

Public Involvement Overview

November 2008

	Month
Hotline Calls*	32
Comment Sense Comments/Inquiries*	99
FOIA requests	0
Speakers Bureau	8
Presentation/Events	3
Neighborhood Boards	5
TAC	0
Workshops	0

*May include questions regarding property acquisition- these calls/submissions are being handled separately

November 1, 2008

Rail study doesn't list all affected properties

By *SEAN HAO*

Advertiser Staff Writer

The locations of up to 212 properties affected by Honolulu's elevated commuter rail will not be released before Tuesday's rail referendum.

That means some residents who may be displaced by the rail project won't be notified before they vote on whether to authorize it.

Voters will be asked on Tuesday whether the city should move forward with plans to build a 20-mile elevated commuter rail line from West Kapolei to Ala Moana.

The city plans to release a new study on the rail project this weekend, but that study does not include the location of properties that may be fully or partially acquired to make room for the rail, the city said yesterday.

Those properties include 20 residences, one church and up to 67 businesses, according to an executive summary of the study.

The city is releasing the study, known officially as the draft environmental impact statement, piecemeal. The executive summary was released Thursday.

The federal government authorized the city to release the study on Wednesday. However, the city has said it could not release the entire study immediately due to technical issues.

City Council member and mayoral candidate Ann Kobayashi yesterday criticized her opponent, incumbent Mufi Hannemann, for withholding the study and the locations of properties affected by the rail project.

"It's an insult to taxpayers who paid for" the study, she said. "We have to share the information that's available."

City spokesman Bill Brennan yesterday said the draft environmental study does not contain the list of affected properties.

According to an e-mail from Brennan, the "city is taking the responsible and considerate step of personally notifying owners of properties that will potentially be impacted by the rail transit project."

In August, the city started notifying some residents living in the path of the rail that all or part of their properties may be condemned. At the time, city officials said they would not disclose how many letters were sent or the number or location of properties affected until the project's draft environmental impact statement was released.

While rail opponents said the city should be releasing more information on the project, city officials said they're releasing information faster than they're required. The city said the full draft EIS will be available on the Internet at www.honolulutransit.org sometime this weekend.

traffic dispute

Details selectively released by the city show the train could reduce traffic congestion by as much as 23 percent in 2030. However, the city has not disclosed how much worse traffic in 2030 will be compared with today's conditions.

"The EIS reference to a summer traffic reduction of 23 percent is pure fantasy," said Panos Prevedouros, a University of Hawai'i engineering professor who came in third in the primary election for mayor. "By the mythical math the city used to achieve that figure, the EzWay (elevated bus lanes proposed by Kobayashi) will reduce traffic by 61 percent."

Among the items not released in the city's summary were details about the project's energy consumption and emissions. Other details that are anticipated to be in the new study include:

- The cost of the full 28-mile alignment of the train. Two years ago, the West Kapolei to University of Hawai'i-Manoa and Waikiki route was estimated to cost an inflation-adjusted \$6.8 billion.
- How much it will cost to acquire properties in the path of rail.
- The traffic impacts created by rapid development in the 'Ewa plain.
- The location of up to 23 buildings that will experience moderate noise impacts from the train.
- Detailed forecasts of revenues and expenses for both capital costs and operations and maintenance of the train.

senator's support

Hannemann hopes to break ground on the project in December 2009 and start limited operations between East Kapolei and Waipahu in 2012. A 20-mile version to Ala Moana would open in 2018, according to city plans.

U.S. Sen. Daniel K. Inouye, D-Hawai'i, spoke in favor of the rail project in a meeting with The Advertiser's editorial board yesterday.

Inouye said there is risk in a project of this magnitude but that the city should move forward to reduce traffic gridlock, create jobs and improve the environment through less automobile pollution.

Inouye, who has appeared in campaign advertisements on behalf of rail, said he has been publicly speaking out in favor of the project after polls showed support had fallen with the downturn in the economy.

"We have to meet the needs of tomorrow. And tomorrow calls for less congestion and more jobs," Inouye said.

November 1, 2008

Honolulu gas prices at 10-month low of \$3.34

Advertiser Staff

Honolulu gasoline prices continue to fall, reaching a 10-month low of \$3.34 for a gallon of regular yesterday.

AAA Hawaii said there was a 20 percent decline in gasoline prices in Honolulu during the past week. Records shows the price is the lowest since mid-December.

The overall statewide gasoline rate fell by 23 cents during the past week to \$3.43 a gallon as prices fell for a fifth consecutive week.

"The acceleration of the price decline mirrors the Mainland's experience and is due to a continued drop in demand worldwide which has forced oil prices down," said Richard Velazquez, AAA Hawaii Region manager in a press statement.

The state still has the second-highest prices nationally, trailing only Alaska, where the average statewide price was \$3.50 a gallon. The cheapest gasoline was in Oklahoma, where drivers were paying an average of \$2.14.

Other figures released by AAA show Hilo's price had dropped 13 cents in the past week to \$3.60 a gallon.

In Wailuku, prices tumbled 32 cents to \$3.78.

Prices reported by AAA are derived from credit card data taken from fleet vehicle purchases at 85,000 stations nationwide. The organization does not have transaction data for Kaua'i.

Go rail go ... or no, rail, no?

Anti- and pro-rail groups rally to reach voters regarding the ballot measure

By Alexandre Da Silva

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Nov 01, 2008

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Opponents of a planned rail line from West Oahu to Ala Moana sought to alarm people about the project's size yesterday by erecting a fake, 8-foot supporting pillar for the envisioned mass-transit system in the middle of a downtown street.



Transit Issue Taken To The Streets



People from Stop Rail Now and Transit Supporters took the issue to the streets, trying to convince voters before the general election.

[[Watch](#)]



The model displayed at Halekauwila and Punchbowl streets would be dwarfed by the average 35-foot pillars that would be needed every 150 feet to carry the 20-mile elevated track from Kapolei to downtown, protester Cliff Slater said.

"It's downright ugly," he said.

Slater, with the group Stop Rail Now, wants voters to choose "no" on Tuesday's ballot measure asking whether the city should break ground on Mayor Mufi Hannemann's suggested \$3.9 billion rail plan.

In their own Halloween demonstration, a group of pro-rail lawmakers and others gathered at the state Capitol to warn voters not to be tricked by what they called "false information."

Critics argue the rail would be too expensive and do little to relieve traffic. Slater said building at least two high-occupancy toll lanes along the H-1 freeway -- the sole link between sprawling Kapolei and downtown -- would cost about \$900 million and improve traffic flow by 35 percent.

But state Rep. Kirk Caldwell said benefits of alternatives, including elevated highways proposed by mayoral candidate Ann Kobayashi, are assumptions that have not been verified by the federal government, a major funding source for transportation initiatives.

The rail guarantees to cut traffic by up to 23 percent in 2030, he said, referring to a draft environmental impact statement released this week.

"The FTA (Federal Transit Administration) says these are the figures," Caldwell said.

U.S. Rep. Neil Abercrombie, also speaking at the rail rally, said expanding freeways would not be a viable solution because of limits imposed by a narrow transit corridor between the mountains and the ocean.

"You can stand on the H-1 and look to the right and look to the left and see where our boundaries are," he said, claiming that simply relying on more roads would lead to islandwide density and congestion. "Inevitably, the country will not stay the country if we don't have rail transit on this side."

The city is expected to release a full 300-page environmental impact statement about the rail sometime this weekend, just ahead of Tuesday's election. Voters are being asked the question: "Shall the powers, duties, and functions of the city, through its director of transportation services, include establishment of a steel wheel on steel rail transit system?"



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Local Top Stories

Final Campaigning;EIS Not Released

By Olena Rubin

Just three days to go until Election Day Honolulu candidates for mayor are hitting the streets to secure a win and address what appears to be the topic on everyone's mind...rail.

Voters will be pressed on Tuesday to decide how to vote on the multi-billion dollars proposed rail system, of which the draft EIS has not been released in its entirety.

Honolulu candidate for mayor Ann Kobayashi is campaigning both day and night to encourage people to vote.

"Reaching out to as many people as possible we started at 630 this morning at the Aiea swap meet," Kobayashi said.

Ann spent several hours on her home turf of Manoa, and plans to reach out to other communities where she was not as popular during the primary election.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann also spends the final days before the election on the campaign trail shaking hands, hugging and singing.

"It will be nonstop we have major events to go to tomorrow and then also Monday we will be everywhere and then up to Tuesday I also campaign right up to 6 pm," Hannemann said.

But the topic on everyone's mind seems to be...

"What is your position on this mass transit this rail thing?" voter Jim DeLuze said.

Wednesday morning city officials received the draft environmental impact statement for Honolulu's proposed rail transit system. The complete statement has not been released to the

public.

“It’s discouraging and really disappointing, I think that Mufi won’t share that information with the public because after all we paid for it with the taxpayers’ money,” Kobayashi said.

Hannemann says it’s expected to come out this weekend.

“My staff is working very hard to get it out and once again I have always said from the very beginning we have nothing to hide,” Hannemann said.

“My attitude was that I wasn’t going to vote for anyone for the mayor’s race but I am very upset about this transit thing,”

Hannemann assures KHON2 the complete EIS will be available to voters before Election Day. Here is a link to the city’s website: [HONOLULU TRANSIT](#)

Story Updated: Nov 1, 2008 at 7:12 PM HDT

Find this article at:

<http://www.khon2.com/news/local/33703149.html>

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November 2, 2008

Draft EIS bodes well for transit

By U.S. Sen. Daniel K. Inouye

This week, O'ahu voters will decide on whether to move forward with a proposed rail transit system, a project I wholeheartedly support. Rail transit can improve the quality of life for residents across O'ahu by reducing traffic congestion, preserving our natural environment, reducing our dependence on foreign oil and bringing jobs and economic vitality to our communities.

This project speaks to the unique island spirit of kokua — our responsibility to provide for the well-being of our entire community.

But we must also understand that there is no free ride. These benefits come with costs and impacts that are identified, analyzed and compared in the draft environmental impact statement being released to the public this weekend. Completion of the draft EIS is an important milestone in both the project's progress and as part of an ongoing process intended to solicit and address concerns.

On the issue of cost — in current dollars, it will take about \$3.9 billion to build a 20-mile system that runs from East Kapolei to Ala Moana Center, with 19 stations along the route. This is an increase from the initial estimate, but these costs are reasonable when one considers adjustments for inflation, and the fact that preliminary project plans have been refined and are much more detailed.

In an abundance of prudence, the project budget includes nearly \$1 billion as a contingency to absorb just such cost increases. They were anticipated and accounted for in the budget.

The federal government has reviewed the financial plan and deemed it sound. Independent, respected organizations and individuals in our community also endorse the project and generally agree with financial projections, including the Hawai'i Business Roundtable and the Chamber of Commerce of Hawai'i.

It is regrettable that approximately 35 residences and businesses will face relocation, and will have to give way for the project. The project budget includes ample resources to provide fair economic compensation to impacted landowners. The project will assist in relocating residents; no one will be left without a home.

All of this must be balanced with the benefits of a rail transit system that is reliable, energy efficient and will shrink traffic congestion by at least 21 percent as it matures. About 34,000 cars will be taken off our congested roads and highways daily, and nearly 90,000 passenger trips will be made on the train each weekday.

More importantly, people who ride the train will know each and every time how long it will take to get to work, school or home, and the time savings will be tremendous. That means more time for family, for recreation, for worship — a myriad of pursuits more worthwhile than sitting in traffic.

Building this system will create 11,000 new jobs and foster a healthy economy, for construction workers, shopkeepers, restaurant owners and more. It will bring federal dollars into our state at a time when one of the mainstays of Hawai'i's economy, the visitor industry, suffers in the global economic slowdown. And, like other cities nationwide, a rail system will foster smart growth, transit-oriented development, which enables us to create livable communities shaped by the people who live

there.

Concerns have been expressed about how the economic downturn will affect federal funding.

Make no mistake — there will be federal funding. Your Hawai'i congressional delegation is fully committed to bringing the full force of our collective legislative powers to make this project a reality.

We do not want to repeat what happened in 1992, when Honolulu walked away from nearly \$618 million in secured federal funds. Had we possessed the needed political will then, we would be enjoying a full-fledged rail transit system today, one that would probably be serving the entire island.

While it is important to learn from past mistakes, my hope is that this is an action we collectively take for the future — for the generations of children to come who deserve an island home where they can live, work and raise their families free from the grind of constant traffic gridlock.

We are an island community with a generosity of spirit that enables us to put aside our differences to help one another. It is time for us to reach out to families on O'ahu's west side. For too long, they have borne the burdens that allow residents of Windward and East O'ahu to live in the relative luxury of open space. They deserve consideration and relief.

Moving forward with rail transit isn't just about transportation. It's about having the will and the strength today, to make the right choices for tomorrow.

Daniel K. Inouye is Hawai'i's senior U.S. senator. He wrote this commentary for The Advertiser.

November 2, 2008

Draft EIS underscores how rail can benefit O'ahu

Those who already supported the proposed rail project ought to feel reassured by the contents of a draft environmental impact statement released by the city.

And for those hesitating over how to vote Tuesday on the City Charter amendment, officially authorizing the project as a municipal effort, the data in the report should nudge them closer to a "yes" vote.

The draft EIS, far from posing scary scenarios arising from the development of the project on the eve of the Honolulu referendum, highlights reasons why the city's largest public-works undertaking should move ahead:

- The anticipated cost, adjusted for inflation, is in line with earlier estimates — \$3.9 billion. The \$200 million adjustment should be largely offset through a similar inflationary boost in the federal subsidy. According to the draft EIS executive summary, the Federal Transit Administration "has agreed to consider \$1.2 billion," up from just under \$1 billion in previous estimates.
- Projections for traffic-congestion relief are more encouraging: at least a 21 percent reduction — almost double the degree that city consultants originally expected.
- The disruption due to construction would be limited in area as the alignment is built out, and would result primarily during the construction of the foundation and columns. A plan would be implemented to minimize effects on fire and emergency response and other community services.
- Upon completion, the travel time would be cut significantly for commuters using rail. By 2030, a trip from Kapolei to Ala Moana would take just under an hour by rail, compared to an hour and 45 minutes if rail isn't built.

The report also provides some detail about displacements due to condemnation of properties along the 20-mile route. The report notes that 34 or 35 parcels will need to be bought outright, depending on the alignment, with partial acquisition of 152 to 177 more parcels. Properties affected would include 30 residential lots, a church and 62 to 67 businesses.

Urban Honolulu endured even greater disruption and dislocation during the construction of the H-1 Freeway, and few would suggest that the temporary inconvenience outweighed the vast improvement in transportation services. The same quantum leap would be realized with the construction of the rail project.

Moreover, the injection of federal funds approaching or topping \$1 billion certainly represents a boost that Honolulu needs as the state faces an uncertain economic future. The project will bring construction jobs, not only for the rail alignment itself but for the redevelopment surrounding the transit stops.

That, as the draft EIS also notes, will help the city contain urban sprawl, concentrating growth along a central corridor.

U.S. Sen. Daniel K. Inouye has watched the city grow for decades, much of that time from a vantage point in Washington, D.C., where the federal dollars are doled out.

He finds nothing in the draft EIS startling. In fact, he said, Honolulu has charged ahead through more momentous upheavals than what the rail project portends.

The H-1 freeway project displaced hundreds of homes and businesses, he said, and residents persevered and adjusted. And with refinements in the environmental planning process over the years, potential complications such as the unearthing of burials or archaeological artifacts can be anticipated. The long, nightmarish legal battles of the H-3 freeway — the nation's most expensive project of its kind — should not be revisited here.

About \$15 million in federal funds already has been appropriated for the project, with \$20 million more in the pipeline, Inouye said. He said those funds can't be transferred to a highway-based alternative such as the proposed EzWay plan, which would have to start the process from square one.

"I did some checking whether the funds appropriated can be used for this purpose, and everything I look at suggests to me it can't," he said.

That's a critical point for voters to consider. Honolulu should not reject the offer of federal funds now on the table for a rail transit system. That offer will likely never come again.

"We have to meet the needs of tomorrow," Inouye said, "and tomorrow calls for less congestion and more jobs.

"This project would provide 11,000 jobs," he added. "At a time like this, it's what the doctor ordered."

He's right. Voters should choose "yes" on the rail initiative. Honolulu's future depends on its citizens moving forward on a project that will create a more livable city for their children.

November 2, 2008

Pro-rail holds 5-1 spending advantage

7 groups poured \$592K into ads urging support from voters on Tuesday

By *SEAN HAO*

Advertiser Staff Writer

Pro-rail lobbying groups outspent rail opponents by a 5-1 margin through Oct. 20 and entered the final weeks of the campaign season with more than \$161,700 in cash, according to the latest campaign filings.

Between Sept. 6 and Oct. 20, seven pro-rail political action committees raised about \$754,100 and spent nearly \$592,400 urging residents to vote for Tuesday's proposed Charter amendment authorizing the city to build a steel wheel on steel rail train.

That's on top of the more than \$170,000 of taxpayers' money the city spent in that period to inform voters about the rail project.

In contrast, the primary anti-rail group Stop Rail Now spent nearly \$118,400 and had nearly \$43,300 in unpaid debts, according to documents filed late Friday with the Hawai'i Campaign Spending Commission.

The spending figures show how one-sided the advertising campaign promoting the state's largest public works project has been. Despite the mismatch in spending, the once seemingly inevitable project now could be in jeopardy. Polls show that Tuesday's vote on rail likely will be close, which could partly be a result of concerns about the project's massive cost and the state's slowing economy.

Plunging visitor arrivals and slumping real estate and construction sectors are forcing the city and state to reduce tax collection forecasts and reduce spending. The train from East Kapolei to Ala Moana, which will be funded mainly via local taxes, is expected to cost between \$3.9 billion and \$4.8 billion.

Rail 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.

Rail proponents say the rail project could provide Honolulu's economy a needed boost. The rail is meant to give H-1 Freeway commuters an alternative to the highly congested freeway. The elevated commuter line with its 19 stations also could encourage more sustainable urban development and reduce suburban sprawl.

"It benefits our community in many ways — economically, environmentally as well as reducing congestion in the years to come on a part of the island that's designed for all of the growth for the next 20 years," said Ron Taketa, business representative for the Hawai'i Carpenters Union, which spent about \$243,600 primarily on prime-time TV ads promoting the project. "In that context it's very important that we get the word out and that the people of O'ahu support it."

groups vs. individuals

In addition to the carpenters union, the Pacific Resource Partnership and the Committee For Balanced Transportation (Go Rail Go) were the top three pro-rail spenders. The Pacific Resource Partnership, which is a joint program of the Hawai'i Carpenters Union Local 745 and contractors across the state, spent \$144,300, according to campaign commission records.

Go Rail Go spent nearly \$142,500. Go Rail Go's contributors include transit contractors such as InfraConsult, employees of transit contractors such as Parsons Brinckerhoff, and hoteliers such as Outrigger Enterprises Inc.

Go Rail Go collected \$192,000 mostly from individuals and businesses that donated prior to the rail issue being placed on the ballot. As a result, the details of those contributions don't need to be disclosed to the state, according to Justin Fanslau, campaign manager for Go Rail Go.

"We have received small donations from over 800 people as well as support from business and community groups that believe rail is the best thing for our community now," he said in an e-mail.

Stop Rail Now's contributions were primarily from individuals. The group's largest individual financial backer is retired businessman Cliff Slater. Just how much money Slater has pumped into Stop Rail Now was not disclosed in Friday's filing, but will be included in a future filing, he said.

That money, which was contributed after Oct. 20, "will be substantial," Slater said.

special-interest funds

On the pro-rail side, "it's all special-interest money and ours isn't," Slater said. "I'm hopeful that the public sees right through it."

The Carpenters' Taketa acknowledged that the union's members have a financial stake in the rail project. About 1,000 of the union's 5,700 O'ahu members are idle because of Hawai'i's flagging economy. However, what's good for the construction industry is good for the state, he said.

"It's critical that we use our reserves to help stimulate the economy that we all depend on," Taketa said.

Political action committees that raised or spent a minimum of \$1,000 were required to file a spending report with the state by midnight Monday.

However, that deadline was extended by nearly a week after the Hawai'i Campaign Spending Commission experienced problems with its online filing system.

Spending by PACs excludes ads paid for by the city to promote rail and educate residents. The city has spent more than \$2.7 million in taxpayer money since August 2005 on public relations and outreach efforts.

Separately, Mayor Mufi Hannemann's re-election campaign also has purchased pro-rail ads.

Rail foes, backers launch final push

Transit supporters have a party while opponents muster a few sign-wavers

[By Gene Park](#)

POSTED: 02:30 a.m. HST, Nov 02, 2008

On the last weekend before elections, the difference between the rail campaigns in money and manpower were stark.

Yesterday in Kapolei, a family festival sponsored by rail supporters had barbecue, live music performances and Mayor Mufi Hannemann chanting "Go rail go" with hundreds of Leeward residents.

Across Oahu in the shadow of Diamond Head, three anti-rail volunteers waved signs and handed out fliers at the Kapiolani Community College farmers' market. Still, Stop Rail Now volunteers believe there will be a silent swell of supporters leading into Tuesday's election.

"I think the grass-roots groundswell support for an alternative to a too-expensive, ultimately useless boondoggle has always been strong," said Rob Marrone, a Stop Rail Now volunteer. "It's concerned, informed people networking amongst themselves."

In many ways the campaigns for rail and for mayor have intertwined, with Hannemann for rail and Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi against it. Former mayoral candidate Panos Prevedouros, now a Kobayashi adviser, also campaigned against the rail issue.

When Hannemann addressed the crowd yesterday, he made no mention of the mayoral race, talking only about the rail and its possible benefits.

"This is not for me, this is not a legacy project," he said in an interview. "The easiest thing for me to do was not have done rail. If I didn't do rail, chances are Ann wouldn't have run, Panos wouldn't have run. I wouldn't have the kind of opposition I've stirred up."

Councilman Donovan Dela Cruz, Kobayashi's campaign manager, said "95 percent" of the time a discussion of the mayoral race leads to rail.

"But when I personally talk to people door to door, there are actually quite a bit of people that

might be supporting rail but they're going to vote for Ann," Dela Cruz said. "They like her style of leadership."

Despite the confidence in both rail camps, neither side is taking anything for granted. Canvassing and sign-waving will continue through Tuesday for both groups.

"I can't predict things because there are so many variables that haven't been before," said University of Hawaii-Manoa graduate student Hannah Miyamoto, a rail supporter. "You have Barack Obama at the top of the ballot. This issue is not the only thing on the ballot. Who is that going to bring out?"

Marrone said even though Stop Rail Now doesn't have the money, he believes the grass-roots campaign will pay off on Tuesday.

Pro-rail supporters have outspent the anti-rail organization by about three to one since the Sept. 20 primary.

Rail proponents combined to spend about \$243,000 through Oct. 20, according to campaign spending reports. Stop Rail Now spent \$75,074 in the same period.

"I maintain that the grass-roots movement has a stronger impact from person to person," Marrone said. "You see Panos' campaign, and those people have moved to support Ann. ... all that has driven an undercurrent you may not see."



City releases draft EIS on rail transit; groups still clash

Posted: Nov 2, 2008 04:47 PM

Updated: Nov 2, 2008 04:48 PM

By Diane Ako - [bio](#) | [email](#) and Joe Aikala

HONOLULU (KHNL) - The city releases a major report today, which does nothing to quell the controversy about rail. This 2 inch thick book is the city's draft environmental impact statement, released Sunday morning. The estimated costs to build rail have jumped, now \$4.2 billion to \$5.3 billion depending on the route.

Salt Lake Boulevard is one of the possible stops of the proposed rail line. The city says you'll see more than 20% less traffic with the help of rail transit. Opponents say that's all spin. Cliff Slater of Stop Rail Now hastily called an afternoon press conference. "Why did they take so long to release this? They're releasing it on a Sunday morning when they could've released it last week."

Slater's Stop Rail Now group said the report doesn't say anything. "We're very disappointed we don't have even the kind of access to information we had with the alternatives analysis." He and his staffers added that they only had a few hours to skim the material and will release more statements as they have time to study and digest the information.

At the supporters' headquarters, Go Rail Go, dozens of volunteers were ready to canvass more homes on Sunday afternoon, and they will do it again Tuesday. State representative Kirk Caldwell (D-Manoa) of Go Rail Go encouraged the volunteers to continue to tell people, "Rail is the best solution to moving people from their homes to their jobs so they can get home earlier and spend more time with their families."

Caldwell said the report confirms all that they've been saying, and more. "The draft EIS says traffic congestion will be reduced by 20%. Previously we thought it was going to be 11%. People are concerned the cost will be out of the ballpark. The draft EIS says that, adjusted for inflation, the cost is within the ballpark."

Opponents said it's just not true. Said Slater, "We're going to spend billions of dollars and traffic is going to get worse."

Here's another sticking point. Who will pay for the rail? The draft report says the feds "have agreed to consider" the city's request for \$1.2 billion. Go rail Go says this is going to be THE economic stimulus for Hawaii for the near future. Stop Rail Now said think about it- the federal government has other economic problems on its table now.



Salt Lake residents prepare for rail system

Posted: Nov 2, 2008 07:14 PM

Updated: Nov 2, 2008 09:47 PM



Adelaida Agregado

By Roger Mari - [bio](#) | [email](#)

SALT LAKE (KHNL) - Nine city neighborhoods are being considered as routes for the rail including here in Salt Lake. Residents and businesses are preparing if the project goes through their town.

Adelaida Agregado has lived in Salt Lake for nearly 20 years. Although relocating would be tough, she believes a rail system will be good for Hawaii and would be willing to move for the better of the whole community.



Michelle Carvalho

"As long as it's for the good of so many people? Why, I am only one," says Salt Lake Resident Adelaida Agregado.

Along with homes on Salt Lake Boulevard sits the First Samoan Full Gospel Pentecostal Church. Since 1966, Faliu Toeaina and her husband have been holding services here. At first they were in favor of having a rail but now they are having second thoughts.

"It's good to have the rail but that's the thing. If it's going to affect our area, our children, our houses, then I don't vote for it," says Faliu Toeaina.

The main commercial area affected by the rail project is the Salt Lake Shopping Center.

Michelle Carvalho has been working for the last three years and considers it to be more than just a small strip mall.

"This whole shopping center over here is like family. This whole shopping center is like one big house," says Salt Lake Resident Michelle Carvalho.

Michelle lives just a few blocks from work. If the rail project makes it through this week's election, she hopes it will take a different route, otherwise she will have no choice but to find

another area to call home.



"I guess I have to do what I have to do but I would be really upset with that," says Michelle Carvalho.

For now, all Salt Lake residents can do is wait and see if a mass transit system will be running through their neighborhood.



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Local Top Stories

E.I.S. Lists Affected Properties Along Rail Right-of-Way

By **Brianne Randle**

Some parks, schools, restaurants, churches, businesses and homes would be affected by the proposed rail route.

The city did not release an appendix of properties that *is* part of the E.I.S., but we found many cited throughout the different chapters (**see list below**) Places the E.I.S lists as having adverse effects due to the rail route could be taken over completely...other properties could see partial take over.

"There are churches, hospitals, schools, so many homes and small businesses and yet no one knew about this," says Ann Kobayashi, Honolulu Mayoral Candidate.

The historic Afuso House, Higa Fourplex and Teixeira House will be impacted with the widening of Dillingham Boulevard to accommodate the columns of the fixed guide-way.

Restaurants along Ward avenue could also be displaced along with a portion of Boulevard Saimin.

An entire minority community in Pearl City would have to be re-located, including a neighboring church.

"They said they promise to relocate us to another place and if that happens, good," says Pastor, Nemesio Arizaba, Alpha Omega Christian Fellowship.

"They say they'll give us fair market value, but they can't replace this. Who knows if I can even

get a loan, I love where I live," says Jill Reid, potentially displaced property owner.

"I've been here practically all my life and to be uprooted, and move somewhere else," says Sam Alipio, potentially displaced property owner.

The banana patch area would be vacated to make way for a park-and-ride lot.

"The main thing is if they're gonna take the property I want to be compensated for it," says Alipio.

The E.I.S states the property owners would be well compensated but due to the high cost of living and available land, the E.I.S states it will be unlikely these residents would be co-located in another area of the city.

Still, supporters argue hundreds of affected properties only pale in comparison to the number of people rail could help.

"We are gonna create eleven-thousand jobs in this economy when we need it most - those are the positive aspects, it is half full not half empty," says Mufi Hannemann, Honolulu Mayoral Candidate.

Properties Affected by Proposed Rail Route:>

FULL ACQUISITION:

Banana Patch residences, lower Waiawa
Alpha Omega Christian Fellowship
Tio's Mexican Restaurant
Rock-n Roll Sushi
Hi-Pace Racing
7-11/Aloha, 1900 Dillingham
Dee Lite Bakery
Aku Bone Lounge & Grill
Hawaii International Child
Makana Esthetics Wellness Academy
Solmirin House
Afuso House
High Fourplex
Teixeira House
Up to 960 off-street parking spaces
Up to 250 on-street parking spaces
Part of Salt Lake Blvd. Ewa travel lane removed
Removed bike lanes

PARTIAL ACQUISITION:

Dillingham Transportation Building plaza

HECO downtown plant
Radford High School
Pearl Harbor Naval Base
Land near Chinatown Marketplace
Boulevard Saimin Restaurant
Six Quonset Huts
7-11 827 Kamehameha Hwy
Fuji's Chevron
Arco AM/PM 1701 Dillingham
Awa Wastewater Pump Station
Motor Imports Service Center
Keehi Solid Waste Transfer Station, Middle Street
Aliamanu Elementary & Middle
Honolulu Community College
Radford High
Waipahu High
Leeward Community College
UH Manoa Urban Garden
Salt Lake library
Bethesda Temple Apostolic Church
Calvary United Methodist Church
Nimitz Field
Richardson Field
Navy-Marine Golf Course
Keehi Lagoon Beach Park
Aloha Stadium
Future Queen Street Park
Y. Makalapa Branch Medical Clinic
Dillingham 2 homes
Goodwill
Puuwau Momi & Teen Center
Salt Lake Apartments
Institute for Human Services
7 historic resource adverse effect
7 cultural resources adverse effect
More for road near Costco
Lanes shrunk on Kamehameha Highway
Narrowed sidewalks
Left-turns in and out of driveways restricted
Add'l closures for roads during construction
Add'l parking reductions during construction

[Contact Brianne Randle with your story ideas](#)

November 3, 2008

Hawaii rail transit cost now at least \$4.34B

Kobayashi wanted news out sooner, accuses city of 'manipulating' data

By *SEAN HAO and SUZANNE ROIG*
Advertiser Staff Writers

The estimated cost of Honolulu's planned elevated rail line has climbed to at least \$4.28 billion in today's dollars, according to the city's draft environmental impact statement released yesterday.

That cost, which includes financing charges, is higher than the \$3.9 billion included in an executive summary of the study released by the city Thursday.

The higher, updated costs along with other new details about the project were included in a full study posted on the city's www.honolulutransit.org Web site yesterday morning.

The 429-page report provides the most detailed, up-to-date look at the effects of the elevated train from East Kapolei to Ala Moana Center. However, the release just two days ahead of a referendum on rail means the public will have little time to digest the report's contents before tomorrow's vote.

Among the key details released yesterday was that the cost of the planned 20-mile route through Salt Lake is projected to be \$4.28 billion, or \$5.28 billion, when adjusted for inflation. That's up from a 2006 estimate of \$3.7 billion, or \$4.98 billion when adjusted for inflation.

The growth in the cost estimate over two years could cause concern among residents worried about whether the state can afford such a massive project during a period of economic uncertainty.

Rail opponents criticized the city for not releasing the full study sooner. The federal government authorized the city to release the study on Wednesday. However, the city said it needed more time to ensure the study complied with state environmental laws.

kobayashi blasts city

City Council member and mayoral candidate Ann Kobayashi said the information released yesterday comes too late for the nearly 40,000 O'ahu voters who cast early votes.

"Whether you're for or against rail, you should be outraged that the city has been manipulating the information it has been giving out," said Kobayashi, who prefers rubber-tire transit technology. "We're talking about the largest public works project in our state. The EIS was released (by the federal government) on Wednesday; we all should have had it then."

Mayor Mufi Hannemann issued a written statement defending the timing of the study's release. "We took tremendous efforts to make the DEIS available to the public prior to its formal distribution and before the general election," he said. "Allegations have been made that the city somehow delayed the release of the DEIS. Those allegations are absolutely false."

The document's release fueled new criticisms from rail opponents who charged that city officials deliberately withheld the project's true costs when it stated last week in the study's executive summary that the Salt Lake route would cost \$3.9 billion. At the time, the city did not disclose that the price excluded \$356 million in finance costs. The cost estimate most often quoted prior to release of the new study, \$3.7 billion, did include finance costs.

Yesterday's study also did not disclose the cost of the entire 28-mile route, which includes stops at the University of Hawai'i-Manoa, Waikiki and West O'ahu.

A combined Salt Lake and Honolulu International Airport route is expected to cost \$5.34 billion, or \$6.48 billion when adjusted for inflation, the study said.

rail backers hail study

At the Go Rail Go Bethel Street headquarters yesterday, the release of the entire document on the Internet was seen as proof that the system will only help commuters, Rep. Kirk Caldwell, D-24th (Manoa), told volunteers headed out to canvass Mililani.

"This document proves everything you have been saying door to door," said Justin Fanslau, prorail coalition campaign manager. "We've squished our opposition today. Everything we've told you is true. The fact remains traffic congestion will be reduced by 11 to 23 percent."

The Go Rail Go group is part of the Support Rail Transit, a private nonprofit group that includes Vote Yes 4 Rail Now.

Volunteer John Waldroupe, a member of the carpenters union, loaded up on door hangers and fliers to pass out yesterday. He was part of a team heading to Mililani to go door to door. He joined the effort because he expects building the rail line will be an economic boon for Hawai'i, Waldroupe said.

"I've done this (hand out fliers) several times already," Waldroupe said. "People overall are pretty positive about rail. Mostly people realize we need something."

On South Street, the Stop Rail Now organizers pored over the document looking for problems and expressing their dismay that it was released two days before tomorrow's general election.

They were concerned about what was not included in the report. The study analyzed the impacts of an elevated rail via Salt Lake and the airport, but did not analyze alternatives such as bus rapid transit and elevated highway lanes. The city contends those alternatives were studied and dismissed during a prior study.

"The only alternatives they're looking at are doing nothing, or building three different versions of rail," said Stop Rail Now co-founder Dennis Callan.

Stop Rail Now wants the city to pursue alternatives such as elevated, managed highway lanes.

