Draft Summary of City Council Hearings Testimony
Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project

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Summary of Public Comments

On October 30, 2006, the City and County of Honolulu Department of Transportation Services (DTS) provided the Honolulu City Council with an Alternatives Analysis Report (AA) that evaluated alternatives that would provide high-capacity transit service on O'ahu. The primary project study area is the travel corridor between Kapolei and the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UH Mānoa). The City Council selected a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) on December 22, 2006, after holding thirteen meetings where the topic was addressed and public comment was sought. The meetings are outlined in the table below.

Date	Meeting	Description
November 1, 2006	City Council	Special Meeting on AA
November 2, 2006	City Council	First reading of Bill 79, relating to selection of the LPA
November 13, 2006	Transportation and Planning Committee	Community Outreach Meeting at McKinley High School
November 16, 2006	Transportation and Planning Committee	Community Outreach Meeting at Kapolei Hale
November 17, 2006	Transportation and Planning Committee	Community Outreach Meeting at Kalākaua Middle School
November 20, 2006	Transportation and Planning Committee	Community Outreach Meeting at Windward Community College
November 21, 2006	Transportation and Planning Committee	Community Outreach Meeting at Pearl Ridge Elementary School
November 22, 2006	Transportation and Planning Committee	Community Outreach Meeting at Mililani District Park
November 27, 2006	Transportation and Planning Committee	Community Outreach Meeting at Radford High School
November 30, 2006	Transportation and Planning Committee	Transit Advisory Task Force Progress Report
December 7, 2006	City Council	Special Meeting, second reading of Bill 79
December 14, 2006	Transportation and Planning Committee	Special Meeting, relating to Bill 79
December 22, 2006	City Council	Special Meeting, third reading of Bill 79, passage of Bill 79, selecting the LPA

Bill 79 was approved by the Mayor on January 6, 2007, which resulted in Ordinance 07-001. The City Council record related to Ordinance 07-001 contains notes on testimony from these meetings and from other communications. The record is summarized in the following table, then described in greater detail below. In general, the comments were categorized as being in support of a specific alternative, or being in opposition to the project, with numerous other general comments or questions that did not specifically provide an opinion.

Total Testimonies	Favoring Fixed Guideway	Favoring Managed Lanes	Favoring Bus Transit	Opposed to Project

2,936	2,395	23	13	291

Attachment A includes the meeting minutes or journal from each of the thirteen council meetings. According to the meeting records, spoken testimony was provided 420 times over the course of the meetings. Because some individuals provided testimony more than once, the actual number of individuals providing testimony was somewhat less. Of the 420 testimonies, 243 were in favor of fixed guideway, some of which identified a specific route or transit technology. One-hundred eleven testimonies were opposed to fixed guideway. Four testimonies were specifically in support of the Managed Lane Alternative, and two were in support of buses in the form of the No Build or TSM Alternative.

In addition to the spoken testimony, substantial written communications were sent and received by the City Council:

- Twenty items of council communications (CC) were sent; requesting or providing information on the project (Attachment B).
- Two items from the Mayor's (MM) office (Attachment C).
- Fifty items from city agencies or neighborhood boards (D). These communications include supporting documents (D-900) provided by DTS to assist the Council in selecting an LPA, which are not included here because of their substantial volume and availability on the City's website (Attachment D).
- Ten petitions (P) and one collection of comment forms, collectively representing 1,856 signatories, supporting or opposing rail (Attachment E).
- 660 items from the general public (M) related to selection of an LPA (Attachment F).

Attachment G includes the City Council Certificate for Ordinance 07-001, which summarizes the written communications listed above.

The written communications reflect similar broad support for the Fixed Guideway Alternative as the spoken testimony. The petitions included 1,691 signatures in favor of the Fixed Guideway Alternative or a specific alignment, four in opposition, and ten opposed to the general excise tax surcharge, which was not a topic of the bill in discussion. The comment forms (P-44) included comments from 151 members of the UH Mānoa community. Of the 151 comments, 114 were in support of rail transit either in general or specifically to the university. Twenty-one were opposed to mass transit in general, seven supported improving the bus system rather than providing a new transit system, and nine provided other suggestions ranging from toll roads to using the funds to provide lower tuition or recycling bins.

A wide range of comments was provided in the public's written testimony, including numerous comments and questions about the project that did not identify a specific opinion on one of the alternatives. Of the 660 items received, 347 were in support of the Fixed Guideway Alternative or a specific alignment or technology. Nineteen were in support of the Managed Lane Alternative, and four were in support of a bus alternative. One hundred fifty-five were specifically opposed to the Fixed Guideway Alternative or to a transit project in general.

