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Sent:	4/2/2010 5:38:17 AM
Subject:	FW: summary of Honolulu's EIS and history of transit in Honolulu [Honolulu Weekly article]

Inside the long-awaited Final Environmental Impact Statement

Adrienne LaFrance

Honolulu Weekly

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Rail: EIS Unbound

Rail uncovered

Amid political name-calling, sensational headlines and evasive officials offering little beyond canned quotations, Honolulu residents have been left wondering exactly what is going on with the City's multibillion-dollar rail proposal, which officials are telling the truth and how much longer we have to wait to see the document that the City assures will seal our transit fate and solve our traffic problems.

While Honolulu transit officials turned down *Honolulu Weekly's* requests for the most recently submitted draft of the Final Environmental Impact Survey (and State transportation officials never formally responded), the Federal government finally obliged. The *Weekly* examined thousands of pages of documents obtained in a federal Freedom of Information Act request. The result: a first look at the latest draft of the FEIS in a side-by-side comparison to the previous version, which was made public in November 2008.

Among the more notable aspects of the document, which still requires approval from the Federal Transit Administration, are the historic properties newly acknowledged to be adversely affected by the rail plan, the 890 parking spaces the project would eliminate and the fact that the document–submitted by the City in October 2009–indeed addressed both the possible encroachment of the rail route onto Runway Protection Zones at Honolulu International Airport and the related permitting requirements (see "Airport Alternative" box), consistent with what City officials have said. That's just the beginning. But with a project of this scope and complexity, you have to start somewhere.

Unresolved issues

2009 Final EIS:

Several permits are still required for the construction of the project.

Transfer of ownership of a site near Leeward Community College is not yet complete.

Federal funds from the New Starts program will not be committed by FTA until the completion of the Full-funding Grant Agreement.

Airport alternative

2008 Draft EIS:

The Airport Alternative will carry the most passengers, with 249,200 daily transit trips by 2030.

No mention of runway positioning as it pertains to proposed rail route.

2009 Final EIS:

The Airport Alternative will provide 273,000 daily transit trips by 2030.

Runway 22R/4L at Honolulu International Airport will be relocated approximately 750 feet makai of its current position and Runway 22L/4R will be relocated approximately 300 feet makai of its current position to make the Runway Protection Zone compatible with the project and existing buildings near Lagoon Drive.

The guideway alignment has been located to avoid the new Mauka Terminal and airplane tarmac

planned for the location of the existing commuter terminal parking lot.

Approximately 2 acres of land will be needed to accommodate the placement of elevated guideway support columns and two passenger stations on airport property.

The City lists the required permit for construction in Runway Protection Zones among necessary paperwork to be filed "by contractor within two years of intended construction of airport portion of the Project."

Operating parameters

2008 Draft EIS:

Transit times from Kapolei to Ala Moana Center in the a.m. peak would be between 57 and 59 minutes via rail.

Potential effects of the project could include reduced travel lane widths, parking, bike lanes and sidewalks.

Each train will be capable of carrying 325 passengers, for a peak capacity of 6,000 passengers per hour per direction.

It's envisioned bicycles would be allowed on trains.

2009 Final EIS:

Transit times from Kapolei to Downtown Honolulu in the a.m. peak would be 55 minutes (no estimate on transportation time between Kapolei and Ala Moana Center provided).

The project will result in the loss of 105 on-street and approximately 785 off-street parking spaces. No bicycle facilities or sidewalks will be removed as a result of the project.

Each train will be capable of carrying up to 500 passengers, for a peak capacity of 8,650 passengers per hour per direction.

Bicycles, luggage and surfboards will be allowed on trains and regulated by policy.

Noise and vibration

2008 Draft EIS:

Moderate noise impacts are anticipated at between 18 and 23 residential buildings.

A solid parapet wall and vehicle wheel skirts will provide 2- to 5 dBA (decibel adjusted) noise reduction at floors above the level of the guideway.

Additional noise mitigation measures will be explored.

The project will not create vibration effects, so no mitigation is proposed.

2009 Final EIS:

Moderate impacts are anticipated at eight locations.

A solid parapet wall will reduce noise by 3dBA or more at five of the eight locations where moderate impacts are anticipated.

Sound-absorption materials will be placed within the guideway structure in the vicinity of the remaining three locations, meaning no noise impacts will occur.

The project will not create vibration effects, so no mitigation is proposed.

Displacements and relocations

2008 Draft EIS:

Property acquisition ranging from 179–205 parcels would be required.