Yesterday's study did not assess the effects of the full, 28-mile route of the train from West Kapolei to UH-Manoa and Waikiki. And the new study did not specify how much the city plans to spend acquiring the needed right of way on up to 212 properties that may need to be acquired in part or whole.

The study also did not include the addresses of those locations.

The study did point out that certain locations such as Boulevard Saimin, Aloun Farms and the Waiawa Banana Patch could be

affected. The Banana Patch neighborhood would need to be moved to build a park-and-ride facility near the H-1/H-2 merge. That would mean displacing 10 homes and a church.

airport route costly

Unlike the 2006 study, yesterday's new report did not disclose details about how much worse future traffic congestion will be even with rail. According to the study released yesterday, future traffic congestion without rail will be 43 percent worse than today.

"What we don't know is what the traffic congestion is going to be with rail relative to today," said vocal rail critic Cliff Slater. "Traffic will be far worse with rail. And they're avoiding that totally."

According to the study released yesterday, the planned Salt Lake route will cost \$4.28 billion, including \$821 million to cover contingencies. Despite the high costs, the project is still affordable using existing state transit tax surcharges and federal funding, according to the report. However, the city's new financial plan relies on more federal money to help pay the higher costs.

The study said more federal money would be needed to fund an airport route instead of the planned Salt Lake route, which would cost \$4.5 billion, or \$5.43 billion, when adjusted for inflation.

Building both the Salt Lake and the airport routes would cost \$5.34 billion, or an inflation-adjusted \$6.48 billion, and could not be done without more local and federal tax money, according to the study.

Also included in yesterday's study was an updated timeline. It still forecast construction to start in late 2009, but anticipates the East Kapolei to Pearl Highlands segment will open in late 2013 or early 2014, about a year later than planned.

The 20-mile route from East Kapolei to Ala Moana would open in late 2018.

City officials hope to receive final approval of the environmental impact statement in the latter half of next year.

That approval is needed before the city can get the bulk of the federal funding.

Kobayashi rails against city for timing of report

[By Robert Shikina](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Nov 03, 2008

Mayoral candidate and City Councilmember Ann Kobayashi yesterday accused the city of hoodwinking taxpayers and said she was "outraged" by the city's handling of the draft environmental impact statement for the city's proposed rail system.

Kobayashi accused the administration of waiting until thousands of residents had already voted to release the report, adding that she didn't know why the administration waited.

The city posted the draft EIS online yesterday morning, following the release of the executive summary last week. By yesterday, about 105,000 residents had already voted absentee, according to the city.

"This information was purposely withheld," Kobayashi said at her campaign headquarters yesterday. "I'm just outraged that our government is lying to the people. This is a cover-up."

Kobayashi said she had not even thought about her mayoral campaign before reproving the current administration.

The draft EIS revealed how the administration "fooled" and "lied" to the public to gain support for the \$5 billion project by showing only the "glamorous side" of the rail and not those areas that would to be lost to the project, she said.

More than 80 properties, including a church, homes and small businesses would be displaced by the rail's construction.

Kobayashi also said the city's report still doesn't release the full cost of the project because it's reporting only on the minimal operating segment.

"When you learn the truth, it is not a glamorous project, it is not a good project. It's going to hurt so many people," she said.

City spokesman Bill Brennan called Kobayashi's accusations "preposterous."

"What Ann is trying to do is deflect attention from the fact that the draft EIS confirms what was said before" through public meetings, he said. "She's trying to deflect attention from the great news that is the EIS with some scare tactics so that some people might consider voting against it."

He said the report's release was delayed from Wednesday so that the city could conform with state EIS laws and that the city produced the report quickly so the public could view it before voting.

Linda Smith, Gov. Linda Lingle's senior policy adviser, joined Kobayashi at her press conference and disputed the assertion that nearly \$1 billion in federal funding will be available for the project.

A former official of the federal Department of Transportation, Smith said the city hasn't even turned in a formal application for the federal money, adding that the process takes two to four years once submitted.

"To say that there will be federal funds available or assured at this junction at a minimum appears ... as very premature and conceivably even misleading," she said.

Meanwhile, the release of the draft EIS rallied rail supporters at the Vote Yes 4 Rail Now headquarters.

John Vidal, a 60-year-old carpenter, joined about 30 volunteers at the headquarters before heading out to canvass for rail votes in Mililani.

"We need the rail," the Waipahu resident said.

Vote Yes Campaign Manager Justin Fanslau said that the release of the EIS was the best thing that could happen to the pro-rail campaign.

He said document shows rail will create jobs, reduce traffic congestion and improve the environment and residents' quality of life.

"It proves the opposition wrong and it proves everything you've been saying door to door true," he told the volunteers.

Dennis Callan, co-chair of the Stop Rail Now campaign, said in an e-mailed statement that the draft EIS uses "distorted, dishonest numbers designed to support their rail scheme."

Residents may decide the fate of the rail system when they vote on a rail question tomorrow on whether the city should support a "steel wheel on steel rail transit system."

Rail to alter landscape

An environmental impact study reveals several dozen homes and firms will be displaced by a transit project

STORY SUMMARY | [READ THE FULL STORY](#)

Dozens of Oahu businesses and homes, including several historic plantation-style houses, might be displaced by the city's 20-mile, \$5 billion rail transit system, a new report released yesterday finds.

The possible displacements include the Banana Patch community in Pearl City, where generations of families have lived, the Boulevard Saimin Restaurant and several homes on Dillingham Boulevard.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann said the city has attempted to contact the property owners affected.

The release of the long-awaited Draft Environmental Impact Statement, totaling more than 500 pages, gives Oahu voters little opportunity to review the project before a critical vote tomorrow on a ballot question determining the fate of the system.

Proponents of the 20-mile rail line say the eleventh-hour release of the report doesn't relate to the vote on rail tomorrow. However, rail critics -- including mayoral opponent City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi -- said it's unfair to the thousands of voters who have already voted early.

[By Laurie Au](#)

.....
FULL STORY >>

[By Laurie Au](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Nov 03, 2008

The city's planned multibillion-dollar rail transit system could displace dozens of Oahu businesses and homes, including a few of the island's historic plantation homes along Dillingham Boulevard, according to a draft environmental report released in full yesterday.

The long-awaited report, a so-called Draft Environmental Impact Statement totaling more than 500 pages, also details cost estimates that put the system's construction cost closer to \$5 billion, a figure that includes inflation, interest and, local officials hope, federal funding.

The report, conducted by the city team overseeing the project and several consulting firms, confirmed many benefits that rail proponents have boasted of in recent weeks -- including reduced traffic congestion, an estimated 11,000 new jobs and minimal additional noise and air pollution.

The reduced congestion estimated for the year 2030 ranges from about 21 to 23 percent, which Mayor Mufi Hannemann compared to traffic when school is not in session.

However, the report noted that the elevated rail system will alter the island's landscape, blocking views of the ocean and the mountains, as well as displacing several culturally significant homes.

GET INVOLVED

Download a copy of the full Draft Environmental Impact Statement at honolulustransit.org

A 45-day public comment period will begin later this month after the city prints and distributes copies to state agencies. The city Department of Transportation Services will take written and oral comments at community meetings that will be determined later.

Rail Draft Environmental Impact Statement Released



The projected cost of a rail system in Honolulu now falls between 4 point 3 and 5 point 3 billion dollars, according to the newly released EIS.

[[Watch](#)]



"The DEIS contains no surprises and supports our position that this project is good for Oahu," Hannemann said in a news release. "In terms of those property owners whose properties may be impacted by the project, we have made every effort to deal with them appropriately and with sensitivity, communicating with them prior to the issuance of the document."

The report noted that up to 173 properties, including 20 residences and more than 60 businesses, could be affected, depending on the route the city ultimately chooses.

The report examined three possible routes, each about 20 miles long, from Kapolei to Ala Moana Center. The likely route at the moment goes through Salt Lake. However, Hannemann has pushed for a route going by the airport.

The report also a combined Salt Lake/airport route, which would be the most expensive to build at about \$6.4 billion.

One of the properties that could be displaced is the Banana Patch, an area near the Leeward Community College in Pearl City where several generations of families have lived. The city plans on building a park-and-ride structure there, connecting to Pearl Highlands Center, for a transit stop with the second-highest expected number of riders of the system.

The report described the effect as "adverse" to the community and families living there and said the city plans on holding a community meeting to discuss several options.

Several homes along Dillingham Boulevard may also be acquired because the city needs to widen the road by 10 feet to accommodate the system. That includes the Boulevard Saimin Restaurant, which will lose its parking lot, and what the report calls the Afuso, Higa and Texeira houses, old-style plantation homes.

The report did not detail the costs of possible acquisitions or condemnation.

Hannemann scrambled to release the report over the weekend in time for tomorrow's general election, which includes a ballot question on rail, amid pressure and claims that he was withholding information from voters.

His detractors include his opponent for mayor, City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi.

"Allegations have been made that the city somehow delayed the release of the DEIS," Hannemann said. "Those allegations are absolutely false. This is simply an attempt by some to obscure the findings of the release with political rhetoric as illustrated by the positive conclusions confirmed in the DEIS."

TOTAL CONSTRUCTION COSTS*

Salt Lake Route
\$5.2B

Airport Route
\$5.4B

Combined Route

The report's release came after the Federal Transit Administration approved it last week. While the report's findings come before the general election, thousands of voters have already cast ballots early without the benefit of the new information.

Critics of the rail system were quick to respond to the report, saying it provides little information on other mass transit options.

"The new Draft EIS, only partially released at the last minute, presents a completely biased view of Managed Lanes, which is the main alternative to rail," said Dennis Callan, co-chairman of the vocal anti-rail group Stop Rail Now and an advocate of toll roads. "The city is using distorted, dishonest numbers designed to support their rail scheme."

There are seven areas along the rail alignment that have a moderate to high risk of affecting Hawaiian burial sites.

The focus of the report remained on the rail routes, but it did note that managed lanes with an enhanced bus system would have resulted in fewer displacements and would have affected fewer cultural and historical sites.

On the downside, the managed lanes would have provided "very little transit benefit at a high cost," would have created the greatest amount of air pollution and would not have qualified for the FTA New Starts program.

NOTABLE PROPERTIES POSSIBLY AFFECTED BY THE RAIL TRANSIT PROJECT

Pearl City

- » **Banana Patch**, a multigenerational community with 10 homes and Alpha Omega Christian Fellowship Church, to be fully acquired.
- » **Solmirin House**, a one-story plantation-style house built in 1937, to be fully acquired.

Along Dillingham Boulevard

- » **Boulevard Saimin Restaurant**, a two-story building from the 1960s, to be partially acquired by losing its parking lot.
- » **Afuso House**, a one-story plantation-style home built in the 1960s, with the home to be

\$6.4B

*Amount estimated after the system is built. City officials have used other construction cost figures as low as \$3.9 billion for the Salt Lake route. However, that is in current dollars and does not include inflation or interest the city will have to pay.

OPERATION, MAINTENANCE ANNUAL COSTS**

Salt Lake Route

\$109M

Airport Route

\$119M

Combined Route

\$172M

**Amount the city is estimated to spend on the rail system, not including TheBus and HandiVan costs. City officials have said the operation and maintenance costs are about \$60 million, but those figures also do not include inflation.

acquired.

- » **Higa Fourplex**, a historic, two-story plantation-style home on Dillingham Boulevard developed in the 1940s before World War II, to be fully acquired.
- » **Texeira House**, a one-story plantation-style home built in the 1940s, to be fully acquired.

Schools

- » **Radford High School**, a small area of the parking lot to be acquired.
- » **Waipahu High School**, some of its buildings might be displaced.
- » **Honolulu Community College**, with a small area of land to be acquired.
- » **Aliamanu Elementary and Middle School**, with a small area of land to be acquired.

Miscellaneous

- » **Kanpai Bar and Grill**, 404 Ward Ave., to be fully acquired because of an unidentified hazardous material on its site.
-

Rail Controversy Continues on Eve of Election



Written by Lisa Kubota - lkubota@kgmb9.com
November 03, 2008 01:23 PM

A day before many Hawaii residents vote on Honolulu's rail project, supporters and opponents continue to clash.

City officials held a news conference to clarify details about the cost and impact contained in the draft environmental impact statement released yesterday.

Meanwhile, the group Stop Rail Now gathered residents and businesses in the path of the rail route to urge people to vote "no" on the proposed city charter amendment.

Watch KGMB9 tonight at 5 & 6 for more on this story.



Last Updated (November 03, 2008 02:06 PM)

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Local Top Stories

City's New Release of the Draft EIS

By **Gina Mangieri**

The most costly alignment in the city's draft EIS has a \$6,500,000,000 price tag and that's before planned extensions to West Kapolei and UH Manoa.

That's part of the draft environmental impact statement for rail ... which the city released today -- several days after the federal government gave the green-light.

The price of rail is now as 6.5 billion in year of expenditure dollars just from East Kapolei to Ala Moana. That includes the route through Salt Lake with an airport spur. Extensions to West Kapolei and UH Manoa would cost extra. The draft EIS for Honolulu rail included prices not in the executive summary put out last week -- like year-of-expenditure figures and finance charges.

The 428 pages released did not include hundreds more pages with key appendices that were part of the federal review -- like property right-of-way details or cash-flow analysis, so it's not clear whether the 4 billion dollars in general excise tax projected accounts for plummeting tourism spending and soft retail sales.

The study says up to 1.4 billion in federal money is needed whereas Hawaii's congressional delegation talks of a 900 million dollar target. The study cites several possible significant cost additions plus risks to GE tax and federal contribution levels. Contingency budgets run as high as 1.2 billion, yet several mentions are made about money shortages such as

"Fare revenues and the GE tax surcharge would need to be supplemented to cover total future operations and maintenance cost...from the city's general and highway funds." City general funds come mostly from property taxes; another statement...

"Funding shortfalls...need to be recovered using additional revenues from other as-yet-unidentified sources"

Commute by train from Kapolei to Ala Moana would be about 40 minutes, plus the time it takes to bus, drive and park, or walk to the stations and to the destination on the other end.

That compares to about an hour by car.

Rail Supporter Kirk Caldwell says "The draft EIS says traffic congestion will reduce by 20 percent previously we thought it was going to be 11 percent.."

However, Rail opponent Cliff Slater says, "The net of it all is that the traffic congestion in the future on the H-1 while it will be worse than it its worse today wont be bad than in the alternative analysis."

During 9 years of construction 4,900 jobs would be created -- the study says "workers would be hired from the existing local labor force and trained to meet job expectations."

Another 6,800 "trickle down" jobs are estimated as well.

Rail Supporters say its going to bring jobs back to the island, and its going take care of congestion,

Justin Fanslau, Rail Supporter says,"This document proves it true."

Story Updated: Nov 3, 2008 at 6:49 AM HST

Find this article at:

<http://www.khon2.com/news/local/33733939.html>

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Local Top Stories

It's EZ Way versus Rail

By Gina Mangieri

The EZ Way transit plan competing with rail would qualify for federal or state dollars targeted for the rail system... according to mayoral candidate Ann Kobayashi.

While the EZ Way plan would likely get federal consideration, the city council and state lawmakers would have to vote on whether to let EZ Way use the excise tax surcharge.

The EZ Way plan backed by mayoral challenger Ann Kobayashi and stop-rail-now would be about a year away from starting the same federal vetting rail has been undergoing for years.

But EZ Way plan backers acknowledge city and state lawmakers would have to vote to let the general excise tax surcharge be spent on a new locally preferred alternative or LPA.

EZ Way is explained as a fixed guideway so the federal transit administration would likely take a look.

Meanwhile, the city says its draft EIS proves it can fully afford the minimum segment of the rail from East Kapolei to Ala Moana thru Salt Lake for 4.3 billion in current dollars or 5.3 billion in year of expenditure terms. They say they would need to find other money for an additional airport spur that could bring the first-phase total to 6.5 billion in year of expenditure, plus the full project envisioned from West Kapolei, Manoa and Waikiki.

A separate review done for the FTA say the city has demonstrated readiness to keep going with preliminary engineering -- a key step toward getting a final EIS and a record of decision from the federal government.

The record of decision from the FTA would be expected in 2009. Hawaii's congressional delegation is lobbying for about \$900 million in federal funds -- we'll know in a few years whether we're getting that.

KITV.com

Oahu Residents Vote On Rail Transit

Mayor Says Federal Government Approves Advancing Project

POSTED: 5:52 pm HST November 3, 2008

HONOLULU -- Oahu residents on Tuesday will vote to decide on a rail transit system.

Rail opponents met with business and homeowners who will lose their properties along the rail line.

The group Stop Rail Now rallied at City Hall, making one final push to get people to vote against the \$5 billion system, which could cost as much as \$6.5 billion, when you factor in inflation.

Among those against rail is the manager of Island Pool and Spa on Kona Street in Kakaako. He received a letter from the city Friday saying his property could be condemned.

"We got 25 employees. This is our main warehouse in Honolulu. We supply two other branches on the neighbor islands. We supply probably 1,500 of our customers who are also going to be affected. It's not just our business," Island Pool and Spa owner Howard Suite said.

"Those properties that result in being acquired or are proposed to be acquired, are the result of a lot of work to try to avoid taking anything at all. This is the last recourse now," city Transportation Director Wayne Yoshioka said.

The city said that out of 1,200 parcels along the rail line, only about 35 are being fully condemned. The city would pay their owners for their properties and help them relocate. Another 160 homes and businesses would lose part of their properties to make way for rail.

Late on Monday afternoon, Mayor Mufi Hannemann announced the Federal Transit Administration said it could move forward with the preliminary engineering phase of rail transit.

"They felt confident to make that recommendation and that's why we have received a memo this morning from the FTA saying for us a key milestone for prelim engineering has been reached," Hannemann said.

The mayor said the decision proves the draft environmental impact statement is valid.

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Rail Debate Heats Up With 1 Day Left Until Vote



Written by Lisa Kubota - lkubota@kgmb9.com

November 03, 2008 06:26 PM

The full rail report has come under intense scrutiny since the city released the document on Sunday. Even with more than 400 pages of information out, there is still a big debate over what is fact and fiction.

Critics joined forces with some residents and businesses in the path of the rail route. The Salt Lake option could require about 35 full and 160 partial acquisitions. City officials said all the owners have been notified, and condemning property would be a last resort.

"Eminent domain, if need be, will be used," said Wayne Yoshioka, director of the Department of Transportation Services. "But I think the first thrust is to get a discussion going with the property owners to get to a fair settlement."

"It looks as though the rail is planned to come right through our place. The situation being even a partial condemnation of our land would leave the land useless for us to do business so it would result in us having to find another location," said Ray Oberacker of Island Pool & Spa Supply.

Opponents said the draft environmental impact statement is incomplete and they still have questions about the project's nearly \$5.3 billion price tag.

"We don't have the cash flow summary which is very necessary if you really want to understand whether or not the city can do this," said Cliff Slater of Stop Rail Now.

"We can afford the rail project. We can pay for this with the proceeds of the projected .5% GET surcharge and the anticipated federal participation," Yoshioka said.

Both sides accuse each other of spreading misinformation. Traffic

congestion is another issue of contention.

"We found that the actual reduction in congestion is twice what was forecasted in the alternatives analysis. 20%-21% instead of 11%," said Yoshioka.

"Traffic congestion is going to get much worse - by 40% or 50% - so the argument is not a reduction from current levels which is what the city is implying which has been a very dishonest campaign," said Dennis Callan of Stop Rail Now.

Now voters must sort through all the information and decide for themselves.



Last Updated (November 03, 2008 09:06 PM)

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November 4, 2008

City OK'd for next phase of rail system

Approval a big step forward in obtaining federal funding

By SEAN HAO

Advertiser Staff Writer

The Federal Transit Administration has given its approval for Honolulu to start the preliminary engineering phase of its planned \$4.3 billion commuter rail project, the city said yesterday. Beginning the preliminary engineering phase of the transit project is a major step toward securing federal funding.

According to the Oct. 30 report by project management consultant Booz Allen Hamilton, the city has demonstrated that it is ready to enter into preliminary engineering. The report also says that Honolulu's schedule to begin service in November 2013 is "optimistic," and recommends the city ramp up its staff to handle added responsibilities.

The report also said that the project's cost estimates were "adequate and appropriate for a project in the pre-PE phase."

During preliminary engineering, the city will finalize management plans, refine the route's alignment and project costs, and identify benefits and impacts. After preliminary engineering is completed, which usually takes between 15 and 30 months, transit projects enter the final design phase, according to the Federal Transit Administration. If the project passes muster at that time, the FTA provides what's called a full-funding grant agreement.

The city expects to be awarded full federal funds in the spring of 2011.

The city plans to begin construction of a 20-mile rail line from East Kapolei to Ala Moana late next year, with full service starting by 2019.

Oahu Residents Vote 'Yes' for Rail System



Written by KGMB9 News - news@kgmb9.com
November 04, 2008 10:46 PM

Residents on Oahu voted "yes" for a steel on steel rail system. The final vote was 140,152 to 125,360. The folks at "Vote Yes for Rail" were thrilled after getting the 3rd printout.



Last Updated (November 04, 2008 10:50 PM)

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Honolulu rail project passes

Posted: Nov 4, 2008 09:48 PM

Updated: Nov 4, 2008 09:57 PM



HONOLULU (KHNL) - A victory for rail supporters. The controversial Honolulu rail transit system has passed.

Voters favor the \$4.3 billion rail project 50.9% to 45.5%.

The rail transit is a proposed 20-mile elevated rail line that will connect West Oahu with downtown Honolulu and Ala Moana and extend even further to Honolulu International Airport, Waikiki, UH Manoa and Kalaheo.

The system features 200-foot-long electric, steel-wheel trains capable of carrying more than 300 passengers each.



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Volunteers trek across the city to sway votes for rail

Posted: Nov 4, 2008 09:02 PM

Updated: Nov 4, 2008 09:07 PM



Justin Fanslau

HONOLULU (KHNL) - Voters are deciding the fate of bringing a mass transit rail system to Oahu.

Tuesday pro-rail volunteers trekked across the City in a trolley, hoping to sway voters to say yes to rail.

At a cost of nearly \$4.8 billion, it's the state's largest public works project ever.

And it has drawn both heavy criticism and support.



Dennis Callan

Anti-rail critics criticized the City for not releasing the rail's Draft Environmental Impact Statement until just two days ago.

For both sides of the issue, Tuesday was crunchtime.

"We're nervous. We're waiting for the results to come in but we have over a hundred people out doing get out to vote efforts right now all over the island," said rail supporter Justin Fanslau.

"We've been out canvassing, distributing brochures door to door. I hit about 600 homes in Maikiki in the last week," said rail opponent Dennis Callan.



While pro rail supporters outspent the opposition, anti rail group "Stop Rail Now" says its hopeful this highly debated decision will be close down to the last printout.



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Oahu Voters Approve Rail Transit

Mayor Hannemann, Unions Support Project

POSTED: 8:25 pm HST November 4, 2008

UPDATED: 12:21 am HST November 5, 2008

HONOLULU -- Oahu voters approved the proposed multibillion-dollar rail transit project on Election Day.

The question put on the ballot by the Honolulu City Council asked whether the city should establish the steel wheel rail system.

Should City Establish Rail?:

- Yes 146,764
- No 132,268

The issue of transit was one that pitted the two candidates for Honolulu mayor against each other. Incumbent Mayor Mufi Hannemann was one of rail's strongest supporters. Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi opposed the project.

Kobayashi said she wanted to halt the rail-transit plan. Instead she supported a 15-mile, elevated three-lane highway that includes two reversible zipper lanes and a fixed guideway using rubber tire on concrete.

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The group Stop Rail Now led a grassroots campaign that also included media ads and lawsuits against the project.

Unions and a group called Go Rail Go placed their own ads and events.

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November 5, 2008

It's time to get rolling on rail transit

In a down-to-the-wire race, voters wisely gave the city's rail-transit project the green light — validating the steel-on-steel system as the more prudent course for Honolulu.

After a divisive and often heated multi-million-dollar campaign, voters opted for a more sensible transportation future. It's a big win for future generations on O'ahu, who will now have a solid transportation alternative to gridlocked highways.

The rail system — part of a multimodal system that includes shuttles, buses, ferries and more — has the fundamental task of moving people, not cars, pushing O'ahu closer to a greener transportation future.

But what happens next is crucial.

With the outcome of the election decided, it's imperative that city, state and community leaders join forces to ensure that Honolulu has the best transit system possible. That means pushing politics and personal agendas aside and working together to complete this project efficiently and effectively.

The last thing that's needed is a string of legal and political challenges that would only serve to tie the project up in court, costing precious time and money. Taxpayers deserve better.

The planned 20-mile transit system, which would have about 19 stops and cost roughly \$4.2 billion after adjustments for inflation, is also likely to garner more federal funding. With Hawaii's entire congressional delegation on board, it's not surprising that the draft environmental impact statement shows the project could receive \$1.2 billion in federal dollars, up from earlier projections of \$900 million.

That's good news.

Equally encouraging is the potential for this project to add 11,000 jobs here at a time when our island economy could surely use the infusion. And new estimates show a more dramatic increase in congestion relief of up to 23 percent.

Communities along the rail line can now begin planning for their preferred future through transit-oriented development. Each community has the rare opportunity to step up and shape the development on the front end, so that the character and feel of individual neighborhoods are maintained. That's an opportunity that the community should make the most of.

The votes are in; the outcome is clear.

It's time to get rolling on the rail transit project. And it's time for community and elected leaders put O'ahu residents' best interest first and support the island's preferred transportation future by making sure the project stays on the right track.

November 5, 2008

Voters on O'ahu say 'yes' to rail

By Sean Hao

Advertiser Staff Writer

Frustration over congested roads outweighed concerns about costs as voters approved Honolulu's planned elevated commuter rail project yesterday.

The victory at the polls brings the city closer than it has ever been to building a commuter rail line. Three previous mass-transit plans over the past three decades failed for lack of political support.

But yesterday's vote, which favored rail by roughly 51 percent to 46 percent, should give the city the green light to move forward with the controversial \$4.28 billion project. Construction is scheduled to begin late next year.

The favorable rail results likely were bolstered by Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann's strong advocacy for the project and a major pro-rail advertising campaign.

Those voting for rail cited the need for transportation alternatives and traffic relief.

"I feel so bad for the people who live out there and have to come into town in this traffic," said Jane Himeda, who voted for rail at McKinley High School.

Those voting against rail cited concerns about the project's high cost, aesthetics and noise.

Waikiki resident Charles Gonzalez, 48, was first in line this morning at the Waikiki Community Center. He said he voted for Hannemann, but against rail.

"I like Mufi as mayor, but I think we have to look into rail more," he said. "They made the decision for steel-on-steel and where to go too quickly."

Gonzalez said the release of the rail project's environmental impact study on Sunday swayed his rail vote. He had been leaning toward voting "yes," but was concerned about how the key environmental impact study was released so close to the vote.

Over the weekend the city disclosed that the cost of the East Kapolei to Ala Moana system increased to at least \$4.28 billion, compared with a 2006 price of \$3.7 billion.

Rail gained momentum about three years ago when Mayor Mufi Hannemann proposed linking East Kapolei to Ala Moana via an elevated train. He won the endorsement of the City Council and the state Legislature, which adopted a 0.5 percentage point increase in the general excise tax to pay for the plan.

Seemed like done deal

Most politicians supported it, and there was no plan to ask voters for their approval. The rail project appeared to be a done deal.

Then came Stop Rail Now, a coalition of rail opponents who launched a petition drive in April to put rail on the ballot. The group collected 49,000 signatures by mid-July. While Stop Rail Now eventually failed to get its ordinance on the ballot, it succeeded in forcing the City Council to place a separate version of the rail question before the electorate.

The ballot question asked voters if they wanted the city to move forward with the steel wheel on steel rail transit system.

Hannemann last night attempted to reach out to the nearly half of the voters who opposed the project.

"All I ask (is) for those who still may disagree with it is let's find ways in which you can support this effort," he said. "The feeling has been that the people decide and the people have spoken."

Vocal rail critic Cliff Slater of Stop Rail Now said the 47 percent who voted against rail indicates there is still strong opposition to the plan.

"When you've got that many against you, that's hardly an indication of community consensus for rail," Slater said.

He said he will continue to oppose the project, but was not sure what form his opposition would take.

The ballot question is non-binding. It doesn't mean the city has to build the rail system; it only authorizes the city to do so.

Brian Manangan, 18, a Farrington High School graduate and Honolulu Community College student, said he voted against rail after talking with friends.

"It's too expensive," Manangan said.

Kapolei resident Kalei Kahapea, 18, voted for rail.

"It's another way to get from Point A to Point B without having to wait in traffic," he said. He also cited the economic benefits.

Other voters, including Nathaniel Jones, were hoping rail would pass.

"I'm originally from Pittsburgh and the rail system there gets you from the outskirts into town in 15 minutes," Jones said. "We need it here. We need something to relieve traffic for the people who live farther out of town."

A public vote in favor of the project could help marginalize the opposition while providing the project a boost.

'Good for Hawai'i'

Rail proponents argue the system will give commuters an alternative to travel on congested roadways while reducing urban sprawl. The 19 planned transit stations also are expected to foster live-work-play communities and opportunities for moderately priced, high-density housing.

"We need something," said Rod Frias, 35, a construction worker who voted for rail at Palolo Elementary. "I don't think we can wait any longer."

Janice Chuck, 53, a teacher in Salt Lake also voted for rail.

"I'm in favor of rail because I think it's going to mean less traffic on the road," she said. "I think there's a lot of benefits.

"This is going to be good for Hawai'i."

Rail opponents argue it's a mistake to saddle the city with a massively costly project.

"I don't think the state can afford it," said Mike Rodrigues, 51.

The city plans to start construction late next year with limited service between West Loch and Waipahu starting in November 2013. Service between East Kapolei and Pearl Highland would begin a year later. Full service to Ala Moana would begin by the end of 2018.

Rail Transit

Rail rolls to victory on ballot

[By Ken Kobayashi](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Nov 05, 2008

Oahu residents voted to approve the City Charter amendment supporting the 20-mile elevated steel-rail transit system from Kapolei to Ala Moana, the single-largest public works project in state history.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann, the leading advocate for a steel-rail system, said it was a tough campaign, but asked opponents to find a way to support the project.

"The feeling has been let the people decide and the people have spoken," he said.

The mayor said the economy and environment need the steel-wheel-on-steel-rail system. "But most of all, our families need traffic relief," he said.

As about 200 supporters celebrated the victory at the pro-rail headquarters on Bethel Street, Justin Fanslau, campaign manager for Go Rail Go, credited the thousands of volunteers who gave their "blood, sweat and tears."

The vote was a blow to Stop Rail Now, the group that opposed the project.

Cliff Slater, a leader of the group, which gathered at a computer store on South Street, said he was disappointed.

"The group will reconvene and consider what's next," he said.

He said he doesn't know whether the federal government will consider the vote results enough of a mandate to provide the federal funding for the project.

"It's hardly a consensus," he said of the 52.6 percent to 47.4 percent vote in favor of rail. "It's pretty close."

Dennis Callan, another leader of the group, said he'll get involved in the environmental impact

study for the project. He said there's still a lot of opportunity for public input.

The rail system's cost is estimated to be \$3.9 billion in 2008 dollars, but it is expected to be closer to \$5 billion after adjusting for inflation during the life of the 20-mile project. City officials expect to cover the costs with \$1.2 billion in federal funding and a 0.5 percent surcharge to the general excise tax that would bring in \$4.1 billion through 2022.

Rail supporters contended the transit system would be the best way to ease traffic, which is expected to increase with new homes planned for Central Oahu and the Ewa Plain. Opponents argued the system is too costly to build and maintain, too ugly, too noisy and not the best alternative to relieve traffic congestion.

In addition to Hannemann, supporters include Hawaii's congressional delegation and the Hawaii Carpenters Union and other labor groups. Opponents include mayoral candidate Ann Kobayashi and Panos Prevedouros, an engineering professor who threw his support to Kobayashi.

Star-Bulletin reporters Nelson Daranciang and Laurie Au contributed to this report.



How rail can impact many residents and business owners

Posted: Nov 5, 2008 04:06 PM

Updated: Nov 5, 2008 05:14 PM



Diana Knightglaz

By Mari-Ela David - [bio](#) | [email](#)

KALIHI (KHNL) - Many of those forced to move out of their homes or shut down their business to make way for rail, are struggling to soak in the election results.

Photos of Dillingham Boulevard at Kalihi Street show how it'll look before, and after rail is built.

Along this stretch of Dillingham, are three homes on the list of places Honolulu needs to tear down to make way for the steel-on-steel transit system.

The Afuso house, Teixeira house, and the Higa fourplex where this mom and her 11-month-old baby live.

Diana Knightglaz says she just found out on Election Day, the house she rents from will no longer be standing.

"The notice would be great so I can start preparing now, start saving money for a deposit, start looking at places, just all sorts of things that you need to get ready to move," said Knightglaz. "That's the part that upsets me. There was no notice."

Across the street from Knightglaz is this gas station and 7-11 store, also on the condemned list.

"I feel so sad because I've been at this store for 17 years," said store manager Nena Dela Vega. "This is my second home so I'm so sad."

And on Ward Avenue, the City plans to acquire Kanpai's, formerly Tio's Mexican Restaurant. The owner just bought the place three months ago, only to find it'll disappear once rail is built.

The big question for those who must move is when they have to do it.



Nena Dela Vega





A call to the City's Transportation Department was not returned.



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Local Top Stories

The Question Everyone Wanted Answered: Rail

By Jai Cunningham

Most agree it was the most fiercely debated question to appear on yesterday's election ballot. Yes or No to the city's steel on steel rail plan.

53 percent said yes to rail, 47 said no, with more than 11,000 voters not weighing in on the sensitive subject.

Close, but the a yes have it.

And one high profile supporter of rail says it's time for the next step.

U.S. Representative, Neil Abercrombie says, "I think we should reach out to those who still have their doubts and say look a decision has been made. I've been on the losing end of a lot of votes in my life, but my attitude has always been okay if I didn't have my way let's try and make this thing work."

Opponents say they're not giving up.

Cliff Slater has been outspoken about the rail project for years...he says its important to continue to shed light on the multi-billion dollar project.

"Getting knowledge to the people. Doing it through websites, so that they understand the issue, because the city is just not leveling with them."

Others against the rail feel it's time to move on, cautiously.

Charles Djou of City Council responds, "I think the focus has to shift from having to stop this system, which is a bad decision, to now shifting it to make sure that if we are going to do this, we make sure we do it right."

And supporters continue to point to the advantages of the massive project.

"But when you consider that this job alone will increase employment by 11,000 and open up opportunities for other businesses it will not only make up for this tax hike I think it will do so in ten fold," says Senator Dan Inouye.

