

Public Involvement Overview

January 2011

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Speakers Bureau:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| • Monday, January 10 | Hawaii Building & Construction Trades Council |
| • Friday, January 14 | Structural Engineers Association of Hawaii |
| • Wednesday, January 19 | Job Quest 2011 |
| • Wednesday, January 19 | Masonry Institute of Hawaii |
| • Monday, January 31 | Oahu Filipino Community Council |

Neighborhood Board:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| • Wednesday, January 19 | Kalihi Neighborhood Board |
| • Thursday, January 20 | Makiki Neighborhood Board |
| • Tuesday, January 25 | Pearl City Neighborhood Board |
| • Tuesday, January 25 | Ala Moana Neighborhood Board |
| • Wednesday, January 26 | Makakilo/Kapolei/Honokai Hale Neighborhood Board |
| • Wednesday, January 26 | Mililani Neighborhood Board |
| • Thursday, January 27 | Waipahu Neighborhood Board |

WOFH Outreach:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| • Wednesday, January 12 | West Oahu/Farrington Hwy. Guideway Business & Community Meeting #2 |
| • Monday, January 24 | West Oahu/Farrington Hwy. Guideway Business & Community Meeting #3 |

Community Events:

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • Wednesday, January 5 | SMA Public Hearing – Aloha Stadium |
| • Thursday, January 6 | SMA Public Hearing - DAV |

TV/Radio Appearances:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Friday, January 14 | KHON Morning Show |
| • Wednesday, January 19 | KITV Morning Show |
| • Wednesday, January 19 | KHON “Wake Up 2day” |
| • Wednesday, January 19 | Hawaii News Now “Sunrise” |
| • Wednesday, January 19 | KSSK Perry & Price “Morning Show” |

January 2011 Website/Information Line/E-Mail Comment Summary

Submission Method	Submission Date	Submission Content/Notes
Hotline	01/12/2011	FEIS DVD request
Hotline	01/12/2011	Wanted to know when the project will break ground.
Website	01/14/2011	<p>My wife and I strongly support this project and will do all that we can to help you. Tourism is the island's number one economic contributor while maintaining roads and expanding them is a major drain on capital budgets. This project can provide a catalyst to rebuild Hawaii as one of the world's leading states when it comes to quality of life and integration of its infrastructure needs with the impact on the environment and economy. A major challenge for Hawaii is its once beautiful land is being paved over for more roads to handle the traffic; this high speed rail project is a better way. Where we live Disbey has made a major commitment to the island by building a magnificent resort but this will put more pressure on the roads. We are very lucky to have a company like Disney choose Hawaii but we need a system like this to ease the transportation pressure. The high cost to our people of imported gasoline to fuel cars and trucks is a barrier to many finding employment and again projects like this give people options.</p> <p>Although I am in the power and water Utilities business, we travel the world and see how other nations have had projects similar to this that have served as a catalyst to signal a positive change and future for their nation. Singapore is a great example what they did with their water systems and what they did to renew their harbor area and drinking water system, it is now a world class destination and improved their economy and quality of life. Although we also live in Canada a good part of the year, we have chosen to live in Hawaii and can not tell you enough, this is a very good way to make a great place better by smart deployment of capital to conserve ever increasing operating and maintenance expense by trying to hold onto the past with traditional ever expanding roads. As a last comment, with this line, should also be a program to reduce parking in downtown areas, raise fees for motor vehicles as a way to encourage further use of mass transit. Look to London England and other major centers like Honolulu who have combined major initiatives like this to maximize their impact. Thank you and keep going! Regarding reply, I am not looking for a fulsome response, merely acknowledgement my comments have been heard and if you need more voices to support, just ask.</p>

Submission Method	Submission Date	Submission Content/Notes
Website	01/17/2011	My bakery lies in rail transit way. The landlord says that he will not renew the lease because the city has purchase the property to construct the rail transit. We signed the least for 5 yrs with 5 yrs option. We have invested over \$300,000 to construct the bakery 3 yrs ago. We still owed the bank a lot of money for our bakery business. Now that the city has purchase the property, all our investment in the bakery business will go waste. Does the city compensate our bakery business in any way? We need to construct another bakery. How much will the city compensate us so can move our business to another location.
Email	01/20/2011	Hi there! Wow! \$5.5 billion is a bright penny but by the time it is finish, the penny will turn into gold. If inflation kicks in and most likely it will, \$5.5 billion dollars is not going to be enough to pay for materials, labor cost, as we get into the 5th year of construction. Promises can be made but they can also be broken. I'm hoping all goes well and China won't claim Hawaii as part ownership because the dept we owe China. 21 stations is good. Hope they finish it before I die so I can at least ride on it once just to see how it feels to travel as an elderly person that faces an over populated Oahu. Keep up the good work
Email	01/20/2011	Who is going to pay the price for this piece of shit
Hotline	01/20/2011	Manager had questions regarding when construction of the rail project would occur in the downtown area. Told him that once a contractor is selected they will provide the City with a schedule.
Website	01/20/2011	I had a couple questions regarding the timeline of the project and the companies associated with it. Thank you for your help.
Email	01/21/2011	Aloha, A client of mine is purchasing 1815 Dillingham Blvd subject to verification of the impact of the rail transit project on subject property. Kindly help me get some feedback to my buyer as regards the ff: a) Will the City buy any portion of subject property? If so, how much? b) What other possible impact will the rail have on subject property? Please email or call me so I can help my buyer come to an acceptable decision as to the property. Mahalo... Art
Email	01/24/2011	Hello, I am a freelance writer for Civil Engineering magazine, a publication of the American Society of Civil Engineers. I am interested in writing a news

Submission Method	Submission Date	Submission Content/Notes
		<p>story on the high-capacity transit corridor project now under way in Honolulu. Can you help arrange a phone interview with a project manager or engineer who can tell me more about the project? I am especially interested in the engineering design aspects. Also, I understand that some design and construction contracts have already been awarded. Can you provide a list of the design and construction firms involved, along with a brief description of what each is doing? By the way, I am located in Florida, where I believe we are five hours ahead of Honolulu. Thanks, Jeff Brown -- Jeff Brown Tel. 407-408-3950 jeffbrown88@gmail.com</p>
Hotline	01/26/2011	<p>writing an article regarding public transit rider ship and would like to ask some questions</p>
Website	01/28/2011	<p>Please add me to your email distribution of information; especially job opportunities. I am local to Honolulu.</p>

*Mailing list request comments have been deleted from this list.

MEET the MAYOR

We sit down for a Q&A with new Honolulu Mayor Peter Carlisle about his plans to trim government, build rail, fix the sewers and clean up the city's clutter.

by VICTORIA WISEMAN, WITH A. KAM NAPIER

Illustration by Joe Ciardiello

HM: Your last job, as prosecutor, was to put away bad guys. Now your job is to keep the lights on. With that transition, has there been anything that's surprised you?

PC: What's surprised me is how well prepared the prosecutor's job made me. That sounds strange, but, frankly, the approach to issues is pretty much the same. Something comes across the desk, you have to analyze it and look at the evidence that the person is guilty or might not be guilty. That's what you need to be able to do in this job, too.

HM: How do you foresee your working relationship with the City Council?

PC: I'm very hopeful. We have so many new people, the dynamic may be different than it was with some of the people who have led a somewhat questionable past, the top of the list being [former] councilmember [Rod] Tam.

HM: Your first mayoral crisis, so to speak, might have been the cancellation of the craft fair that bears the

mayor's name. What did you take away from that issue, knowing as we do that you weren't aware it was being canceled?

