from a 2006 forecast," he said.

So far economists aren't predicting a repeat of the 1990s, when a drop in military employment and loss of tourism from Japan set the stage for a prolonged stagnant economy. Others aren't so sure.

"This is not just a matter of the local economy suffering from a depletion of Japanese investment in Hawai'i, but we're talking about the national economy," said Lowell Kalapa, president of the nonprofit Tax Foundation of Hawai'i. "With the dependence we have on the visitor market and the visitor market being more leisure than business, I would expect we're going to hurt more this time around than we did in the 1990s.

"It is going to have an impact on tax collections no matter how you look at it."

long-term balance

The state began collecting a half-percentage-point general excise tax surcharge for transit in January 2007 and \$246 million was raised in the first 20 months, according to the state tax department records. The state and the city of Honolulu are raising that money in the form of a 15-year increase in the state's general excise tax on O'ahu, from a maximum of 4.166 percent to 4.712 percent.

This year transit tax collections are expected to climb to about \$178 million in 2007 dollars.

Last year, the transit tax was expected to generate \$164 million in 2006 dollars. Adjusting for inflation, that's about \$171.9 million in 2007 dollars. Actual transit tax collections last year were \$136.4 million, about \$35.5 million less than forecast. That disparity was partly because transit tax collections were low in the initial months after the surcharge took effect.

If transit tax collections don't meet expectations, the added burden would fall on local taxpayers. However, at this point the city does not anticipate having to deal with a shortfall.

Toru Hamayasu, chief of the city's transportation planning division, said the city will release an updated financial plan based on revised tax collection estimates in an upcoming draft environmental impact statement. That statement isn't scheduled for release until sometime next month at the earliest.

"At this point I can tell you ... (the updated financial plan) is still balanced or it shows a little bit of a positive cash flow at the end of the twenty-some years," Hamayasu said. "Otherwise we don't have a project."

Mayor Mufi Hannemann hopes to break ground on the rail project in 2009, with the first segment starting service between East Kapolei and Waipahu in 2012. The entire route to Ala Moana via Salt Lake would be in service in 2018.

September 29, 2008

Hannemann failed to capitalize on Leeward popularity in primary

Hannemann could have avoided runoff with better voter turnout, data show

By *DERRICK DePLEDGE*
Advertiser Government Writer

A breakdown of the Honolulu mayoral primary by state House district shows Mayor Mufi Hannemann took every district but did not fully capitalize on his popularity in a swath of Waipahu, 'Ewa Beach and Kapolei that probably would have given him a complete victory on Sept. 20.

In eight state House districts where Hannemann approached or exceeded 60 percent of the vote, four districts had above-average voter turnout while four had below-average voter turnout.

If the Hannemann campaign had pushed turnout closer to average in these below-average districts where he was popular — clustered on the Leeward side where support for a \$3.7 billion mass-transit project is the strongest — he likely would have avoided a November runoff with City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi.

Split another way, Hannemann broke 50 percent of the vote — the threshold needed for re-election in the primary — in seven of the 10 districts with the lowest turnout.

The breakdown, prepared by The Advertiser, documents an impressive showing for Hannemann. The mayor was ahead of Kobayashi 49.4 percent to 30.2 percent — or by a spread of more than 30,000 votes — while University of Hawai'i-Manoa engineering professor Panos Prevedouros took a surprising 17.7 percent.

Voter turnout was a disappointing 37 percent.

Hannemann was ahead in every House district, including districts in East Honolulu and Manoa where Kobayashi and Prevedouros were considered more competitive, and the mayor only dropped 14 precincts clustered around Kobayashi's Manoa-area council district and on the North Shore and Windward side.

"We are pleased with the fact that we did win every district throughout the island; that was very gratifying," said A. J. Halagao, Hannemann's campaign coordinator. "In the areas where we probably did the best, the turnout was the lowest, but that's not across the board.

"We just have to work harder in those areas to get the people out to vote."

Halagao also said that the campaign is not taking the mayor's primary performance for granted in November. "We're not going to take anything for granted. We're going to work just as hard or even harder," he said.