Mayor Hannemann has said in the past he hopes to break ground on the rail system late next year.

Story Updated: Nov 5, 2008 at 5:45 PM HST

Find this article at:

<http://www.khon2.com/news/local/33940484.html>

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City Moves Forward With Rail Transit After Vote

Opponents Plan To Participate In Public Hearings

POSTED: 3:34 pm HST November 5, 2008

UPDATED: 4:11 pm HST November 5, 2008

HONOLULU -- Oahu voters chose to support the city's \$5 billion rail transit project by a slim margin on Election Day.

About 53 percent of the voters favored the steel-on-steel rail project with 47 of the island voting against rail. It was a difference of about 15,000 votes.

The slim victory in favor of rail transit does not officially trigger anything in the rail transit development, but it does allow the mayor to say that a majority of Oahu residents support rail.

"We gave the people a choice and tonight they said they want rail," Mayor Mufi Hannemann said.

Hannemann's re-election party Tuesday night was the de-facto headquarters for rail transit supporters, who told KITV they figured rail might lose or win by a very close margin of 1 or 2 percent.

When the final numbers showed transit winning by 6 percent, Hannemann had a message for the 140,000 people who voted against rail.

"What I want to do too now, Keoki, is I want to reach out to those who still have

problems with rail. Let's see where we can find common ground. I don't want this to become another H-3 (Freeway). We took too long to build it, it cost us many more millions of dollars," Hannemann said.

At the Stop Rail Now headquarters in Kakaako, volunteers cleaned up the paperwork, the petitions and the signs at midday, preparing to move out of their one-room office.

"There's no mandate on this. Fifty-percent of the people voting for rail is not any strong mandate, especially when you consider all the money that they spent to get that 50 percent," Stop Rail Now founder Dennis Callan said.

Pro-transit groups spent \$243,000, twice as much money as transit opponents, and the city spent another \$2.5 million on transit "public education," which many transit foes called pro-transit propaganda.

Next, the city will officially release the transit environmental impact statement in a few weeks and the public will have at least a month and a half to comment.

"We'll be there participating. We'll be at hearings, we'll be submitting questions to the EIS process and we encourage the public to do the same," Callan said.

Previous Stories:

- November 5, 2008: [Oahu Voters Approve Rail Transit](#)
- November 3, 2008: [Oahu Residents Vote On Rail Transit](#)
- October 21, 2008: [Hannemann, Kobayashi Tout Transit Plans At Forum](#)
- September 23, 2008: [Judges Plan To Rule On Rail Ballot Soon](#)
- September 15, 2008: [Honolulu Mayoral Candidates Discuss Transit](#)
- August 22, 2008: [Hannemann Says No Veto For Transit Amendment](#)
- August 20, 2008: [November Ballot To Include Transit Amendments](#)

- August 14, 2008: [Judge Orders City To Put Rail Transit Issue On Ballot](#)
- July 18, 2008: [Djou Introduces Transit Charter Amendment](#)

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November 6, 2008

Honolulu rail might be rerouted to airport

Vote could influence council to renege on route through Salt Lake

By *SEAN HAO*
Advertiser Staff Writer

Following Tuesday's victory for the rail referendum, the City Council might decide to switch the route of the proposed elevated commuter line to include a stop at Honolulu International Airport instead of going through Salt Lake.

The Salt Lake route was the product of a political compromise to win the support of council member Romy Cachola. Cachola, who represents the Salt Lake area, held the swing vote when the council approved the project in 2007. He threatened to vote against rail unless it was routed through Salt Lake.

But now that voters approved rail — by 52.6 percent to 47.4 percent — at least one council member is willing to switch his vote to support the project, and several members said they are interested in revisiting the airport option.

"While I disagree with the wisdom to move forward with rail, I will respect the voters' decision," said City Councilman Charles Djou yesterday. "Now let's make sure we do it and we do it right.

"The Salt Lake route doesn't make sense. If we're going to do it right, we should connect the airport and Pearl Harbor. That will be a discussion that we'll need to take a look at."

Djou's willingness to vote for rail now means the council no longer needs Cachola's support to have a majority for rail.

If the council changes the route to the airport, it would raise the cost of the project by about \$200 million to \$4.5 billion, up from \$4.3 billion now. However, an airport route also could build support for the controversial project.

"That's one of the major points of contention people have," council member Gary Okino said. "I think that all comes into play now again. The airport route, that will become a major issue at this point."

Cachola yesterday said he wouldn't support moving the route back to the airport.

"I'm not fully aware of this and neither is the community," he said. "I think our community will be (upset) if anybody is going to do that and they will not forget it. Commitments were made to leaders of the community. From what I read it's still cheaper to go to Salt Lake."

at least 5 votes

To change the train's route back to the airport, the council would need at least five votes. Prior to Tuesday's election, the four most solid supporters of rail were Okino, Todd Apo, Nestor Garcia and Rod Tam. Those four along with Cachola voted for a rail route through Salt Lake in early 2007.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann favored an airport route, but compromised to win Cachola's support for rail. A spokesman for Hannemann didn't return a call seeking comment yesterday on the possible switch to the airport route.

Council members Djou and Barbara Marshall have consistently opposed the rail project. They, along with council members Ann Kobayashi and Donovan Dela Cruz, voted against the Salt Lake route.

Garcia and Apo yesterday said they're open to discussing a switch to the airport route.

"With that (Tuesday's) vote, we should be able to take a look at all options available to us," Garcia said. "I wouldn't mind having that (airport route) discussion again.

"If we're going to put something on the ground, let's do it right."

However, a prolonged discussion about the rail's route could interfere with plans to begin construction in December 2009.

The sooner the route debate begins, the better, Apo said. He said a bill proposing to amend the train's route to include the airport will be introduced by a council member "very soon."

"I have always said getting to Pearl Harbor and the airport is the better route," he said. "It's what we should have been at. Now that we're moving forward with this we need to get that corrected. And we need to get that correction done now."

higher cost

According to a draft environmental impact statement released Sunday, the planned Salt Lake route will cost \$4.3 billion, including \$821 million to cover contingencies. The study found the project is affordable using existing state transit tax surcharges and federal funding.

The study said more federal money would be needed to fund an airport route, which would cost \$4.5 billion. However, that figure includes \$862 million in contingency costs. Excluding that cushion, the airport route's estimated cost is \$3.8 billion, according to the study.

Apo said the city could rely on a portion of that buffer as well as added federal funds and possibly new state funds to pay for the costlier airport route.

Michael Schneider, managing partner for city consultant InfraConsult LLC, which provides management support on the train project, said the current route through Salt Lake is the most affordable option.

"It would seem that the nominal plan on the table is the most affordable," he said. "Building a slightly more complex route or building a bypass with the existing line — of course that will be more expensive.

"The way the council and the administration approach that remains to be seen," Schneider added. "Contrary to opinion we will not build something that is unaffordable."

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Mayor, enjoying win, gets final word

Mufi Hannemann got everything he wanted in Tuesday's election

STORY SUMMARY | [READ THE FULL STORY](#)

Newly re-elected Mayor Mufi Hannemann will return to work in Honolulu Hale with a focus on building the city's proposed \$5 billion rail project after a campaign that lasted longer than he expected.

The day after his re-election, Hannemann expressed hope for unity with the supporters of his opponent, City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi, yet still criticized her failed campaign.

Hannemann will also have to work with a divided City Council and the addition of a new member, Duke Bainum, his 2004 mayoral opponent.

Hannemann called it an "embarrassment" that 14,434 blank votes, or 43 percent, were cast in Bainum's race. But Bainum vows to work hard for the community despite some apparent resentment against him.

[By Laurie Au](#)

.....
FULL STORY >>

[By Laurie Au](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Nov 06, 2008

The day after comfortably winning re-election, Mayor Mufi Hannemann spent most of his time thanking supporters, but also again sharply criticizing the failed campaign of opponent City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi.

 Many Voted Yes To Mufi & Rail



Hannemann and rail transit wins votes and Hannemann wants to convince locals who are still against it, that rail is the way to go.

[[Watch](#)]



After a boisterous victory party Tuesday night at Dole Cannery Ballroom, Hannemann woke up early for a news media blitz, appearing on all four local news stations for their morning shows.

"I'm extremely humbled and grateful for all the support," Hannemann said.

Tuesday night was a success for Hannemann with an easy re-election, an approval from Oahu voters to build his \$5 billion rail transit system and the presidential election of Hawaii-born Sen. Barack Obama.

But while Hannemann, in his victory speech, spoke of reaching out to Kobayashi's supporters, he reiterated past criticism of her campaign yesterday morning.

"It was clear that Kobayashi lost because she was being pushed and manipulated by those who had a different agenda," Hannemann said. "This was not a one-against-one race. It was one against eight or nine, people who want to be governor or senator in the future. Rail was only a part of it."

Kobayashi's campaign said her late entrance into the race hampered her ability to get her message out and to raise enough money to combat Hannemann's \$3 million. Kobayashi entered the race on the last day possible in July after many supporters, including widely known politicians who clash with Hannemann, pushed her to challenge the mayor.

City Councilman Charles Djou, who has already announced that he will be running for Congress in 2010, rejected that claim, saying he would have supported Kobayashi over Hannemann regardless of his political ambitions.

"I believe Ann Kobayashi truly, sincerely wanted to be the mayor of the City and County of Honolulu," Djou said.

Hannemann still refused yesterday to say whether he'd run for a higher office in 2010 with an open governor's race and possible vacancies in Congress but has kept those options open.

With the end of a campaign that went on longer than Hannemann had hoped, he will return to Honolulu Hale with a focus on the city's elevated, 20-mile rail transit system.

Hannemann hopes with the approval by voters of the rail transit system, the anti-rail community and politicians would back the project.

"While I am very much disappointed in the result of the rail vote, I also will respect the will of the voters," said Djou, a rail opponent.

Meanwhile, Hannemann will also have to work with a City Council that is gaining a new member, his 2004 mayoral opponent, Duke Bainum.

A Manoa community group launched a campaign to vote "blank" against Bainum, who ran uncontested after Kobayashi's late entrance into the mayor's race.

Bainum received 14,434 blank votes, or 42.6 percent.

"That's embarrassing," Hannemann said. "That's a statement of disappointment and protest."

Bainum noted that other incumbents had received a high percentage of blank votes in the past, including City Councilman Donovan Dela Cruz with 37 percent in 2006 and Djou with 37 percent.

"We were kind of surprised," Bainum said. "We anticipated it be a little higher. I was under attack by the mayor, but I am going to continue to work hard for my constituents."

Find this article at:

http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20081106_Mayor_enjoying_win_gets_final_word.html

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Rail Route Changeup; Back to Original Plan



Written by Tim Sakahara - tsakahara@kgmb9.com

November 06, 2008 06:17 PM

Whether you call it a deceptive flip-flop or a brilliant political maneuver the rail route is on track to change.

Just two days after the public voted in favor of rail the city council is now looking at switching the route from going through Salt Lake to stopping at Pearl Harbor and the airport.

According to the study just released the airport route is expected to cost about \$4.1 billion to build, that's \$200 million more than the Salt Lake route.

And it will cost about \$5 million more to operate every year. But the some think the worth is in the ridership. The city estimates about 8,000 more riders a day would get on board the airport route by the year 2030.

The added cost is only one of the issues the city council will consider. The change could also cause delays and a political backlash from one of the council members.

Council members Charles Djou and Todd Apo have been on opposite sides of the rail since the start, but after the public voted in favor of transit Djou is switching sides.

Now together they want to switch the rail route back to the original plan which goes to the airport.

"I believe the city shouldn't have done rail in the first place but if we are going to do rail it doesn't make any sense to go down salt lake boulevard," said Honolulu Councilmember Charles Djou, who represents Hawaii Kai, Waikiki and East Oahu.

"There are rationales for going through Salt Lake but when you compare it with the two options the airport/Pearl Harbor option is the better of the two," said Councilmember Todd Apo, who represents Kapolei, Ewa and Leeward Oahu.

Here's the problem. Romy Cachola was the swing vote on the council. Without him the transit never would have made it this far. So to get his vote it was agreed that the route would go through his district down Salt Lake Boulevard. But with Djou and possibly others coming on board his vote is not as crucial, which opens the opportunity to build the airport route first ahead of Salt Lake.

"People went there to vote in support of the rail issue on the ballot only to find out 2 days after the election that we are going to switch from salt lake to the airport. 18: 07 we are playing with fire." 18:09 we should not do that the integrity of the council is compromised," said Councilmember Romy Cachola, who represents Salt Lake, Iwilei, Pearl Harbor and the airport.

Cachola says the mayor also made a deal with Salt Lake neighborhood leaders and says if you make a commitment you have to follow through.

"We did not initiate this. I live by my word. That's where we are so he can't be crying to the administration he has to take his tears to the city council and talk with them," said Mufi Hannemann, Honolulu Mayor, in a press conference in his office.

"I'm not crying to the mayor, he made the commitment and the people that voted with me on the Salt Lake alignment are people close to him," said Councilmember Cachola, in his own press conference.

"Like I said tell him to save the drama for his mama go down stairs and talk with the city council guys," said Hannemann.

"You deceive the people by letting them understand that the alignment will go to Salt Lake Boulevard," said Cachola.

To be continued. The council takes up the issue for the first time next Wednesday. At least five council members say they are leaning towards the airport route which would be enough to pass.



Last Updated (November 06, 2008 07:03 PM)

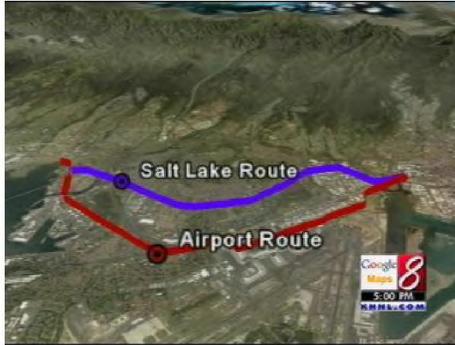
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Honolulu city council members call for rail route change

Posted: Nov 6, 2008 04:32 PM

Updated: Nov 6, 2008 07:18 PM



By Mari-Ela David - [bio](#) | [email](#)

HONOLULU (KHNL) - Rail may not go through Salt Lake after all.

Just two days after voters say 'yes' to steel-on-steel, two Honolulu council members call for a route change.

That change would bring rail to the Honolulu International Airport instead. And it'd cost point-two million more dollars than the Salt Lake Route.



Councilmember Todd Apo

The thinking is, 'yes,' it may be more expensive to build a transit system here at the airport.

But councilmembers Todd Apo and Charles Djou say it'll serve more people and businesses compared to the Salt Lake route.

Running rail over Salt Lake Boulevard is a route the Honolulu city council adopted in March, but not necessarily favored. In fact, only one councilmember wanted it.



Councilmember Charles Djou

"We had to accommodate Romy Cachola to get the votes so we could get the EIS worked out." said Honolulu city council Rod Tam.

Now that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement or EIS is out, councilmembers Todd Apo and Charles Djou have introduced a bill to switch the route away from Salt Lake.

"We have the ability to run the spur to Salt Lake in order to serve that residential community but it makes more sense to run the entire line through Pearl Harbor and the airport," said Apo.

"It's a bad move the way I look at it," said Honolulu city council Romy Cachola.

The Salt Lake Route is shown here in blue.



Councilmember Romy Cachola

The airport route in red runs along Kamehameha Highway then north to Nimitz to Aolele Street.

From Aolele Street, rail would then come through Keehi Lagoon Beach Park, past these tennis courts, then out to town via Middle Street and Dillingham Boulevard.

The airport route is more expensive than the Salt Lake Route.

"But you're getting a quality product rather than one that's not quality," said Tam.

"But you're getting a quality product rather than one that's not quality," said Tam.

It's not that we're saying never to go through Salt Lake Boulevard. Instead we're saying, where should we prioritize, where should we go first," said Djou.

The first reading of Djou and Apo's bill is set for November 12th.

According to the City's report on the impacts of rail, connecting the airport to the rail line will mean the City would take over fewer properties, but displace more businesses compared to the Salt Lake Route.



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Local Top Stories

U-Turn On Proposed Rail Route?

By Andrew Pereira

STORY SUMMARY>>>

Rail critic Charles Djou and rail supporter Todd Apo have joined forces to try and send Oahu's proposed rail transit system to Pearl Harbor and Honolulu International Airport instead of Salt Lake Boulevard.

The two councilmen introduced legislation Thursday (Bill 64) that could change the proposed route of the rail line if they find three more votes. The City Council consists of nine members.

Djou, a harsh critic of the city's proposed project, says he's now onboard after Oahu voters approved the construction of a steel wheel on steel rail transit system by a margin of 15,000 votes.

"If we're going to do rail we need to make sure we do it right," said Djou in a joint press conference with Apo.

Despite the city's own analysis showing an airport route would increase the projected cost of the project by \$226 million; Apo believes a rail line servicing Pearl Harbor and the airport would qualify for more federal funding. The city hopes to secure as much as \$900 million from the federal government. The entire 20-mile segment from East Kapolei to Ala Moana is expected to cost \$4.3 billion in 2008 dollars.

"I'm certainly hopeful that we're going to be able to find additional federal funds to cover this cost," said Apo, who pointed to strong support for the project from Hawaii's congressional delegation.

Council members Rod Tam and Gary Okino told Khon2 they would support the proposed change in the route, while councilmen Nestor Garcia, Donovan Dela Cruz and Duke Bainum are taking a wait and see approach. Bainum will be seated on the Council in early January, taking over for defeated mayoral candidate Ann Kobayashi.

Clearly, the odd man out in this latest twist to Oahu's rail transit project is Councilman Romy Cachola.

Cachola, who represents the Salt Lake area, said changing the route now would be a "bad move". In February of 2007 the Council voted 5 to 4 in favor of the Salt Lake route as a way to gain Cachola's support.

Cachola said in a statement that Salt Lake residents voted in favor of rail believing it would run along Salt Lake Boulevard. "Now," said the councilman, "the administration and the Council are renegeing on their promise."

However Mayor Mufi Hannemann said Cachola should air his grievances with the Council since his administration had nothing to do with the proposed route change.

The mayor said he will support the airport route as long as the Council involves the public in the legislative process.

"This is a great opportunity now the hear from those who would like for us to keep it along Salt Lake Boulevard and for those of us that would like to see it go along the airport route," said Hannemann.

Apo and Djou said rail would eventually service the Salt Lake area when the line is expanded. The first reading for their proposal is scheduled for November 12.

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

Story Updated: Nov 6, 2008 at 6:30 PM HST

Find this article at:

<http://www.khon2.com/news/local/34067489.html>

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Pacific Business News (Honolulu) - November 6, 2008

<http://pacific.bizjournals.com/pacific/stories/2008/11/03/daily49.html>

PACIFIC BUSINESS NEWS

Thursday, November 6, 2008 - 12:20 PM HAST

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Honolulu City Council may consider airport rail stop

Pacific Business News (Honolulu) - by [Chad Blair](#)

Two Honolulu City Council members on Thursday said a planned rail system should include a stop at Honolulu International Airport.

Todd Apo and Charles Djou introduced a bill that will require the East Kapolei-Ala Moana rail system to connect the airport and Pearl Harbor rather than traveling along Salt Lake Boulevard.

Djou, who has opposed a rail system from the start, said he would vote in favor of the new route.

"If we are going to do rail, I am committed to making sure it gets done right," he said.

In March 2007, the council chose the Salt Lake route by a 5-4 vote at the urging of Councilmember Romy Cachola, whose district includes Salt Lake.

Both routes were studied in an environmental impact statement, whose executive summary was released Oct. 30.

The EIS estimated the rail system would cost \$4.9 billion if it included the airport versus \$4.8 billion for the Salt Lake route, in inflation-adjusted, year-of-expenditure dollars.

Apo, a rail supporter who represents Leeward Oahu, where a growing population is increasing traffic congestion, said voters on Tuesday "sent a clear message that the public wants rail. ... This means not only serving residential areas, but the employment centers and connecting all transportation modes, especially the airport."

Oahu voters approved a rail system by 53 percent to 47 percent in the election. They also reelected Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann, who has made his support for rail the centerpiece of his administration.

Hannemann preferred the airport route but agreed to a compromise with Cachola, who argued the rail system would attract more riders if it stopped in Salt Lake, a largely residential area.

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November 7, 2008

Council must realign rail to include airport link

Now that voters have flashed a green light for the city's steel-on-steel rail project, elected leaders must work to get the most for the more than \$4 billion it will cost.

The best way to achieve that has always been routing the rail close to Pearl Harbor and, in particular, the Honolulu International Airport. But the City Council was unable to muster enough votes to approve the project, unless an alternative route through Salt Lake — City Councilman Romy Cachola's district — was crafted, winning his vote.

Fortunately, the administration had the consultants preparing the draft environmental impact statement study both routes, and now the council seems positioned to switch to the airport route.

Councilman Charles Djou, long an opponent of the rail project, said this week he's accepting the voters' verdict to move forward with the project. He now advocates that the council revert to the airport alignment — and he's right. His vote would produce the majority needed to make the switch; the council should approve the amendment soon, to minimize further delays.

In addition, there's the added cost of the longer airport route, an estimated \$200 million. The state has been keeping 10 percent of the city's transit tax for administration; clearly, the tax collection is now set up and such a fee is not needed. The Legislature should let the city use that money for the increased construction cost.

Among the advantages of the route cited in the EIS:

- Bringing the train to town via Pearl Harbor and the airport would affect 5 percent fewer properties than on the Salt Lake route, meaning less cost and disruption arising from land acquisitions.
- The city anticipates fewer encounters with burials along the airport route, further reducing potential delays.
- The EIS includes a cost-benefit analysis that shows the added cost will pay off in increased ridership — 7,000 more daily passengers than for the Salt Lake route.
- Finally, there's more room for planned development around the transit stops along that stretch of Kamehameha Highway, which will yield a greater boost to the economy and increased capacity for affordable housing.

The council will need to see that the Pearl Harbor National Historic Landmark is protected in the buildout. But, on balance, the realignment offers a way to improve how this critical project serves the public interest. Council members must not pass up that chance.

November 7, 2008

Reroute dismays Salt Lake

Area council member accuses colleagues of deceiving constituents

By SEAN HAO

Advertiser Staff Writer

A first vote by the City Council on whether to realign Honolulu's commuter rail line to Honolulu International Airport and Pearl Harbor instead of Salt Lake could come as early as Wednesday.

The debate over the train's route is expected to be contentious as various communities fight for a route favorable to them.

Under Bill 64 introduced this week, the route of the planned elevated commuter rail line from East Kapolei to Ala Moana would bypass Salt Lake in favor of the airport. The bill, introduced by council members Todd Apo and Charles Djou, would renege on an agreement between the city and Salt Lake community made more than a year ago.

Some longtime Salt Lake community members yesterday expressed disappointed with the effort to change the route.

"It's unfortunate that this is being done," said Grant Tanimoto, former chairman of the Salt Lake area neighborhood board. "I don't think there's any real policy reason to revisit this issue after we've gone down this path a couple of years.

"There was strong community support for this route. I think the community support is still there. Whether they can generate that support again on such short notice, I don't know."

The Salt Lake route was the product of a political compromise to win the support of Councilman Romy Cachola. Cachola, who represents the Salt Lake area, held the swing vote when the council approved the project in 2007. He threatened to vote against rail unless it was routed through Salt Lake.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann, who originally proposed an airport route, said he welcomed a debate about whether to switch the route. However, Hannemann said, he remains concerned about how the city will pay for the more expensive airport route, and whether that change could delay construction plans.

"This is a great opportunity now to hear from those who would like for us to keep it along Salt Lake Boulevard, and for those of us who would like to see it go along the airport route," Hannemann said. "The bottom line is that's great. We have an opportunity to continue to put this on the front burner of people who would like to see this rail system."

The airport route costs about \$200 million more than the current \$4.3 billion Salt Lake route. However, those higher costs would be offset by higher ridership and other benefits, said Apo.

"For our broader island community, it makes more sense to initially serve Pearl Harbor and the airport, and the industrial area around the airport," he said.

The bill is expected to get its first reading at Wednesday's City Council meeting. If there's enough support, it could be up for final passage sometime in January, Djou said. The council needs to make the change quickly to prevent delaying the project.

Cachola yesterday said the city needs to follow through with its commitment to Salt Lake.

"The dust (from the election) has barely settled, and now we're going to switch the alignment from Salt Lake to the airport," he said. "The actions of the council, by doing this, is very deceptive. People in Salt Lake who voted in support for rail believed that the rail would go to Salt Lake."

Djou and Apo said a Salt Lake spur could still someday be built, if added money can be found in the future.

"It's not that Salt Lake is a bad idea. It's that the airport is a better idea," Djou said.

The city plans to start construction late next year, with limited service between West Loch and Waipahu starting in November 2013. Service between East Kapolei and Pearl Highlands would begin a year later. Full service to Ala Moana would begin by the end of 2018.

Switching the route to the airport could help build support for the train, which on Tuesday survived a voter referendum.

Makiki retiree James Miyashiro, 70, yesterday said the Salt Lake route doesn't make sense.

"I kind of supported (the train), but I didn't like it going through Salt Lake," he said. "The airport and Pearl Harbor are where the majority of people are going.

"Going through Salt Lake is crazy."

To change the train's route back to the airport, the council would need at least five votes. The likelihood of switching the route to the airport increased after Djou, who had opposed rail, said he was willing to switch his vote to support the project.

If he and others are successful in steering rail to the airport, the city would be breaking a commitment made to the Salt Lake community. The community agreed to defer the widening of Salt Lake Boulevard along with \$30 million in federal highway funds with the understanding that the widening of Salt Lake Boulevard would be done concurrently with the transit construction.

Support for the train in Salt Lake is not unanimous. However, the effort to move the route to the airport is likely to generate a backlash from some Salt Lake residents.

"I think it's a dishonorable thing they're doing," said Howard Shima, an 81-year-old Salt Lake resident. "Now, since they're going to shift back to the airport, we've lost that \$30 million. The community has lost that and (the widening) won't be completed in my lifetime."

According to a draft environmental impact statement released Sunday, the planned Salt Lake route will cost \$4.3 billion, including \$821 million to cover contingencies. The study found the project is affordable using existing state transit tax surcharges and federal funding.

The study said more federal money would be needed to fund an airport route, which would cost \$4.5 billion. However, that figure includes \$862 million in contingency costs. Excluding that cushion, the airport route's estimated cost is \$3.8 billion, according to the study.

Apo said the city could rely on a portion of that buffer as well as added federal money and possibly new state money to pay for the costlier airport route.

Councilwoman Barbara Marshall yesterday had no comment on plans to change the train's route. Councilman Donovan Dela Cruz said he wants to know more about the costs and benefits of the various train routes before making a decision on the route.

"I just want to see the details," he said. "You want to be able to justify whether we leave it at Salt Lake or why we need to move it.

"I'm not closed to the idea (of an airport route). I just want to make sure that's going to be the best decision."

Council reconsiders rail route to airport

Romy Cachola says Salt Lake residents have been betrayed

[By Laurie Au](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Nov 07, 2008

The City Council is considering a major change to the route of the city's proposed \$5 billion rail transit system: an airport stop rather than passing through Salt Lake.

 [Oahu Rail Transit Route Could Change](#)



Many thought the plan for rail to go through Salt Lake was a bad idea.

[[Watch](#)]



Two days after Oahu voters gave the go-ahead to the rail transit system, the proposal gained preliminary support by a majority of the City Council yesterday, but Mayor Mufi Hannemann was quick to point out that the change could delay the project and will cost more.

The 20-mile, elevated route from Kapolei to Ala Moana Center is estimated to cost \$5.2 billion once built. The route going to the airport instead of Salt Lake is estimated to cost an additional \$200 million.

"One of the first steps that needs to be corrected is the route and taking it to Pearl Harbor and the airport," said Councilman Todd Apo in a joint news conference with Councilman Charles Djou.

"It's not that we're saying we'll never go down Salt Lake Boulevard," Djou added. "It's just that we're prioritizing where should we go first. This switch will not delay the project. ... and I think by connecting the route to the airport and Pearl Harbor (Naval Base), we make a better case for federal funding."

Djou, a consistent opponent of the rail system because of its cost, is supporting the project after a majority of Oahu voters approved the project in a ballot question Tuesday.

Many leaders, including Hannemann and Hawaii's congressional delegation, had long considered the airport and Pearl Harbor route to be more sensible. Two years ago, however, Hannemann made a compromise for the route to go to Salt Lake to get the support of Councilman Romy Cachola, who was the last of five votes needed to approve the system.

Hannemann was not as enthusiastic yesterday over the airport proposal as many might have expected. Hannemann said he was pleased to see Djou express support for the system and called for others of the anti-rail community to follow.

"There are some concerns that we would have in moving forward as quickly as the Council would like," Hannemann said. "There are some cost ramifications. And secondly, there are some delays that could occur as a result of the review process."

The city is moving forward in the "preliminary engineering" phase of the project, and changing the route could delay the goal of groundbreaking late next year.

Cachola, who represents Salt Lake, was angered over the possible change, calling it a "bad move" that he won't support. He said Hannemann had made a promise to Salt Lake residents that the route would go to their area.

"People went to vote in support of the rail issue on the ballot thinking that the alignment would go to Salt Lake, only to find out two days after the election that we are going to switch it to the airport," Cachola said. "The integrity of this Council is compromised. The administration has been compromised."

But Hannemann pointed out that it's not his decision to change the route.

"I made the commitment, but it's (Cachola's) colleagues that are revisiting the issue," Hannemann said. "That's where he needs to spend his time lobbying amongst his colleagues. We did not initiate this. He can't be crying to the administration."

Cachola argues that the Salt Lake route would accommodate the thousands of residents living in the area and boost ridership. However, according to a recently released document by the city, ridership would increase with the airport route because of the amount of travelers and employees that work there.

The next City Council meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, the earliest it could take the public's comment on this issue again.

Find this article at:

http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20081107_Council_reconsiders_rail_route_to_airport.html

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Our Opinion

Pathway is clear for rail transit essential to Honolulu

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Nov 08, 2008

THE ISSUE

Voters approved a rail transit system for Oahu, and the City Council could move the route from Salt Lake to Honolulu Airport.

HONOLULU voters are on board with a rail transit system that is necessary and affordable, although cost estimates are steep when you include inflation and financing charges. Even newly released figures show that the present general excise surcharge and expected federal financing are enough to pay for and provide a green light for the project, scheduled for completion a decade from now.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann estimated two years ago that the transit system from Kapolei to Ala Moana would cost \$3.7 billion, which has increased to \$3.9 billion because of inflation during that period. Inflation and the finance charges on bonds through 2030 are expected to bring the total to nearly \$5.2 billion, according to the city's draft environmental impact statement released last weekend.

The City Council is poised to change the route to include Honolulu Airport instead of Salt Lake. That would increase the current cost to \$4.1 billion and the ultimate cost, including inflation and finance charges, to \$5.4 billion, according to the impact statement. An airport route is more sensible and is likely to be more acceptable to ensure federal funding.

Inflation is expected to rise to 3.3 percent in 2009, and inflation projected for the 23-year period of paying for it comes to \$876 million. Bonds and short-term loans to bridge any funding gap would cost \$479 million in finance charges, according to the impact statement.

The statement's authors did the math and found the project to be feasible using more than \$4 billion in revenue from the 0.5 percent general excise tax surcharge authorized by the Legislature

to run through 2022 and \$1.2 billion in federal funding expected from the New Starts program of the Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration.

The FTA has agreed to consider the funding request, which has congressional support. Sen. Daniel Inouye's elevation to the chairmanship of the Senate Appropriations Committee should enhance the assistance.

Outgoing City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi, who opposed the transit system in her failed mayoral candidacy on Tuesday, accused the Hannemann administration of "lying to the people" by delaying release of the environmental statement until 105,000 people had voted absentee, but her charge is not supported by evidence.

The environmental statement included no new information except the identification of more than 80 properties that would be displaced by the rail's construction of the Salt Lake route. Such disruption caused by the Salt Lake or airport route pales in comparison to the properties affected by construction of the H-1 freeway in the early 1950s.

November 8, 2008

Letters to the Editor

transit

Rail construction will have consequences

Now that the rail issue is a done deal, I hope the construction company awarded to build it acts responsibly.

My family lives in the Kuli'ou'ou area where the city is conducting sewer work. Six days a week, we are assaulted with extreme noise, home vibration and diesel fumes.

The work needs to be done, I understand that, what I don't understand is the lack of compassion for the families living in the construction area.

It is an insult to have to explain to the construction company that our 1-year-old child can't sleep through the rumblings of earth drilling or the constant pounding of a jackhammer.

I truly had no idea how disruptive city and county construction work can be until we lived with it.

I hope that three groups read this and take note.

First, Mayor Mufi Hannemann. Be aware that your rail project will cause the same life-altering changes for many families along the route.

Second, the construction company doing the rail work. You may be doing your job, but your job uses some of the loudest and most polluting equipment in Hawai'i and there will be families living in your construction area.

And last, the people living in the path of the future rail project. Don't let the disruption caused by construction affect your family.

Ted Obringer | Honolulu

November 9, 2008

Proceeding on rail and another 4 years

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 Honolulu's newly elected mayor, Mufi Hannemann.

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).

Jason: With the recent election and the win for rail transit, what specifically is the next step? When is the absolute soonest the project will be done and people can ride? Any chance on speeding it up?

Mayor Mufi Hannemann: I was very happy that a majority of people voted to have us proceed with our rail transit project this past Tuesday.

The current plan is to have the entire 20-mile project completed by 2018, just 10 years from now.

We're hoping to open the first operational section in just four years, 2012.

Nahoaloa: About the airport alternative: The draft EIS points out that there are fewer property acquisitions required than Salt Lake and a higher cost-benefit ratio, undoubtedly because of the number of riders who want to go to and from the airport and Pearl Harbor. But what about transit-oriented development potential? Is it greater along the airport route, or less?

Hannemann: As you know, the airport route was always my first choice. We were unable to get the votes for that route at that time. With the council now wishing to revisit the issue, this will be a good opportunity to hear from both pro-airport and pro-Salt Lake advocates.

As far as transit-oriented development goes, the airport route actually provides more opportunities for transit-oriented development.

Bill in Nanakuli: There is concern that adequate, affordable parking at the rail stations will not be available. Should this be a concern?

Hannemann: At appropriate rail stations, especially at the west end, parking will be provided. At the more urban station, it is anticipated that riders will be able to walk, bike and transfer from feeder buses. So it shouldn't be a major concern.

Roger: What is your take on City Councilman Charles Djou's rail realignment back to the airport, won't this save money due to length and property acquisitions?