PC: It's a very different management style that this administration brings in than the previous administration. We're genuinely believers in delegation of authority and allowing other people to make decisions and discuss matters with the media without running to us every time that they do something. When you give people that kind of latitude, they have to know what some of the restraints are.

HM: Do you think it indicates a lack of coordination between offices that you've inherited?

PC: No, I think it's a matter of not being given the opportunity to run their own shop in a fashion that's consistent with the policies of this administration. That means that something I assumed was obvious, wasn't. That's my fault more than it's their fault. We're starting brand new at 30 days into the operation and they've been told things are going to change

dramatically and that may not be enough guidance for them to actually understand what they need to do that's different.

HM: You said recently that furloughs were invented by the devil and should go back to the purgatory from whence they came.

PC: Unequivocally true.

HM: Now, who is the devil you're talking about? Who started them?

PC: The statement by the former mayor was, "Let's give furloughs a chance." It's a chance I don't think they should have been given. The furloughs were a bad idea in the school system; that became painfully apparent very quickly. The mistake is giving people more vacation time as opposed to saving money by making things more efficient or by reducing pay, if necessary.

HM: The furloughs under the previous administration were supposed to save around \$26 million. If you take away furloughs, how will you replace

that \$26 million savings?

PC: First off, is overtime being abused? Then take a look at fees that could be raised for services. We'd save a lot of money by upgrading all the parking meters to the new ones being used at the zoo, which are far more effective. There's a wealth of things that you can do by just looking at the way things are operating.

HM: Are you looking at salaries?

PC: You have to look at the salaries. It's impossible to look at the costs without looking at salaries because that's the biggest chunk. Across-the-board pay cuts, reducing overtime, prosecuting people for overtime abuses when it's criminal in nature.

HM: Those seem like very hard decisions to make, especially in this economic climate. Are you prepared to make the tough cuts?

PC: Yes. You can't do this to be somebody's friend. Everything we do in government that's inefficient is taking money out

those people who have a vested interest in benefits and in an oversized government to either give concessions or we're going to be at loggerheads very quickly.

HM: To go back to the issue of city debt, under Mufi Hannemann, Honolulu made the *Business Insider* list of Most Bankrupt Cities as fifth in the nation, right behind New York City at \$370 per capita in debt. And it looks like there's going to be a \$98 million shortfall this fiscal year. So do you have any plans yet to address that beyond the kind of nips and cuts you've been talking about?

PC: No, but we're going to get a handle on it and address it. We cannot continue to mount debt. Period. So if we get to the point where there has to be a reduction in force, then that's something we'll confront. And we're also going to have to look at changing some of the laws as they've related to bumping rights [etc.]. Because you're not doing this in an efficient fashion; [when jobs are eliminated] you're

disaster. The biggest one is healthcare benefits. You can get yourself to a point with healthcare benefits where the gross product of the state would be going to healthcare benefits. And you can't allow that to happen.

HM: Now city workers get healthcare for life after how many years on the job?

PC: It was 10 at one point, now it's up to 25, I think. So, it's coming, it's changing. Is there a reason why nobody in the private sector has the type of guaranteed medical benefits that we in the public sector have? Yeah, it's because they need to keep their doors open and they don't want to go bankrupt.

HM: Let's get into the "nuts and bolts" of the office. One of the less glamorous sides is dealing with waste.

PC: Yeah, but believe it or not, that's a very exciting thing right now. I mean, it really is. Garbage is gold.

"All our last mayors had what I like to call worst way; certainly that was true for Mayor want to go to Washington, D.C., I don't want

of the private sector, and those are the people being bled to death by an oversized government. They're looking at the dead end and they're looking at welfare and they're looking at losing their homes. Is that really worth giving government workers unlimited overtime, unlimited vacation time, unlimited sick leave? Every ounce of that is coming from somebody else's pocket. The people who are suffering right now are in the private sector.

HM: When it comes to the teacher fur-loughs, they seem to have originated with HSTA saying, well, if we're going to get paid less, then we'll work less. Is the city confronting that kind of attitude with the unionized city workers?

PC: You *think* that might be a possibility? We're coming on up to some serious negotiations right now with the UPW, HGEA and SHOPO. There are strong issues that are going to make it very important for

bumping somebody from a higher level pay to go down at the same level pay and do less work and letting somebody else from the bottom go who might be better at that work than the person who's higher up. There's all these catch-22s with what we've got right now... which many people feel is so completely skewed in favor of the union that you can never win. So, if that's true, then we have to change it. And that means changing the laws, and going to the Legislature.

Kaua'i has actually looked at all these things and done an excellent job of reducing the cost of government. Where other counties are looking at deficits, they've got a surplus.

HM: Nationwide, cities and even states are looking at bankruptcy, largely because of what they owe on pensions and health benefits for their own employees. How is Honolulu doing in that regard?

PC: We are rapidly approaching the same

HM: What's your plan for the mess?

PC: We've got the third boiler coming up at H-Power that's going to make a huge difference. Right now we generate 900,000 tons of solid waste and can burn 600,000 tons of it to convert to energy, leaving a surplus of 300,000. Once the new boiler comes on, all of that can go there and more. That will reduce the waste going into Waimānalo Gulch landfill.

HM: What about wastewater?

PC: We've got a huge issue because of the consent decree [negotiated with the EPA to upgrade Honolulu's wastewater systems]. Our plan is to comply with the consent decree because we've got to get ourselves up to snuff in terms of maintenance of the whole system. We had a long period where they weren't putting enough money into maintenance of the system, and the need to maintain it went up and up and up. They've called that "deferred maintenance." What I would call it was

negligent maintenance.

HM: Let's jump into your views on commercial development. For instance, the City Council approved the Moana Surf rider's plans to build closer to the shoreline than normally allowed. Do you agree with that decision?

PC: I think you have to take a look at competing globally for tourism and look at each project's merits and where it's going to be going. If that requires flexibility in zoning and it's carefully considered when a decision was made, yes, I would support that.

HM: Saying that you'd support that project is one thing, but what is your guideline for development along Waikiki, or in general? How much is too much?

PC: That's an extremely fair and difficult question. If you take a look at the [Waikiki] Beach Walk, which involved a lot of development and redevelopment, it clearly left a better product. If you don't

make it self-sustaining; the other side says you can't get rid of it because it's a historic monument and you can't lose this part of history. We're going to have to make a decision that is consistent with what's economically feasible and in the best interest of preserving what needs to be preserved. And that's going to be dictated by the information we get about what kind of money will come here for it to be self-sustaining.

HM: Self-sustaining by being a draw for visitors?

PC: Or something you can keep as it was originally functioning and maintained and safe. I'm told there's the ability to do that with funding. Now, I don't know if that's true or not, but I'm going to find out. Because there was a long study that was done that gave specific recommendations on what to do, and now the question is, can it be kept functioning without funds from the city?

HM: So if it doesn't get funded by the

frivolous—the more we're going to have the kind of problems we had with H3, which ended up with gigantic cost overruns. There are people who are willing to obstruct [rail] for their own ideology at the expense of everybody else in the community.

HM: The third-place finisher in the mayor's race, Panos Prevedouras, did get 18 percent of the vote. Nearly one in five voters went for a career civil engineering professor instead of a career politician because of this issue. Do you feel an obligation to address them?

PC: All you have to do is listen to a real, honest engineer and not an academician who is also a politician. After I listened to someone who really does know about the project, I am convinced Panos is clueless. And will remain so. I think the driving force behind that is people don't want to have to pay for rail, it's not because he has some good vision or some great understanding—he doesn't.