City Councilman Donovan Dela Cruz, Kobayashi's campaign manager, said the campaign is still analyzing the primary results.

"The bottom line is we've got to get out there and touch people," he said. "We're going to continue to sign-wave. We're going to continue to canvass, continue to do coffee hours and go to community events.

"Any time any group wants to meet with Ann, we're going to try to be there."

Dela Cruz said the primary results reflected the campaign's late start at the filing deadline in July. "They also reflected that we are running against a machine with a lot of money," he said. "Despite that, we're working hard."

Kobayashi's campaign hopes to pick up voters who went with Prevedouros in the primary. Prevedouros has said he would vote for Kobayashi in the general election and is expected to announce soon whether he will formally endorse her in the race.

September 30, 2008

Letters to the Editor

transit

Rail a white elephant, not traffic answer

Something needs to be done about the Leeward traffic problem, but rail is not the answer. No one will ride it. Our transportation needs are more than just getting to work and back. So what do we do?

First, move the University of Hawai'i to Kapolei. Also, professor Panos Prevedouros has a great plan for a double-decker freeway.

True, it is just as ugly as a rail. But let's take it one step further. Allow only buses and electric vehicles on the top deck. The buses would get people to town faster than rail.

By the time it's built, electric cars will be going 45 mph. They will cost a lot less and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

People would start buying electric cars to get to work cheaply and quickly. Honolulu would be on its way to being the greenest city in the U.S.

What will be your legacy, Mr. Hannemann? A big, long, graffiti-ridden white elephant or having been the greenest mayor in the U.S.?

Keith Puhi Adams | Kailua

September 30, 2008

Panos to endorse Kobayashi for mayor

News conference 3 p.m. today; UH professor, fiancée welcome baby

BY PETER BOYLAN

Advertiser Staff Writer

Panos Prevedouros, a rail transit opponent who finished third in the Sept. 20 Honolulu mayoral election, will endorse City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi today in an effort to marshal his supporters behind her mayoral bid.

Kobayashi is running against Mayor Mufi Hannemann in the Nov. 4 runoff election.

Prevedouros, a University of Hawai'i engineering professor, yesterday confirmed his endorsement but declined further comment before a news conference scheduled for today at 3 p.m.

Prevedouros' fiancée, Katie O'Donnell, gave birth to the couple's first child yesterday.

Prevedouros, a first-time candidate, took 17.7 percent of the vote on Sept. 20, while Kobayashi took 30.2 percent. Hannemann took 49.4 percent of the vote, but the race went to a runoff when no candidate got more than half the vote.

Kobayashi yesterday said she was excited at the chance to work with Prevedouros to form a comprehensive transportation policy.

"I think the main thing is that it brings our ideas for alternative transportation together. That's the most important part of all of this," said Kobayashi. "We're looking forward to that, and we hope that will happen. We've been quite similar on this. We're both against a train."

Kobayashi said she and her campaign staff will work closely with Prevedouros and his supporters on transportation policy and on mobilizing his supporters behind her.

Prevedouros has said previously that he will vote for Kobayashi in the general election.

Prevedouros based his campaign on his opposition to Hannemann's plan for a \$3.7 billion steel-on-steel rail project.

Kobayashi has supported a rubber-tire-on-concrete option for mass transit but said she also is open to high-occupancy toll lanes and other alternatives to help reduce traffic congestion.

She said that first and foremost, she will support whatever the voters decide Nov. 4 when they vote on whether or not to build the steel-on-steel system proposed by the Hannemann administration. Kobayashi said she wants to have a coherent, comprehensive plan in place in the event that voters kill the project.

Prevedouros said he believes high-occupancy toll lanes and other options can be mixed to help alleviate traffic congestion.

September 30, 2008

Stop Rail Now says it will focus on education

Stop Rail Now yesterday said it will not ask the state Supreme Court to intervene in an appeal now pending in the Intermediate Court of Appeals.