Hannemann: I'm pleased that Councilman Djou is heeding my election night call for those who've been opposing rail to work with us. I hope that Gov. Lingle, Panos Prevedouros, Cliff Slater and others will do likewise. Let's remember the lesson of H-3. It was mired in controversy and lawsuits for far too long that it delayed the project and almost doubled the cost of building it. Today, you don't hear anyone complaining about H-3.

Dinah: Are the anti-rail folks planning to mount another challenge, legal or otherwise. I did not vote for rail, but I agree that voters have spoken, I say let's move forward and get the job done right.

Hannemann: The anti rail folks have been saying, "Let the People Decide." And you're right, Dinah, the people voted in the affirmative for rail. We need to come together as a community to resolve the biggest impediment to our quality of life — the sooner the better.

Meheroo Jussawalla: Sincere congratulations on your victory as well as to your wife, Gail, whose support was a special tribute to you. While you will be busy finding funds for the rail transit will you also consider some help to senior citizens in finding funds for payment of property taxes in these very hard times of shrinking pensions and inflation? Please give some reprieve to seniors who have owned their properties for 15 years and more.

Hannemann: I've always held a special place in my heart for our island's kupuna. One of my father's most prized possessions was his senior citizen bus pass.

I've enacted two ordinances that favorably impact seniors and their real property taxes. The first is that home exemptions for people age 75 and older is \$140,000; 85 and older is \$180,000. A taxpayer need apply only once every 5 years for exemptions instead of annually.

John: Now that you have been re-elected for another term, what are your top four priorities as mayor for the next four years?

Hannemann: With our success at the polls on Tuesday, the voters are validating our record of accomplishment, which I was very proud to run on. We will continue to prioritize fiscal accountability, always tempered with compassion for our seniors, low income and the disadvantaged.

We will continue our focus on basic city services, infrastructure and public safety. And we will continue emphasizing quality of life issues such as integrated multi-modal transportation solutions and promoting our 21st Century Ahupua'a environmental initiatives.

Finally, there will be a stronger focus on the economy. Given my experiences as a former director of DBEDT and private sector executive, we've had some excellent results during our first term on creating or saving jobs, such as Disney Resorts, Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard, Trump Tower, employment help for Aloha Airline employees. And in this second term, you can expect our Job Focus Honolulu program will bring in more results, because this is when we need it most. I will leverage my chairmanship of the U. S. Conference of Mayors Tourism and Arts Committee to insure that Hawai'i remains at the forefront of our national agenda. I'm excited about the opportunity to work with President-elect Obama and our strong congressional delegation.

Mongo: With your friend (Barack) Obama in the White House, can we get more infrastructure money

from the feds? They are already talking about another economic stimulus package based on funding infrastructure.

Hannemann: This 'Iolani alum supported the Punahou alum now president-elect for two main reasons. One, his strong affinity for Hawai'i gives us a sensitive advocate in the White House. Two, it was clear when I helped to bring him before the U.S. Conference of Mayors in Miami to address us, he has a clear vision and objectives to help cities throughout America. Infrastructure and mass transit are going to be definite priorities of an Obama administration. And with the combination of a strong congressional delegation led by Sen. (Daniel) Inouye, I'm very optimistic we'll get what we need.

TT: Why doesn't Gov. Linda Lingle support the rail project now? She used to be the one saying we needed it. I don't understand why she would say she voted against it now.

Hannemann: I'm glad you remember that Gov. Lingle tried in 2003 to initiate raising the local tax to fund a rail transit system and then backed off. Then in 2005, she suggested working with me in her State of the State address to identify a mass-transit solution for O'ahu. So I went to work with the Legislature, the congressional delegation and the City Council to move forward.

Now that the people have spoken in favor of rail, I trust that she will do everything to work with the city to make this happen. For as I've always said, the longer we delay, the more we're going to pay.

Tina: Could you please tell us two or three things about yourself that the general public might not know.

Hannemann: Here's a few things: I've visited every Disney attraction in the world. My wife, Gail, and I each drive hybrids. I'm known as Mufi, but my first name is actually Muliufi, named after my great grandfather who was one of the chiefs that was one of the signatories of the deed of cession that created the territory of American Samoa.

November 9, 2008

Letters to the Editor

transit

Forward thinking needed in rail system

Now that the voters have spoken, let's hope the city will be forward and modern thinking in the design and operation of the rail system.

If they build an ultra-modern, aesthetically pleasing and well-run system, as in many foreign countries (i.e. Singapore and Sydney), it will be both clean and quiet.

This opportunity offers a myriad of ways to eliminate traffic, reduce pollutants and increase economic activity. Let's hope there is consideration to placing free parking areas near suburban stations that will offer free charging for electric cars.

Think about it! It will not only motivate the public to use the transit system but spur economic development in the electric-car industry.

Taxi drivers should rejoice, they will be rewarded by the public looking for rides to the transit stations. If done correctly, it could be great. If done wrong, God help us.

It's all on the shoulders of our leaders. Now that you have the vote, please don't blow it.

Tom Bashaw | Ala Moana

November 10, 2008

Geography played key role in Hawaii rail vote

Proximity to proposed route led to greatest levels of support for project

By *DERRICK DePLEDGE*
Advertiser Government Writer

The vote on Honolulu's rail transit project split along geographic lines, with voters who live closer to the planned 20-mile route from East Kapolei to Ala Moana favoring rail by the largest margins.

Voters approved rail transit 53 percent to 47 percent in a significant endorsement of the largest public-works project in city history. An Advertiser analysis of the vote by state House district, however, shows an island divided.

In traffic-choked Central and Leeward O'ahu, particularly in Waipahu, 'Ewa Beach, Kapolei, Mililani and Pearl City, voters backed the project by wide margins. But the vote was much closer near Downtown, Waikiki and out in Wai'anae, and voters broke against rail in East Honolulu and on the Windward side.

The divide could create challenges for the city as it moves forward with the \$4.3 billion to \$4.5 billion project.

O'ahu residents are paying a general excise tax surcharge to help finance rail, and a sinking economy, disputes over the route, and the inevitable headaches of more than a decade of construction will require a collective effort for the project to flourish.

Environmental and legal protests to H-3 Freeway linking Kane'ohe to Pearl Harbor delayed the project for years and helped make the highway among the most expensive ever built in the United States. H-3, which also divided the island largely on geographic lines, never went before voters.

"As far as I'm concerned, the people have spoken," Mayor Mufi Hannemann said. "And I think, over time, they will appreciate that this was the best solution. And I've said I will reach out. I will continue to see where we can get some common ground here.

"I don't want to see another H-3 occurring, where too much time was spent on delays, on lawsuits, on controversy, where we spent much more than we should have. And look at H-3 today. Everybody loves H-3."

vote was close

City Councilman Charles Djou, who represents East Honolulu and has opposed rail, said the vote showed the community is narrowly divided. He said he respected the decision of voters and would work with others on the council and with the city to bridge the divide.

Djou said last week he would be open to a route that includes Honolulu International Airport, rather than

running through Salt Lake, because, he said, it would make more sense. The Salt Lake route was adopted by the council as a compromise to get the swing vote of City Councilman Romy Cachola, whose district includes Salt Lake.

"Even if we all don't necessarily agree on the wisdom to do this project, we all can at least respect how it is done," Djou said.

Some balk at steel

Barbara Ankersmit, the president of QMark Research, asked voters mass-transit related questions as part of her polling for Hannemann's re-election campaign. She said there was general support for rapid transit but a slight drop-off when voters were asked about the ballot question on a steel-on-steel rail project.

Ankersmit said support for rail was stronger after the primary and then narrowed before increasing again before the general election.

"People wanted a solution, but I think that there were so many things said about steel-on-steel that they became worried about the solution, about the way the ballot issue was worded," she said.

Older people concerned about money were not quite as in favor of rail, Ankersmit said, while younger people and two-income families, especially those living in Central and Leeward O'ahu, had higher interest.

Supporters of the rail project substantially outspent opponents on campaign advertising and also benefited from Hannemann's more aggressive get-out-the-vote drive compared with during the primary. The city also spent taxpayer money in the months before the vote on ads explaining the project.

opposition regroup

Mike Uechi, a doctor and co-chairman of Stop Rail Now, said he was happy with the closeness of the vote, given the opposition did not have the resources to mount an extensive get-out-the-vote campaign. He said he could not say what the next steps are for opponents other than to continue to monitor the project.

"I think we're going to look at the draft EIS (environmental impact statement) and see where that's going to take us," he said.

City Councilman Nestor Garcia said the divide means the city needs to continue to educate people about the project and be inclusive in planning.

"I've always tried to make people understand that we're all in this together," said Garcia, whose district includes Waipahu, Makakilo and Mililani. "I want people to understand that those of us on the west don't necessarily want to say that this is our project and you should vote for it because now it's our turn.

"I don't like to couch it in those terms."

November 10, 2008

Letters to the Editor

transit

Rethink construction plans for rail system

I have long been a proponent of rail and think it is appropriate to consider switching from the Salt Lake route to the airport route.

But as long as the route is being reconsidered, why don't we rethink the buildout plan.

Do we want serious traffic reduction to begin in five years, or 10? The plan now is to start in Kapolei and build in toward town, with the first leg ending in Pearl City.

How many people will take that short train ride during rush hour? It would seem most users of that first rail stretch would be curiosity one-time users, and then only during non-rush-hour periods. Why? Because the majority of car drivers from West O'ahu are heading into town or toward Waikiki.

Even if those drivers were to take the first leg as planned, how would they continue their trip into the city? If using TheBus is the answer, they are probably already using it. These drivers will not abandon their cars to use the first stretch as planned and congestion will remain until most of the final legs are completed.

By building out, starting in the city and working out, we will see the first sections of rail actually being heavily used as they become available. This would get more cars off the road and generate rail revenue earlier rather than later.

Jim Kennedy | 'Ewa Beach

November 11, 2008

Salt Lake split over rail line

Residents share pros, cons of placing route in community, vs. airport

By mary vorsino
Advertiser Staff Writer

Those who live or work in Salt Lake have mixed feelings about the possibility that the City Council could renege on a pledge to bring a commuter rail line through the community.

Some said the alternative — bringing rail instead to Honolulu International Airport — would be a smarter choice, while others said a line through Salt Lake would be better-used and take more cars off the road. Still others said they would be OK with both proposals.

Grant Tanimoto, the former chairman of the Aliamanu/Salt Lake/Foster Village Neighborhood Board and a longtime champion of bringing rail to Salt Lake, said he is disappointed the City Council is proposing to go back on its earlier agreement.

"I think the community loses," said Tanimoto, adding Salt Lake is one of the most densely populated areas of O'ahu with 30,000 residents. "We been proceeding with the assumption that there would be a rail route that would be very accessible to our residents."

But Cesar Gonzalez, 39, a Salt Lake resident, argued that taking the rail line to the airport would help tourists, commuters and residents who are flying in or out of the island. "It's a better option," said Gonzalez, of the plan to take rail to the airport instead of Salt Lake.

As early as tomorrow, City Council members could take their first vote on Bill 64, which was introduced last week and proposes the elevated commuter rail line planned for East Kapolei to Ala Moana bypass the Salt Lake community in favor of the airport.

More than a year ago, Salt Lake was put onto the rail route as part of a political compromise to win Councilman Romy Cachola's support for the project. Cachola, whose district includes Salt Lake, held the swing vote when the council approved the rail project in 2007. He threatened to vote against rail unless it was routed through Salt Lake.

Cachola has said the city needs to follow through with its commitment to Salt Lake.

But Bill 64 supporters said a Salt Lake spur could still be built in the future.

At Salt Lake Shopping Center last week, Salt Lake resident Jerry Kitayama said he didn't want rail coming to the community and would prefer it go to the airport. The 64-year-old added that rail would displace too many homes and businesses.

But Young Kwon, 50, the owner of a small sundries shop at the center, saw opportunity in bringing rail to

Salt Lake. "For businesses, it would be very good," he said.

City officials have said that bringing the rail line through Salt Lake would displace dozens of homes and businesses, especially since the community is largely built out. But details on how many would be displaced have not been ironed out, and proponents of rail say the overall economic benefit to the community would be significant — and worth it.

Those who want rail in Salt Lake also point out that the airport route would cost more.

According to a draft environmental impact statement for the project, the planned Salt Lake route will cost \$4.3 billion, including \$821 million to cover contingencies. Meanwhile, the airport route is projected to cost \$4.5 billion.

However, that figure includes \$862 million in contingency costs.

The city plans to start work on the rail line in late 2009.

Limited service between West Loch and Waipahu would start in late 2013, and full service to Ala Moana would begin by the end of 2018.

Mililani resident Burt Ollestead said he works in Salt Lake, and sees a need for rail in the community and at the airport. "They should probably hit all the places," he said.

But airline worker Ken Chang said rail to the airport is a bigger priority.

The Pearl City resident added Salt Lake could get a line later.

"It's good for us," he said, of the option to take rail to the airport.

Meanwhile, Merle Takuma, who lives and works in Salt Lake, said she's just not sure what all the fuss is about. Takuma said it's a short bus ride from Salt Lake to the airport, so a rail line in either place would be well-used. "I don't care" which option the city goes with, she said. Then, she added, "You've just got to go with popular demand."

November 11, 2008

Letters to the Editor

rail

Airport link is not a priority for residents

I was upset to read that the City Council is considering changing the proposed rail route to bypass the Salt Lake community for a stop at the airport.

The rail is supposed to help improve quality of life for our local residents. Bypassing Salt Lake for an airport destination sounds suspiciously like catering to tourists.

The people who need rail and who will ride rail are in Salt Lake.

Building a line to the airport is not a priority for our hard-working people who are tired of being trapped in traffic, whether in a car or a bus.

Councilman Charles Djou says we should "make sure we do this and do it right." Doing the right thing means staying with the route that was worked out by the City Council. This is a political bait-and-switch, and I'm very unhappy with Councilman Djou.

Lyn Pyle | Honolulu

Burial Council Views Rail Route



Written by KGMB9 News - news@kgmb9.com

November 12, 2008 07:32 PM

The Oahu Burial Council hopped on a bus and took a tour of the rail route. Members say they asked for the tour. The city says there is a good chance there are ancient burial sites along the 20-mile route.

The Burial Council says it was important to see where they might be and what could be done to avoid digging up the iwi or bones.

"If it's possible to move the columns," said Jace McQuivey from the Oahu Burial Council. "These are only 8 by 8 foot columns, and so we are hopeful we can move them along the corridor north or south so that we don't have to impact a site we come across."

If a site is identified and the project can't be moved then the council, the city and the preservation society would negotiate the best way to handle the situation.



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Local Top Stories

City Council Makes Moves on Alternate Airport Route

By **Gina Mangieri**

Honolulu's rail system is heading toward a different route -- with the city council making the first move on an airport alignment instead of going through Salt Lake.

The city transportation department says ridership would be much higher on an airport route, but residents and the councilmember from Salt Lake take issue.

The council voted seven to one to move forward a measure that sends the train past Pearl Harbor, Hickam Air Force base and the airport -- instead of the Salt Lake route previously adopted.

Voters in Salt Lake voted 55 percent in favor of the rail, but the day after the election the council signaled its intention to change the route.

The councilmember from Salt Lake says Mayor Mufi Hannemann promised the Salt Lake path in order to get his vote of support in the first go-around. The administration says they're just following the will of the council.

The City estimates the airport alignment would garner more ridership and would cost 200 million dollars more. The administration says funds could come from a state partnership or a request for additional federal funding. They say they do not anticipate additional local taxes needed.

The council also passed a resolution asking the state to give back its unused share of the tax surcharge management fee.

The resolution says if the state doesn't give it to the city, they should refund it to taxpayers, or put it toward public education.

Story Updated: Nov 12, 2008 at 6:33 PM HST

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November 13, 2008

Effort to change rail route advances

City Council favors airport station over Salt Lake by 7-1 vote

By SEAN HAO

Advertiser Staff Writer

The City Council yesterday took its first official step toward changing the route of Honolulu's train to include Honolulu International Airport.

The council voted 7-1 to advance a measure to divert the route away from suburban Salt Lake and into the industrial airport district. The change increases the project's cost by about \$220 million to \$4.5 billion. Councilman Romy Cachola, who represents Salt Lake, opposed the measure. Councilwoman Barbara Marshall did not attend yesterday morning's meeting.

The council is expected to vote on the matter several more times, with the next public hearing likely occurring next Thursday.

Changing the route would break a commitment by the city to the Salt Lake community, which successfully lobbied for the current train route in early 2007. That's when Cachola cast a swing vote to keep the rail project alive, if it went through Salt Lake rather than the airport.

The city's recently released draft environmental impact study shows that a Salt Lake route is convenient for more people, but by 2030 would generate lower ridership than an airport route.

Proponents for the Salt Lake route contend that alternative is cheaper and will serve more people, sooner than an airport route that doesn't connect to Waikiki. The city plans to someday connect the train to Waikiki, though there is no financial plan or timetable for building a Waikiki spur.

Cachola said the train will generate higher ridership by serving the Salt Lake area's 60,000 residents, rather than serving the airport-area's 15,000 workers. The higher the train's ridership, the less taxpayer subsidies will be needed to finance its operations.

"Salt Lake Boulevard is far superior to the airport," Cachola said during yesterday's hearing. "We can always do (an airport spur) later when we connect the route to Waikiki."

The city plans to start work on the rail line in late 2009. Limited service between West Loch and Waipahu would start in late 2013, and full service from East Kapolei to Ala Moana would begin by the end of 2018. Although the current plan is to route the train to Salt Lake, the airport route remains more popular for many in the broader community. That support now is being reflected in the council, which now appears to have the five votes needed to change the route to the airport.

At one time Cachola held the swing vote on rail. However, following last week's narrow victory on the rail ballot issue, Councilman Charles Djou switched his vote to support rail. Djou favors an airport route.

"The question before us is no longer should we do rail but how," said Djou, who opposed rail prior to last week's rail referendum. "The first step to doing it right is to connect the airport with Pearl Harbor."

Mayor Mufi Hannemann favors an airport route, but compromised to win Cachola's support for rail. Hannemann has supported the renewed debate over the train's route, but has not taken a position on the bill passed yesterday.

Additional Facts

To comment

People wishing to submit written testimony on Bill 64 can fax their testimony to 768-3826 or go to www.honolulu.gov/council/emailccl.htm to e-mail their testimony to the city.

November 13, 2008

Gas prices in free fall

Average cost on O'ahu about to dip below \$3, with no end in sight

*By Will Hoover
Advertiser Staff Writer*

If you like the price of gas today — just wait until tomorrow.

Pump prices in free fall are the silver lining in a cloud of financial darkness that hangs over Hawai'i and the nation.

On O'ahu, the average price of a gallon of regular unleaded gasoline is poised to fall below the \$3 threshold today for the first time since April 16, 2007.

Tomorrow's price will likely be lower still, and Saturday's even lower than that.

The downward trend began after the average price of regular gas peaked in Honolulu at \$4.39 a gallon on July 29. The descent started slowly, with prices even rising briefly by a fraction of a cent four times. But by Aug. 24, the price was falling every day and picking up steam.

Recently, the drops have been "unprecedented," said Jeff Spring, Southern California spokesman for AAA, the auto association that tracks gas prices nationwide.

"It's just been falling off the edge of a cliff for the past two or three weeks," he said. In past week, the average price has been falling by about three or four cents a day, he said.

The Web site www.honolulugasprices.com said Costco Iwilei had Honolulu's cheapest gas yesterday at \$2.46 a gallon. Some Mainland markets have gasoline at less than \$2 a gallon.

Spring said he sees nothing to indicate the gears would reverse anytime soon. Typically, he said, downward price trends last around 12 weeks, and then level off. This slide has already lasted about 11 weeks in Honolulu. And with the current accelerated nationwide drop, it's tough to predict when it could end, he said.

Crude oil closed yesterday at \$56.16 a barrel — the lowest price since January 2007. The U.S. Energy Department projected that in 2009, petroleum consumption would be off by 250,000 barrels a day compared with this year.

"Nobody seems to know as of today what's going to happen," said Bill Green, former owner of and current consultant to the Kahala Shell station. He said some analysts who study the market contend gas prices could level off by April.

"I think there's more room for it to go down. We know it's a lot lower in really low-ball markets on the

Mainland — around \$2 a gallon."

excise tax break

Lower fuel prices offer some solace to dealers as well as motorists, said Green.

"The biggest advantage for us when the price goes down — and a disadvantage when the price goes up — is the cost of processing the credit cards. And, other than rent, that's probably the biggest cost we have in doing business."

Green acknowledged that decreased oil demand is the main cause of the price drop here. But he pointed out something else that many folks in Hawai'i may have forgotten: Consumers are currently paying no state excise tax at the pump.

One person who remembers is Lowell Kalapa, president of the nonprofit Tax Foundation of Hawai'i. He said the 2007 state Legislature enacted a two-year excise tax exemption on gasoline as relief to consumers when gas prices were going up.

At the time the exemption from the excise tax was approved, it saved drivers about 12 cents on a gallon of gas.

Now, as prices plummet and the state tries to head off a potential budget deficit amid an economic crisis, Kalapa questions the wisdom of maintaining the exemption. The excise tax could pump \$32 million more into the state's general fund annually, he said.

"Sure, my pocket is a little fuller because of the exemption," said Kalapa. "But, at the same time we don't have textbooks in the schools for our kids. Do we need the exemption? Or do we need the revenues to run our schools, and our prisons, and our social services? Which is more important to me?"

Lawmakers are in a bind, he said. They need the money, but they may lack the resolve to reinstate the excise tax on gas.

"I don't think they're going to take any action," Kalapa said. "They're just going to let it sit there and let it expire at the end of next June. Because they're afraid their constituents are going to be angry."

If they take no action, the exemption will expire on June 30, 2009. Then, no matter how low gas prices might be, they'll go up.

November 13, 2008

Now it's time to focus on getting rail right

By Charles K. Djou

I have long argued that a multi-billion-dollar rail system for O'ahu is far too expensive and beyond what our local families can afford. Indeed, last week's vote on rail showed that nearly half of O'ahu's voters shared at least some of my concerns.

Nevertheless, while I disagree with the decision to move forward with rail, the voters have spoken in narrow support of this issue, and it is now my responsibility as a councilmember to ensure that the money spent on rail is expended as cost effectively as possible, so that we do not end up with a rail system that no one rides.

The close vote on rail reflects our community's clear divide over the wisdom of a rail system for Honolulu. If we want to bridge this divide, we must make sure that the city implements the rail project in the best way possible. One of the first steps to making sure that things are done right is to connect the airport and Pearl Harbor to the rail system.

The city's handling of the rail project thus far leaves much to be desired and much that needs correction. The exclusion of the Honolulu International Airport in favor of Salt Lake Boulevard was a significant error on the part of the city, which was the result of a deal by the administration and the councilmember from Salt Lake to secure the votes needed on the City Council to go forward with rail.

Every major American city that proceeded with a rail system has connected its airport to the rail line. In Honolulu, tourism is the largest sector of our economy. Except for a handful of cruise-ship passengers, every tourist who comes to Hawai'i comes to us via the airport. Every rail study conducted in every major city, including Ho-nolulu's, concluded that connecting the municipal airport makes sense. This makes it all that much more important to connect Honolulu International Airport to the rail system.

Furthermore, the second-largest sector of our local economy is defense. The Pearl Harbor and Hickam Air Force Base area is one of the largest job centers in our state — not just for military service members, but for local civilian employees as well. If we are going to go forward with a rail system, it makes sense to connect this major employment center to the rail system.

Along with Councilmember Todd Apo, I introduced legislation that would make connecting the airport and Pearl Harbor a priority in the building of a Ho-nolulu rail system. This is an important measure that makes doing rail a little more sensible.

My proposal to connect the airport and Pearl Harbor, however, does not mean that Salt Lake Boulevard will never be connected to the rail system. Rather, it changes the construction priority. Salt Lake Boulevard still remains a part of the master-planned rail system for construction. The airport and Pearl Harbor area, however, will just be connected first in rail's initial operating segment.

I was not one of the 51 percent of the voters who went to the polls and voted for a rail system, but I respect our democratic process, and will focus on addressing the weaknesses in the rail project so that

we end up with a rail system that actually serves our community's needs.

One of the major mistakes the city has made in designing the proposed rail system is to opt for a route that goes down Salt Lake Boulevard instead of connecting the airport and Pearl Harbor. We need to correct this mistake now before we start preliminary engineering at the beginning of next year.

We need to correct this and other mistakes made with the city's rail planning, to bring those, like me, who opposed rail, to at least respect the decision to do rail even if we don't like it.

Honolulu City Councilman Charles K. Djou represents District 4. He wrote this commentary for The Advertiser.

City Council gets behind new airport route for rail

Mayor washes hands over rail route as Council pushes airport segment

STORY SUMMARY | [READ THE FULL STORY](#)

A bill to change the route for the city's planned \$5 billion rail transit to go to the airport instead of Salt Lake gained early approval by the City Council yesterday.

But while it appears a majority of the City Council supports the change in the 20-mile elevated system, City Councilman Romy Cachola is fighting the bill since the route would no longer go to Salt Lake, his district, in the first segment.

The Hannemann administration, which has long preferred the airport route, has not taken a strong position on this measure, leaving it as a City Council decision.

— [Laurie Au](#)

.....
FULL STORY >>

[By Laurie Au](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Nov 13, 2008

The City Council pushed forward legislation yesterday that would change the city's planned \$5 billion rail transit route to go to the airport, resurrecting a 2-year-old debate and angering advocates of the alignment going to Salt Lake.

WHAT'S NEXT

The City Council's Transportation and Public Works Committee will discuss Bill 64 to alter the rail transit route to go to Honolulu Airport

In a 7-1 vote, the City Council gave preliminary in depth at a meeting scheduled for 9:30 a.m. approval to Bill 64, which would alter the 20- next Thursday. mile transit route to go to the airport and to Pearl Harbor Naval Base instead of the Salt Lake residential area. The rest of the route, beginning from Kapolei and ending in Ala Moana, would stay the same.

The lone dissenting vote came from Councilman Romy Cachola, who represents Salt Lake and was the critical swing vote in 2005 that enabled the city to move ahead with the project. Council Chairwoman Barbara Marshall, who is undergoing treatment for cancer, was absent from the meeting.

The City Council typically passes bills in its preliminary stages to encourage more discussion, but Cachola called on the other councilmembers to stop the bill since it would break an alleged promise made to Salt Lake residents by Mayor Mufi Hannemann.

"The exact words of the mayor were, 'If you want Salt Lake, I will give it to you,'" Cachola said. "He said at the time we need a fifth vote, and it's me. I just want him to at least say that he made the commitment to the community and he should honor that."

New Transit Route Proposed



Many City Council members think that it would make more sense by suggesting to move the transit system towards the airport.

[[Watch](#)]



In a news conference last week, Hannemann was quick to emphasize that though he has always preferred the airport route, it is the City Council that is initiating this recent change.

The city administration is taking a hands-off approach to the alignment change. No city representative testified at the City Council meeting yesterday. Outside the Council chambers, city Transportation Services Director Wayne Yoshioka said the route is a decision left up to the City Council.

"(The mayor's) commitment, unlike what Councilman Cachola said, is that he would accept what segment the Council would adopt," Yoshioka said. "True to his word, he accepted that commitment, and right now, Councilman (Charles) Djou and Councilman (Todd) Apo are proposing to ... to designate the airport route first."

"This decision on a system this big and this important cannot be based on the political games that were going on a few years ago," Apo said. "It needs to be based on what is the best route for this system that the voters said to go and do. The very broad opinion is that the Pearl Harbor/airport route is the better route. That's what needs to guide this discussion."

The airport route would cost \$200 million in construction costs and could push back Hannemann's goal of groundbreaking late next year.

"There will be slight delay," but it would be minor at worst, Yoshioka said.

Djou, one of the councilmembers who introduced the bill, called on Hannemann to veto the bill if its approval would break a promise made to the community.

"Ultimately if the mayor gave his word, he should veto this measure," said Djou, who has consistently opposed rail until a majority of voters approved a ballot measure last week.

Weekly



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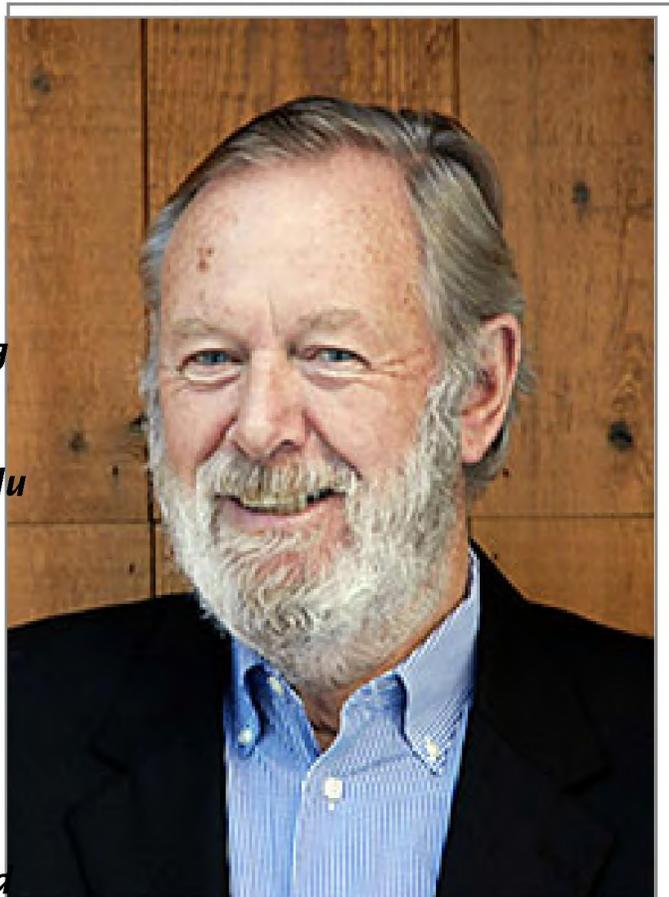
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It's never over

A veteran of the rail wars nurses his wounds and prepares for the battles that lie ahead.

by *Ragnar Carlson* / 11-12-2008

Cliff Slater has been fighting rail in Honolulu for a long, long time. He's squared



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off on the biggest policy question of the past half-century with a triumvirate of Honolulu mayors—Frank Fasi, Jeremy Harris and now Mufi Hannemann—and so far, he’s outlasted every one of them. And just because O’ahu voters have spoken in favor of the mayor’s rail plans doesn’t mean Slater is ready to throw in the towel. Honolulu Weekly spoke with him last weekend about his plans to carry the anti-rail fight forward.

What happened?

They just threw everything at us. The city had spent a lot of money before we even started Stop Rail Now in April, but in April, they really geared up. Taxpayer money was used to promote rail—\$2.6 million just through June, and then there were four more months after that. We don’t know the total number, but it would not surprise me if it was another million or so. They stopped two weeks short of election day. They kept protesting that the money was used for voter education, because it’s illegal for them to spend money influencing the vote.

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On top of that, there's the mayor's campaign funds, which served the same cause. And the other guys [Go Rail Go, Support Rail Transit, the Hawai'i Carpenters Union] all together, in the 30 days ending October 20, they spent another \$700 thousand. So it was just too much money on the other side. And then of course very important was the entrance of [Sen.] Dan Inouye.

You think that made a big difference?

Oh, yeah. When he gets up there and says, "Believe me,"...oh, shit [laughs]. One of the principal issues is the fact that everyone in the know fully understands that traffic congestion, even with rail, is going to be far worse than it is today. We got the city to admit to that this past Monday during a radio debate on KHVH. Unfortunately it happened during the podcast hour, but we have that available on our website ([\[honolulutraffic.com\]](http://honolulutraffic.com)). None of the people who are promoting rail will admit that in public normally, so I was astounded they fessed up. They'll twist and turn and do everything they can to not acknowledge that congestion will be higher with rail

campaign was when Panos [Prevedouros, the former mayoral candidate and engineering professor] said to the mayor, “Yes or no, doesn’t the city forecast that congestion will be far worse?” The mayor said, basically, “There you go again, twisting the language of the study.” He would not answer the question, and he never did, so it’s no wonder that in the *Advertiser* poll, 73 percent said rail would reduce congestion and shorten commutes. There seems to us to be a direct correlation between those two things: If you believe rail will shorten your commute, you’re for it. If you don’t think it will, you’re against it. So when Inouye gets up and says it’ll reduce traffic...it’s tough. When the respected fathers of the state get up there and lie about it, it’s tough.

So it was the money and the heavy-hitters.

We didn’t have the money, we didn’t have the firepower.

Well, the measure passed. What now?

We’re changing the name to Stop Rail Later. [laughs]

How much later? What can we expect from your side in the coming weeks and months?

The draft EIS [Environmental Impact Statement], all we've got is the front section. The crucial stuff is buried in the backup documents. The critical one is cash flow. We need that to tell whether they can do this or not. They've changed the claim of how much it would reduce traffic. But there's no backup to those claims. They haven't changed ridership number. The city claims ridership will increase from 6 to 7 percent, but that will reduce congestion by 20 percent, which doesn't make sense. The next thing is to examine the flaws, legal and logical, in the city's plan, and that's our next task. Last time around, in the early 1990s, we didn't start our work until after the EIS was out.

So can we expect that you are headed to court?

Not necessarily. It depends where events take us on this.

Look, the folks on the 'Ewa plain are looking for a reduction in congestion. If you complete the whole thing [as currently

planned], you're talking about \$7.5 billion. To do that and have no reduction in congestion, I think, is crazy. I don't see the logic. There are opportunities to do that, to reduce traffic congestion, a zillion of them, but the politicians won't do them.

Like what?

Like getting rid of uninsured motorists, who make up 15 percent of the cars on the road.

How do you do that?

Once a month, you have insurance companies provide license plates of all insured automobiles. Then that's matched up against registered vehicles. You send them a notice. They have 14 days to show proof of insurance. But it's a voting block.

I didn't hear the sprawl issue raised often in all of this.

Developers are putting too much money in this game. Two-thirds of the Support Rail Transit money came from Campbell Estate. Developers and builders are huge contributors to the rail effort.

Any personal plans to run for office?

I've had no interest in [elective] politics. As a politician, you can only really do what your constituents will let you do. It seems to me that the more important thing is to educate constituents.

We've got to go with where the events go. There may be some serious flaws in the city's plans and we have to find those and bring them out.

So it isn't over.

No, no, nothing like that.

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November 14, 2008

Quick action needed on 'Ewa regional plan

The City Council is refocusing its plan for the island's fastest-growing district, comprising communities between 'Ewa Beach and Ko Olina.

It's about time. This latest draft of the 'Ewa Development Plan has not been revised since 1997. It contains important areas of concern that should be reviewed by the public (see box) and city policymakers as the "Second City" builds out.