'governor envy.' They wanted to be 'gov' in the Hannemann. I don't want to go there. I don't to go to Washington Place. Period."

do that, and they have a better product elsewhere—in Asia, in Europe, on the Mainland—than we're not going to be competitive.

The people who are in Waikiki know the answers to these questions a lot better than some of us who aren't there. They know what their competition is and how to attract people and make it profitable to keep jobs. I think we have to give some deference to their thoughts, knowing, as well, that they're profit-motivated. It's reaching a balance between being greedy on their part and what is being done to make sure that we can compete for the global tourism dollar.

HM: In 2001, the city invested \$4 million to refurbish the Natatorium. The work was stopped in 2005, so now it's been closed and locked for 30 years. What obligation do you or the city have to restore it?

PC: I've been given both sides of this. One side says you can't refurbish it, you can't

city, you're all for it?

PC: That's a real easy thing to say, but that's not fair. But, I like your thinking!

HM: Let's delve into rail. You've been outspoken in your support. Now, there's a new rail authority to propel the project forward. Do you think it's going to change the debate?

PC: The debate will change when the first shovel is struck. Once it becomes a project, it's not a question of *if* we're going to have the project, it's going to be *how* we make sure it's done on time and under budget. There's going to be people who are greedy, who want to make a fortune, but we need to make absolutely certain that we find these people early. People have an obligation to speak out if they know something is going wrong; we have to make sure that people aren't working less effectively so they can extend the project and continue getting paid.

The more we are delayed by people bent on bringing lawsuits—no matter how

HM: You say you want voters to pay for rail, but you also want to cut costs in other areas of government, specifically with staffing. How can you sell that to people who don't want the rail line?

PC: You have to take a bigger view on this and understand what transit-oriented development brings to the table. It's going to give us the opportunity to give people first-time homes out in Kapolei. We've run out of that here, in the core; people are lucky if they can buy a condominium. And look at this as being a way of transporting students from campus to campus in the UH system, and people will have the opportunity now to move from as far out as Kapolei to get up to the university in a reasonable period of time. Every other place served by a large and effective transit system has a better-educated and a more mobile workforce.

HM: Will the city be doing anything

CONTINUED ON PAGE 54

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On the Beach at Waikiki

MEET THE MAYOR, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 38

to induce businesses to move out to the west side? Kapolei was the traffic solution for Honolulu. We've had Kapolei now for a couple of decades, trying to become a city, but, so far, people are still driving in from west and central O'ahu to work in town or Waikiki.

PC: You've got to figure out what will actually bring the people out to the west. In terms of urban planning, what happens is you first have to have the population base, then they've got to want to have services and goods they can purchase, then after that you can start moving government in, and then businesses follow. It's already happening with the advent of the Kroc Center [The Salvation Army Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center in Kapolei] and with the advent of the University of Hawai'i at West O'ahu. Once that starts building up, you're going to need sewers, you're going to need fire stations, you're going to need ambulance

"Homelessness is everyone's issue. It's certainly a city issue."

services, all those things will follow. And the key infrastructure, in my opinion, is this rail project, because it will tie it all together.

HM: Mufi Hannemann took heat from former Gov. Linda Lingle for insisting homelessness was a state issue, and the two offices went back and forth on it. What's your position?

PC: Homelessness is everyone's issue. It's certainly a city issue. Are we ever going to completely get rid of homelessness? No, as long as we've got people who are mentally ill, drug addicts or who want to live that particular lifestyle, with no rules that apply to them. The only thing you can do is control it. Part of that means isolating them from places where they shouldn't be, which includes taking up sidewalk space that belongs to the public, taking up camping space and turning

it into basically a waste zone. If that means putting safe communities or safe shelters—or whatever you want to call them—somewhere, so be it.

HM: Homelessness is just one of the issues the city and state will have to work closely on. How do you envision your working relationship with Governor Abercrombie?

PC: I'm extremely hopeful, because he's not going anywhere. This is his end job. I hope not to be going anywhere, except out the door if I'm not reelected. If that's my attitude and that's his attitude, you don't have that friction that has always existed between the state and the mayor. All our last mayors had what I like to call "governor envy." They wanted to be "gov" in the worst way; certainly that was true for Mayor Hannemann, I don't know about Mayor [Eileen] Anderson and we know that Fearless Frank [Fasi] wanted it more than anything on the planet Earth.

I don't want to go there. I don't want to go to Washington, D.C., I don't want to go to Washington Place. Period. So my hope is that's going to give us a real advantage over the relationship that existed between the governor and the mayor before. I don't think we'll agree on everything, but I think it gives us a chance.

HM: Since you won an election to finish the last two years of Hannemann's term, you'd be eligible to run up for two more full terms. [Jeremy] Harris did that, he was mayor for 10 years. Conceivably you could be mayor for a decade.

PC: There's nothing I'd like more.

HM: What would the city look like after a decade of Peter Carlisle as mayor?

PC: I hope it looks cleaner; I hope it looks like the city of tomorrow it could be; I hope it looks far more friendly for those of us who live here; I hope it continues to be a place where we not only have tourists coming but we're a good location for businesses, for recreational tourism, for athleticism. Genuinely become the Geneva of the Pacific, if we could. If APEC [Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation] goes off well, maybe that's a possibility. I would like to see that.

While that is a major concern, I don't want to think what I would look like after 10 years. It's frightening enough already. By that time it will be terrifying. [PAU]

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Getting rail funds now up to Hanabusa, Djou says

The outgoing U.S. representative delivers his parting shots as he departs Congress

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Jan 01, 2011

U.S. Rep. Charles Djou bade goodbye to Congress yesterday, saying he has no current plans to seek political office and challenging his successor to pick up where he left off in securing federal funding for Honolulu's \$5.5 billion rail transit project.

Djou, a Republican, said he has secured commitments for Honolulu's rail funding from the GOP leadership and that it is up to U.S. Rep.-elect Colleen Hanabusa to follow up.

"If the future 112th Congress fails to secure all the rail funding, it's the fault of this delegation," Djou said at a farewell news conference on the steps of the federal building in Honolulu. "The commitments are there. ... If rail funding doesn't come through, we have to lay the blame at the hands of Colleen Hanabusa and the rest of Hawaii's congressional delegation."

Hanabusa will be sworn in Wednesday.

Djou made similar statements about advancing the Akaka Bill — to grant federal recognition of native Hawaiians — saying he believes he had enough GOP support to get the legislation passed in the Republican-controlled House next year.

Hanabusa thanked Djou for his service to the state and said she hopes Djou will continue serving the public.

"I would assume once one starts in public service, one will continue to be in public service," Hanabusa said from Washington. "I'm certain that he will do whatever he feels he could do to assist in that process."

"I think I would have hoped to have heard from Charles more of a continuing commitment to the people of the state versus a statement instead that if it's not him then it's not going to work."

Honolulu officials and U.S. Sen. Daniel Inouye have pegged the federal government's financial commitment to the rail project at \$1.55 billion.

Djou said he worked with GOP leaders to ensure Honolulu would receive its "fair share" of federal money, but he had yet to receive a commitment from the Federal Transit Administration on the exact amount.

He said he expects all new spending to come under heavy scrutiny as Congress works to pass the fiscal year 2011 budget as well as the 2012 budget.

"I don't think it's about rail, per se, as much as the new 112th Congress is going to be very focused on reducing spending overall," Djou said. "They are going to be targeting all new projects, whether it's rail or airports or anything."