The project would require 34 or 35 full acquisitions.

20 residences, one church and between 62 and 67 businesses would be relocated by the project.

There are 58 schools, six libraries and 93 religious institutions within one half-mile of the project alignment.

The project will have no adverse effects on Hawaii Employers Council; Ossipoff's Aloha Chapel; Potential Makalapa Housing Historic District; Lava Rock Curbs, six quonset huts; wood tenement buildings; OR&L office, terminal building and document storage building; Nuuanu Stream Bridge; Chinatown Historic District; Merchant Street Historic District including Honolulu Police Station; Walker Park; Mother Waldron Playground; Honouliuli Stream Bridge, Waiawa Stream 1932 Bridge (westbound lanes), Waimalu Stream Bridge, Kalauao Springs Bridge or Waikele Stream Bridge.

2009 Final EIS:

Property acquisition of 191 parcels will be required.

The Project will require 33 full acquisitions.

20 residences, one church and 61 businesses will be relocated by the project.

There are 46 schools, five libraries and 82 religious institutions within one half-mile of the project alignment.

The project *will* have adverse effects–including some effects to integrity of setting and feeling–on Hawaii

Employers Council; Ossipoff's Aloha Chapel; Potential Makalapa Housing Historic District; Lava Rock Curbs, six quonset huts; wood tenement buildings; OR&L office, terminal building and document storage building; Nuuanu Stream Bridge; Chinatown Historic District; Merchant Street Historic District including Honolulu Police Station; Walker Park; Mother Waldron Playground; Honouliuli Stream Bridge, Waiawa Stream 1932 Bridge (westbound lanes), Waimalu Stream Bridge, Kalauao Springs Bridge and Waikele Stream Bridge.

Some land within the study corridor has been designated ceded land. For land designated as ceded lands within the project's right-of-way, ownership of these lands will not change. The Rapid Transit Division will obtain the appropriate permissions from the State for any ceded lands needed for the Project.

Archaeological, cultural and historic resources

2008 Draft EIS:

The Area of Potential Effect, identified as containing properties with construction dates before 1969, contains 84 historic resources. Up to 61 of those resources could be affected by the Project.

Mitigation measures for historic resources are being developed in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Division.

2009 Final EIS:

The Area of Potential Effect contains 81 historic resources. Through consultation, the Project was determined to have an adverse effect on 33 of those resources.

Adverse affect recommendations by the State Historic Preservation Division were accepted by the FTA.

The Project will not affect any known archaeological resources.

Cost and funding

2008 Draft EIS:

In fiscal year 2008 dollars, the capital cost of the project would be $4.8 billion.

The local funding source for the project is a 0.5 percent surcharge on the State General Excise and Use Tax.

The local funding source is expected to generate $4.1 billion through 2022.

The FTA has agreed to consider $1.2 billion for the Federal contribution to the project from the New Starts Program.

The weighted average interest rate on long-term debt is assumed to be 3.71 percent, consistent with the

City's AA financial rating as of July 2008. Finances charges are expected up to $727 million.

2009 Final EIS:

In fiscal year 2009 dollars, the capital cost of the project would be $4.3 billion.

The local funding source for the project is a 0.5 percent surcharge on the State General Excise and Use Tax

The local funding source is expected to generate $3.5 billion through 2022.

The FTA has agreed to consider $1.6 billion for the Federal contribution to the project from the New Starts Program.

The weighted average interest rate on long-term debt is assumed to be 3.27 percent, consistent with the City's AA financial rating as of April 2009. Finances charges are expected up to $393 million.

Water resources

2008 Draft EIS:

Although floodplains and surface marine waters are found at various sections of the route, mitigation using best management practices would promote a natural, low-maintenance, sustainable approach where possible.

2009 Final EIS:

Twenty streams or conveyance channels and several floodplains are to be crossed by the guideway or other project structures.

The project will permanently encroach upon .08 acres of U.S. waters from placing piers in Waiawa Springs, Moanalua Stream, Kapalama Canal Stream and Nuuanu Stream.

Since Draft EIS was published, several meetings have been held. In December 2008, the United States Army Corps of Engineers, Hawaii Department of Health, Hawaii's Coastal Zone Management Program, Hawaii Commission on Water Resource Management and Environmental Protection Agency met with project staff to clarify water resource requirements for the project.

Section 4(f)

Section 4(f) of the 1966 U.S. Department of Transportation Act protects public parklands, recreational lands, wildlife refuges and historic sites of national, state or local significance.