The state appeals court last week rejected a bid by the group to place an anti-rail ordinance on the Nov. 4 general election ballot.

The court did not decide on the underlying merits of the case, which involves a lawsuit against the city clerk over the question of how many signatures are needed to place the following measure on the ballot: "Honolulu mass transit shall not include trains or rail."

Stop Rail Now backer Cliff Slater said the group now will focus on educating residents to vote "no" on a City Council-initiated charter amendment question that asks whether the city should "establish a steel wheel on steel rail transit system."

September 30, 2008

City must clear a path for UH-West O'ahu

U.S. businesses certainly aren't facing the best of times for raising money to back any enterprise, let alone more than \$100 million to buy land for development.

Hunt Development Group's plan to spend that much on 300 acres next to the University of Hawai'i-West O'ahu site is now in doubt — not surprising, given Wall Street's shock waves and credit squeeze.

Nonetheless, the public portion of the partnership — groundbreaking on the new campus — should move forward.

The City Council must move quickly to approve the plan review use application for UH-West O'ahu, a document akin to a master plan that must be approved for construction to start on the first phase in January, as scheduled. And UH has money set aside to get much of the phase done, with or without the land sale.

In addition, the council should pass Bill 25, which encompasses all the zone changes needed not only for the campus but for the adjoining development, including a range of homes, apartments and mixed-use projects.

The university's sale of this land will help finance the further development of the campus. But the Texas-based Hunt, which struck the UH purchase deal assuming a rosier financial outlook, now wants to renegotiate the deal.

With that part of the project on hold, it's important that the city get the zoning in place. Even if another player replaces Hunt at the bargaining table, UH is bound to get a better price for the land if the rezoning hurdle has already been cleared.

The final developer of the land can, if needed, return to the council to fine-tune the zoning map.

This week the council extended the deadline for approval, with the final vote set for Nov. 12. This makes sense. By then, voters will have weighed in on the rail project; the placement of the proposed rail line and stop is one of the complications that has delayed action on the bill. The stop and park-ride facility is sited on land now owned by the state Department of Land and Natural Resources.

Council members need to work with DLNR to finalize the land transfer so the rail route can be inked in and UH can get to work on its campus.

Prospects are going to be dicey for development with the nation's tight credit market. So it makes sense for government to remove unnecessary obstacles from the path of desirable projects, like UH-West O'ahu, that already have some momentum.

Letters

For Tuesday, September 30, 2008

Our future doesn't have to include rail

Something needs to be done about the Leeward traffic problem, but rail is not the answer. No one will ride it, especially because it won't be much faster than the present bus system. The fact is that everyone needs to drive. So what do we do?

During the summer, while classes are out at the University of Hawaii, traffic is not so bad. So, let's move UH to Kapolei. Enough talking about it. Do it.

We will still need to do something about traffic to and from Honolulu. Panos Prevedouros has a great plan for a double-decker freeway. True, it would be just as ugly as a rail. But let's take it one step further. Allow only buses and electric vehicles on the top deck. The buses would be going faster than the rail, and there would be less need to transfer. By the time it's built, electric cars will be going 45 mph. They will cost a lot less than gas-guzzling cars, and they will cost way less to operate.

People on the Leeward side would start buying electric cars like crazy. Honolulu would be on her way to being the greenest city in the world, a great example for the rest of the world to follow in these times of looming global-warming catastrophe. Think about it, Mayor Hannemann. What will be your legacy? A big, long, graffiti-ridden white elephant or having been the greenest mayor in the world?