On the Akaka Bill, Djou said he had secured commitments from enough Republicans that he believes he would have been able to push the measure through, similar to how Gov. Neil Abercrombie previously managed it through a GOP-controlled House when he was a member of Congress.

Hanabusa said Djou's statements did not recognize the difficulty in getting legislation through both chambers of Congress and the president, but said she hopes Djou will work to serve the public interest.

"If he believes he has those commitments, then I call upon him to call upon them (GOP leaders) to keep their word to him," she said. "The bottom line is it's for the people of Hawaii."

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Inouye, through a spokesman, said, "I thank Congressman Djou for his service to Hawaii and the nation, and I wish him well in his future endeavors."

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Rail, schools and APEC challenge isles

By Star-Advertiser staff

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Jan 02, 2011

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As 2011 dawns in Hawaii, three issues carry the prospect of hope or failure for the islands:

» Honolulu's new rail system — the biggest public works project ever in Hawaii — is expected to break ground early in the new year.

» Critics of Hawaii's school system will see their push for an appointed school board achieve success after teacher furloughs gave island schoolchildren the fewest instructional days in the country.

» And Hawaii can show another side to its touristy image — if perhaps only briefly — and demonstrate that it can be a serious place to do serious business if it can produce a trouble-free Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in front of the leaders of 21 countries who will gather in Waikiki.

There will be plenty of other big headlines as 2011 begins.

But rail, education reform and the APEC forum, individually and collectively, can move Hawaii to new and positive directions — or end up providing more ammunition to critics who say the islands can't play in the big leagues.

Hawaii can elevate its reputation as a serious place to do business if it can pull off an efficient Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in November.

An estimated 10,000 to 20,000 people are expected to attend, including 2,000 journalists.

The APEC delegates, representing the 21 largest economies in the Asia-Pacific region, will be joined by President Barack Obama in his hometown to do serious work continuing to rebuild from 2008's economic collapse.

APEC forums often attract protests, so security will be tight around Waikiki — especially with Obama back in town.

The other countries' leaders and delegates will have their own motorcades and security. And they'll require reliable telecommunications and efficient and hassle-free airport access and hotel operations, Kurt Tong, economic coordinator and the senior U.S. official at Singapore-based APEC, told the Star-Advertiser last month.

Most of the delegates certainly will appreciate flourishes of island culture, Tong said. But the leaders and delegates will be in Waikiki essentially to conduct a series of serious business meetings, he said.

Amid all the high-level talks, however, could be at least one highly visible moment of fun.

At each APEC forum, the leaders gather for what's sometimes called the "silly shirts" photo because the leaders often wear garments reflecting the host culture.

In 2009, after Honolulu was named the host of the 2011 APEC forum, Obama joked that he was looking forward to seeing world leaders "decked out in

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flowered shirts and grass skirts." — *Dan Nakaso*

Hawaii's public schools will see new leadership in 2011 with the decision by voters to switch from an elected Board of Education to one appointed by the governor.

Just when that will happen and how much leeway Gov. Neil Abercrombie will have in picking new board members is still up in the air.

The question first goes to the Legislature, which may decide that the governor has to choose from candidates presented to him by an advisory council, similar to the way he picks judges and the University of Hawaii Board of Regents. In any case, the governor's nominees will be subject to approval by the state Senate.

In the meantime, the current 14-member Board of Education will be handling some hotly contested topics. After a series of public hearings last month, the board will vote on whether to close small schools to save money, a prospect that has ignited vigorous protest in communities from Hawaii Kai to Kalihi.

Also looming in the new year are negotiations with the teachers union over a new contract. One of the thorniest issues may be hammering out a way to evaluate teachers, in part, on their students' progress over the course of the school year. Hawaii committed to that effort as part of its successful bid for a \$75 million federal "Race to the Top" grant.

The grant will be used to try to turn around low-performing schools, boost student achievement, and assess and deploy teachers effectively. — *Susan Essoyan*

It's full speed ahead for the \$5.5 billion rail transit project in 2011.

Mayor Peter Carlisle remains optimistic for groundbreaking in the first quarter, possibly by March.

Three things need to happen before construction can begin.

Now that Abercrombie has signed off on the final environmental impact statement, the city needs the Federal Transit Administration, the state Historic Preservation Division, the National Park Service, the Navy and the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to sign a "programmatic agreement" indicating the impact of the project on historic sites.

The FTA then would issue a "record of decision," concluding the environmental process and clearing the way for groundbreaking to begin.

City administration officials next would have to approach the City Council and apply for a Special Management Area permit. The permit is required by law to ensure projects adhere to coastal zone management policies, including height restrictions, preservation of archaeological sites and ensuring adequate public shoreline access.

Toru Hamayasu, general manager of the city's rapid transit division, has said the project does encroach into Special Management Areas due to its proximity to Pearl Harbor.

The Department of Planning and Permitting has scheduled hearings on the Special Management Area permit next week. The permit then would go to the City Council for vetting and final approval. — *B.J. Reyes*

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Time to buckle down

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Jan 02, 2011

Now that Hawaii finally has closed the book on a difficult year, it's tempting to anticipate that 2011 will bring a long-awaited respite.

Tourism is recovering, as are housing prices. Tax coffers are filling up again. The jobless rate, already lower than the national average, may tick downward in the coming months, if projections for the construction industry and other employers are borne out.

But while there may be encouraging signs, we're not out of the woods. At both city and state levels, the new year promises new challenges that won't allow policymakers to slack off on austerity pledges.

For starters, the fiscal support provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will be on the wane before long. Unlike many states, Hawaii budgeted its stimulus funds to last over a longer term, but that will come to an end in 2012; a little more than half of the \$1.6 billion has been spent, say the state officials who are tracking the money. And in general, with political pressure mounting to cut the deficit spending in Congress, all manner of federal grants will be harder to come by.

So Gov. Neil Abercrombie will have to make good on his pledge — sooner rather than later — to reorder spending priorities. Budgets are sure to be tight, and Hawaii won't reap the fruits of an optimum economic upswing without actively laying the groundwork for long-term fiscal health, with an emphasis on efficient, conservative spending practices.

There are other opportunities for a proactive approach to public policy. For example, education reform presents great potential for growth. To begin with, the state has developed an encouragingly ambitious blueprint for using its Race to the Top grant money, part of the stimulus program. Now the state Department of Education must deploy its allotment of \$75 million to produce the innovative and responsive public school system the state needs — and the public demands — if its children are to be prepared for employment in the new economy.

An even more critical task awaits the Legislature in bettering public schools: Lawmakers must decide how the conversion to an appointed school board, an overhaul that voters authorized in the last election, should proceed. The governor's favored proposal — to allow him full discretion to appoint members — seems the most sensible, as long as board members serve for staggered terms and cannot be dismissed by executive whim.

Fiscal challenges await the University of Hawaii as well, and efforts to upgrade facilities represent a wise investment for education as well as a needed spur for the construction industry. On a related front, UH administrators need to guide the football program through its transition toward the potentially more lucrative alliance with the Mountain West Conference.

At Honolulu Hale, the most pressing concerns are to close any residual budgetary gaps and especially to move ahead with the Honolulu fixed-rail transit system, a long-overdue addition to city infrastructure. New Mayor Peter Carlisle, like his predecessor, must take an active and visible role. He needs to ride herd on the creation of a transit authority and help to ensure that the first phases of the rail project are executed effectively and with transparency.

And all the state's leadership, in both the public and private sectors, needs to continue the momentum generated by the Lingle administration to reduce Hawaii's reliance on imported fossil fuels. If it remains a top priority, we can establish Hawaii as a leader in the renewable energy industry.