2008 Draft EIS:

The project would result in direct use of between seven and eight Section 4(f) resources.

The project would result in de minimus (of minimum importance) impacts on between six and seven Section 4(f) resources.

No temporary or constructive use would occur.

2009 Final EIS:

The project will result in direct use of 12 Section 4(f) resources.

The project will result in de minimus impacts on three Section 4(f) resources.

The project will require temporary occupancy of one Section 4(f) resource.

There is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of these resources.

Comments

2008 Draft EIS:

Public involvement in the form of opportunities for comment will continue through the remainder of the project.

The Draft EIS is being circulated for a 45-day review and comment period. A formal public hearing will also be held during this period. The hearing's purpose is to give interested parties an opportunity to formally submit comments on the Project and the analysis contained in the Draft EIS. Attendance at the hearings is not required to submit comments.

2009 Final EIS:

Public involvement activities will continue throughout the construction period.

The Draft EIS was circulated for a 75-day review and comment period starting in November 2008.

In total, 592 comment submissions were received. The majority of those comments were related to the following topics: Alternatives considered, planned extensions, ridership and travel forecasting, parking, traffic analysis, visual, noise, cost and financing, construction phasing, construction effects, acquisition and relocation.

Timeline: 120 years of Honolulu Transit

The 1800s

1888: The Oahu Railway and Land Company is founded with a government railroad charter approved by King David Kalakaua.

1895: The development of the OR&L's route across 'Ewa establishes the first urban development at Pearl City.

1899: The first two automobiles in Honolulu take to the streets.

Early 1900s

1901: Honolulu Rapid Transit and Land Company launches an electric streetcar system.

1925: Motor bus operations begin in Honolulu.

The '40s & '50s

1942: Streetcars are replaced completely by buses.

1947: OR&L makes its last trip on New Year's Eve before the company's dissolution.

1953: Construction of the H-1 highway is complete.

The '60s

1960s: Public opposition to expanding highways mounts on Oahu.

1966: Honolulu Mayor Neal Blaisdell suggests rail as an alternative to automobiles.

1967: Oahu Transportation Study concludes rail between Pearl City and Hawaii Kai would be a cost-effective transportation solution.

1968: Preliminary engineering and evaluation completed for Honolulu Area Rail Rapid Transit, popularly known as HART.

The '70s & '80s

1971: Bus operations expand on Oahu under a new name: TheBus.

1980: HART advocate and Honolulu Mayor Frank Fasi loses reelection to Eileen Anderson.

1981: Honolulu Mayor Eileen Anderson scraps HART after President Ronald Regan eliminates federal funding for new mass transit.

1984: Frank Fasi reelected as mayor.

1986: City officials revive rapid transit project, based on planning from HART but incorporating new automated technologies, and call it Honolulu Rapid Transit or HRT.

The '90s

1992: Final Environmental Impact Statement is issued for HRT.

1992: City Council rejects local funding solution, halts HRT.

1998: City develops the Oahu Trans 2K Islandwide Mobility Concept Plan, an integrated transportation approach with planned roadway and public bus system improvements.

The aughts

2000: Major Investment Study and Draft Environmental Impact Statement for a system based on bus rapid transit completed.

2005: State Legislature approves Act 247, allowing City Council to levy tax to fund transit improvements.

2005: State and Federal paperwork filed to explore transit solutions for Oahu congestion.

2006: *Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project Alternatives Analysis Report* completed. Report evaluates four transit solutions: Do nothing, transportation system management, express buses operating in managed lanes, fixed-guideway transit system.

2007: City Council considers 3,000 public comments, selects a fixed-guideway from East Kapolei to Ala Moana by way of Salt Lake Boulevard as the locally-preferred alternative.

November 2008: Oahu voters pass a charter amendment in support of a steel-wheel on steel-rail transit system.

November 2008: City releases Draft Environmental Impact Statement, requests comments from public.

November 2008: City Council Chairman Todd Apo and City Councilman Charles Djou propose altering rail route to go past airport.

January 2009: City Council passes resolution to approve airport route.

October 2009: City submits Final Environmental Impact Statement to Federal government, Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann announces delay to planned December 2009 groundbreaking.

Into the future

March 2010: Federal, State and City officials meet to discuss airport zoning and other technical issues.

2018: Planned completion of Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project, based on December 2009 groundbreaking.

From: Luden, Hymie (FTA)
Sent: Thursday, April 01, 2010 11:34 AM
Subject: FTA article: summary of Honolulu's EIS and history of transit in Honolulu