Keith Puhi Adams
Kailua

Honolulu Rail Transit Project

Honolulu On The Move

566-2299 www.honolulutransit.org

Presentation to Waikiki Beach Marriott Resort & Spa

September 10, 2008

Honolulu On The Move

566-2299 www.honolulutransit.org



Honolulu On The Move

566-2299 www.honolulutransit.org

Planning for the Future

O'ahu in 2030

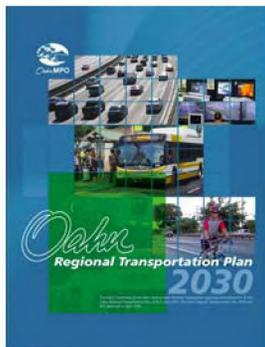
- 200,000 more residents than in 2005
- 100,000 more jobs than in 2005
- 750,000 more daily trips than in 2005

Honolulu On The Move

566-2299 www.honolulutransit.org

Multi-Modal Options to Improve Mobility

- Highway Expansion
- Traffic Engineering Improvements
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Projects
- TheBoat
- Expansion of TheBus
- Fixed Guideway Project



Honolulu On The Move

566-2299 www.honolulutransit.org

Four Alternatives

- No Build
 - No Transit Improvements
- Transportation System Management
 - Expanded Bus Service
- Managed Lane
 - Buses on Toll Lanes
- Fixed Guideway

Honolulu On The Move

566-2299 www.honolulutransit.org

Decisions Made

- Choice of Mode – Fixed Guideway
- Choice of Alignment
 - Initially – East Kapolei to Ala Moana Center
 - Next – Airport Spur
 - Ultimately – Kapolei to UH Mānoa and Waikīkī
- Choice of Vehicle Technology
 - Rail

Honolulu On The Move 566-2299 www.honolulutransit.org

Why Not Expanded Bus Service?

- Traffic congestion slows buses and increases operating costs
- Traffic congestion hurts schedule reliability
- Bus system is currently approaching capacity

Honolulu On The Move 566-2299 www.honolulutransit.org

Why Not Toll Lanes / HOT Lanes?

- Toll lanes will increase traffic and increase congestion
- Results in only minor increase in transit usage
- Toll lanes are not financially feasible
- Toll lanes add to the cost of travel
- Toll lanes do not support sustainability

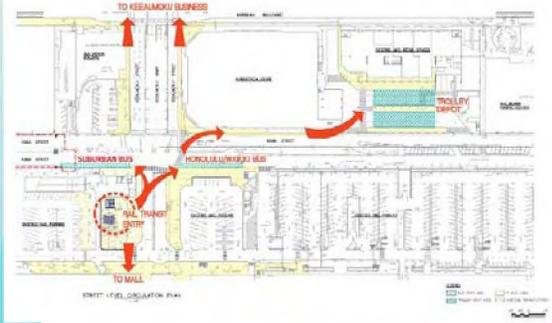
Honolulu On The Move 566-2299 www.honolulutransit.org

Rail Transit Route



Honolulu On The Move 566-2299 www.honolulutransit.org

Ala Moana Center Station



Honolulu On The Move 566-2299 www.honolulutransit.org

Rail vs. the Alternatives



Modern Rail Technology



Rubber Tire Technology



Maglev Technology

- Multiple Suppliers
- Widely Used
- Noise Easily Mitigated
- Lowest Life Cycle Costs

- Proprietary Suppliers
- Uncertain Future Availability
- Higher Life Cycle Costs

- Sole Source Supplier
- Higher Life Cycle Costs
- Highest Energy Use

Honolulu On The Move 566-2299 www.honolulutransit.org

New Starts Projects Technology Choices

- 90% were rail transit = **56** rail transit projects
- **62** projects funded by FTA since 1992

Honolulu On The Move 

566-2299 | www.honolulutransit.org

Project Effects

- On Mobility
- On the Environment
- On the Economy
- On Communities

Honolulu On The Move 

566-2299 | www.honolulutransit.org

Effect on Mobility



- System capacity equivalent to six freeway lanes of cars
- Reliable travel times on an exclusive facility
- It provides mobility to family members who don't drive – the young, the old, the disabled

Honolulu On The Move 

566-2299 | www.honolulutransit.org

Reduce Future Congestion by 11%



Honolulu On The Move 

566-2299 | www.honolulutransit.org

Travel Time

Route	Auto Travel Time Today	Future Rail & Bus Travel Time
Waipahu to Waikiki	69 minutes	52 minutes
Pearl Ridge to Downtown	35 minutes	30 minutes
Kapolei to Downtown	89 minutes	53 minutes
Mililani Mauka to Downtown	84 minutes	55 minutes

Honolulu On The Move 

566-2299 | www.honolulutransit.org

Less Energy Use

- Passenger vehicles use 36% more energy on average per passenger-mile than rail transit.