In November, Honolulu will have its brightest spotlight on the world stage as host of the Asia-Pacific

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Economic Cooperation conference; seeing that this is remembered as a success must be an all-consuming concern for the new administrations and business leaders.

If anything, 2011 may be even more challenging than the recessionary years past, but it should be an energizing rather than dispiriting time. Clearly, only an energetic, active approach to a year offering such potential for growth can yield the kind of progress Hawaii needs to thrive again.

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Will Republican House Fund Honolulu Rail Project?



Reported by: [Andrew Pereira](#)

Email: apereira@khon2.com

Last Update: 1/04 7:44 pm

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Incoming Speaker of the House John Boehner has made it clear the era of earmarks in Washington, D.C. is over and the first priority for the new republican majority will be to cut spending.

Rep.-elect Colleen Hanabusa, Hawaii democrat, says it's still unclear whether the GOP majority will target projects such as Honolulu's \$5.5 billion rail transit system to get federal spending under control.

"We're gonna have to wait and see exactly what is it that the republicans are looking to do; whether they're just looking to vote 'no' on things or to make the president look bad," said Hanabusa, during an interview Tuesday with Khon2.

Honolulu City officials, including former Mayor Mufi Hannemann and current Mayor Peter Carlisle, have said the city expects to receive \$1.55 billion in federal funds to help build the elevated heavy rail system from East Kapolei to Ala Moana, a 20 mile long route.

However with republicans in control of the House and both Hanabusa and fellow Hawaii Rep. Mazie Hirono being snubbed for positions on the all important Appropriations Committee, getting GOP support for Honolulu's costly rail project may prove difficult.

Conservative radio talk show host Michael Medved, who broadcasts his nationally syndicated show from Hawaii a few weeks every year, has been watching the debate over Honolulu's proposed rail system with interest.

"I think there's no chance that the new republicans in Congress will go for this rail project in Honolulu," Medved told Khon2. "There's just no chance at all."

However Hanabusa says Hawaii may hold the trump card over federal funding for rail in Sen. Dan Inouye, who chairs the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee and is the longest living member of Congress.

"I don't think Hawaii needs to be as concerned (over rail funding) because Sen. Inouye chairs Appropriations," said Hanabusa. "That's as powerful as it gets."



Still, Medved believes Inouye's influence over spending matters may only reach so far.

"He's a Washington fixture and he has as much clout as any single person in the Capitol but that only carries on one side of Congress," said Medved. "On the other side you've got a republican majority."

In a statement to Khon2 Sen. Inouye said he's committed to Honolulu's rail transit project and will do all he can to secure federal funding to ensure its timely completion.

Inouye went on to say that funding for rail projects usually don't fall under the purview of Congress and may not be part of the upcoming debates over federal deficit spending.

"Most of the federal funding for the rail project comes through a grant agreement between the Federal Transit Administration and the city that is separate from the debate that occurs in Congress," said Inouye.

While that has been true in past years when the emphasis on federal spending wasn't as hotly contested as it has been in the current political climate, republicans in the House could simply refuse to fund any agreement between the FTA and the City and County of Honolulu.

"Yes you could get this money from the Senate side, that's possible (and) I think that Sen. Inouye could deliver that," said Medved, "but I think the chances of Hawaii getting the money for the rail project from the House of Representatives are less than the Seattle Seahawks winning the Super Bowl."

Carlisle believes the city's rail project could be built with fewer federal dollars. However the mayor cautioned the project could be delayed or construction drawn out over a longer period of time if federal lawmakers don't deliver the \$1.55 billion that has long been anticipated.

"Then what we have to do is we have to make sure we have to stretch the project longer unfortunately because if you don't have the money to pay for it, then you're gonna have to cut back on how quickly it goes and all the rest of those things," said Carlisle.

Have a news tip? Contact Andrew Pereira at 368-7273. Follow Andrew on Twitter at [Khon_Reporter](#)

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Hawaii's earmark funding source appears dried up

January 5, 2011 - By HERBERT A. SAMPLE, The Associated Press

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HONOLULU - For decades, the billions of dollars that U.S. Sen. Daniel Inouye wrangled out of Congress for Hawaii-specific projects flowed into many of the state's business, educational and governmental corners.

But now, the earmark spigot appears to have gone dry.

A stopgap spending law that will finance the federal government through early March contains no earmarks. And it appears likely that Republicans - whose influence in Congress will rise markedly starting today - and some Democrats will fight earmarks in any future spending bill.

That means government programs and business projects in Hawaii that were relying on the earmark funding from the Hawaii congressional delegation may have to cut back or halt, at least for the next several months.

"We may very well have to lay off some personnel," said Lt. Col. Chuck Anthony of the Hawaii National Guard, which would have received \$3 million for drug enforcement efforts from an Inouye earmark during the current federal fiscal year that began Oct. 1.

The program was to operate with 49 employees, but now, 35 positions are in danger, Anthony said. "If there's no other way of securing federal funding, yeah, it would have a very severe impact on the counterdrug program," he added.

Peter Boylan, Inouye's spokesman, said in an e-mail, "Unfortunately, as things stand now, these worthy programs will be forced to seek alternate sources of funding."

Until recently, members of Congress sponsored thousands of annual appropriations for projects in their districts and states. For example, 141 Hawaii earmarks worth \$321 million were in the omnibus 2011 spending bill that recently died in the Senate, according to Boylan.

Inouye, who chairs the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee, has argued that the overall amount spent on earmarks has markedly decreased and that the transparency by which Congress considers them has improved.

But earmarks continue to be a target. So when the omnibus measure failed, Congress instead passed a continuing resolution that put federal spending for the current fiscal year on autopilot through March 4 and funded no earmarks. President Barack Obama signed it before Christmas.

Moreover, earmarks appear unwelcome by the incoming Congress, said Steve Ellis, vice president of Taxpayers for Common Sense, an anti-earmark group in Washington.

"I have a hard time seeing that a strengthened Republican minority in the Senate and a Republican majority in the House are going to adopt a spending bill then that has earmarks in it," he said.

Ellis stressed that Hawaii will still receive billions of federal dollars, particularly to support the U.S. military presence in the islands. The money just won't come from earmarks, he said.

Still, past earmarks sponsored by the Hawaii delegation have been a lucrative source of financing for nonprofit groups, for-profit businesses, the University of Hawaii, and state and local governments.

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For example, Inouye had sponsored 2011 earmarks to direct \$26.4 million to Pacific Marine of Honolulu for new "bow-lifting" naval technology; \$13.7 million to North Star Scientific Corp. of Kapolei for new airborne surveillance systems; and \$10 million to Oceanit of Honolulu for a system to better track satellites and space debris.

He also had championed earmarks worth \$27.5 million in defense funds for the University of Hawaii.

Jim Gaines, UH vice president for research, said his system is just beginning to grapple with the loss of that and several other earmarks, particularly for research.

"On the educational activity side, we're (financially) stressed to start with," he said. "To think that that side is somehow going to pick up over on the (research) side is very unlikely."

Among the earmarks backed by Sen. Daniel Akaka of Hawaii were \$5.7 million to restore a historic seaplane hangar at Midway Island, nearly \$3.8 million he and Inouye sought for Native Hawaiian education programs, and \$3.4 million to the Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission to help clean up a former weapons range and protect endangered species.

"Instead of making things better, we're just trying to keep things from getting worse now," said Michael Nahoopii, the commission's executive director.

Inouye, Akaka and Rep. Mazie Hirono - all Democrats - also sponsored a \$55 million earmark for final design and engineering of Honolulu's commuter rail project.