And after appropriate review, the council should adopt the plan without further delay.

The 'Ewa draft is one of eight regional plans for O'ahu that play an essential role in guiding the long-term development of the island.

These plans are evolving documents that translate broad land-use boundaries drawn by state planners into more specific blueprints. These guide decisions on zoning and building permits.

The 'Ewa draft includes:

- Better-connected road networks, with pedestrian walkways and bikeways to relieve some of the residents' reliance on car transport and create a more livable neighborhood.
- Increased height limits in the Kapolei civic center and mixed-use district and other provisions to encourage the development of an urban and suburban employment hub.
- A more detailed plan along the rail-transit corridor, now that the route and stop locations have been firmed up.

More than 40 percent of the area's residential development acreage is already zoned; the city crafted urban plans and agreements with those developers to ensure that builders provide the needed roads and other public facilities.

However, these individual agreements can't substitute for the broad view that acknowledges how separate neighborhoods affect each other. Second City dwellers can attest to that, having seen traffic-jammed 'Ewa residents cut through Kapolei to H-1.

That's why it's critical that this updated plan be implemented as soon as possible so that its provisions can guide the half of the development that remains. About 2,800 acres still require rezoning.

In addition, almost 1,600 acres are controlled by either the state Department of Hawaiian Home Lands or the Hawai'i Community Development Authority. Both agencies can exempt themselves from city zoning and land use regulations. But clearly it's in the best interest of all the residents if these government agencies closely coordinate their planning, regardless. The council should seek alignments between state projects and the vision for 'Ewa communities in this plan.

The economic downturn may complicate progress on some developments for the short term. But the doldrums ultimately will ease and the council must ensure that the plan's guidelines are reflected in zoning decisions made when markets again drive projects to completion.

YOUTH IMPORTANT IN VOTE SUPPORTING RAIL

Please stop saying that rail transit has "divided" the city along "geographic lines." All across O'ahu, rail transit received between 42 percent and 66 percent approval. Nowhere was rail decisively rejected. Indeed, the real dividing line was probably youth and wealth.

An example of this "division by zero" is the Nov. 12 column by Jerry Burris, "Common good gets short shrift" (Nov. 12). While supporting the rail project, Burris portrayed the people in the districts that voted "no" as selfishly opposing any project that does not serve their neighborhood. In fact, in Hawai'i Kai and Kane'ohe, four voters voted "yes" for every five voters voting "no." That shows noteworthy aloha and public spiritedness.

Turnout partly explains the result. Nearly 11,000 votes were cast in the Waipahu area (District 41), and rail won by 66 percent. Around Wai'anae (District 45), barely 5,000 voted and rail lost by 51 percent.

What the media missed was youth support for rail. College-age and even teenage volunteers were vital in the "Yes 4 Rail" campaign, knocking on doors and calling phones, because they saw rail transit as our first step toward the "green economy" that President-elect Barack Obama wants to build.

*Hannah Miyamoto
Manoa*

November 14, 2008

Switch to airport rail route could come sooner

By SEAN HAO

Advertiser Staff Writer

The City Council could reroute Honolulu's planned commuter train to Honolulu International Airport as early as Dec. 3, under a resolution introduced yesterday. That's about one month sooner than under a prior plan to alter the current Salt Lake route via a bill.

Unlike a bill, the resolution introduced by City Councilmen Charles Djou and Todd Apo would not need five affirmative votes or go to the mayor's office for possible approval. A resolution would only need to clear two votes, with the first possibly coming as soon as next Thursday's Transportation and Public Works Committee meeting.

The move could expedite the route change, which could reduce potential delays in the project. However, the accelerated timetable also reduces the amount of time proponents for a Salt Lake route have to rally support for their cause.

The change increases the project's estimated cost by about \$220 million, to \$4.5 billion. However, an airport route also could build support for the controversial project.

Under Bill 64, which passed first reading Wednesday, the route of the planned elevated commuter rail line from East Kapolei to Ala Moana would bypass Salt Lake in favor of the airport. Resolution 08-261 would accomplish the same purpose sooner, said Djou, who supports an airport route.

Normally, the route would need to be changed via a bill. However, the original ordinance authorizing the city to build the train allows the route to be set via a resolution, Djou said. The plan is to hold a committee hearing next week on both the bill and the resolution, and, barring legal issues, move forward with the resolution, he said.

The Salt Lake route was the product of a political compromise to win the support of Councilman Romy Cachola. Cachola, who represents the Salt Lake area, held the swing vote when the council approved the project in 2007. He threatened to vote against rail unless it was routed through Salt Lake.

Following last week's narrow victory for the rail ballot issue, Councilman Charles Djou said he would vote to support rail because voters support rail. Djou said he still opposes rail because he thinks it will cost too much.

The city plans to start work on the rail line in late 2009. Limited service between West Loch and Waipahu would start in late 2013, and full service from East Kapolei to Ala Moana would begin by the end of 2018.

A prolonged discussion about the rail's route could interfere with plans to begin construction in December 2009. The sooner the route is settled, the less likely the city will waste money studying the

wrong route, Djou said.

Cachola yesterday said he wasn't sure whether the city could legally change the route via a resolution.

AIRPORT ALIGNMENT WILL ADD COMMUTE TIME

Everyone understands that changing the transit alignment from the Salt Lake Boulevard route to the Honolulu International Airport route would cost an additional \$200 million, and mainly benefit folks who work at and around the airport at the expense of Salt Lake residents. What's not being discussed is the impact of changing the alignment on the train's primary customers, Leeward and Central commuters who will ride it to work every day.

The city's environmental impact statement says the airport route will take two minutes longer to traverse than the Salt Lake route, because it's longer and has more stations. No big deal, right?

Well, think about it. That's four minutes more per day per roundtrip, which is 20 minutes per week, which is 1,000 minutes per year. This "1,000-minute penalty" would be imposed on every single one of the tens of thousands of commuters from Kapolei, 'Ewa Beach, Waipahu, Mililani, Pearl City and 'Aiea who will be the train's core ridership.

Does it make sense to spend \$200 million more and make fare-paying and taxpaying commuters spend an extra 1,000 minutes a year sitting on the train, just to shift transit access from Salt Lake residents to airport workers?

Mark Taylor
Honolulu

RAIL IS A BETTER SOLUTION TO CUT DOWN ON TRAFFIC

The Honolulu Advertiser published a letter last Friday in which Mr. Bill Haig suggested a way to cut down on traffic.

By his plan, you would need your insurance card to buy gas, thereby eliminating uninsured motorists from the road. Isn't it weird to ask the gas merchants to enforce our insurance law? And it sounds like we're going after poor people.

In fact, the letter seems to suggest that people who cannot afford insurance are clogging the roads. How about the families who have insurance and a car for every family member? Should we limit every family to two vehicles? Just one for those with no dependents at home?

The train is not as aggressive as Mr. Haig's traffic solution. But trains are more becoming in a democracy.

Richard Schnittger
Honolulu

Don't displace people when building rail

All this hoo-ha about rail is starting to get overwhelming. I understand the importance of it and why we need it. I lived in the Bay Area for more than seven years and have taken advantage of the BART. It works wonders for commuters and tourists alike.

But the issue that gets me is, why do you have to interrupt people lives? Moving them out of their homes and businesses is totally unacceptable. I bet if rail went through some of the City Council members' homes or even big rail supporters' property, they would have a problem with it.

And depending on who you are speaking to, the time for completion for rail is outrageous. Former mayors Frank Fasi or Jeremy Harris should have started the process way back when. How does this benefit me and other frustrated commuters now? Or do I just look forward to this benefit for my kids?

Shandell Kovaloff-Coryell
Waipahu

'Yes' vote assumed rail route wouldn't change

How can the City Council get away with changing the rail route after the current proposed route was voted on? Oh, I know, the vote was only on whether we should have rail or not. It wasn't on the route. Tricky!

However, the proposed route entered into the decision by the voters. The current proposed route caters entirely to local residents, people going to work or for other business downtown. The airport route caters to visitors. If all the possible scenarios in connection with visitors and baggage handling are investigated, whether helped by friends or in other ways, it will be found that the train is not the most convenient way to go.

That right angle turn in the airport route is ridiculous; the train would have to come to almost a complete stop to negotiate it. I can see cars pouring over the edge and falling on houses below due to inattention by the train engineer or if something happens to the train engineer while traveling at speed.

At any rate, it appears that another vote is required to decide which route is preferred by the residents, since the first vote was only for either a "yes" or "no" on rail.

Ted Chernin
Aiea

Airport route will serve more rail commuters

Routing the proposed rail system through Salt Lake area would be reckless, unproductive and stupid. The industrial and business areas along Kamehameha Highway through Pearl Harbor and Nimitz Highway are where people go to and from work. The airport, too, will be served well because the route that makes sense will go through that area.

Moreover, many Salt Lake residents are opposed to the rail noise that would disturb their residential homes. I believe Mayor Mufi Hannemann is correct that the airport route is better.

Bernardo P. Benigno
Mililani

November 17, 2008

Best route for Hawaii rail still unclear

Study points to pros, cons of airport, Salt Lake, with neither one a clear winner

By SEAN HAO

Advertiser Staff Writer

An elevated commuter rail system that runs past Pearl Harbor and Honolulu International Airport would cost more to build and maintain, but carry more passengers and alleviate more traffic.

Those are among the findings in the city's draft environmental impact statement, which analyzes the effects of both routes. The recently released study is a key resource as the Honolulu City Council debates switching the route of the planned train from Salt Lake to the airport.

The current Salt Lake route was set in March 2007 in a political compromise between rail proponents and City Councilman Romy Cachola, who supported rail only if it went through Salt Lake. A change in political dynamics following the general election vote in support of rail, however, has increased pressure to switch the route to the airport.

Despite the political nature of the city's decision-making process, there are legitimate reasons for the city to pursue either route, said Peter Flachsbar, an associate professor of urban and regional planning at the University of Hawai'i-Manoa.

"It is very much a political decision — the routing — (but) if you open it up to more rational reasons, you can point out the pros and cons of either one," said Flachsbar, who favors a Salt Lake route.

Each alternative has advantages and disadvantages, according to the project's draft environmental study. While the Salt Lake route was chosen mainly because of a political compromise, it does serve more residences than an airport route. An airport route, however, would serve more employers.

Despite the different characteristics of Salt Lake and the airport district, there aren't major differences in the benefits and environmental impacts of either route.

cost difference: \$220M

The biggest advantage of a Salt Lake route is cost. The slightly shorter route is projected to cost \$4.28 billion to build, which is about \$220 million less than the airport route's \$4.50 billion price tag. That cheaper route is the only alternative that's affordable within the city's current financial plan, according to the city's draft environmental impact statement.

The city plans to start work on the rail line in late 2009. Limited service between West Loch and Waipahu would start in late 2013, and full service to Ala Moana would begin by the end of 2018.

Proponents of a Salt Lake route contend the train should serve a predominately residential area, which could help drive up ridership. Airport route proponents argue that the costlier route is more convenient for the broader Honolulu community, which also could generate higher ridership. Higher ridership means the system will require less in subsidies to pay for operations and maintenance.

"It's still our belief that the best route, if rail does go through, is the airport route," said Brennon Morioka, director of the state Department of Transportation.

"It drives up your ridership and it makes sense for future growth as well when you start talking about spurs to UH and Waikiki. Just having it go through the airport makes more sense."

overestimating usage

Because it would serve more employers, the airport route is expected to attract more riders. The city's draft environmental impact study predicts there will be 95,310 daily train riders on the airport route in 2030, which would be nearly 9 percent higher than a Salt Lake route. That would lead to a 23 percent reduction in daily vehicles hours of delay on Honolulu roads, which is slightly more traffic relief than predicted for a Salt Lake route.

Those projections would favor building an airport route. However, train ridership projections generally tend to be inaccurate and typically overestimate actual ridership.

According to an April report by the Federal Transit Administration, recently opened federally subsidized train projects are expected to carry, on average, just 74.5 percent of their originally forecast ridership.

Salt Lake resident and former area Neighborhood Board member Mike Taylor said the city's higher ridership forecast for the airport route doesn't make sense. That's because Salt Lake's higher residential population results in a higher potential ridership base. In addition, there is no timetable or financial plan for extending the train into tourist-popular Waikiki.

"I think that any person out there that looks at this issue dispassionately would instantly and immediately think the airport is a logical alternative," he said. "That's just thinking about it for five or 10 minutes. The first priority is to service commuters who are going to ride the train into town," Taylor said.

"That's how you maximize your ridership. Airport travelers with luggage are not going to be a real strong draw to ride the train. It's not convenient for them."

By skipping the airport and Pearl Harbor, the Salt Lake route would provide the most direct connection between East Kapolei and Ala Moana. An end-to-end trip on the airport route would take 42 minutes, or about 2 minutes longer. The shorter Salt Lake route is expected to generate a slight increase in through trips, but substantially fewer trips to Pearl Harbor Naval Base and the airport.

benefits to employers

In addition to improving airport access, the airport route would provide better access to major employers such as Pearl Harbor and Hickam Air Force Base. That could spur the federal government to provide additional money to offset the route's higher costs, said City Council member Charles Djou, who supports an airport route.

"I think by connecting the airport and Pearl Harbor you make a better case for federal funding," he said.

High gasoline prices coupled with newer, faster train systems are expected to result in a slight increase in the popularity of public transit once rail is built. However, it's unclear whether the train will spur workers at Pearl Harbor and in the airport area to leave their autos at home.

"The fact is that the parking at Pearl Harbor and Hickam is so plentiful," said Tom Strout, a Salt Lake Neighborhood Board member. "Why would the people give up their cars? I can see that the airport route would get used. I just don't believe it would be used as heavily" as the Salt Lake route, Strout said.

Beyond ridership and cost, the two routes have mixed impacts on the environment including land use, noise pollution and on archaeological resources.

Both routes will displace businesses and homeowners. However, the airport alternative would require about 6 percent fewer parcel acquisitions than the Salt Lake alternative. Overall, 193 properties will need to be fully or partially acquired to build the Salt Lake route, versus 182 properties on the airport route. Both routes would displace 20 homes.

Although it would affect fewer properties, the airport route would have more of an effect on historic and public park resources. The airport route would use a small, half-acre portion of the Pearl Harbor National Historic Landmark. The airport route also would have a larger effect on public park land at Ke'ehi Lagoon Beach Park. The guideway would pass 40 feet above 2.8 acres of the 72-acre park's mauka side.

can salt lake mobilize?

Among other effects, the fixed guideway would have a greater visual presence and generate more noise along Salt Lake Boulevard, but require the removal of significantly fewer street trees than an airport route.

Archaeological resources and burials are expected to be an issue with either alternative. However, the likelihood of encountering burials is slightly greater for the Salt Lake alternative than for the airport alternative.

The airport route also would result in slightly less air pollution and energy consumption, according to the city's draft environmental impact study.

Because of its lower costs, the Salt Lake route is slightly more cost-effective. However, either route would be cost-effective enough to qualify for federal funds, according to the draft environmental impact study created by New York consultant Parsons Brinckerhoff.

Just which route the city decides to take depends in part on how well Salt Lake and other communities can mobilize support on their behalf. The route also hinges on whether the city can secure more money to cover the airport route's higher cost.

RAIL SYSTEM'S STOPS SHOULD BE LIMITED

I voted for rail, but we need rail because no other means of transportation will work. I know of nothing that could convince me to leave my car and ride on mass transit in the same traffic, unless it was free.

Rail will not have to contend with the traffic. But to be effective, it must go past the major malls (Pearlridge, Ala Moana and Kahala) and college campuses (Leeward and Manoa). It must also go past Pearl Harbor — don't people realize how many people work there?

There also need to be stops downtown, not in Waikiki. People should transfer to buses after they are in town. The train should not be making stops like a bus all along the route; the stops should be limited.

The in-town people should still be using the bus. Anyone who watches the morning news can see the traffic bottleneck from H-1/H-2 merge to Aloha Stadium. The system should also run late into the evening, and it should also eventually reach Hawai'i Kai.

*Don Buote
Hawai'i Kai*

SALT LAKE ROUTE WOULD HELP TO CUT CONGESTION

I know there are lots of people out there who favor building a rail line to the airport over Salt Lake, but there are a few things that people need to consider.

Rail is being built to ease traffic congestion.

There are no residents at the airport; people going to and from the airport are not contributing to rush-hour traffic.

Salt Lake's population density is very high.

Current bus lines servicing the Salt Lake area can be diverted to other areas.

Tourists who "might" take rail will still have to get off at Ala Moana and get transportation to Waikiki.

Please don't lose sight of the original purpose and then complain that it's not working when the airport route is implemented.

Mark Shibata
Waipahu

UH-MANOA SHOULD BE ON INITIAL RAIL ROUTE

Now that rail has been approved, there's been a lot of talk about changing the route from Salt Lake to Pearl Harbor and the airport.

While it seems like Salt Lake greatly needs rail — there always seems to be a bottleneck right at Salt Lake regardless of the time of day — I think it's a no-brainer that Pearl Harbor takes priority over Salt Lake based on the huge population that commutes to Pearl Harbor every day.

The airport's all very nice and good, but if it's not connected to Waikiki, I'm not sure how useful it will be to visitors.

All this talk of Salt Lake and the airport misses the most glaring omission in our rail route, however. If there is one stop that should have been on the initial rail line, it's the University of Hawai'i-Manoa.

As we all know, traffic on O'ahu ebbs and flows according to the UH-Manoa calendar. UH-Manoa is currently on the map as part of "planned future extensions," but if the initial rail route is not well used then this spur will never be built and we will never know the full extent to which rail might be have been used by the community.

Jacquelyn Chappel
Honolulu

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Our Opinion

Reroute the rail transit line through Honolulu Airport

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Nov 18, 2008

AFTER a disgraceful sequence of political maneuvering, the City Council is drifting toward a change in the route of the planned Kapolei-to-Ala Moana rail transit to include Honolulu Airport instead of Salt Lake. The fact that the Council and Mayor Mufi Hannemann are leaning toward a preferable route provides no rationale for the squalid path that is taking them there.

The Salt Lake route was included in February of last year following a deal -- hinted at, contrived, real or imagined -- between Mayor Mufi Hannemann and Councilman Romy Cachola, who represents that neighborhood. Hannemann favored the airport route but agreed to the Salt Lake route after gaining Cachola's support.

According to a memorandum written by a Cachola aide, the mayor asked the Councilman in a meeting that included Salt Lake neighborhood leaders if he would vote in favor of rail transit if it were to "go through Salt Lake," and Cachola, who had pleaded with the mayor to run it through his neighborhood, responded that he would. The City Council approved the Salt Lake route two days later by a 5-4 vote and affirmed it a week later.

Cachola told the Star-Bulletin editorial board yesterday that he regarded Hannemann's statement as a "commitment" but not in return for Cachola's favorable vote, since he would have voted for the transit even if it were to bypass Salt Lake. "The exact words of the mayor were, 'If you want Salt Lake, I will give it to you.' He said at the time we need a fifth vote, and it's me."

"There was no deal," Cachola said yesterday. "I did not threaten to vote against it." His account essentially lets Hannemann off the hook for renegeing on a quid pro quo, even if he thought there

was one.

Councilman Todd Apo, an early supporter of the rail line, has been joined by Councilman Charles Djou, a rail opponent, in sponsoring a rerouting to the airport. The lone dissenting vote in last week's 7-1 vote was Cachola.

A draft environmental impact statement about the transit system found the two routes to be equal in cost-effectiveness, a key criterion that the Federal Transit Administration uses to evaluate projects proposed for federal funding. The federal agency has agreed to consider the city's funding request of \$1.2 billion for the project.

While adding \$200 million to the \$3.9 billion construction, the airport route would average an estimated 95,000 passengers a day, while the Salt Lake route would carry 88,000. The airport route would be useful to employees commuting to the airport and Pearl Harbor Naval Base.

"The higher cost of the airport alternative would be offset by the higher ridership and user benefits for that alternative," the environmental statement says. It also notes that the airport route would require less land conversion and fewer properties affected by its placement.



November 19, 2008

Mayor needs to lose persecution complex

By David Shapiro

The election is over and we're back to the usual melodrama at Honolulu Hale with Mayor Mufi Hannemann directing animosity every which way in the City Council's fight over whether to reroute the O'ahu rail system to the airport instead of through Salt Lake.

Hannemann favors the airport route recommended by city consultants and was never thrilled with the political compromise that produced the Salt Lake alignment.

But the measure to change the route back to the airport was co-sponsored by Councilman Charles Djou, one of the mayor's harshest critics on the council and a possible political rival.

While not disagreeing with the intent of the resolution proposed by Djou and Council Chairman Todd Apo, the mayor accused Djou of political motivations and trying to embarrass him. Something about their mutual interest in running for Congress.

Hannemann also took a whack the other way at Councilman Romy Cachola, who forced the routing of the rail line through his Salt Lake district when he held the swing vote on a divided council.

Cachola complained the mayor would break a promise to Salt Lake residents if he approves changing the route to the airport, which Hannemann dismissed by criticizing Cachola for supporting his opponent, Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi, in the election.

Why does it seem that discussion of policy differences at city hall always devolves into personal attacks instead of focusing on the substance of the issue — in this case whether the airport or Salt Lake is the best route for the initial phase of the \$4.5 billion rail line between Kapolei and Honolulu?

Why can't we take it at face value that Djou honestly thinks the airport is the better route and Cachola honestly thinks Salt Lake is the better route and judge it from there on the merits?

It's been Hannemann's pattern to attack alleged ulterior motives of those who differ with him.

The day after the election, when his hero, President-elect Obama, was extending olive branches to campaign opponents, the mayor was showing no such grace in victory. He was on a morning talk show continuing his attack on Kobayashi's motives for running against him.

Kobayashi, once a strong Hannemann supporter, says she ran because she was disappointed in his management of the city and thought she could do better.

But Hannemann accused her of running as a stalking horse for his potential rivals for governor in 2010 and to give Duke Bainum a free shot at her Manoa-Makiki council seat. Why would an experienced politician give up an uncontested council seat to offer herself up as a sacrificial lamb to the ambitions of

others?

Former Gov. Ben Cayetano had been publicly of the opinion that rail is a bad solution for Ho-nolulu since before Hannemann was in politics, but Hannemann reacted to his opposition to the current plan by taking a slap at his wife Vicky and saying he comes from an anti-rail household.

The mayor accused Senate President Colleen Hanabusa of using scare tactics and protecting corporate interests when she tried to hold the city to a promise it made to her constituents to close the Waimanalo Gulch landfill.

Hannemann is a talented politician with the potential to go as far as he wants in his pursuit of higher office.

But he needs to recognize that everything isn't always about Mufi. If he doesn't lose the biggest political persecution complex this side of Frank Fasi, it could become the same Achilles' heel for him as it was for Fasi, who never made it past mayor.

David Shapiro, a veteran Hawai'i journalist, can be reached by e-mail at dave@volcanicash.net. His columns are archived at www.volcanicash.net. Read his daily blog, Volcanic Ash, at volcanicash.honadvblogs.com.

Under the Sun

City politics roughens the road to rail transit

[By Cynthia Oi](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Nov 19, 2008

A grocery store owner in Volcano recently observed that the only thing that seemed to matter on Oahu was rail.

At the time, the specific topic was the vote on whether it should be built, but through the years she'd seen the headlines in the Honolulu newspapers she sells going on and on about cost, funding and routes.

From her casual reading, she concluded that the issue's constant companion was "all politics, yeah?"

Tempting as it would be to agree fully, it wouldn't be fair to wrap political motivations so tightly around the project. There is at least some thought for public welfare bundled somewhere in there.

Still, each step of the process has been riddled with conflict and, make no mistake, every step taken from here on down the track will prompt the same.

Not that there's anything wrong with that. The "largest public works project in the history of Oahu" -- as rail is often and somewhat ominously described -- ought to be fought over, argued and altered to produce the best system possible. The cumulative political pushing and shoving, however, has almost reached a tipping point.

If economic failure doesn't hijack the project, battle fatigue will, not among politicians who relentlessly throw stink bombs at each other, but among the people who are paying for it both in taxes and confidence, which have always been in short supply when it

comes to local government.

A mere two days after voters approved a ballot measure to back the project, the City Council decided to change the rail route through Salt Lake to run past the airport instead. Advocates of the Salt Lake pathway saw the Council's move as a bait-and-switch tactic; its chief proponent, Councilman Romy Cachola, cried foul.

Although the revision bloomed seemingly quickly and spontaneously, backroom chatter had the seed planted beforehand. True or not, its proponents are an odd-couple of Council members: Todd Apo, an ally of Mayor Mufi Hannemann's, and Charles Djou, a relentless opponent of rail and all things Mufi.

The mayor, who favored the airport route at the outset, claimed clean hands, saying the drive for the airport route came from the Council, not from him. Nonetheless, he urged the Council to move fast, sounding the alarm that the project could be delayed, even though his transportation honcho later said the change would be a "slight" setback.

Cachola, who by most accounts had won the route through his district in exchange for his approval of the project, called the mayor on reneging on a promise made to a Salt Lake contingent, and denied there had been a tit-for-tat.

Meanwhile, Djou had his own storyline going. Since voters had said yes to rail, he declared, he would humbly bow to their will. But, he said, he wanted rail "done right," and doing so would mean going past the airport. Then he added his own twist. If the mayor really wanted to keep his promise, Djou allowed, Hannemann could veto the change.

For crying out loud. If this round of political machinations was a unique event and not the latest chapter in a tiresome drama, perhaps the public would stand for it. From funding squabbles to tussles over technology, the rail project has hit stops at almost every turn.

The public may not be able to tolerate much more and politicians who are more attentive in their careers could find themselves left at the station. Rail will affect population distribution, housing and commercial development, the environment, traffic and Honolulu's economy for decades to come. To be successful, it will need the public's confidence that their leaders can deal straight.

Cynthia Oi can be reached at coi@starbulletin.com

Find this article at:
http://www.starbulletin.com/editorials/20081119_City_politics_roughens_the_road_to_rail_transit.html

MidWeek

More of Mufi's Rail Deceptions

November 19, 2008

By Rick Hamada



Photo from Rick Hamada

City Councilman Romy Cachola is upset that he was deceived about the rail project.

Well, Romy, welcome to the club.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann shook the hands of Cachola and Salt Lake representatives in promising the rail route would run along Salt Lake Boulevard. He needed Cachola's vote, and the rail re-route from the airport to his district raised allegations of political gladhanding. It clearly was a political maneuver that became the calling card of the entire project.

Just as the decision to award the route to Salt Lake was a little smelly, the ballots weren't even dry when the mayor, and a select group of councilmembers, flipped Romy and Salt Lake the bird and re-re-routed the rail back to the airport.

I mean, really, is anybody surprised?

Romy made a backdoor deal and got hit in the okole when it was slammed shut by the mayor. As they say, if you are going to play in the mud, you're going to get dirty. Cachola put the mayor on the line with threats of pulling his vote, and Mufi let Cachola think that he got rail for Salt Lake Boulevard.

{embed="elements/box_ad"}

I don't think there was one fleeting moment when the mayor knew if rail got the vote that he would honor his agreement.

Councilman Cachola is just one in a long line of those who feel betrayed by the rail process. First and foremost, the whole propagandistic indoctrination of the people with ad nauseum pro-rail commercials ranks as one of the most blatant and outrageous voter-manipulation episodes

ever seen in Hawaii. The combination of taxpayer money and special interest money was a staggering amount.

There was a paucity of fairness to begin with regarding this project, but the heavy-handed promotion of the project paid for with your tax dollars remains a bad taste in the mouth of many. Imagine a scoop of Limburger cheese with kim chee on a moldy piece of bread. That combination would be more digestible.

I find it interesting that some of the more vocal critics of the rail project have thrown their support behind the rail project. The rationale is, "The voters have spoken." Yes, vote for rail passed. But it was less than fair, and using taxpayer money on marketing remains outrageous. There is a 45-day period to analyze and debate the contents of the draft environmental impact statement. This is the time to demand an equitable assessment of the details. There should be a petition to the Federal Transit Authority for precise oversight of the public process to ensure

fairness and equality. Save the federal involvement, I am not confident that the discussion of the DEIS will be above reproach.

All the reasons for opposing this project exist. The route, the cost, the impact and the alleviation of congested roadways still remain salient and relevant issues.

{embed="elements/google_ad336x280"}

I believe this multi-billion dollar project is a wonderful vehicle to enrich a few at the expense of the many. This is a make-work project to keep a select group of

residents employed while being subsidized by their neighbors. This is not an economic stimulus project. It is a governmental redistribution of wealth project.

I understand the polls have spoken. I respect the process. But I don't think the process was respectful to us. The DEIS process provides for additional public input. The ramifications of this project demand precise public discussion without flagrant favoritism from either side. The public deserves the opportunity to participate in this ongoing process and reserves the right to act accordingly if revelations about the project compels them back to the polls. Remember, there are tens of thousands of signatures on the Stop Rail Now ballot that could be expanded, thereby placing the question of rail on the 2010 ballot.

The rail project is not a done deal.

MidWeek

Ready For A Rail Referendum

November 19, 2008

By Larry Price

Government officials and elected politicians have been working to craft an Airline Passengers' Bill of Rights for some time. Members of the task force were in agreement that at bare minimum they would come up with a definition of what constitutes an "extensive on-ground delay."

According to an apologist on the task force, they have not been able to craft a definition, and therefore no bill of rights for airline passengers is forthcoming, because "the airline industry doesn't want anything that is remotely enforceable."

This also applies to airports that might have been required under a new federal mandate to provide additional services for passengers stranded aboard airlines going nowhere.

For a lot of taxpayers who have never been stranded at an airport, on the tarmac in a hot airplane, this story must be totally boring. On the other hand, if you have never driven a car on our freeway system and gotten stuck in dead-stop traffic, then you probably don't care about alternative rail-transit systems either.

{embed="elements/box_ad"}

I have been stranded on the tarmac for a couple of hours and didn't come away wanting to sue anyone, simply because the airplane had a mechanical problem that needed to be corrected before the flight could proceed safely. The pilot apologized, and no one was served any refreshments, but they left the restroom doors unlocked. The choices were simple: yell and scream threats, demand that the plane leave immediately, safety be damned, or just sit there and be grateful they caught the mechanical problem on the ground and not in the air, which could have been life-threatening.

It's similar to what people who live on the North Shore or Leeward Oahu experience, where the main feature of the mass transit scheme is one way in and one way out.

If there is a critical traffic accident, there is no way around the problem, and tooting your horn is not going to make the investigation go any faster, even if you have an urgent appointment. You just are stranded, whether it's on the tarmac or asphalt, it's all by the fell clutch of

circumstance.

What's interesting to note about the dilemma gripping the tarmac task force, they are stumped by trying to define a single word: lengthy. In this particular case, a simple dictionary definition is not sufficient because there are legal ramifications to the definition that could cost the airports or airlines money to remedy the situation.

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The lesson is simple. When words like "fairness" and "equality" are used by lawyers, judges and members of task forces, they get analyzed carefully, and the conversation more often than not devolves into considerations of consequence.

When public opinion is presented, notions of fairness, equality, liberty and justice become infinitely malleable, and conclusional, rather than analytic. This is a fine example of what normal taxpayers have to live with, rhetorical inflation, loquacity and impenetrable jargon, become the occupational hazard of any kind of governmental adjudication. One of my personal favorites is the court ruling on election jargon: Vote "yes" if you mean "no," and a blank vote is a "no" vote.

It's probably a good idea to not expect anything from the tarmac task force because "lengthy" has nothing to do directly with goodness and badness, because neither has anything to do with who is going to determine each traveler's needs and interests.

So what? Well, when a traveler makes a decision of how best to get from point A to point B, whether it be by car, steel on steel, rubber on concrete or air, the decision is made based on options and the possible consequences attached to them. Said another way, it has nothing to do with the definition of lengthy. Lengthy is probably in the eyes of the beholder.

When all is said and done, this task force will propose a law based on "politics." This suggests that the members of the task force will decide on what is "lengthy" in exactly the same way that legislators and other politicians decide what policies to advocate or oppose.

Find this article at: http://www.midweek.com/content/columns/therightprice_article/ready_for_a_rail_referendum1/

November 20, 2008

City accepting comments from public until Jan. 7

Advertiser Staff

Residents and others concerned about the city's planned elevated commuter rail have until Jan. 7 to provide comments about the project's environmental impacts.

That's when the 45-day public comment period for the project's draft environmental impact statement will end. An electronic version of the 400-plus-page document is available at www.honolulustransit.org. The document also is expected to be available for inspection at public libraries next week.

The city will accept comments on its Web site, or via mail addressed to the Honolulu Department of Transportation Services, 3rd Floor, 650 S. King St., Honolulu, HI 96813.

The public also can provide comments at five upcoming community meetings. The dates of those meetings have not been set yet, but the first is scheduled to occur early next month. The city expects the final environmental impact statement will be released next summer and construction to begin in December 2009.

November 20, 2008

Rail route to airport seen as better for Honolulu economy

Impact study finds less redevelopment in Salt Lake option

By SEAN HAO

Advertiser Staff Writer

A commuter rail route that connects to Honolulu International Airport could spur more economic development near train stations than a Salt Lake route, according to the city's recently released draft environmental impact study.

Members of the Honolulu City Council today are scheduled to debate switching the planned \$4.28 billion train route from Salt Lake to the airport in an effort to attract more riders.

One of the biggest beneficiaries of rail-related economic activity could be the state's main airport, which owns much of the land adjacent to the proposed route and near two planned airport-area stations. Honolulu's commuter train is expected to drive up land values and real estate investments around those stations, potentially generating more rent from redeveloped industrial land.

However, a slightly longer airport route comes with an added cost of about \$220 million, which proponents for an airport route contend could come from federal or state coffers.

But so far, state officials have expressed no interest in helping to pay.

"I don't think the state in general has any funds," said state Transportation Director Brennon Morioka. "That was the whole intent of the (added general excise) tax. That was supposed to be the main source for revenue for both building and operating the rail system regardless of where the route went."

The state's recalcitrance is likely to be an increasingly sore point for the city, which is seeking the return of excess transit taxes now going to the state.

A half-percentage-point surcharge was added to the excise tax for O'ahu residents beginning in January 2007 to pay for the elevated rail system linking East Kapolei to Ala Moana. The state collects the tax, takes a 10 percent cut for administrative costs and gives the rest to the city. The administrative costs, however, are proving to be much lower than 10 percent and the excess — so far estimated at more than \$20 million — is going into the state's general fund.

Many city officials want some of that money back. Councilman Gary Okino said the state should be more willing to help pay for an airport route.