Rail in US **2,784 BTU/Passenger Mile**
Auto/Light Trucks **3,793 BTU/Passenger Mile**
Transit Buses **4,323 BTU/Passenger Mile**

- Rail transit can be powered by electricity from renewable resources.

Honolulu On The Move 

566-2299 | www.honolulutransit.org

New Jobs from Constructing the Project

- Direct Employment
 - 4,700 construction jobs per year
 - 37,700 person-years of employment
- Total Direct plus Indirect Employment
 - 11,300 jobs per year
 - **90,400 person-years of employment**

Honolulu On The Move

566-2299 www.honolulutransit.org

Private Investment Near Rail

- Washington Metro – \$15 Billion since 1976
- Dallas DART – \$4.3 Billion since 1996
- Portland MAX – \$3 Billion since late 1986
- St. Louis MetroLink – \$1 Billion since 1993

Honolulu On The Move

566-2299 www.honolulutransit.org

Transit-Oriented Development

- Livable, walkable communities which take advantage of transit access
- Community-based planning
- Publicly enabled, privately invested



Honolulu On The Move

566-2299 www.honolulutransit.org

What are the operating details?

- When will it run?
 - From 4 a.m. to midnight, every 3 to 10 minutes
- How fast will it be?
 - 55+ mph top speed, 30 mph average with stops
- How do I get to it?
 - Integrated with TheBus, bike and walking paths, and park-and-ride at some stations
- How much will a ride cost?
 - Same as TheBus and TheBoat, can use a transfer from one to the other

Honolulu On The Move

566-2299 www.honolulutransit.org

What will it look like?



Honolulu On The Move

566-2299 www.honolulutransit.org

Existing View – Pearlridge Center



September 2006

Honolulu On The Move

566-2299 www.honolulutransit.org

Fixed Guideway Station– Pearlridge Center



September 2006

Honolulu On The Move

566-2299 www.honolulutransit.org

Sources and Uses of Funds

	Millions of 2006 Dollars	Millions of Year-of- Expenditure Dollars
Total Net GET Surcharge Revenues	3,020	4,055
FTA New Starts Funds	700	925
TOTAL REVENUE	3,720	4,980
Fixed Guideway Capital Costs	3,470	4,570
Net Interest Costs	250	410
TOTAL COST	3,720	4,980

East Kapolei to Ala Moana Center

Honolulu On The Move

566-2299 www.honolulutransit.org

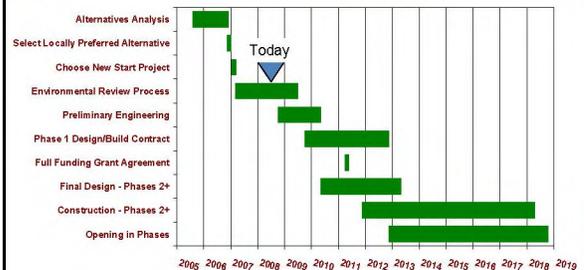
Operating & Maintenance Costs

- Building rail is a way to save on transit O&M costs
 - Operating cost per passenger mile is 40% less for rail than for bus
 - Bus O&M costs are growing as bus speeds decline
- O&M costs of a bus+rail system will be less than the cost of carrying the same number of riders on a bus-only system

Honolulu On The Move

566-2299 www.honolulutransit.org

Project Schedule



Honolulu On The Move

566-2299 www.honolulutransit.org

Stay Informed

- Sign up for the newsletter
- Watch Channel 54, Mondays at 6:30pm
- Visit www.honolulutransit.org
- Call the project hotline: 566-2299
- Stay informed with *accurate* information

Honolulu On The Move

566-2299 www.honolulutransit.org

Mahalo!