Toru Hamayasu, general manager of the city's rapid transit division, said it's premature to assume the money is gone. Even if it is, he said that will not affect the \$1.55 billion in mostly construction dollars the city expects from the Federal Transit Administration.

In a statement, Hirono said she pursued earmarks for worthy projects in her district, such as computer equipment for Molokai students, education services for homeless Native Hawaiian children, and YWCA domestic violence prevention programs.

"I will work over the next two years to ensure that the federal agencies, which now will be making all the funding decisions, are aware of the needs of my district," she said.

Former GOP Rep. Charles Djou of Hawaii said he sponsored no earmarks during his seven-month stint in office.

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Environmental Group Complains About Rail Transit Hearing

Hearing Looks At Special Management Areas

POSTED: 2:43 pm HST January 5, 2011

UPDATED: 2:54 pm HST January 5, 2011

HONOLULU -- The head of the environmental group Hawaii's Thousand Friends complained Wednesday that the city wasn't clear enough about what sensitive areas would be affected by the proposed rail transit project.

The proposed \$5.5 billion elevated rail transit line would run 20 miles, from Kapolei to Ala Moana Center.

Four locations along the route are designated special management areas. They are in Waipahu, Peal City, near Halawa and Keehi Lagoon. Any construction in those areas would require a special permit.

“Whenever you make contact with a special management area, no matter how small, you have to get a special management area permit,” said acting Director of the City Department of Transportation Services Wayne Yoshioka.

Donna Wong, executive director of Hawaii's Thousand Friends, complained Wednesday that the city did a poor job of publicizing exactly what areas would be impacted and should have given better notice.

“We're concerned about how the coastal zone will be impacted by development, and we just really wish we had more opportunity to discuss what the impacts would be. But with just a diagram with a red line showing the Special Management Area, we had to search for that application. It really wasn't user friendly,” Wong said.

City officials said everything was available, posted on the Internet, and hearing notice of the hearing was published according to city ordinances.

A second part of the hearing is scheduled for Thursday at 10 a.m., at Keehi Lagoon Hall.

The special use permits go to the City Council for approval on Jan. 29.

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A Fixed-rail Project Update (jan11)

Written by [Frank Genadio](#)
Thursday, January 06 2011



Proponents of the City and County of Honolulu's fixed-rail project believe that "all of the pieces are finally falling into place" even though some major hurdles remain. Both the new governor and the new mayor are rail backers, with Governor Neil Abercrombie signing off on state approval of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) despite a critical financial analysis delivered by outgoing Governor Linda Lingle. That analysis, referred to by Mayor Peter Carlisle as an "appalling waste" of taxpayer dollars, indicates a potential overrun of the city's rail budget of \$1.7 billion, giving rail opponents new vigor in their efforts to block the project.

Honolulu's remaining daily newspaper, the Star-Advertiser, urged restraint on both sides and also editorialized for making the newly voter-approved transit authority a priority to ensure that the project is implemented "with transparency and professionalism." The amendment to the City Charter will create a semi-autonomous board of three members appointed by the mayor and three by the City Council, with the state and city transportation directors automatically members. Those eight would then vote for a ninth member (with the city's planning director as a tenth-non-voting-member). This transit authority would prepare its own capital budget and maintain rail project accounts, but would still have to seek council approval for bond sales, condemnation of buildings, and land acquisition needed for the rail alignment.

Still to be obtained are: a Programmatic Agreement concerning historical and archeological sites along the rail alignment; a Record of Decision from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA); and a Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA-also from the FTA). While the FFGA will set the parameters for Honolulu such as the amount of federal "new starts" funding, time for completion, and project management, the "800 pound gorilla" in the process may be gaining approval for \$1.55 billion in federal funding for Honolulu rail (anticipated for federal fiscal year 2012). As the political "climate" in Hawaii moved toward favoring the project, the recent election at the national level may have brought new obstacles. The Democratic Party retained control of the U.S. Senate, and Senator Daniel Inouye remains as Chair of the Appropriations Committee, but the House of Representatives will now be in Republican hands. Democrat James Oberstar, a key House member-and Honolulu rail supporter-not only lost his position as Chair of the House Transportation Committee but also lost his bid for re-election.

The new (Republican) Transportation Committee chair will be Representative John Mica of Florida, a state also pursuing federal funding for rail. Rep. Mica is a dedicated "budget balancer" who was highly critical of the stimulus package, not because of the amount of spending but because of its neglect of infrastructure (i.e., less than seven percent). He favors a multi-year infrastructure program to create jobs and help "rebuild our crumbling highways, bridges and transportation network" but is likely to take a close look at project management and funding plans that reach his committee. One can anticipate that the state's financial analysis will reach Mr. Mica's desk along with the Final EIS, leaving him to ponder numbers such as the city's and proponents' cost estimate of \$5.2 billion, the state's analysis of \$6.9 billion, or opponents' claims of up to \$10 billion for the 20-mile, 21-station steel wheels on steel rails project. He also is a high-speed rail advocate; hopefully, Honolulu will not find itself competing for funds with an Orlando Airport to Disney Amusement Parks 20-mile high-speed rail corridor apparently favored by Mica.

Finally, with the current disagreement about whether or not the city is meeting collection projections for the rail surcharge on the general excise tax and the State Legislature about to go back into session, it is prudent to again ask why the state continues to take an unneeded ten percent "cut" of that surcharge for "administration and handling."



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Inside Honolulu: Jan. 7

It's a new year, and Honolulu Hale is welcoming five new City Council members. The city's new mayor has eight weeks to go before he has to present his first budget, and a new round of rail hearings start this week. Civil Beat is reporting from the inside.



Adrienne LaFrance/Civil Beat

The Meeting Before the Meeting

1:07 p.m.

Transportation Services Director **Wayne Yoshioka** is heading into a "pre-meeting" with City Council members in advance of next week's Transportation and Transit Planning Committee meeting. That committee's new director, City Council member **Breene Harimoto** is devoting the Jan. 12 meeting to discussion of an outside review, commissioned by former Hawaii Gov. **Linda Lingle**, that called into question the city's financial planning for rail.

Carlisle Mum on Obama Rental

11:40 a.m.

Honolulu Mayor **Peter Carlisle** isn't weighing in on whether he believes the city should pursue a citation for the Kailua homeowner who [rented his property](#) to President Barack Obama without the required short-term rental permit.

"You'd have to ask the appropriate person about that," Carlisle told Civil Beat.

Calls to the city's Planning and Permitting director and that department's compliance chief have not yet been returned.

See ya, Santa

Police directed traffic as the giant statues of Santa Claus — barefoot and throwing a shaka with his shirt unbuttoned — and Mrs. Claus were carted away from Honolulu Hale this morning. Also gone are the indoor decorations, as Honolulu Hale regains its pre-holiday look.

Mayor Peter "Hollywood" Carlisle Looks to Film Opportunities

One week from today, Mayor Peter Carlisle plans to attend the [Critic's Choice Awards](#) at the Hollywood Paladium in Los Angeles. Carlisle said he's hoping to hobnob with "all the major producers" who might bring their film and TV projects to Honolulu. Carlisle said the state of Hawaii got more than \$400 million from the film industry last year.

"The film industry is booming," Carlisle said this week. "We are doing wonders. It's staggering money and it's all staying in Hawaii."

Carlisle also points out that former Honolulu Mayor **Mufi Hannemann** met Angelina Jolie when he attended the Critics Choice Awards during his mayoral tenure. He also mock-grumbled about the locally filmed television hit Hawaii Five-0.