"They should participate because they're really going to benefit from this," he said. "I can see building some commercial center within that (airport) parking structure. I can see some potential for commercial development."

The city plans to start work on the rail line in late 2009. Limited service between West Loch and Waipahu would start in late 2013, and full service to Ala Moana would begin by the end of 2018. One of the last major decisions is whether the route should go through Salt Lake or run near the airport. A commuter rail system that runs past Pearl Harbor Naval Base and the

airport would cost more to build and maintain, but carry more passengers and alleviate more traffic, according to the city's draft environmental study.

The current Salt Lake route was set in March 2007 in a political compromise between rail proponents and City Councilman Romy Cachola, who supported rail only if it went through Salt Lake.

Both the airport and Salt Lake routes have a station near Aloha Stadium and a station at Middle Street. Between those two points, the Salt Lake route travels down Salt Lake Boulevard with a station at the Ala Lilikoi Street intersection. The route continues down Pukoloa Street through Mapunapuna.

The airport route runs makai from Aloha Stadium down Kamehameha Highway toward Nimitz Highway with stations near the Arizona Memorial and Pearl Harbor. At the airport, the route turns onto Aolele Street and heads diamondhead until Lagoon Drive. This route has a station in the interisland terminal/post office area and at the corner of Lagoon Drive and Aolele Street.

Single landowner

Potential stations near military property at the Arizona Memorial and Pearl Harbor are considered to have no transit-related economic development potential. Closer to the airport, the increased mobility generated by rail transit could eventually spur higher-density housing and the development of mixed use, live-work-play communities, said Toru Hamayasu, chief of the city's transportation planning division.

That's because much of the industrial area around the airport stations belongs to one landowner: the state. Those properties are tied up in leases that have durations that range from 30 days to 30 years. In comparison, land surrounding the Salt Lake station is owned by a variety of private owners and includes mid- and high-rise condos, a shopping center and the Moanalua Public Library.

"When their lease is up, there's a potential (to redevelop airport land)," Hamayasu said. "On the other hand, in Salt Lake those are individual owners, so unless they decide to consolidate, it's going to be tough" to redevelop, Hamayasu added.

"With a big landowner, whether it's the state or a private land owner, it's easier to deal with," he said.

In contrast to the airport route, a Salt Lake route, which also would pass by government lands, could potentially benefit more private landowners. And unlike the airport route, one major landowner along the Salt Lake route is willing to help defray the costs.

Mapunapuna plan

Under current plans, the proposed commuter rail will cut through Mapunapuna without stopping. However, Massachusetts-based HRPT Properties Trust has said it's willing to provide money and/or land to bring a train station to Mapunapuna, possibly at the intersection of Pukoloa and Ahua streets.

"We're willing to work with state and local government on that," said Tim Bonang, spokesman for HRPT, which is Hawaii's largest private owner of industrial land. "It would alleviate some of the (parking) congestion and make the area more accessible to the workforce."

Placing a station in Mapunapuna would be difficult, according to the city. That's because of the engineering challenge created as the elevated track transitions from the higher Salt Lake area into the low-lying Mapunapuna area, then swings makai to connect with a station at Middle Street.

HRPT, which owns 150 acres of Mapunapuna land, said it has no plans to redevelop Mapunapuna. However, Mapunapuna, like the airport, is considered a candidate for redevelopment. Still, neither the Salt Lake nor the airport route contains ready-to-develop empty fields, so the overall economic development potential for both areas is relatively low compared with undeveloped portions of the route, such as East Kapolei.

Even if the train goes to the airport, many people will not want to live in the highly industrialized and potentially noisier area, said Peter Flachsbar, an associate professor of urban and regional planning at the University of Hawai'i-Manoa. The population-dense suburban Salt Lake-area is likely to attract more residents and riders, which could lead to more economic development than the airport area, he said.

"I think the Mapunapuna area would be a more likely candidate" for transit-oriented development, Flachsbar said. "I don't see the potential at the airport. Who wants to live there?"

Warren Luke, a partner with Loyalty Associates, which owns several mixed-use and industrial parcels near the airport, said that area is ripe for redevelopment, perhaps into mixed-use office space. However, the economic downturn could dampen such investments for the next several years. Some of the airport's land was purchased from Loyalty via condemnation proceedings, Luke said.

"A lot of those warehouses were built 50 years ago," he said. "There's land available for them to build without condemning. It makes a lot of sense, if you're expanding offices. The hard part is, if you look at your crystal ball, is now a good time to build office space?"

Potential airport developers face other hurdles including height limits and other restrictions. Buildings along the flight paths face height limits. However, projects near the airport viaduct generally are not subject to limits, said Morioka, the state transportation director.

However, the airport is required to provide preferences to tenants that have ties to aviation, Morioka said. That's because the use of airport land is governed by the Federal Aviation Administration, which helps provide funds for the acquisition, maintenance and operations of airport lands.

"If rail does go there, we would definitely take a look at what those opportunities are," Morioka said. "We would have to look at it in terms of a holistic approach through a master plan for Honolulu International Airport and then have buy-in from the FAA."

Ultimately, higher rents from airport lands could benefit residents by lowering the cost of airport activities.

"The more revenue potential that we have for our state airport system, the lower fees we're able to charge the airlines (and) rental car agencies," Morioka said. "The ultimate trickle-down effect is for consumers to have lower costs of goods."

Additional Facts

Meeting today

The City Council's Transportation and Public Works Committee today is scheduled to discuss the route of Honolulu's planned train. The committee meets at 9:30 a.m. in the Committee Meeting Room at Honolulu Hale.

Letters to the Editor

For Thursday, November 20, 2008

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Nov 20, 2008

Rail route games look like child's play

I remember when our neighborhood gang would set rules for street games and then the bigger guys would change the rules in the middle of the play. We would say, "That's chicken."

Look at all the people who are against the city leaders and City Councilman Charles Djou trying to alter the rail route through Damon Tract instead of Salt Lake and Mapunapuna ("Rail route changes trigger harsh words," Star-Bulletin, Nov. 17).

Councilman Romy Cachola and the determined members of the Salt Lake/Aliamanu/Foster Village Neighborhood Board spent lots of time planning the Salt Lake Boulevard route. Those against the plan now are throwing a monkey wrench into the rules. That's chicken.

Len Withington Jr.
Makiki



Proposal for Honolulu's mass transit system stalls in committee

Posted: Nov 20, 2008 05:10 PM

Updated: Nov 20, 2008 06:22 PM



By Mari-Ela David - [bio](#) | [email](#)

SALT LAKE (KHNL) - A proposal to change the route of Honolulu's mass transit system, stalls in committee.

Thursday, the City's Transportation Committee deferred the issue until January seventh.

That's the day the public comment period for the rail project's Draft Environmental Impact Statement is over.



Romy Cachola

The idea is to give the public more time to weigh in on whether rail should go through the Honolulu International Airport instead of Salt Lake.

The rail debate over the airport versus Salt Lake hits a sore spot for Salt Lake residents who voted in favor of the mass transit system.

"I feel betrayed."

As the Transportation and Public Works Committee decides to hold off on a decision until the City is done gathering public input, Salt Lake's Councilmember, Romy Cachola asks a loaded legal question.



Tony Soon Fah

"Is there a possibility of anyone who has been deceived or think they've been deceived believing the rail route would go to Salt Lake, rather than the airport to file a case to invalidate the result of the ballot question?" said Cachola.

"There's always a possibility of a lawsuit. I think today is the last day for a challenge on the election."

Despite Cachola's preference, election numbers indicate Salt Lake residents did not overwhelmingly support trains running through their neighborhood.



Todd Apo

At the Salt Lake District Park polling place, 531 voters said yes, 368 said no.

But at Salt Lake Elementary School, the vote was nearly even.

Same thing at Radford High, where the margin was close.

"The reason for the rail is for the residents. It's for the people. It should not be for the businessmen, and obviously, by running it through the airport route, it's for the businessmen," said Salt Lake resident Tony Soon Fah.



"There's a large amount of our residents that work the airport area, but also there are a large number of local travelers," said Todd Apo, Committee vice chair.

Transportation officials say the airport route will bring in 7,000 more riders than Salt Lake, but will cost at least \$220-million more.

The city plans to hold five community meetings to gather input on the rail project.

Dates and locations have not yet been determined.

But transportation leaders say the meeting will be sometime in early December.



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Government

"Betrayal"

By Andrew Pereira

STORY SUMMARY>>>

Deception and betrayal - those are just two of the words being used by Salt Lake residents as the Honolulu City Council considers changing the route of the city's \$4.28 billion elevated rail line to the airport.

"I voted for it because it ran through Salt Lake as I heard from many other people speaking - that's why they voted for it," said Rachel Glanstein, a member of Neighborhood Board 18, which represents the Salt Lake community.

Glanstein was among several Salt Lake residents who testified Thursday in front of the Council's Transportation and Public Works Committee. The committee is considering two proposals that would divert rail to the airport, Pearl Harbor and Hickam Air Force Base instead of Salt Lake Boulevard.

Others like Roland Bueno said changing the route would constitute another broken promise by the city.

"I feel as if I was betrayed especially (since) the administration took away the \$30 million to complete the Salt Lake Boulevard road widening," said Bueno.

The city removed funding for the widening project after the Council voted in favor of sending rail through Salt Lake Boulevard. The city plans on finishing improvements to the busy roadway during construction of the elevated rail line.

"It was supposed to be done when I was five years old, Glanstein said of the widening project.

“That was twenty-five years ago.”

However the two councilmen who have become the driving force behind the proposed route change remain steadfast in their support. In fact, Todd Apo and Charles Djou introduced a measure that would make it easier for the Council to approve the detour, estimated to cost an additional \$226 million.

Instead of a proposed city ordinance, Apo and Djou have shifted gears by signing onto a resolution [\(08-261\)](#). That’s considered key since a resolution only needs to pass one reading before heading to the full Council.

“When you compare the two routes,” said Apo, “it is I believe better to do the route through the airport with the spur to Salt Lke as opposed to vice versa.”

Djou said changing the route to the airport would be critical to Hawaii’s economy since it would serve both tourists and members of the military, two groups that contribute a large amount of tax revenue to the state.

In the end, Committee Chairman Nestor Garcia deferred both proposals that could force rail to the airport.

Garcia said it would be unfair to move either measure forward until the public has had a chance to comment on the city’s Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The document, released last month, analyzes the impact of the rail line on Oahu’s communities.

Garcia said both proposals could be heard by his committee on January 8, one day after the public comment period on the DEIS is scheduled to end.

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

Story Updated: Nov 20, 2008 at 6:12 PM HST

Find this article at:

<http://www.khon2.com/news/government/34854199.html>

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November 21, 2008

City delays action on rail route

Committee to discuss changing Salt Lake line to airport in January

By *SEAN HAO*

Advertiser Staff Writer

Honolulu City Council members yesterday deferred action on measures that would change the elevated commuter rail route to Honolulu International Airport.

One of the last major decisions facing the city on the multibillion-dollar rail project is whether the route should go through Salt Lake as planned, or run next to Pearl Harbor Naval Base and the airport.

Some council members had sought to have final approval of the route change as early as Dec. 3, and an expedited route change could reduce potential delays in the project. However, the accelerated timetable also reduces the amount of time proponents for a Salt Lake route have to rally support for their cause.

The council's Transportation and Public Works Committee was expected to approve the change yesterday. Now the committee doesn't plan to hear the measures until Jan. 8 at the earliest, which could push any final approval until later in January or sometime in February. Committee Chair Nestor Garcia said the delay will allow residents more time to voice their opinions on which route the train from East Kapolei to Ala Moana should take.

The new deadline coincides with a Jan. 7 deadline for public comments on the project's draft environmental impact statement.

"I do not want to presume that this committee will forge ahead and in effect this is a *fait accompli* without giving the public an opportunity to weigh in on the project via the draft EIS," Garcia said.

The city plans to start work on the rail line in late 2009. Limited service between West Loch and Waipahu would start in late 2013, and full service to Ala Moana would begin by the end of 2018. Changing the route would break a commitment by the city to the Salt Lake community, which successfully lobbied for the current train route in early 2007. That's when City Councilman Romy Cachola, who represents Salt Lake, cast a swing vote to keep the rail project alive, if it went through Salt Lake rather than the airport.

A commuter rail system that runs past Pearl Harbor and the airport would cost more to build and maintain, but carry more passengers and alleviate more traffic, according to the city's recent draft environmental study. The change would add about \$220 million to the project's \$4.28 billion price tag.

Five people testified in favor of a Salt Lake route, while no one testified in favor of the airport route at yesterday's hearing. Several said they felt betrayed by the effort to switch the route.

The suburban Salt Lake area could generate higher ridership at a lower cost, said Salt Lake resident Tony Soon Fah.

"I voted for rail because it was passing through Salt Lake and now we shouldn't even be having this discussion here today about passing it through the airport," he said.

In addition to route, unsettled questions relating to procurement pose a risk to plans to begin construction in about a year.

The question is whether the city can legally solicit bids to begin construction of the \$4.3 billion train.

The committee passed a bill that would remove a technical glitch preventing the solicitation of proposals to begin construction of the first phase.

The original ordinance authorizing the city to build the train requires the administration to seek council approval before soliciting proposals to build the train system. That was added as an attempt to keep the council and public informed about key project details. However, that provision also violates state procurement laws, according to the state Procurement Office.

Bill 63 would eliminate that provision and allow the city administration to seek construction proposals without council approval, but that issue also isn't expected to be resolved until sometime early next year. Also, the city cannot begin preliminary engineering on the project until questions about the route are settled, said Wayne Yoshioka, director of the city's Department of Transportation Services.

"Right now we think we can still break ground at the end of 2009," Yoshioka said. "It really depends on how things move once we're back on track again."

"We're trying to accommodate these slight delays, but the delays are adding up."

RAIL TRANSIT

Airport route in the lead despite procedural delay

[By Laurie Au](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Nov 21, 2008

A City Council committee postponed a decision yesterday to change the city's proposed \$5 billion rail transit line to go to the airport instead of Salt Lake.

A majority of the City Council members still expressed their support for the airport route, but will wait until January when the city finishes receiving public comment on an environmental report of the project.

The public comment period ends on Jan. 7 on the city's massive draft environmental impact statement, which compares the airport and Salt Lake alternatives for the 20-mile elevated route from Kapolei to Ala Moana.

Councilman Nestor Garcia, chairman of the Transportation and Public Works Committee, said the Council will likely take up the issue again after hearing comments on the report.

City Council Chairman Todd Apo and Councilman Charles Djou, who introduced the change, had hoped to move the bill quickly through the City Council for approval to minimize any delay or cost impact. But city Transportation Services Director Wayne Yoshioka testified at the hearing yesterday that an approval in January should not cause any significant effect.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON DRAFT IMPACT STATEMENT

The city will accept public comment on a draft environmental impact statement on its proposed \$5 billion rail transit system:

- » **Dec. 6**, from 9 to 11 a.m. at Kapolei Hale, 1000 Uluohia St.
- » **Dec. 8**, from 6 to 8 p.m. at Neal Blaisdell Center, Hawaii Suites, 777 Ward Ave.
- » **Dec. 9**, from 6 to 8 p.m. at Salt Lake District Park, 1159 Ala Lilikoi Place.
- » **Dec. 10**, from 6 to 8 p.m. at Filipino Community Center, 94-428 Mokuola St.
- » **Dec. 11**, from 6 to 8 p.m. at Bishop Museum, 1525 Bernice St.

Visit www.honolulutransit.org to download a copy of the report and for more information.

The airport alternative is expected to generate higher ridership, according to the city's report, but will cost about \$200 million more in construction. The plan is for the city to eventually build a spur to Salt Lake Boulevard, but not within the first segment.

The city administration has remained unusually hands-off on the proposed airport change. Mayor Mufi Hannemann has long favored the airport alignment, but compromised for the Salt Lake stop to gain the support of Councilman Romy Cachola.

"We see that the airport alignment does have more benefit," Yoshioka said. "Our position is that we will respect the decision that the Council makes."

Apo said the city could be keeping mum for political reasons. The proposal has created an uproar among some Salt Lake residents, including about a half-dozen who testified yesterday in opposition, after an alleged promise Hannemann made to Salt Lake community leaders last year.

"I find it peculiar that the administration hasn't taken a position," Apo said. "I can make some guesses as to the political reasons why. ... As far as I can see, the best system includes the airport, and as much as the administration is saying, 'This isn't our position,' in the past they have testified to that."

Find this article at:

http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20081121_airport_route_in_the_lead_despite_procedural_delay.html

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November 23, 2008

42 of Honolulu's bus drivers fired over past 5 years; 410 penalized

But O'ahu Transit chief says disciplinary figures aren't unusual

By *SEAN HAO*

Advertiser Staff Writer

O'ahu Transit Services Inc., operator of TheBus, has fired 42 drivers and suspended 410 more during the past five years.

The disciplinary actions include two recent high-profile cases involving a driver arrested on suspicion of driving while under the influence and another caught on video playing a hand-held game.

While those two incidents were embarrassing for the city's bus service, they are isolated incidents, according to OTS and the city, which pays the private nonprofit company to run TheBus. Most disciplinary actions during the five years were for preventable accidents, attendance problems, driving without a valid commercial driver's license and other undisclosed reasons.

Whether the disciplinary problems at TheBus are high or low is difficult to determine, since there are no national numbers on public-transit bus driver disciplinary actions. However, the number of disciplinary actions taken against drivers over the five years is not unusual given the scope of operations at TheBus, which employs about 955 drivers and uses 525 buses, said Roger Morton, OTS president and general manager.

The disciplinary record shows that TheBus is doing a good job enforcing its policies, he said.

"Running a bus system is a tough business — there's a lot of exposure," Morton said. "We try to run the best service we can, but we're not perfect."

From Sept. 27, 2003, through Sept. 26 of this year, bus drivers lost nearly 7,194 days to suspensions, according to an Advertiser review of five years of bus driver disciplinary records.

OTS would not disclose the identities of disciplined drivers.

Typically, the identities of discharged city workers, including police officers, are public. However, OTS maintains that it is a private company not subject to the state's open-records law. Additionally, OTS said federal law prevents disclosure of details surrounding policy violations that may have involved drug use or some instances of sexual harassment.

The city, which subsidizes about \$130 million of TheBus' \$160 million in annual costs, has access to bus driver disciplinary records under terms of its contract with OTS. However, the city said it does not have bus driver disciplinary records.

Breaking it down

According to what was released by OTS, 42 drivers were let go during the past five years. That includes 30 regular employees and 12 new employees terminated during probation. Many resigned during the termination process.

Just how that compares with Mainland public bus systems is unclear. At the San Francisco Municipal Railway bus system, the number of fired bus and street-car operators grew from 43 in fiscal 2007 to 55 the next year, with most firings tied to safety violations, according to a September article in the San Francisco Chronicle. TheBus, which only carries about a third of the 700,000 daily riders carried by the San Francisco bus system, fired 17 drivers in 2007 and eight so far this year.

Those figures include a 36-year bus driver arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence in August. That driver is no longer employed by TheBus, Morton said. The incident was the first time a driver was arrested for driving under the influence and only the second time a bus driver has been investigated for driving while under the influence in about two decades, Morton said.

Another high-profile incident in those figures is the October 2005 arrest of a city bus driver suspected of attempting to sexually assault a 15-year-old male bus passenger. That driver was discharged.

Wayne Yoshioka, director of the city's Department of Transportation Services, said egregious cases of driver misconduct were not representative of the behavior of bus drivers overall.

"By far, most of the drivers are courteous and really professional in the way they do their business, so I think these are really, truly isolated incidents," he said. "My feeling is OTS does a good job of making sure that it keeps track of its employees and when an incident happens, they're prompt in taking action right away."

Inattentive behavior

Incidents where drivers were disciplined for inattentive behavior, such as using a cell phone, occurred at least a half-dozen times during the past five years, according to OTS records. That excludes written warnings, which are common for a first offense. Bus drivers can carry cell phones, but they must remain turned off while driving their routes. The 18-year veteran of TheBus caught using an electronics device in September was suspended, but has since returned to duty, according to OTS.

Drivers in other cities also are getting caught using their cell phones. In Boston, dozens of Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority bus drivers and subway operators have been disciplined for using cell phones while on the job during the past 2 1/2 years, according to a June Associated Press probe. The Boston transit system has about 1.2 million riders a day.

On any given day, TheBus carries about 235,000 passengers. On average, bus operators, who together drive about 65,000 miles a day, have about one preventable accident a day. A preventable accident can range from a scratched mirror or passenger injury to a collision with a car or pedestrian.

An accident is judged to be preventable if the bus driver did not do everything possible to avoid it, according to OTS policy. A major accident occurs if a passenger is treated for injuries or if there's property damage exceeding \$5,000. Drivers can be fired after one major accident or if they have five accidents within three years.

Honolulu's narrow streets and high passenger load factors, which result in more standing passengers, increase the potential for accidents, OTS said.

Most accidents typically are analyzed and used to help better train drivers, said Ralph Faufata, OTS vice president for transportation.

"Anybody that gets into a preventable accident is retrained, and anybody who gets into any major accident, preventable or unpreventable, is also retrained, so we take things very seriously around here," he said.

Safety comparison

The safety record for TheBus appears to be in line or better than the national average. In 2007, TheBus experienced 1.9 collisions per million miles of service, which was below the 2006 national average of 4.1 collisions per million miles of service. National safety statistics for 2007 were unavailable.

The rate of passenger injuries at TheBus in 2007 was 1.1 per million miles, which was in line with the national average, according to OTS.

One pedestrian has died in a collision with a bus during the past two years, according to OTS, which did not specify whether the incident was preventable.

The two recent incidents at TheBus that generated media attention did not involve injuries or fatalities. However, the repercussions of accidents involving buses and trains were highlighted by two recent high-profile accidents:

- In September, 25 people were killed and more than 130 were injured in Southern California when a Metrolink train failed to stop at a red light and collided with an oncoming Union Pacific train. Investigators have said the train's engineer sent numerous text messages that day, including one just before the collision.
- And locally, in June 2006, a Kane'ohe resident was killed when a Roberts Hawaii tour bus crossed the center line of Kamehameha Highway in Kahalu'u and smashed head-on into a sport-utility vehicle. The city prosecutor has alleged that the bus driver was under the influence of crystal methamphetamine when the crash occurred, although no drug or alcohol tests were conducted by authorities after the collision.

Less-common reasons

In addition to avoidable accidents and attendance issues, there were at least a couple dozen instances when drivers were suspended for not having valid paperwork such as a commercial driver's license. In most cases, they were reinstated after renewing their licenses. However, in at least one case, a driver lost a job because of being cited for driving under the influence of alcohol on personal time.

Other less-common reasons drivers were suspended or fired included insubordination, unsatisfactory work records, sexual harassment, lying or falsifying records, rude behavior toward passengers or fellow employees, stealing and other unspecified, confidential reasons.

September's incident was the first time a bus driver was caught on video violating company rules, Morton said. However, it's unlikely to be the last time a driver is caught on camera, given the proliferation of mobile video recording devices.

"Now that we have video cameras throughout society — pretty much everybody has a cell phone — maybe that in and of itself will be a deterrent," Morton said. "We do have our problems with (drivers) running off with their mouth and getting angry or something, and really doing stupid things, and if this helps to make them think twice before they put their mouth in gear, that's a good thing."

Ron Kozuma, president of Teamsters Local 996, which covers about 1,400 drivers, mechanics, maintenance workers and clerical staff of OTS, did not return messages regarding this story.

Additional Facts

410

Bus driver suspensions during the same period that the 42 drivers were fired

7,194

Days of work lost to the suspensions

955

Drivers employed by TheBus

525

Buses used in Honolulu's transit system

\$160 Million

TheBus' annual costs

\$130 Million

TheBus' annual costs subsidized by Honolulu

235,000

TheBus passengers on any given day



Letters to the Editor

For Sunday, November 23, 2008

Cheaper mag-lev could extend to UH

Many writers on the transit project, here and online, have expressed concern about the current plan - and budget - not including the University of Hawaii Manoa campus. Those of us who favor the HSST (high speed surface transportation) urban magnetic levitation system know that UH-Manoa can be included within the plan and budget for the initial 20-mile minimum operable segment. The lower construction costs of the narrower (and less obtrusive) guideway for the mag-lev will accommodate four or five miles of added length in the MOS budget, enabling not only the university extension but also the airport routing.

Compared to conventional steel wheel systems, the HSST is faster, much quieter and capable of saving \$15 million to \$20 million per year in operations and maintenance costs because of its virtually frictionless running. It also is safer because of its wrap-around-the-beam train car configuration.

The HSST is a proven technology that has been in extremely high reliability revenue service in Nagoya, Japan, since early 2005. The administration and City Council must allow the HSST to compete if this city's taxpayers and commuters are to receive the best transit system at the best price.

Frank Genadio
Kapolei



Letters to the Editor

For Sunday, November 23, 2008

Rail, other projects will boost economy

I applaud the state's efforts to boost the economy by planning new projects for our airports and harbors, and repairing public schools as a way to keep workers employed and inject money into our local economy. This would be financed through state bonds, which must be repaid by local taxpayers. This economic stimulus is needed, but pales in comparison to the economic impact of building a rail transit system.

The biggest shot in the arm for our economy by far is the city's rail project. Rail will create more than 11,000 new jobs for the next 10 years. Honolulu stands to gain from more than a billion dollars in federal funding, which is money local taxpayers won't have to repay.

The public made the right decision by approving rail for our future quality of life and for our economy.

Joe Lee
Hawaii Kai

November 24, 2008

Rail hearings start with Kapolei meeting

Advertiser Staff

The city will have its first public hearing on the draft environmental impact statement for a planned commuter train on Dec. 6 from 9 to 11 a.m. at Kapolei Hale, 1000 Uluohia St.

That's the first of five planned meetings. The other meeting dates, times and locations are:

- Dec. 8, from 6 to 8 p.m. at Neal Blaisdell Center, Hawai'i Suites, 777 Ward Ave.
- Dec. 9, from 6 to 8 p.m. at Salt Lake District Park, 1159 Ala Lilikoi Place.
- Dec. 10, from 6 to 8 p.m. at Filipino Community Center, 94-428 Mokuola St., Waipahu.
- Dec. 11, from 6 to 8 p.m. at Bishop Museum, 1525 Bernice St.

The city plans to start work on the \$4.3 billion elevated commuter rail line from East Kapolei to Ala Moana in late 2009. Limited service between West Loch and Waipahu would start in late 2013, and full service to Ala Moana would begin by the end of 2018.

Residents and others concerned about the city's planned elevated commuter rail have until Jan. 7 to provide comments about the project's environmental effects.

That's when the 45-day public comment period for the project's draft environmental impact statement will end. An electronic version of the 400-plus-page document is available at www.honolulustransit.org.

The city expects the final environmental impact statement to be released next summer and construction to begin in December 2009.



City holds high-capacity transit corridor project hearings

Posted: Nov 24, 2008 02:00 PM

Updated: Nov 24, 2008 02:01 PM

HONOLULU (KHNL) - If you want to comment or learn more about the voluminous Environmental Impact Statement for Oahu's proposed light rail project, here's your chance.

The City and County of Honolulu is holding five public meetings next month:

December 6, at 9:00 a.m. at Kapolei Hale, 1000 Uluohia Street.

December 8, at 6:00 p.m. at the Blasidell Center, Hawaii Suites, 777 Ward Avenue.

December 9, at 6:00 p.m. at Salt Lake District Park, 1159 Ala Lilikoi Place.

December 10, at 6:00 p.m. at the Filipino Community Center, 94-428 Mokuola Street.

December 11, at 6:00 p.m. at the Bishop Museum, 1525 Bernice Street.

Anyone who wants to offer comments at the hearings may sign up at the hearing site and will be allowed to speak for three minutes.

For more information on the public hearings, call 768-8303.



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Local Top Stories

Public can Now Comment on Rail Draft EIS

By **KHON News**

The Public now has a chance to comment on Honolulu's Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed rail transit project.

Today thru January 17th you can submit comments in the following three ways:
In writing to the Department of Transportation services office, Online at Honolulu.transit.org,
Or at multiple public hearings in December.

Copies of the Draft EIS for review will also be posted online and are available at the city and state libraries.

[Click Here for more Information](#)

Story Updated: Nov 24, 2008 at 5:39 PM HST

Find this article at:

<http://www.khon2.com/news/local/35034889.html>

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

November 24, 2008

Public should step up in support of airport route

It's easy to understand why the better course for Honolulu's rail transit system is to connect with the airport, rather than cut through the residential community of Salt Lake.

In addition to the prudent position of having public transportation connect with the airport for travelers, it's common sense to have the system directly connect with large employment hubs — including airport-area businesses as well as Pearl Harbor.

The good news is that the city and consultants working on the project have studied both routes, so making the switch to the airport would be relatively smooth. That's provided the measure authorizing the change can clear political hurdles at the City Council.

The Salt Lake route — the path of least political resistance at the time it was first agreed on — is not the way to go.

While the airport route would run about \$200 million more, the benefits far outweigh the additional cost. The Honolulu International Airport route has greater potential for more transit-oriented development and for affordable housing, which would create a sorely needed economic boost for the state. It also would result in increased ridership and create the least disruption for private, residential property owners along the route. Clearly it makes the most sense and would better serve the public interest.

To close the cost gap, the state, which now keeps 10 percent of the transit tax collections for administrative fees, should return at least a portion of that money now that a structure is already in place and the tax is being collected. The Legislature should make sure that happens, regardless of the route.

The council last week held off on the proposal to shift the route, to allow for public input. While a handful of Salt Lake residents have understandably voiced support for the Salt Lake route, it's time for the majority of residents to make their views heard.

The \$4.3 billion project, the largest public works project in the city's history, is crucial for O'ahu. Selecting the right route is key, and that decision must be made promptly to avoid costly and unnecessary delays. Above all, it should serve the public interest; that ensures the most efficient use of tax dollars.

The airport route offers the best course for Honolulu's transit system — now it's up to taxpayers to make that clear to the City Council.

Additional Facts

GET INVOLVED

Send your comments on the route to Councilman Nestor Garcia, chairman of the Transportation Committee.

E-mail them to: gmurayama@honolulu.gov.

Or if you have questions on the proposal for the route change, call Garcia's office at 768-5009.

Deadline for comments in Jan. 7, which coincides with the deadline for public input on the project's draft environmental impact statement.

To comment on the project's draft environmental statement go to www.honolulustransit.org

November 24, 2008

Letters to the Editor

transit

Run rail along Nimitz, not through Salt Lake

Should the rail come through Salt Lake, it seems many of my neighbors do not realize the amount of property that will be displaced in our already-congested community.

A better solution would be to place the rail along Nimitz Highway and build a transit station and parking structure. This location would not affect any residential properties and the noise and vibration would not be a problem in an industrial area.

All surrounding communities would benefit from having a transit station and parking structure on Nimitz Highway. The transit station could also be built to include commercial activities, such as a food court, convenience stores, day-care center to name a few.

On weekends and holidays, residents from all over O'ahu could use the rail and transit station for recreational trips into Waikiki and Ala Moana Park and Ala Moana Shopping Center.

Tourism is our biggest industry, and in these tough economic times having an affordable means of transportation to and from Waikiki would be very attractive to visitors.

The rail will be a win-win situation for all residents if moved to the Nimitz-airport industrial area with its supporting transit station and parking garage. Do not run the rail through our bedroom community.

R. Tim Yee | Honolulu

November 25, 2008

New H-1 interchange set to open by fall 2010

Construction of a new H-1 Freeway interchange giving motorists more direct and quicker access in and out of the heart of the Kapolei commercial/business district is expected to begin early next year. The interchange is set to open by fall 2010.

The state Department of Transportation announced yesterday that it has awarded a \$16.6 million construction contract for the first phase of the Kapolei Interchange Complex to Hawaiian Dredging Construction Co.

The new interchange is expected to provide traffic relief for the downtown Kapolei area. Kamokila Boulevard and Farrington Highway are heavily congested, particularly during the noon hour.

Phase 1 of the interchange project will create new east-bound freeway on- and off-ramps at Kamokila and Wakea Street, and between the Kapolei Theaters and Zippy's, as well as a new west-bound freeway off-ramp near Hawaiian Waters Adventure Park. A new west-bound on-ramp at the Makakilo Interchange will also provide access to H-1 Freeway from Makakilo Drive.

Phase 2 will add to the new interchange, including a concrete H-1 Freeway overpass, a westbound off-ramp from H-1 Freeway to Wakea, and a new westbound on-ramp onto Farrington Highway. Subsequent phases will include new on- and off-ramps for the Palailai and Makakilo interchanges.

TRANSIT ROUTE

LET RAIL RIDERS VOTE ON SALT LAKE VS. AIRPORT

The Nov. 20 headline said: "Bigger boon seen with airport to rail." This boon turns out to be for development. Did I miss seeing any boon for the people who will ride the train?

We voted "yes" for rail based on the Salt Lake route. The City Council wants to railroad us into a different route.

It seems that for the greater boon for the riders — what the whole thing is supposed to be all about — we need another ballot to vote on: Shall it be the Salt Lake route or the airport route.

Ted Chernin

'Aiea

Salt Lake a better choice than airport for rail route

By Romy M. Cachola

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Nov 26, 2008

Both Honolulu dailies endorse the airport route for the 20-mile minimum operable segment of the rail project. It is in everyone's best interest to carefully consider the following facts before stepping up to support the route.

» Construction cost. The airport route costs \$220 million more than the Salt Lake Boulevard (SLB) route. We need to avoid the mistakes of other cities and analyze whether funding estimates are what taxpayers can afford. For example, extending Denver's FasTracks, which was estimated in 2002 to cost \$4.7 billion, now costs \$7.9 billion. Denver officials are contemplating raising their sales tax to fund this increase.

» Ridership levels. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement lists 95,310 daily passengers on the train by the year 2030. This means that when the rail line is completed by 2018, ridership and transit-oriented development potential for the airport won't be reached for 12 more years. In comparison, you don't have to wait until 2030 with the SLB route, which would go through the densely populated community of Salt Lake, where there would be a solid ridership from day one.

The estimate of 95,310 daily passengers on the airport route is questionable. There are about 12,500 civilian employees with free parking at Hickam and Pearl Harbor and about 727 state and 15,000 private sector employees at the airport, and more than 7,000 parking stalls at the airport, including the new 1,800-stall parking structure.

These are all disincentives for employees at the airport, Hickam and Pearl Harbor to ride rail.

In comparison, San Francisco International Airport has more than 34,000 workers and higher visitor arrivals than Honolulu, yet SFO has had difficulty reaching a daily projected ridership of only 17,800 on a BART extension. Since the extension opened in 2003, ridership is nowhere near what BART officials had hoped and the route is losing money.