Honolulu On The Move

566-2299 www.honolulutransit.org

September 2008 Comments submitted to the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project*
(contains submitted comments only- requests such as inclusion on the mailing list are not presented)

Submission Method	Submission Date	Submission Content/Notes
Website	09/01/2008	Aloha, I am curious is the plan for where the light rail is going firm? Will it go from Kapolei to Ala Moana? Is that it? Why doesn't go to downtown and Manoa first like it was first planned to go? Will it fix the traffic problems before 2030? Is this the only solution? I hope to hear from you Mahlo. Kenji Rasmussen
Website	09/04/2008	I lived in Atlanta for 11 years before I moved to Honolulu 10 years ago. I took the train as often as possible, and I really liked it. I have two questions about the Honolulu proposed train system. 1. I'd like to know about the plan for park & ride and/or parking at the stations. 2. Is there a plan to encourage people to leave their cars at home, such as increased parking fees/taxes?
Website	09/05/2008	Gentlemen: It's an honor to present our Aerotram System, to the Honolulu Authorities and citizens, as an opportunity to think about solutions to solve west side traffic problem.. We consider you are right in the election of a solution based on elevated. But, rail is only one of several elections. Other is our system. It is based on elevated tracks supported on specially designed columns. Elevated 17 meters from ground, two steps (the upper one going, the lower coming back), no noises, no vibrations, no pollutant emissions, no garage depot required, no washing trains area needed. Electric trains running on RUBBER TIRE, AGT full automatic guided. Up-to-date technology in mass transport equipment. Offers 375 to 500 passenger each train capacity, 80 km/hour commercial speed. Cost \$ 60 million/km. Very low impact on traffic during construction period. As you know, we have a construction system, Thanks for the opportunity, Cordially Carlos Montalvo Aerotram System
Telephone	09/08/2008	Has questions about the project. Wanted to talk to a real person.
Telephone	09/08/2008	Promote his idea on how to make rail cost-effective and service entire island with monorail. One car goes W-E in morning and E-W in afternoon. Wouldn't require as large of structure and could expand source island-wide. Wanted confirmation call > Circular route around island - single track Kapolei to Pearl Harbor to Airport to Waikiki to UHM single track. Would go where needed. Hook additional circles (like Hawaii Kai). Have several small circular routes. It's economic. Less obtrusive. Stanford graduate -

		engineer. SR called 9/8 3:53 pm.
Website	09/08/2008	Will folding bicycles be allowed on the rail system?
Website	09/10/2008	Aloha, I watched the primary debate for the candidates for Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu tonight. Of course transit was a major issue in the debate. What is the cost savings, if any, of building the Fixed Guideway Alternative as a base structure and combining it with a superstructure of lesser weight for vehicles on a Reversible Option Managed Lane Alternative compared to separate construction projects? This combined structure may be needed in order to address both Transit Oriented Development at approx. 20 stops as well as increased speed of commute without such stops using variable tolls. Why was a dual build option not an environmental impact assessment option given the combined cost may be less than \$842,380,000 Total 2030 Annualized cost in 2006 dollars? Please provide a detailed response using data from the Alternatives_Analysis PDFs posted in the honolulutransit.org/library/files/. Mahalo, Timothy Miller timothy_miller2001@msn.com
Website	09/10/2008	Please keep me updated as to what is happening; I am in support of the rail.
Website	09/12/2008	I believe building a rail transit to bring down the numbers of vehicles on the freeway is not always best for the retiree nor the mid/low income workers who are trying to survive through today's high cost of living. I would suggest if you are going to build a transit, cut back on the freeway so you would direct the traffic there instead combining the problem. There will be problems on the transit whether we accept it or not. BIG TIME MONEY. Can we slice the freeway in such a way that we can have only car pool (three or more people), express buses, large heavy duty trucks and handi-cap/emergency vehicles only? I strongly believe I am not getting more money in my pocket to up keep with the future bill for the transit unless Hawaii start building a special area for the poor. It will be getting worst. 1- look at the homeless now who don't want to work but to use our tax money to enjoy the beautiful beaches. I look at the news and see these people are healthy. 2- you can not tell me taxes are not going up. 3- the cost of living here is getting out of control. Look at ocean point, my understanding they are selling \$900,000.00 homes. Are these people from here? There are many things to look at instead of your own pockets/pride. 4- by the time they finish the rail transit, wouldn't you think there would be at least 15 times more the people driving now? 5- there should be less vehicle accidents. I believe we should decide to rearrange the freeway conditions to fit our economy 20 plus years from now if you should use the rail transit system. I'm hoping my monthly income would be \$10,000.00 per month by the time this project is over. On the news letter it tell us \$3.7 billion total. This is only an assumpton because as I