"I've was taken on the set of Hawaii Five-0," Carlisle said. "My one bitter complaint is that they haven't asked me to do a cameo."

Read Previous Editions of Inside Honolulu

Jan. 6, 2011: Emergency official cites threat of "huge mudslide" in Kaneohe highway closure; City eyes user fees, but in what form? Mayor tells Pacific Club crowd about inevitable cuts during "financial crisis," calls city challenges "exciting."

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Adrienne LaFrance
Honolulu Reporter-Host



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Posted by [Adrienne LaFrance](#) on 01/07/2011

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Rail ridership up

January 9th, 2011 8:22 pm HAST

By **Sandi Yara**, Oahu Transportation Examiner

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Good news for Phoenix, their metro light-rail ridership is up.

According to their latest report, during 2010, Phoenix light rail served more than 12.6 million riders ... 11% more than in 2009.

Similar to Hawaii's rail project, Phoenix has a 20-mile light rail route. It runs from West Phoenix to Mesa.

Based on the report, more riders rode the rail on weekdays (average 39,335 riders per day)... my assumption is that the riders are probably people going to / from work and possibly students. Average ridership on Saturdays was 29,329 and 19,170 on Sundays and holidays.

Mesa has a population of about 450,000.

A couple of interesting highlights of the Phoenix light rail program·

- Reduced number of collisions by more than 50 percent vs. 2009
- Generated \$335,000 in system advertising revenue since program inception in Oct. 2009

More here: <http://www.metro-magazine.com/News/Story/2011/01/Phoenix-Metro-2010-light-rail-ridership-up.aspx>

The Honolulu Rail Transit project is a 20-mile elevated rail line that will connect West Oahu with downtown

Honolulu and Ala Moana Center. The system features electric, steel-wheel trains capable of carrying more than 300 passengers each.

Tags:

[light rail](#), [Honolulu Rail Transit](#), [Phoenix Light Rail](#), [Metro](#)

City May Use General Funds To Build Rail



Reported by: [Andrew Pereira](#)

Email: apereira@khon2.com

Last Update: 1/12 8:39 pm

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Honolulu Councilman Ikaika Anderson told transit officials a plan to divert federal bus subsidies in favor of rail is an “end run” against a 2007 ordinance that forbids general fund monies from being used for construction of the controversial project.

“This is a violation of the spirit of the law,” said Anderson, during a hearing of the Council’s Transportation and Transit Planning Committee.

While the administration has stated previously that \$300 million in bus subsidies, known as 5307 funds, could be used to build the e\$5.5 billion rail system, Wednesday’s hearing was the first time a city officials agreed that general funds would be used to make up the difference.

“Is it possible? Yes it is possible,” said Toru Hamayasu, general manager for the city’s Rapid Transit Division. “That’s why we’re trying hardest to delete that possibility.”

Anderson said he was “gravely, gravely, gravely concerned” about the possible use of general fund monies, or in other words property taxes, to cover any gap in bus funds.

“I would agree that we’ve had the discussion in the past,” said Anderson, “but at no time was I ever told in the affirmative that, ‘yes’ your administration was going to consider possibly reprogramming general fund monies to make up for 5307 monies.”

Hamayasu expressed the city’s desire to remove federal bus subsidies from a new financial analysis of the rail project due out this spring, but had no specifics as to how that would be accomplished.

“We would like to address it and try to eliminate it,” he said.

Wednesday’s discussion was the result of Transportation Chairman Breene Harimoto placing former Gov. Linda Lingle’s financial analysis of the rail project on his committee’s agenda, a report Honolulu Mayor Peter Carlisle called “a pre-determines anti-rail rant” after it was released December 2.

During Wednesday’s hearing Harimoto had hoped to hear from an official of Infrastructure



Management Group, the company that authored the report, which showed rail could be plagued by \$1.7 billion in cost overruns.

However a letter sent to the state Department of Transportation on December 28 that requested an IMG official to attend the hearing was largely ignored.

By the time the DOT responded to Harimoto on January 5 it was too late for IMG to send a representative to Honolulu from its headquarters in Bethesda , Maryland.

"I leave it to you to draw your own conclusions about what's going on," said Harimoto. "To say the least I am frustrated."

OFFICIALS DOUBT IMG ANALYSIS

During the hearing Hamayasu expressed doubt about the IMG's analysis of the rail project, which showed a possible shortfall in GET surcharge collections of \$505 million. He said the company's estimate was based on a faulty economic forecast.

"The point here is that it all depends on which number you want to use," said Hamayasu.

However some of those who testified told Council members it would be prudent to take all possibilities into consideration before moving forward with the project, an elevated heavy rail system that stretches 20 miles from East Kapolei to Ala Moana.

"I think the concern for cost overrun is not one we should take lightly, whether this report is exactly accurate or not," said Peter Vincent, a member of the Honolulu chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

Others raised a red flag about the new republican Congress, saying the GOP controlled House of Representatives may not dole out federal subsidies in the amount the city is expecting.

"Hawaii lost \$320 million in congressional earmarks and that was while both houses of Congress were still in democratic hands," said Tom Coffman, a director with Hawaii's Thousand Friends.

However city Transportation Services Director Wayne Yoshioka testified the Federal Transit Administration would not have allowed rail to enter preliminary engineering if the agency did not have confidence in the financial feasibility of the project.

"They don't want to be throwing money at a project that's not going to succeed," he said.

The city hopes to receive \$1.55 billion from the federal government once a full funding grant agreement with the FTA is in place.

The first step in that process is receiving a record of decision, which may happen as soon as this March.

Have a news tip? Contact Andrew Pereira at 368-7273. Follow Andrew on Twitter at [Khon_Reporter](#)

Letters to the Editor

For Wednesday, January 12, 2011

Financial risks abound with rail

The financial risks associated with rail will be discussed this week at the City Council. If our rail tax revenues fall short of projections, or if the total cost increases, there is no funding source to make up the difference.

In the next 18 months, the city's rail project faces three additional challenges.

First, will the city be able to defend itself against soon-to-be filed lawsuits to stop the project? Second, how will the city handle the Federal Transit Authority's demand that we come up with a more robust rail financial plan in order to proceed into the final design stage of funding? Finally, the city must sit down with the FTA and negotiate a full funding agreement. Will the money be there?

Our new City Council should require the city to successfully handle these challenges before allowing the city to start spending on rail construction.

John Brizdle
Honolulu

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Thursday, January 13th, 2011

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After City's Rail Panel, Opponents Hold Their Own

So that's how these things go.

As I collected my thoughts ahead of my participation on a panel discussion on conflicting financial reports for Honolulu's rail project, I got something of preview at the [City Council's](#) Transit Committee.

I wrote in [Inside Honolulu Wednesday](#) that the afternoon hearing was billed as a dialogue between the city and the state regarding rail money, but that the state was a no-show.

In Thursday's [Star-Advertiser](#), Gene Park did a [good job summarizing](#) how the meeting, chaired by council neophyte [Breene Harimoto](#), quickly went off the rails and devolved into a de facto panel on the merits of the project in general and potential alternatives.

The event was educational for me on a number of levels, particularly because I'll be participating on a panel — with the same advertised focus — just days from now.