Overall, the majority (more than eighty percent) of all comments received were in favor of the Fixed Guideway Alternative. Those comments that identified technology generally identified rail or specifically light rail, while other technologies were occasionally mentioned. Numerous comments specifically supported the North-South Road alignment in 'Ewa, the Salt Lake Boulevard alignment, or connection to UH Mānoa. Testimony was provided both for and against the branch line to Waikīkī.

Responses to Common Comments

While the majority of testimony received was specific to supporting or opposing the selection of one or more of the proposed alternatives, a number of comments and questions were raised either about the process or about specific alternatives. There were several re-occurring themes in the public comments and questions that were addressed to City Council during the hearings on the Locally Preferred Alternative. The most common items are summarized below, along with a response to the issue. Comments limited to preference for an alternative or alignment are not addressed, as they are summarized in the prior section. Various comments about the general excise tax surcharge are not addressed, as it was enabled and is being collected as a result of prior legislation, and not under current consideration. Likewise, unsupported generalizations about land use, transportation, crime, drug use, safety and other issues about transit systems outside of Honolulu are not addressed.

The proposed fixed guideway system can not be sufficiently funded for construction and/or maintenance. Cost overruns will cause the project to fail.

As summarized in the *Alternatives Analysis Report* (Table 5-8), and detailed in the *Financial Feasibility Report*, reasonably anticipated funding sources will generate approximately $3.8 billion (2006 dollars) in dedicated project funding between 2007 and 2022, sufficient to cover the capital cost and finance costs of the 20-mile East Kapolei to Ala Moana Center fixed guideway alternative. Furthermore, as shown in Table 5-10, the Fixed Guideway Alternative will require less City operating support than either the TSM or Managed Lane Alternative would.

The capital cost estimates include contingencies, both those allocated to specific cost elements, which range from 10% to 50% depending on the cost element, and an overall project reserve of 6%. In total, contingencies add approximately 33% to the estimated capital cost of the project.

Funds should be used for education, housing or some other purpose, rather than transit.

Anticipated construction funding comes from the general excise and use tax surcharge that is dedicated by law to transit and from Federal Transit Administration sources. These funds may not be used for any other purpose.

The system will only be successful with prudent Transit Oriented Development.

Existing development densities, both residential and commercial, in most of the project corridor are already sufficient to support high-capacity transit. That said, both the future operation of the system and future development in the corridor can be more successful if they consider each other. Transit Oriented Development can provide both an improved range of lifestyle choices for residents and more users of the transit system.

The fixed guideway system would not reduce congestion, but managed lanes would.

Neither alternative is expected to reduce future congestion to levels less than today. As shown in Figure 3-4 of the *Alternatives Analysis Report*, future islandwide hours of traffic delay would be greater with the Managed Lane Alternative than with the Fixed Guideway Alternative. While highway congestion would decrease with the Managed Lane Alternative compared to the No Build, the increased attractiveness of driving would place more automobiles on arterials and local roads as they attempt to access the Managed Lane facility, resulting in a net increase in delay. Furthermore, in the case of the Managed Lane Alternative, transit riders would be subjected to the same delay as automobile drivers. With the Fixed Guideway Alternative, future islandwide hours of traffic delay would be reduced compared to No Build. In addition, users of the fixed guideway system would experience no delay from congestion for that portion of their trip which uses the fixed guideway.

Bus service is unreliable as a result of roadway congestion, a transit solution with better reliability is needed.

Increased transit reliability is one of the key purposes of the proposed system. The Fixed Guideway Alternative will best provide increased reliability.

Providing parking for employees is costly and providing a transit pass would be more cost-effective for businesses.

With the improved transit reliability available from a grade-separated fixed guideway transit system, it will be more practical for a greater percent of the workforce to rely on transit. Shifts in benefit packages that consider the option would be logical, but at the discretion of individual employers.

The project will require substantial takes of private land and reduction in traffic lanes.

The project's design, wherever possible, remains within existing roads' rights-of-way, minimizing the number of private parcels that would need to be acquired. Some acquisition of land would be required. In most cases, only partial slivers of land would be needed - for example, a few feet wide for the length of a property to widen a sidewalk. When acquisition is required, the first step is to approach land owners to discuss options. In most cases, those acquisitions can be done without complications and the property owners would be compensated at fair market value, even for small slivers of the property.

The *Alternatives Analysis Report*, in Table 4-1, identified that approximately 220 parcels would be affected by construction of the Locally Preferred Alternative, following both Salt Lake Boulevard and Aolele Street. The majority of these needs would be for slivers of a parcel, as discussed above.

The AA has not considered impact to Section 4(f) resources.

Both historic properties and parklands were considered in the evaluation of alternatives presented in the *Alternatives Analysis Report*. The *Environmental Consequences: Supporting Information* provided to the City Council included sections on parklands, recreation areas, and refuges (Table 5) and historic resources (Tables 18 and 19) that would be affected by each alternative.