» Operation and maintenance costs. Currently, taxpayers subsidize the TheBus at \$130 million per year. With rail, the O&M cost for both is estimated at more than \$200 million.

When the initial rail segment is built from East Kapolei to Waipahu, who will ride it? This first segment might not relieve traffic since gridlock begins where H-1 and H-2 merge. As you extend the first segment, it will still be "a train to nowhere." With less ridership and farebox revenues, taxpayers will pay more for O&M, which will continue to increase until it reaches downtown.

The above arguments are good reasons to build the first segment from downtown to East Kapolei via SLB; delay the airport route and give the state/city ample time to plan and build a station closer to the passenger terminal; and construct a Waikiki spur.

The advantages of adding a SLB station in Mapunapuna are: 1. the landowner is willing to donate land and help with station construction costs, and 2. there are better opportunities for affordable housing and transit-oriented development.

The debate between Salt Lake Boulevard and the airport should not pit one community against the rest of the island. This is not a popularity contest but a serious pocketbook issue with billions of dollars at stake.

Other than encouraging commuters to leave their cars at home, a successful rail project shouldn't bankrupt taxpayers' pocketbooks. Simply put, the Salt Lake Boulevard route is cheaper and better than the airport.

Romy M. Cachola represents District 7 (including Mapunapuna, Airport, Hickam, Pearl Harbor, Salt Lake and Foster Village) on the Honolulu City Council.

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Don't play games to decide rail route

Why play "jan ken po,

Where the train suppose to go?"

For sure, without a doubt,

No build the rail if you don't know the route.

Ahanakokolei,

Rail no go past Kapolei

No go to Waikiki. No go to University.

No go to where the people stay stay.

Mo bettah first fine-tune the prize-winning TheBus

Easy, quick, save billions and no muss, no fuss.

Richard Y. Will
Honolulu

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H-1, H-2 can't take more Ewa development

By Kioni Dudley

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Nov 30, 2008

Under ordinary circumstances, the five-year-update of the Ewa Development Plan would attract little attention. In its current form, however, the just-finished revision will condemn commuters on the H-1 and H-2 to ever-worsening traffic jams, with no possibility for relief.

The H-1 already has the worst freeway traffic congestion in the United States. With roughly 65,000 cars on the freeway every day, we have exceeded its carrying capacity. There is no room for more cars.

There is only one automobile corridor to town. The state Department of Transportation tells us that it cannot be expanded beyond Zipper Lanes, and the people wouldn't stand for ugly double-decking in paradise even if there were money for it. Clearly, we have built ourselves into a "no build" imperative for more housing.

But the city doesn't understand this. It has already approved zoning for 33,000 more dwellings on the Ewa plain! Nothing can be done to stop their construction. At two cars per family, that is 66,000 more cars. Two out of every three cars will join the rush-hour traffic to Honolulu.

A new rail system will help, but not much. All studies agree that, even with rail, commuter traffic on H-1 and H-2 will grow worse.

Why is this revision of the Ewa Development Plan important? Because those 33,000 already-zoned homes are not the only thing out there. There's another whole city of houses - 12,000 homes with two cars each - that is just starting the approval process. This project is called Hoopili. And the Ewa Development Plan embraces its existence by including its land within the Urban Growth Boundary, and by planning for it, and

planning other projects dependent on it coming to exist.

Hoopili traffic will add to the freeway snarl for everyone on H-1 and H-2, but it will be particularly bad for those living on the Ewa Plain and Waianae Coast. Hoopili will fill the entire open space between Kapolei and Waipahu. All of its traffic will pour onto Fort Weaver Road and H-1 headed to Honolulu in the morning rush. And all of the Hoopili cars will be on the road to town in front of every current commuter from Ewa and Kapolei and beyond. There is nobody who now drives to town from the West side of the island who will not be behind all of the cars from Hoopili.

The Ewa Development Plan contains an adequate-facilities requirement: It states that zoning should be approved only if the responsible city and state agencies indicate that adequate public facilities and utilities will be available at the time of occupancy. It also states, as policy, that the "transportation system should provide adequate capacity for major peak-hour commuting to work in the Primary Urban Center," Honolulu. This requirement cannot possibly be met even without developing Hoopili. This adequate-facilities requirement must be strengthened in the revised Ewa Development Plan. And the city must begin to follow it.

There is another important reason to resist Hoopili. The land it will take is some of our most precious agricultural land. Rated as A and B soils (on an A to E scale), it is all prime agricultural land. It is also low-lying land that gets plentiful sun and drains well. From sugar plantation times, the Hoopili land has been known as the Golden Triangle of farmland on Oahu.

How precious are these A and B lands? Not one acre of A-quality land is found on the Big Island or Lanai. No B quality is found on Molokai or Lanai. And nearly half of Oahu's A and B land has already been covered over by Mililani, Waipio, Waikele, Village Park, Royal Kunia, the Ewa developments and Kapolei.

When agriculture land is covered with roads and houses, it can never be restored.

Japan went to war with China because it covered over its agricultural lands with houses and couldn't grow enough food. We, too, might need this land for survival. We sit in the ocean 2,000 miles from land. We've seen the price of oil rise so high it destroyed two airlines, caused a major drop in tourism, brought a spike in food prices and made import of many things by air and boat uneconomical. The price of oil can go far higher as China's and India's demand continues to grow exponentially in the face of decreasing supply.

There is further reason for concern: Rising seas could not only destroy tourist beaches, but also could engulf our ports, forcing us to be self-sufficient or perish. We will need lands for biofuels as well as food.

We must save our best farmlands. It makes no sense to cover them. We can save them

only with public action.

In its current updated form, the Ewa Development Plan endorses Hoopili. If it passes as it now reads, the developers can use the plan to claim rights for zoning and full approval. The plan must be changed to delete all references to Hoopili as if it were going to be built, and to re-draw the urban growth boundary makai of the Hoopili land. This will happen only if there is public outcry.

Write a short note to: » Mayor Hannemann at mayor@honolulu.gov;

» City Council members at tapo@honolulu.gov; ngarcia@honolulu.gov; gokino@honolulu.gov; dmdelacruz@honolulu.gov; and

>> Bob Stanfield of the Department of Planning and Permitting at bstanfield@honolulu.gov.

And please send me a copy at drkionidudley@hawaii.rr.com.

Tell city officials that you don't want more cars on the freeway. Tell them you want to see the Ewa Development Plan move the urban growth boundary to exclude all of the currently farmed land between Kapolei and Waipahu. Tell them you want the Hoopili land to remain in agriculture.

Kioni Dudley is president of the Friends of Makakilo and of the Leeward/Central Community Roundtable. He is a member of the Makakilo-Kapolei-Honokai Hale Neighborhood Board.

Find this article at:
http://www.starbulletin.com/editorials/20081130_H-1_H-2_cant_take_more_Ewa_development.html

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November 30, 2008

Letters to the Editor

transit

Think long term and route rail to airport

An opinion from a longtime Salt Lake resident: Put the rail to the airport.

Listen, it is about the visitors. That is what keeps this island ticking, like it or not. Let us upgrade this city to first class for the visitors. Right now, it is not.

For a visitor to be able to walk out to a platform, grab a light rail into Waikiki (I know it only goes to Ala Moana — baby steps), get off and walk to their hotel, is where this needs to go.

Any city worth its salt does this. Portland, Minneapolis, Chicago, Tokyo, Frankfurt, Atlanta, Paris and so on.

Right now, our visitors have to grab taxis, vans, buses, rental cars and fight the traffic into Waikiki.

With rail, time is predictable and hassle free. It really does alleviate a lot of the stress for the traveler. And, isn't that what travelers are looking for, stress relief?

Let us not pander to those few who benefit from not having rail to the airport.

Let us think long term and overall health for this economy.

James Donovan | Honolulu

An Update on the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project

Review the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Honolulu Rail Transit



Aloha! You have the opportunity to have your voice heard on one of our community's most important transportation projects. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) for the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project is now available. We invite you to review the Draft EIS and submit your comments. The public comment period will end on January 7, 2009.

The Draft EIS examines the environmental, economic and community impacts and benefits of 4 future alternatives between Kapolei and UH Mānoa: 3 potential routes for a rail transit line from East Kapolei to Ala Moana Center are analyzed in comparison to the No Build alternative.

Where can I get a copy of the Draft EIS?

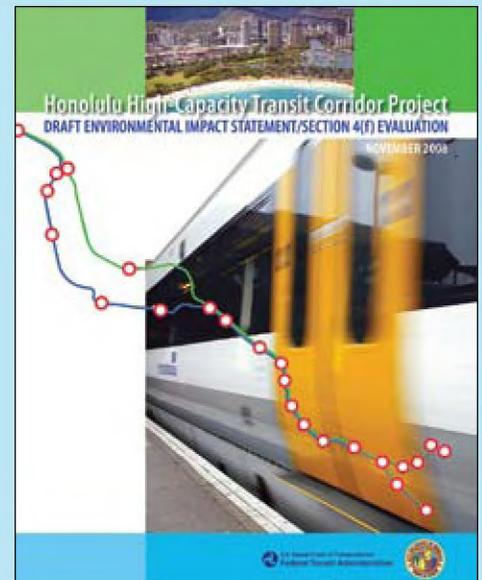
You can review a copy of the Draft EIS at your local state library, the City library, the Department of Transportation Services (650 South King Street, 3rd floor), the Rapid Transit Division (1099 Alakea Street, 17th floor), and online at www.honolulutransit.org.

You can also request a free DVD that includes a video about the Draft EIS. In addition, printed copies of the Draft EIS are available for purchase for \$59. Call **566-2299** or visit www.honolulutransit.org to order. Please include your full name, address and phone number when contacting the project.

— continued on back

Public Hearing Dates for the Draft EIS

- **Saturday, December 6**
9 to 11 a.m. at Kapolei Hale
1000 Ulu'ohia Street, Kapolei
- **Monday, December 8**
6 to 8 p.m. at the Neal S. Blaisdell Exhibition Hall, Hawai'i Suites
777 Ward Avenue, Honolulu
- **Tuesday, December 9**
6 to 8 p.m. at Salt Lake District Park
1159 Ala Liliiko'i Place, Honolulu
- **Wednesday, December 10**
6 to 8 p.m. at the Filipino Community Center
94-428 Mokuola Street, Waipahu
- **Thursday, December 11**
6 to 8 p.m. at Bishop Museum
1525 Bernice Street, Honolulu





Honolulu On The Move

Nov-Dec 2008

Contact Us

You can reach us by calling the project hotline at 566-2299 or by submitting your comments to www.honolulustransit.org.

Call or email us if you would like to receive an electronic version of this newsletter or would like to be removed from our mailing list.

— continued from front

How can I comment?

There are three ways to comment:

- In writing** at a Draft EIS Public Hearing or mailed to:

**Department of
 Transportation Services
 650 S. King Street, 3rd Floor
 Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813**

Comments must be postmarked by January 7, 2009.

- In person** at a Draft EIS Public Hearing in December.
- Online** at www.honolulustransit.org.

Here is a look at several of the project's key environmental milestones.

Milestone and Date	Description
EIS Preparation Notice (2005) Scoping (2007)	Scoping identified the alternatives and impacts that are examined in the Environmental Impact Statement. Along with technical studies, the project reached out for the public's ideas and opinions through community meetings, City Council hearings and the Internet.
Alternatives Analysis (2006)	Information from Scoping was used to identify and analyze types of transit and routes that were reasonable and practical.
Honolulu City Council selects Locally Preferred Alternative (January 2007)	Based on the Alternatives Analysis and public testimony, the City Council selected a transit system for the Kapolei to UH Mānoa traffic corridor.
Draft Environmental Impact Statement (November 2008)	The Draft EIS studies the potential impacts of three routes from East Kapolei to Ala Moana Center, as well as a No Build alternative. The public and government agencies can review and comment on the Draft EIS.
Final Environmental Impact Statement (projected for 2009)	The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will issue the Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS). The Final EIS will respond to comments received on the Draft EIS, identify a preferred alternative, show state and federal environmental laws are followed, and identify any mitigation measures.
Record of Decision (projected for the second half of 2009)	The FTA will issue a Record of Decision (ROD), which will state the FTA's determination that all environmental steps have been completed. The ROD describes the basis for the decision, identifies alternatives that were considered and summarizes specific mitigations for the project.

Honolulu Rail Transit Project

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Presentation

- **Overview**
- **Decisions Made**
- **Project Effects**
- **Project Characteristics**



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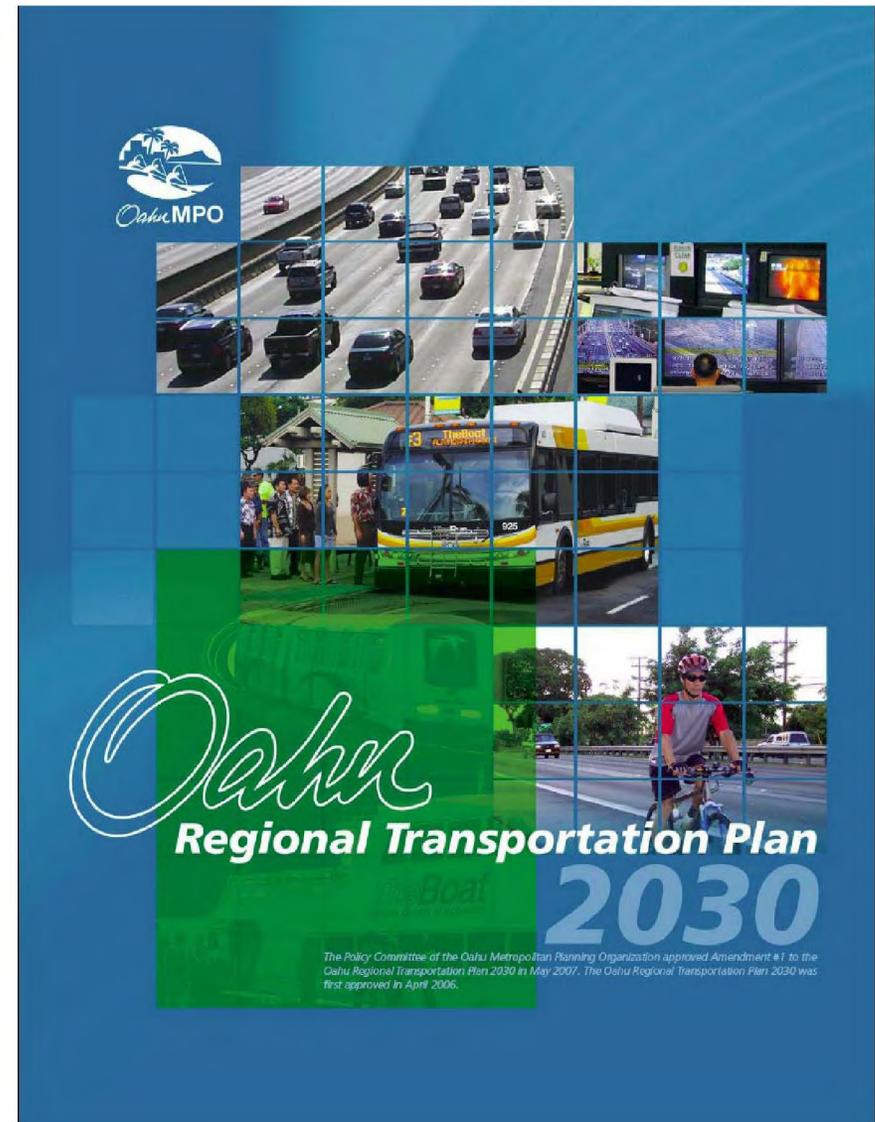
Planning for the Future

O'ahu in 2030

- 200,000 more residents than in 2005
(22% more people)
- 100,000 more jobs than in 2005
(21% more jobs)
- 750,000 more daily trips than in 2005
(27% more trips)

Multi-Modal Options to Improve Mobility

- Highway Expansion
- Traffic Engineering Improvements
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Projects
- TheBoat
- Expansion of TheBus
- Fixed Guideway Project



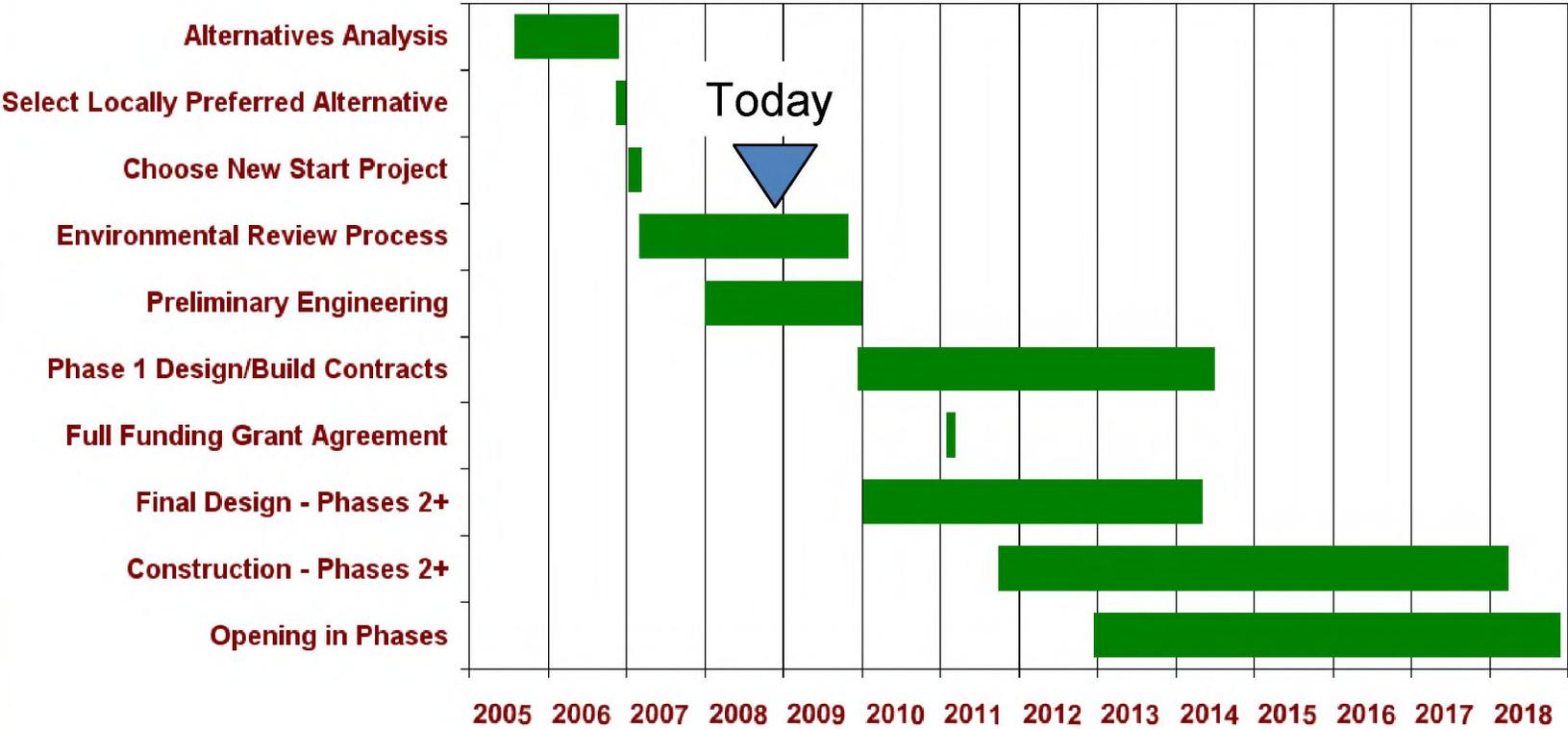
\$3 Billion in Highway Expansion – All Anticipated Federal Highway Funds Allocated to Specific Projects, including:

- H-1 Improvements
 - Widening, Middle Street to Vineyard Boulevard
 - Widening, Liliha Street to Pali Highway
 - Widening, Waiawa Interchange to Hālawā Interchange
 - Widening, Ward Avenue to Punahou Street
 - HOV Lanes, Makakilo Interchange to Waiawa Interchange
 - PM Zipper Lane, Ke‘ehi Interchange to Kunia Interchange
- New or Extended Roadways
 - Nimitz HOV Flyover, Ke‘ehi Interchange to Pacific Street
 - North-South Road
 - Kapolei Parkway

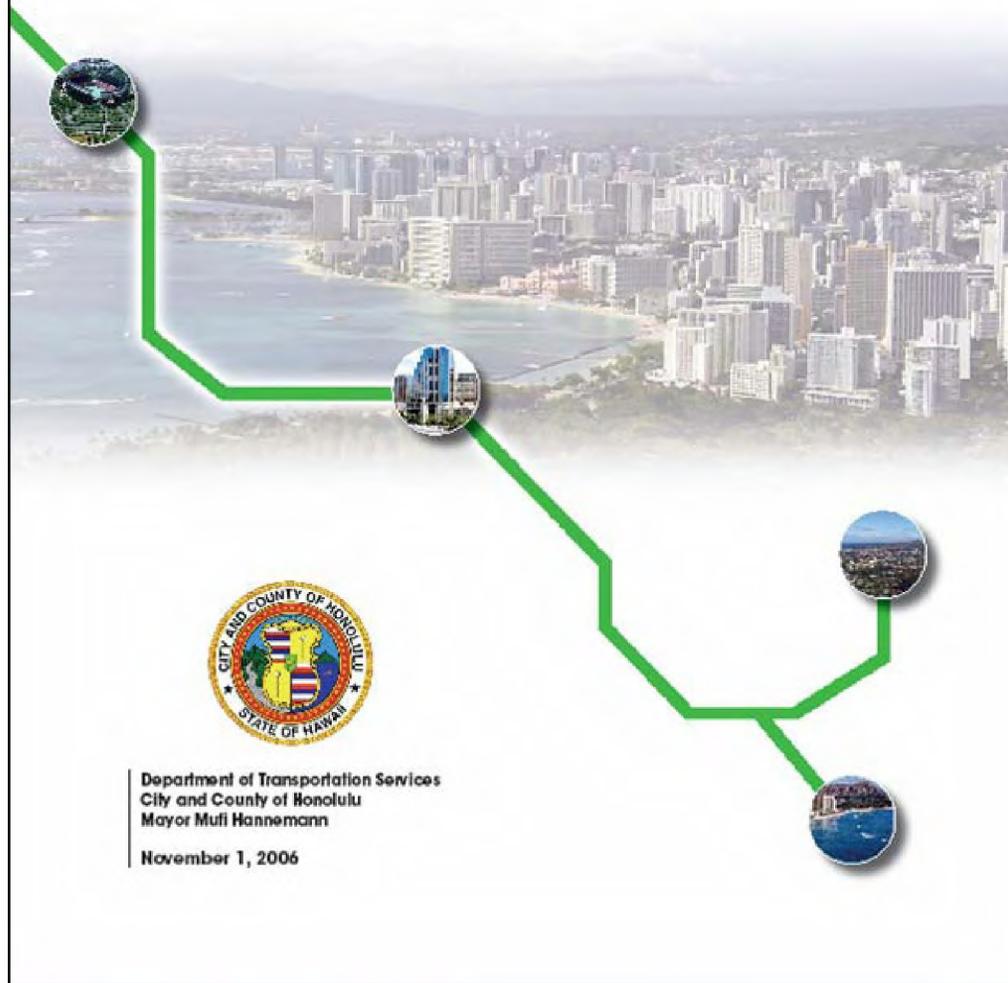
Presentation

- Overview
- **Decisions Made**

Project Schedule



Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project Alternatives Analysis Report



Department of Transportation Services
City and County of Honolulu
Mayor Mufi Hannemann
November 1, 2006

Four Alternatives

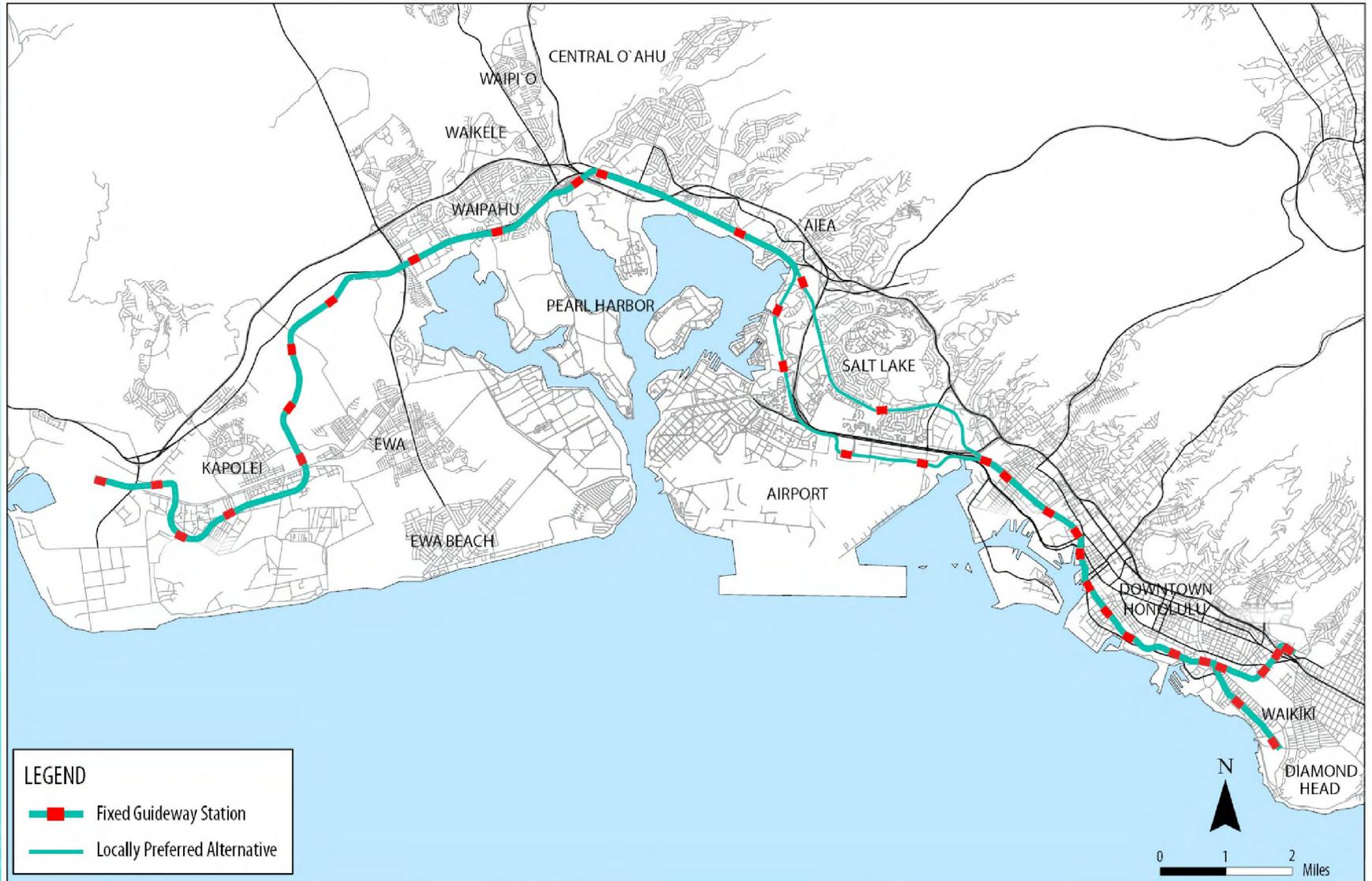
- No Build
 - No Transit Improvements
- Transportation System Management
 - Expanded Bus Service
- Managed Lane
 - Buses on Managed Lanes
- Fixed Guideway
 - Alignment Options

City Council Selection December 22, 2006

- By a vote of 7 to 2 the City Council selected Fixed Guideway

COUNCIL	12/22/06	CR-508 ADOPTED. BILL 79, CD2, FURTHER AMENDED ON THE COUNCIL FLOOR TO CD2, FD1, HOWEVER, BILL 79, CD2, FD1, FURTHER AMENDED TO BILL 79, CD2, FD2 (FINAL #2), AND SUBSEQUENTLY PASSED THIRD READING, AS AMENDED (BILL 79, CD2, FD2 (FINAL #2))					
		(NOTE: <u>BILL 79 (2006), PROPOSED CD2, FD1 (NORTH-SOUTH BRANCH, NON-LPA COMMITMENT)</u> WAS ALSO CONSIDERED AND SUBSEQUENTLY WITHDRAWN)					
	APO Y	CACHOLA Y	DELA CRUZ Y	DJOU N	GARCIA Y		
	KOBAYASHI Y	MARSHALL N	OKINO Y	TAM Y			

Locally Preferred Alternative



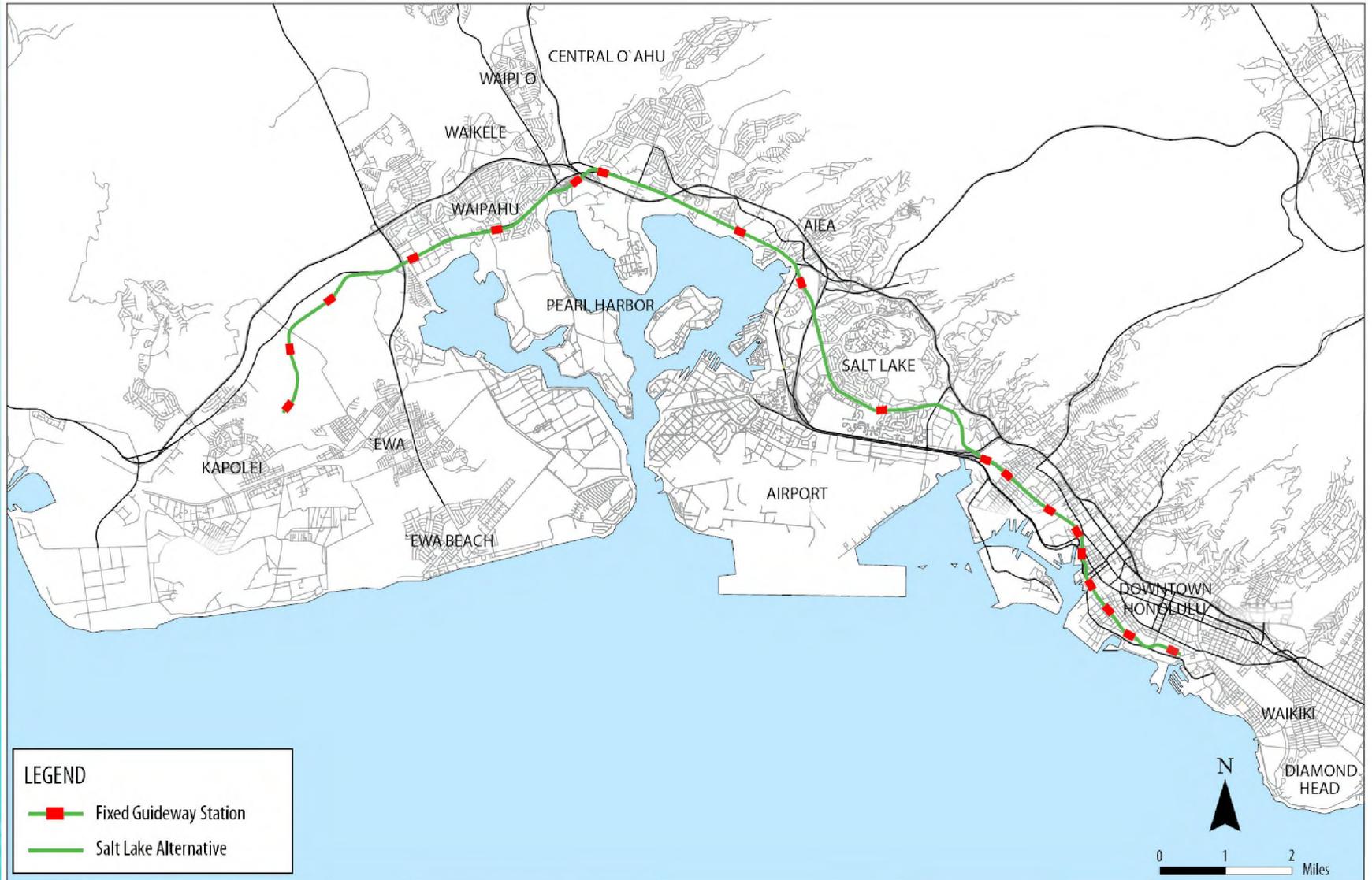
Why Not Expanded Bus Service?

- Traffic congestion slows buses and increases operating costs – bus operating costs per passenger mile are 2/3 more than for rail
- Traffic congestion hurts schedule reliability
- Bus system is currently approaching capacity
- Attracts fewer riders than bus+rail system

Why Not Buses on Managed Lanes?