		said the cost of living is shooting to the moon. If that is true today what make you think the cost you quote will lock in? I doubt it very much and I don't think we are looking at the problem for our children who would need to up keep with future technology to survive. Especially on a populated Island. Looks like the rich is pushing out the mid/poor from here. Thank you
Website	09/13/2008	Where on line, can I find a map of the proposed transit rail route? Thank you.
Telephone	09/16/2008	Kevin called and left a voicemail - had a question about whether there was a rough timeframe for when the first phase of the project was going to be completed.
Telephone	09/16/2008	Leslie Ishimi called to get more information on the proposed route - if the route will go past the federal building or not.
Website	09/16/2008	To Whom It May Concern: My name is Ryan Jeroski and I work with GVF Transportation, a not-for-profit Transportation Management Association based out of King of Prussia, PA. I am sending this e-mail to get some information about the Federal Highway Administration's Innovative Finance Team. I understand that the Innovative Finance Team worked with City and County of Honolulu to help with financing of the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project. I just wanted to know exactly what services the Innovative Finance Team provided or how exactly they assisted Honolulu and the State of Hawaii? I am curious because my organization is considering contacting the Innovative Finance Team to help us with a highway project. I just wanted to get a feel for some of the services they provide. Any assistance you could offer would be greatly appreciated.
Telephone	09/17/2008	Would like to know the type and style of rail - why was steel selected?
Website	09/22/2008	Rail transit probably will help traffic problem if enough people participate in ridership, but I am concerned about the cost in terms of construction and maintenance for each taxpayer. I want to know how much the average taxpayer will pay for this project. People need to know the actual cost of this project.
Website	09/23/2008	Please tell me why the persons don't want to see the new rail system in or on Oahu hi?, I would ride it if it went to the please I like it to go. I am moving from Ca. in Dec. 8 and live on Oahu, Hi. I like to see it to work.

Website	09/24/2008	I think it is ridiculous that the mayor refuses to include UH in the initial proposed route. 23,000 students, employees, and faculty travel to UH. Does he not see a correlation between traffic congestion and the UH semester dates? Why wait another ten years to build an extension to UH contingent upon available funding? Even if the funding is there, the public is going to fight tooth and nail against any expansion of the established system. Look at how many times the rail project has been fought in the past. Fasi argued for it then, just as Hannemann is arguing now. Let's not make a future mayor have to go through the same battle when we know that UH is a necessary inclusion for any mass transit project. Just try riding the bus from UH during rush hour. On the 3 buses servicing UH (the 4, 6, and A), there is standing room only. Many times riders are forced to wait for the next bus. It has personally happened to me on a few occasions. I wouldn't imagine a first time rider would consider regular use of public transportation after having that happen.
Website	09/24/2008	I think the Rail Project is a great idea but I was wondering how will this project affect our electricity usage in the future? I've been reading the newspaper about state budget cuts and where the cut backs will be implemented such as the excessive use of electricity by state departments eventually resulted to an experiment of a 4 day work week to conserve on energy cost. Basically, I was just wondering how this ties together or if it does and the kind of effects will it have on the economy when the project follows through?.
Telephone	09/25/2007	Has questions about the project
Telephone	09/25/2007	Advised to make sure we did an environmental study

* Comments do not include requests to be on the mailing list, maps, right-of-way, or submissions other than comments. Some comments have been checked for grammar/spelling.