The visual impacts of an elevated system are too great.

While the Fixed Guideway Alternative would have visual impacts, they would be less than for the Managed Lane Alternative in the majority of the corridor which would be served by either alternative. However the visual impacts would extend further for the Fixed Guideway Alternative, because it would serve a greater area. Visual impacts were considered in the *Environmental Consequences: Supporting Information* provided to the City Council (Table 8) and will be evaluated in greater detail in the upcoming Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Rather than any of the alternatives considered in the AA, build a bridge or tunnel across Pearl Harbor.

This option was previously considered and rejected in the *Screening Report* as well as in the current version of the O'ahu Regional Transportation Plan (ORTP).

Not enough commuters use public transportation to make a difference. People will not change their travel behavior.

The *Alternatives Analysis Report* (Table 3-7) shows approximately 60,000 more transit trips in 2030 with the Fixed Guideway Alternative than with the No Build, and approximately 50,000 more trips compared to either of the other alternatives. New transit riders, who previously would have driven, are expected to account for about ½ of the trips made on the fixed guideway system. This is similar to the experience of several other U.S. cities that have opened new fixed guideway systems in recent years. Between 10,000 and 15,000 of these trips (Table 3-8) would occur during the a.m. peak period, removing somewhere between 7,000 and 12,000 automobiles from the roads compared to the No Build Alternative.

The AA refers to the 2030 O'ahu Regional Transportation Plan (ORTP) but the 2030 ORTP has not been approved.

The 2030 O'ahu Regional Transportation Plan was adopted by the O'ahu Metropolitan Planning Organization (OMPO) Policy Committee on April 4, 2006.

The AA's forecast of future population on O'ahu and in the corridor is unrealistically high.

As required by federal guidelines, the 2030 population forecast used in the Alternatives Analysis is the forecast approved for use in long range transportation

planning by OMPO. Consistent with adopted procedures, the islandwide population total for 2030 is prepared by the State of Hawai'i Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT). DBEDT forecasts that the 2030 resident population on O'ahu will be 28% higher than that recorded in the 2000 census. This 28% growth in thirty years from 2000 to 2030 compares to 39% growth which occurred in the previous 30 year period from 1970 to 2000. The allocation of the islandwide 2030 population forecast to various geographic locations on O'ahu is prepared by the City and County of Honolulu Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP). The DPP allocations are estimated consistent with market trends and the policies of the O'ahu General Plan and the regional Development/Sustainable Communities Plans.

The ridership projection model used for the Alternatives Analysis is fundamentally flawed in that is assumes ridership will grow with population.

The travel forecasting procedures used for the Alternatives Analysis, obtained from OMPO, make no such assumption. The procedures, consistent with nearly all travel forecasting models nationwide, follow a "4-step process" wherein travel patterns are estimated as the product of a sequence of individual decisions – the number of trips that a household will make ("trip generation"); the destinations of these trips ("trip distribution"); the modes that will be used for travel ("mode choice"); and the paths on the transportation network that the trips will take ("network assignment"). The first step, trip generation, estimates the number of daily trips that a household will make, for different trip purposes, as a function of household size, household income and household vehicle ownership. Trip generation assumes that people make trips and so if the number of people increases the number of trips will increase, though not necessarily on a one-to-one basis. Whether this results in an increase in transit ridership, though, depends on the next two steps in the modeling sequence, trip distribution and mode choice, since trips will be forecast to occur on transit only if they are destined for locations served by transit and if making the trip by transit is attractive relative to other modal options.

The AA forecasts an increase in transit ridership in 2030 as compared to today even though transit ridership on O'ahu has been declining.

Transit ridership on O'ahu has varied over the past 20 years or more with year-to-year increases and decreases both occurring. Transit ridership had several years of declines in the 1990s but this is in common with other measures of travel demand. The 1990s saw one or more years of declines in vehicle registrations, licensed drivers, vehicle miles of travel and highway daily volumes. Current transit ridership, as measured by the recently completed (December 2005–January 2006) on-board transit survey, is at a level of approximately 236,600 unlinked trips on an average weekday, about 8% higher than 10 years earlier.

The need for commuting should be eliminated by moving people and jobs to Kapolei or other relocations.

More jobs are developing in Kapolei, which reduces the need for some people to commute. People make choices of where to work and live for many reasons, such as being near family, schools, or either their or their partner's work. As more jobs have developed in Kapolei, the directionality of commuting has decreased, with a greater percentage of travelers now traveling from the Primary Urban Center to Kapolei for work than previously.

Construction will be disruptive.

Construction of any of the build alternatives would temporarily disrupt traffic. Approaches to minimize the disruption will be developed as the design of the Fixed Guideway Alternative advances.

Limited parking in downtown, Waikīkī, and near UH Mānoa is a problem.