- Results in only minor increase in transit usage – only 22% as many new riders as bus+rail system
- Higher O&M cost per passenger served than bus+rail system
- Doesn't meet FTA cost-effectiveness threshold
- Managed lanes are not financially feasible – Neither Federal transit funds nor GET surcharge revenues can pay for highway lanes

First Construction Project



Summary – Decisions Made

- Choice of Mode
 - Fixed Guideway in Exclusive Right-of-Way
- Choice of Alignment
 - Initially – East Kapolei to Ala Moana Center
 - Ultimately – Kapolei to UH Mānoa and Waikīkī
- Choice of Vehicle Technology
 - Steel Wheel on Steel Rail

Presentation

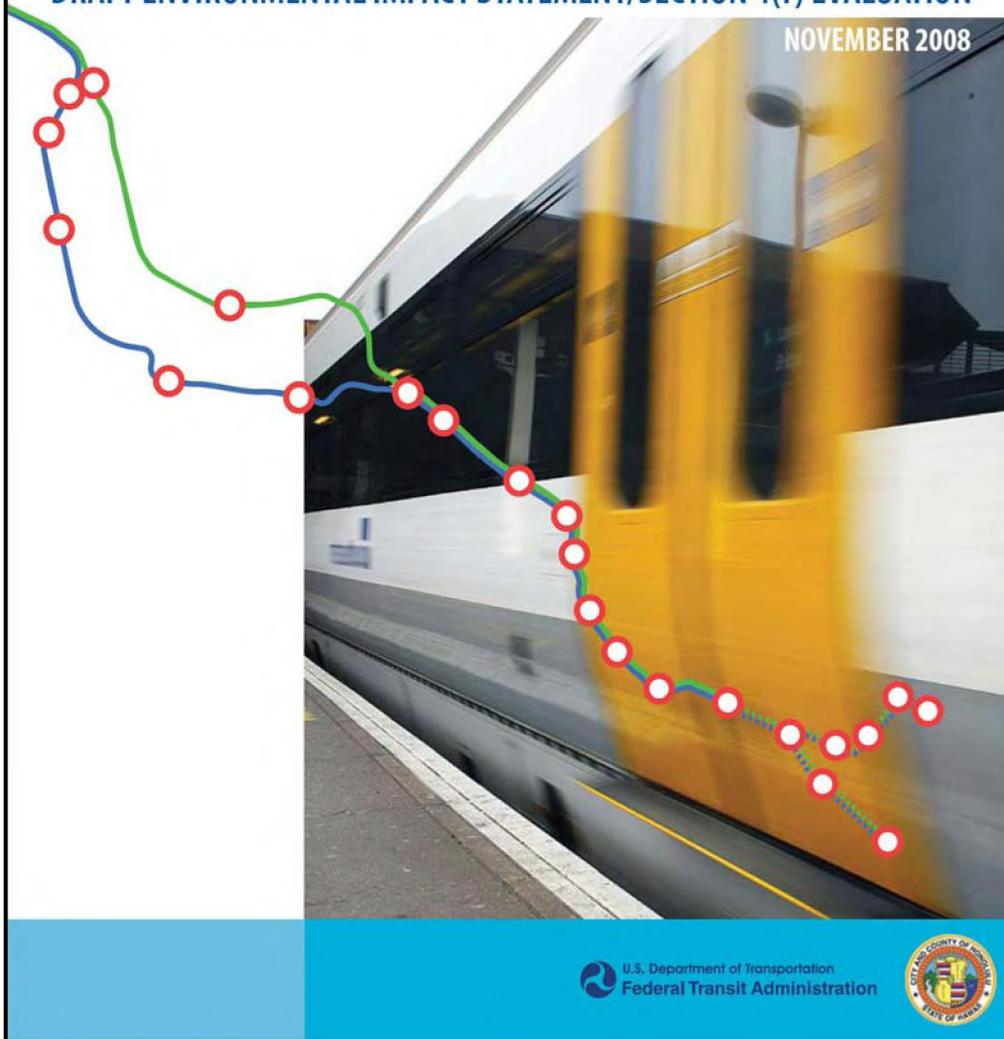
- Overview
- Decisions Made
- **Project Effects**



Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT/SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION

NOVEMBER 2008



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration



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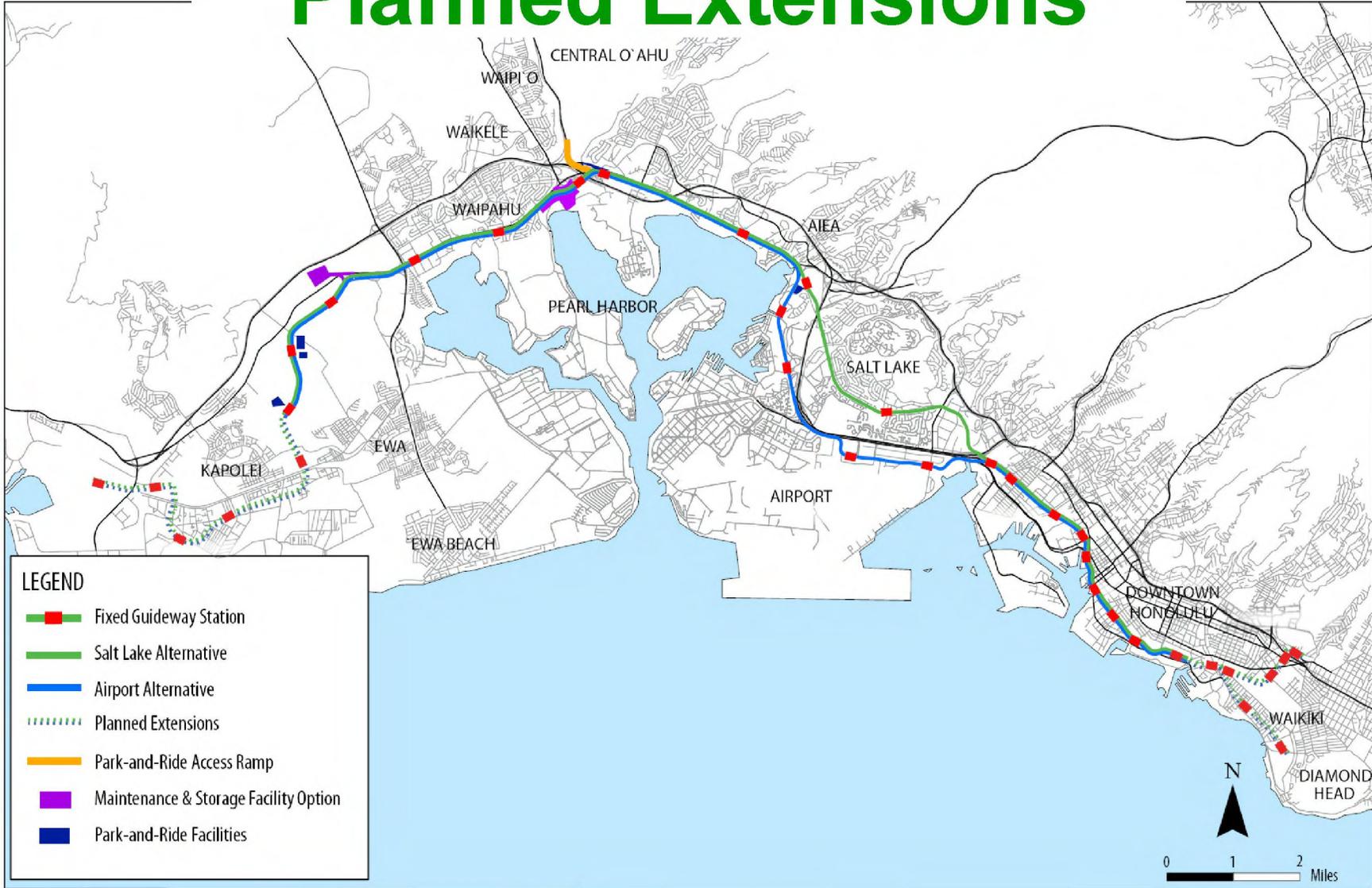
Draft EIS Outline

- Chapter 1 Background, Purpose and Need
- Chapter 2 Alternatives Considered
- Chapter 3 Transportation
- Chapter 4 Environmental Analysis,
Consequences, and Mitigation
- Chapter 5 Section 4(f) Evaluation
- Chapter 6 Cost and Financial Analysis
- Chapter 7 Evaluation of Alternatives
- Chapter 8 Comments and Coordination

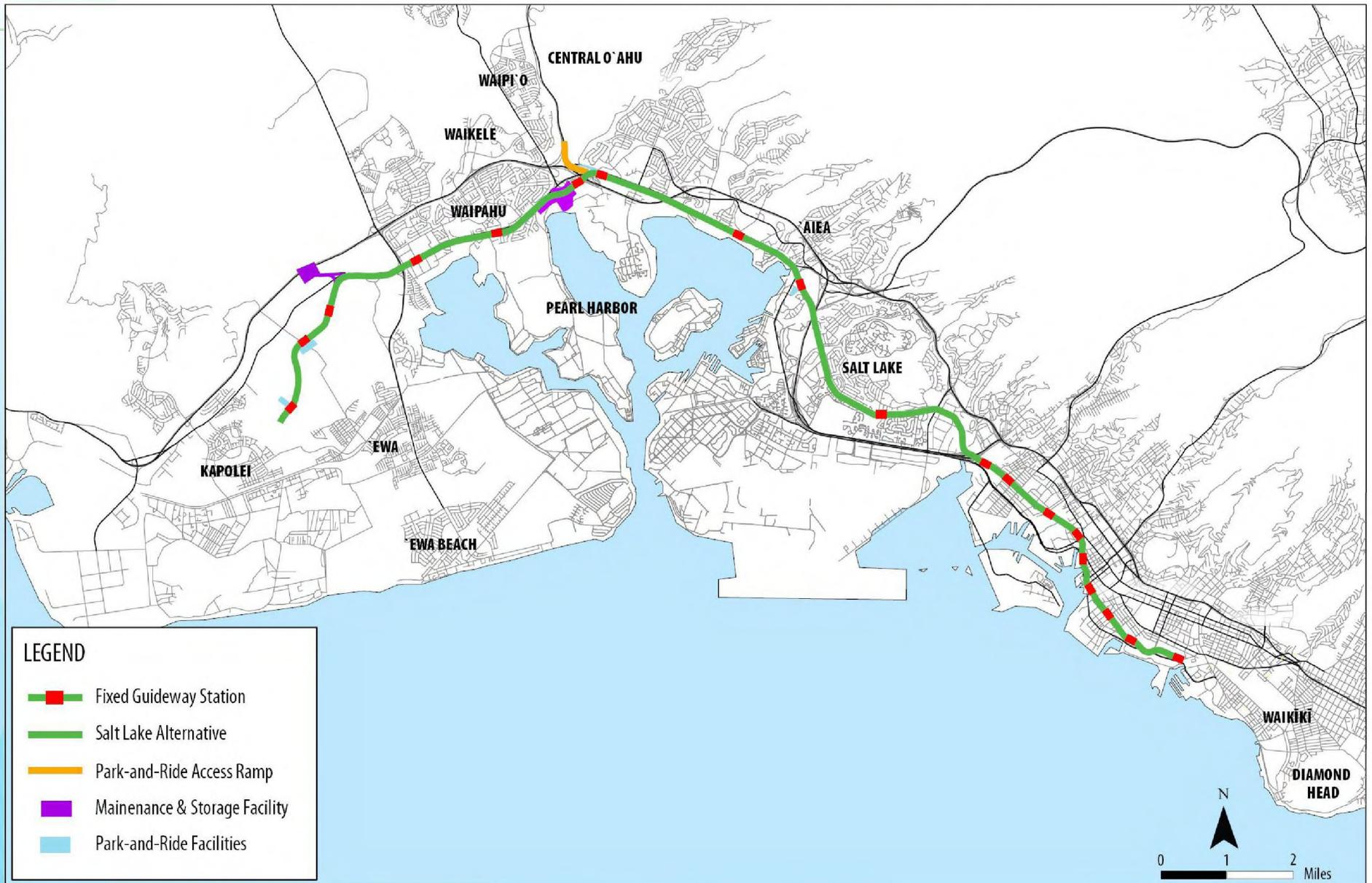
Draft EIS Alternatives

- No Build
- Fixed Guideway, East Kapolei to Ala Moana Center via Salt Lake
- Fixed Guideway, East Kapolei to Ala Moana Center via Airport
- Fixed Guideway, East Kapolei to Ala Moana Center via Airport & Salt Lake

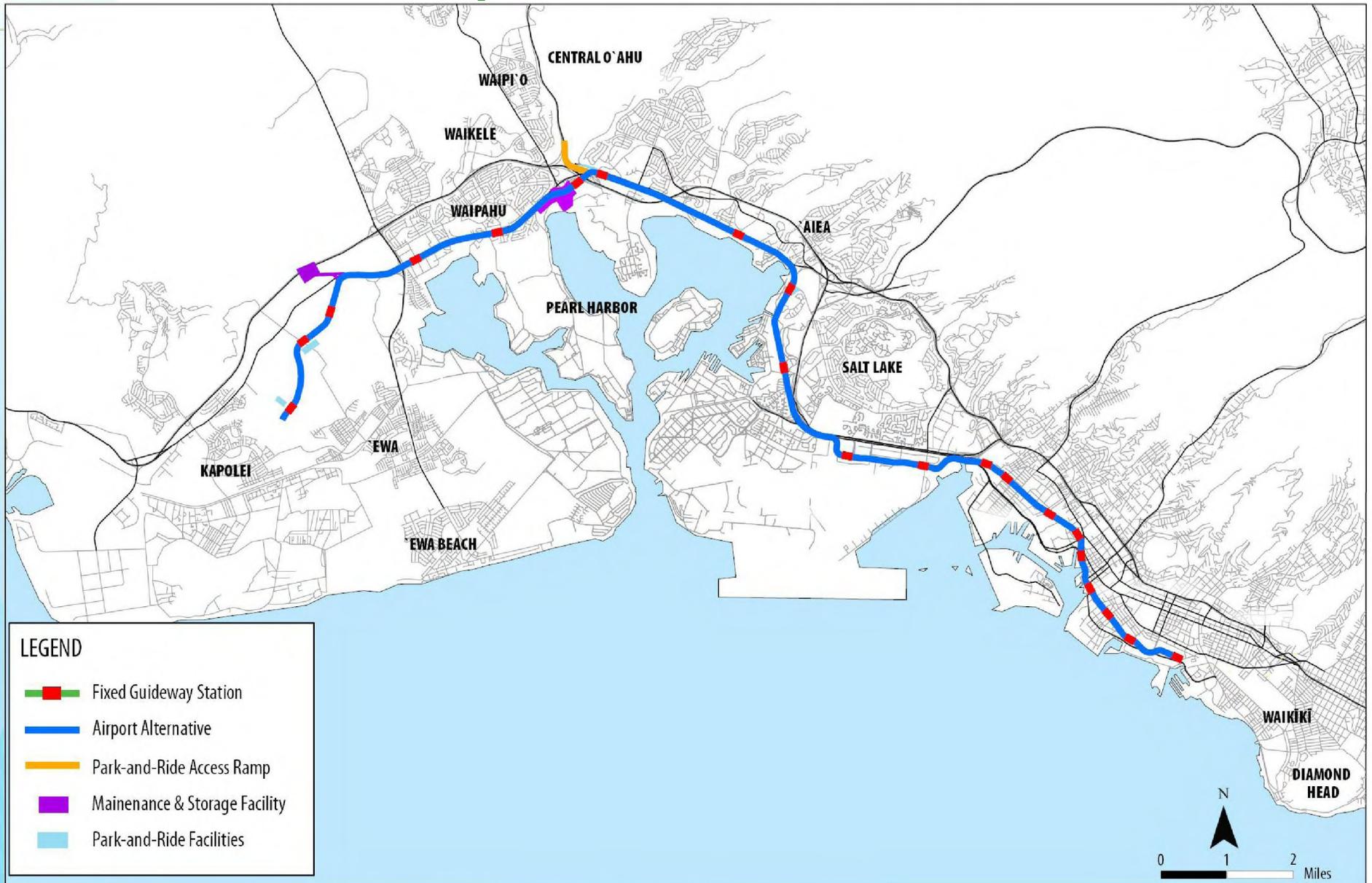
Build Alternatives and Planned Extensions



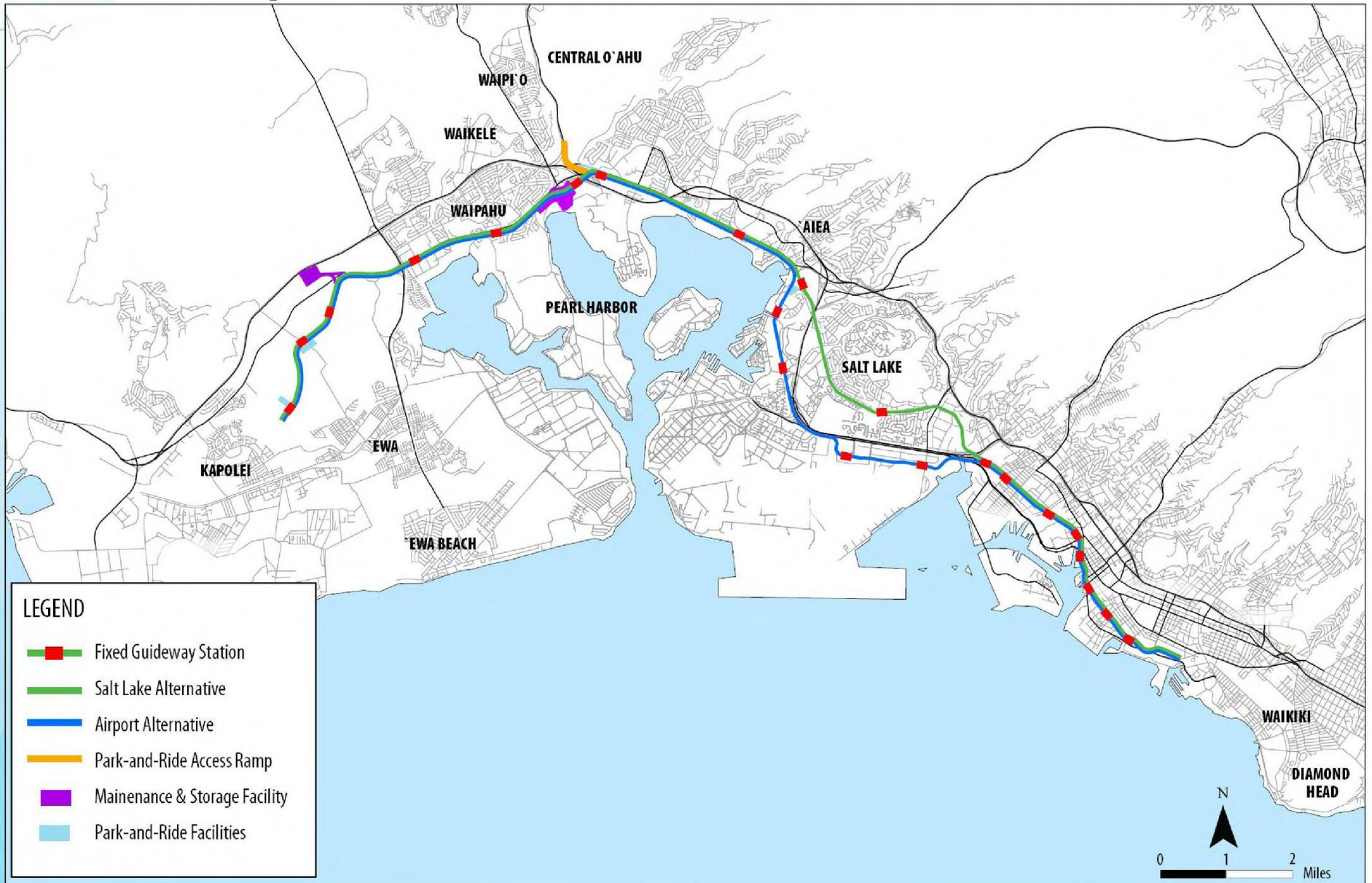
Salt Lake Alternative



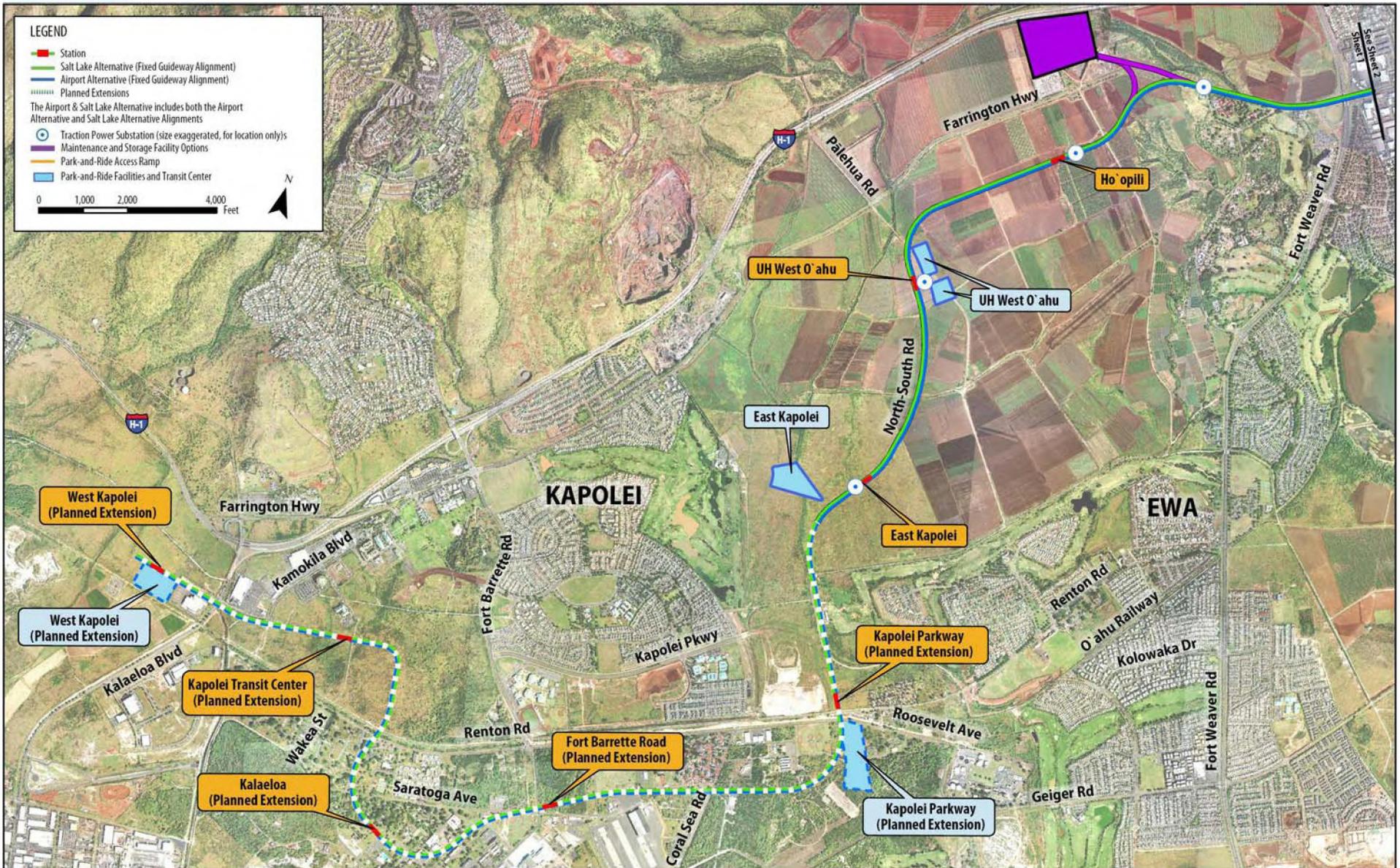
Airport Alternative



Airport & Salt Lake Alternative



Kapolei to Waipahu



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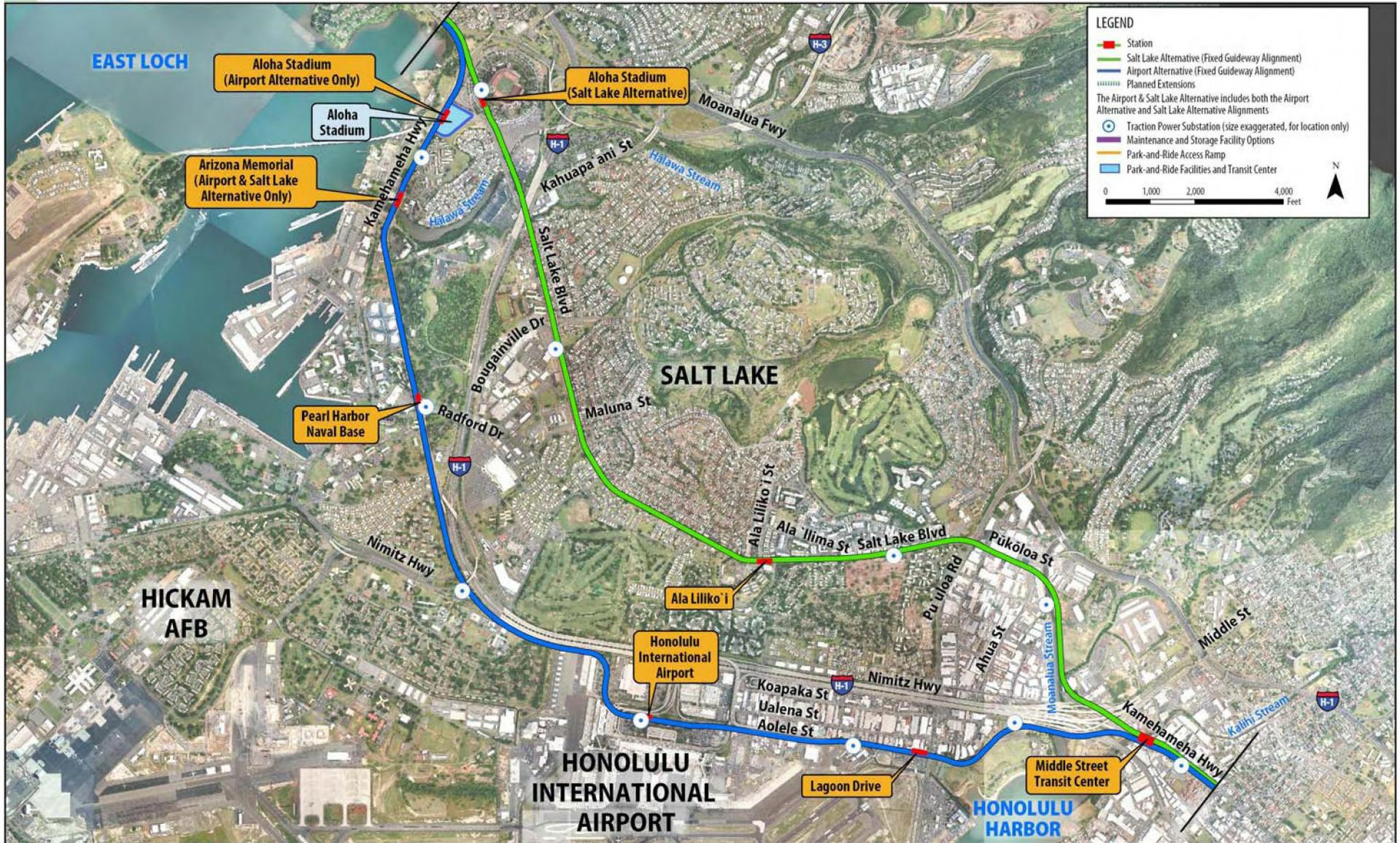
Waipahu to 'Aiea



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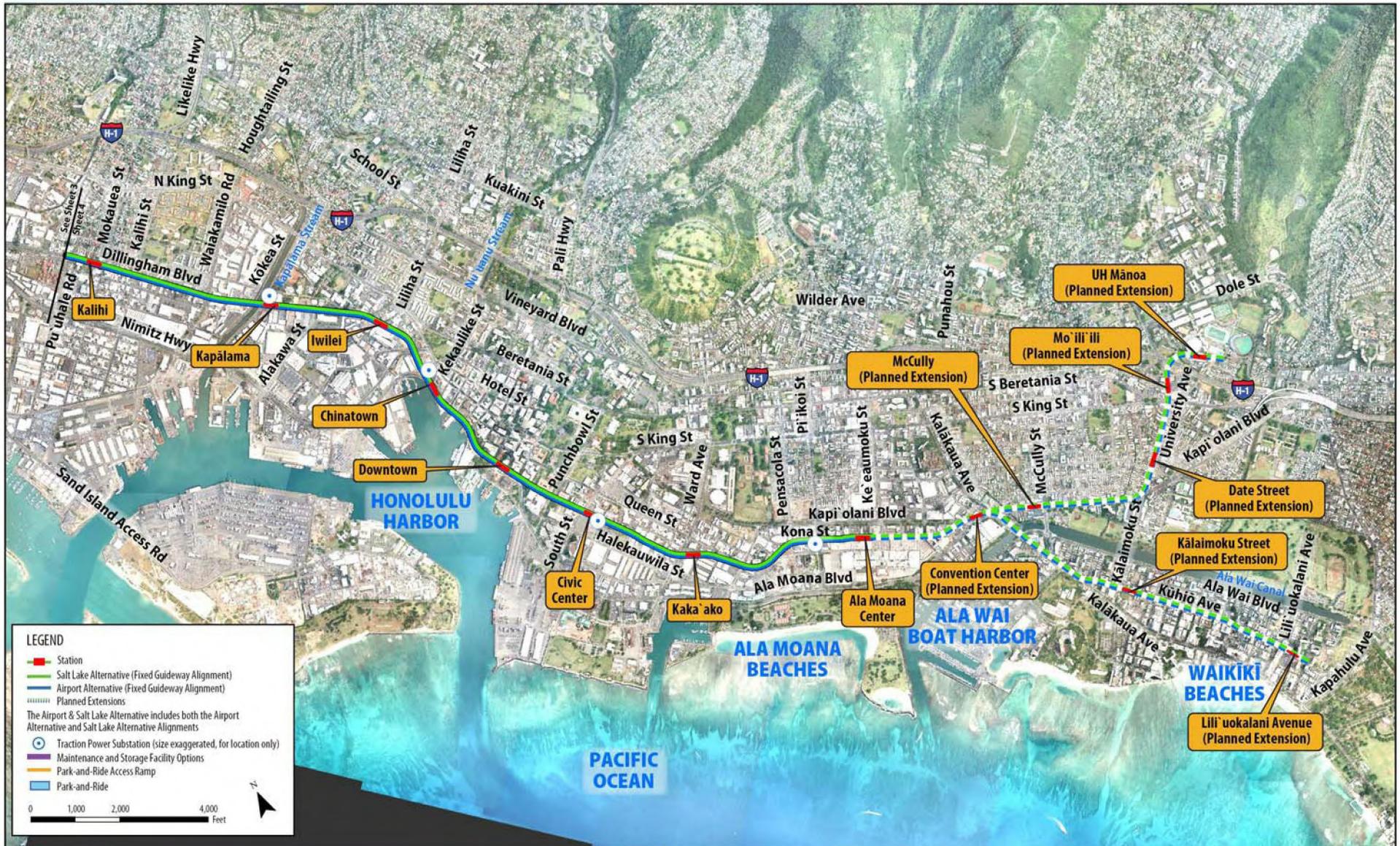
'Aiea to Kalihi



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Central Honolulu



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Transportation Effects

- 2030 Fixed Guideway Daily Riders
 - Salt Lake Alternative: 88,000
 - Airport Alternative: 95,000
 - Airport & Salt Lake Alternative: 93,000
- Reduction in 2030 Daily Vehicle Hours of Delay
 - Salt Lake Alternative: -21%
 - Airport Alternative: -23%
 - Airport & Salt Lake Alternative: -22%

Property Acquisitions & Displacements

Alternative	Parcel Acquisitions			Displacements by Land Use		
	Total*	Partial	Full	Residential Units	Commercial & Industrial Businesses	Churches
Salt Lake	190	155	35	20	62	1
Airport	179	145	34	20	65	1
Airport & Salt Lake	205	170	35	20	67	1

* Total parcel acquisitions includes full and partial acquisitions.

Partial Acquisition = acquisition of only land and possibly minor buildings on a property. The existing owners would continue to be able to own and use the property in the future.

Full Acquisition = acquisition of the entire property—land and all buildings on the property. The existing owner and existing land uses would be displaced by project improvements.

Visual Impacts – Examples

- Kamehameha Highway at Ka‘ahumanu St.
- Ala Lilikoī St. at Salt Lake Boulevard
- Kamehameha Highway near Radford Dr.
- Crossing Nu‘uanu Stream
- Halekauwila St. at Mother Waldron Park

Kamehameha Highway at Ka'ahumanu Street



Ala Liliko'i Street at Salt Lake Boulevard



Kamehameha Highway near Radford Drive



Crossing Nu‘uanu Stream



Halekauwila Street at Mother Waldron Park



Noise Impacts

Residential building, parks and schools with noise impacts

Alternative (2030)	Moderate Impacts	Severe Impacts
Salt Lake	23	0
Airport	18	0
Airport & Salt Lake	18	0

Employment Effects

Alternative	Construction Cost 2007 \$ (millions)	Average Number of Jobs per Year (9 years of Construction) ¹			
		Direct	Indirect	Induced	Total
No Build	\$0	0	0	0	0
Salt Lake	\$3,921	4,000	1,700	3,900	9,600
Airport	\$4,125	4,200	1,800	4,100	10,100
Airport & Salt Lake	\$4,803	4,900	2,100	4,700	11,700

¹ Multipliers of 9.25 for direct, 4.03 for indirect, and 8.90 for induced jobs are based on the 2008 State of Hawai'i Input-Output factor for heavy civil construction (jobs per million \$)

How much will it cost to build?

	Millions of 2008 \$
Salt Lake Alternative	
Capital Cost	3,920
Finance Charges	360
TOTAL	4,280
Airport Alternative	
Capital Cost	4,120
Finance Charges	380
TOTAL	4,500
Airport & Salt Lake Alternative	
Capital Cost	4,800
Finance Charges	540
TOTAL	5,340

How will we pay for it?

Salt Lake Alternative	Millions of Inflated \$
GET Surcharge Revenues	4,050
FTA New Starts Funds	1,200
Interest Income	30
TOTAL REVENUE	5,280
Capital Cost	4,800
Finance Charges	480
TOTAL COST	5,280

Can we afford Operations & Maintenance?

- Rail operating & maintenance cost, after fares, will be ~\$40 million a year
- 2-3% of the City's annual operating budget, an amount that could be accommodated without an increase in taxes

A bus+rail system costs less than the cost of carrying the same number of riders on a bus-only system

Where to get a copy of the DEIS

- Libraries (for review)
- City Offices
 - Fasi Municipal Building, 3rd Floor
 - Ali'i Place (1099 Alakea Street), 17th Floor
- Download at www.honolulutransit.org
- Order a free electronic version on DVD or order a printed copy at cost. Call 566-2299 or visit www.honolulutransit.org to order.

How to comment on the DEIS

- In person at a Public Hearing in December
- In writing at a Public Hearing
- Mailed to: Department of Transportation Services, 650 S. King Street, 3rd Floor, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813.
- Online at www.honolulustransit.org

The public comment period ends January 7, 2009

DEIS Public Hearings

December 6,	9:00 am	Kapolei Hale
December 8,	6:00 pm	Neal Blaisdell Center
December 9,	6:00 pm	Salt Lake District Park
December 10,	6:00 pm	Filipino Community Center
December 11,	6:00 pm	Bishop Museum

Presentation

- Overview
- Decisions Made
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- **Project Characteristics**

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 much will a ride cost?**
 - Same as TheBus and TheBoat, can use a transfer from one to the other
- **How do I get to it?**
 - Integrated with TheBus, bike and walking paths, and park-and-ride at some stations

What are the physical characteristics?

- **Where is the guideway located?**
 - Elevated, with columns in existing roadway medians
 - One track in each direction on a single column
- **How wide is the guideway?**
 - Less than 30 feet between stations
 - At stations about 50 feet
- **How many stations?**
 - 19 stations in 20 miles (Salt Lake Alternative)
- **How long are the stations?**
 - About 250 to 300 feet

What will it look like?



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Stay Informed

- Sign up for the newsletter
- Watch Channel 54, Mondays at 6:30pm
- Visit www.honolulustransit.org
- Call the project hotline: 566-2299
- Stay informed with *accurate* information

Mahalo!

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