The Fixed Guideway Alternative would reduce parking demand in these areas compared to the other alternatives by providing a reliable alternative to driving.

Providing mobility options that enable independent living for seniors is important. Seniors are underserved by transit.

As noted in correspondence from the AARP, the fixed guideway alternative, providing affordable transportation, along with accessible transit oriented development and pedestrian-friendly station areas, can substantially improve the quality of life for the entire community.

Insufficient information is available to select a Locally Preferred Alternative.

The *Alternatives Analysis Report* and supporting materials provided a substantial comparison of the transportation, environmental, and financial costs and benefits between the various alternatives. Additional studies would not substantially change the relative merits of each alternative.

A different Managed Lane Alternative should have been evaluated. It should have been one or more of the following: longer, wider, provided more ramps.

The reversible Managed Lane Alternative evaluated in the AA was based specifically on the alternative requested during scoping by the commenters. The original request specified the beginning and end locations, two reversible lanes, and that a number of access points should be provided. The evaluated alternative was designed to provide the best benefit within these parameters. While an alternative of different design would provide somewhat different results, the general findings would be the same for any of the proposed variations.

The cost estimate is too low for the Fixed Guideway Alternative, but too high for the Managed Lane Alternative. The Tampa HOT lane project was less expensive than what is proposed for Honolulu.

Both alternatives were estimated using the same underlying costs and assumptions. The greatest cost for either system is the construction of an elevated concrete structure. Cost estimates were reviewed by the City Council's independent Transit Advisory Task Force and found to be reasonable. The Task Force also found that differences in construction conditions between Honolulu and Tampa make comparison of the Tampa highway facility to the Managed Lane Alternative not valid.

The morning zipper lane should have been continued with the Reversible Managed Lane Alternative.

Peak-period transportation demand is becoming more balanced as more commercial development is occurring in Kapolei. Operation of the zipper lane results in the loss of two 'Ewa bound lanes. With the reversible Managed Lane Alternative, demand is better balanced by restoring the two 'Ewa bound lanes when the single Koko Head bound lane provided by the zipper lane is replaced with the two Koko Head bound lanes provided by the managed lanes.

Also, the three elevated lanes would need to merge with three existing inbound lanes between the end of the elevated facility and Awa Street. This section would be able to accommodate, without major right-of-way acquisition, only a 5-lane wide at-grade facility. The merge would create a bottleneck that would diminish the benefit of a 3-lane reversible, elevated facility.

Why are more buses included in the Managed Lane Alternative than in the TSM Alternative?

The managed lane facility would be managed in such a way as to enable free flow speeds for all vehicles using it, including buses. To take advantage of this for transit, new routes were added and corridor bus service was increased in the Managed Lane Alternative in comparison to the TSM Alternative.

How much cost recovery could be accomplished with tolls?

As summarized in the *Alternatives Analysis Report* (Table 5-6), and detailed in the *Financial Feasibility Report*, tolls would generate approximately $1.5 billion (2006 dollars) over a thirty-year operating life of the project. Net toll revenues, after supporting operating and maintenance of the facility, would cover approximately 23 percent of the cost of development of the Managed Lane Alternative.

Fixed guideway systems rely on foreign technology.

Numerous companies manufacture rail transit vehicles in the United States, including Bombardier, Siemens, Skoda, and others.

How would the Fixed Guideway System deal with Safety and Security?

Statistics for 1997 from forty-five transit agencies were included in the Transportation Research Board (TRB) Report *Improving Transit Security*. Eight-thousand serious offenses were reported across all forty-five agencies. This is an average of about 175 serious crimes per transit system per year. As a matter of comparison, 53,000 serious offenses were reported by the Honolulu Police Department for 1997, or about 60,000 serious offenses per million population. According to the Federal Transit Administration's *Safety Management Information Statistics* for 1997, there was one serious offense for every million passenger miles carried on rail. These statistics were prior to creation of the Department of Homeland Security, which has substantially increased transit security programs nationwide. These statistics show that crime does occur, but that the level of crime is not extreme.

The more important question is what can be done to control crime on and around transit. Transit agencies around the country have used numerous approaches to reduce crime, including uniformed and non-uniformed officers on transit, video surveillance, community outreach, and architectural design elements. Design elements ranging from using vandal-resistant materials to landscaping with thorny bushes and using lighting and open sight lines to eliminate hiding spots have been effective for many agencies.

Transit poorly serves linked trips.

While trips with destinations that are poorly served by transit are poorly served by linked transit trips, there are several cases where linked trips can be well served. For example, transit service from downtown to Ala Moana Center will be more convenient than driving and parking for many people, allowing workers to make shopping trips during lunch breaks. Also, families may choose to drop children at school before leaving their car at a park-and-ride and taking transit to work, or one parent will drive while the other one takes transit.