The [League of Women Voters](#) is hosting its own rail panel Saturday morning. The other panelists, according to [the League's press release](#), are:

- Moses Haia, Director of the Native Hawaiian Legal Corporation, who will focus on the issue of native Hawaiian burials
- Jim Roumasset, [University of Hawaii](#) Economics Professor, who prepared an economic analysis of the rail [Environmental Impact Statement](#)
- John Brizdle, Founder of Enoa Tours, innovator of Waikiki Trolley and author of "Streetcar Days of Honolulu"
- Scott Wilson, Member of The American Institute of Architects

The League of Women Voters — which has repeatedly voiced its opposition to rail, including again on Wednesday — said it invited city officials to be part of the discussion. But just as the state declined the city's invitation, the city turned down the league's. Based on that and looking at my co-panelists, you might assume the event will have an anti-rail bent.

I can't control or predict what others will say, but it should be made clear that Civil Beat has not taken a position on rail, and neither have I.

I was told my invitation came on the heels of Civil Beat's December series comparing the conflicting financial estimates. We found optimism in the city's model, but also found errors in the state consultant's work. The conclusion was titled, "[Honolulu Rail Report 'Shoddy,' 'Biased' — and Right?](#)"

The panel, which is free to the public, is set for Saturday, Jan. 15, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. in the Washington Middle School auditorium on King Street. I encourage you to come down and join the conversation.

Posted by [Michael Levine](#) on 01/13/2011

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Michael Levine/Civil Beat

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Inside Honolulu: Jan. 12

It's a new year, and Honolulu Hale is welcoming five new City Council members. Mayor Carlisle has seven weeks to go before he has to present his first budget, and the first committee meetings of the new year take place this week. Civil Beat is reporting from the inside.



Adrienne LaFrance/Civil Beat

City Transportation Hearing a One-Sided Affair

1:42 p.m.

What was supposed to be a conversation between the city and state governments regarding rail financing was more monologue than dialogue. [Honolulu City Council](#) Transportation and Transit Planning Committee Chairman **Breene Harimoto** started this afternoon's hearing by announcing that the state Department of Transportation blew off the city's request to explain the report prepared for former Gov. [Linda Lingle](#) by Infrastructure Management Group last year.

"We really tried our best to have an open discussion with the state on their report," Harimoto said, adding that government agencies have the obligation to explain themselves when they write reports concerning other government agencies. "It's not only a common courtesy, I believe it is professionalism."

A crowd turned out for a fight. Seven council members attended, even though the committee has only five voting members. Incoming District 1 City Council member **Tom Berg** also listened in on the meeting. The only member of the council not present is its chairman, **Nestor Garcia**, who is out of town. Former City Council Chair **Todd Apo** was also there, and the small committee meeting room was packed with rail prononents and opponents alike.

In the absence of the Hawaii DOT and its consultant, IMG, city transportation chief **Wayne Yoshioka** and rail project manager **Toru Hamayasu** presented their rebuttal to the state's report. Civil Beat [previously reported on the city's response](#) when it was released last month.

Budget Committee Cautiously Advances Measure to Introduce Camping Fees

1:13 p.m.

Members of the City Council's Budget Committee this morning spoke at length about [Bill 60](#), which would introduce fees for campsites. Parks officials said the fees would likely raise about \$350,000 annually, and the money would offset the cost of maintaining campsites, issuing permits and training staffers on a new online permitting system.

People would be required to pay at least \$37.50 to use Honolulu campsites. That's for the minimum three-day permit for up to 10 people, but fees for camping at larger sites would surpass \$300 per day.

"The majority of people request permits for three days, so that's where the three days come from," said Richard Haru, deputy director of the Department of Parks and Recreation. "It made sense based on past practices by campers."

Haru said campers could leave sites early, and would not be held liable for any damages to the site that might take place after their departure but within the timeframe of their allotted stay. He said the city will not issue permits to other parties, even if a site is vacant due to an early departure.

City Council member **Ikaika Anderson** said the three-day minimum is unfair to constituents who might prefer one- or two-day permits. Anderson also raised questions about the money generated from the fees being diverted into the general fund, rather than being used for campsites.

"If the goal is to move toward a pay-for-the-services-you-use basis, there should be an assurance that those monies are used for that particular program," Anderson said. "If they go into the general fund, there's no guarantee."

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City Council member **Tulsi Gabbard Tamayo** said she worries about how fees would affect people who regularly use campgrounds, including members of the homeless population who live on them.

"With no fees currently, there are people who use campsites continuously," Gabbard Tamayo said. "By implementing a fee structure, even if it is nominal, there are many people who won't be able to afford it."

She said she wants to be sure people who live at campsites have adequate social services to find other housing arrangements if the bill passes. Budget Chairman **Ernie Martin** echoed Gabbard Tamayo's concerns, but said it's also important to maintain campsite access for all Hawaii residents.

"We have to be sympathetic, while at the same point we have to be cognizant that there are your members of the general public, who do pay taxes, who also should have an opportunity to camp," Martin said. "We need to balance those two forces."

Rain Keeps Haraguchi Supporters Away, Golf Courses Closed

11:35 a.m.

The mayor's pick for director of Customer Services, **Gail Haraguchi**, breezed through the Budget Committee's discussion of her appointment. It's now up to the full council to approve her appointment.

Haraguchi began working for the City and County of Honolulu as deputy director of the Department of Enterprise Services under former Mayor **Mufi Hannemann** in 2005, and later worked as deputy director of Parks and Recreation. She became the Customer Services Department's director in July 2009, and current Honolulu Mayor **Peter Carlisle** nominated her to stay in that role. Haraguchi also has a decade of experience in corporate development. ([Click here](#) to review her résumé.)

City Council members in the Budget Committee meeting spoke highly of Haraguchi, and congratulated her. Budget Chairman **Ernie Martin** lightly teased the nominee about the near-empty committee room behind her.

"Gail, you don't have any friends?" Martin asked with a smile.

"It's raining," Haraguchi mock-protested.

This morning's heavy rains are affecting some city services. All city golf courses — Ala Wai, Pali, Ted Makalena, Kahuku, West Loch and Ewa Villages — will remain closed until conditions allow.

In Economic Recovery, Airplanes and Football Games Matter

9:45 a.m.

Former Honolulu Mayor **Mufi Hannemann** appeared before the City Council in his new capacity, as president of the Hawaii Hotel & Lodging Association. Hannemann spoke optimistically about the state's tourism picture, describing the past few months as indication of "some light at the end of the tunnel."

"I kind of call it a cautious recovery, if you will," Hannemann said. "We are still seeing increasing competition from our competitors around the world. Whether it's Mexico, Tahiti, Florida or the Caribbean, they're out there promoting their sea and surf. They're out there promoting their own aloha spirit. We also are seeing a very different type of traveler now. They're tech-savvy. They're using their smart phones. They're searching for the best deals."

Hannemann said the bottom line is making sure that visitors have plenty of opportunities to fly to Hawaii.

"You can do all the marketing in the world to bring people here, but if you don't have the airline lift to bring people here, you suffer as a result," Hannemann said. "The good news is this: As of April 2011, we expect to be within 92 percent of April 2008 levels. Of the 19 routes that were impacted by suspension of Aloha Air, only five routes are expected to be unserved as of April 2011."

Hannemann mentioned the television show Hawaii Five-0, the first family's annual visit and the return of the [Pro Bowl](#) as factors that contribute to the strength of the local economy.

Budget Committee Chairman **Ernie Martin** asked that Hannemann continue to work with the NFL commissioner, with whom Martin said Hannemann is a "personal friend," to keep the Pro Bowl in Hawaii. Hannemann said he would, and that there may be discussion of bringing a preseason NFL game to Hawaii as well.

Hannemann Sits in on Budget Briefing

9:23 a.m.

Former Honolulu Mayor **Mufi Hannemann** joined the City Council's first Budget Committee meeting of the year. Committee members are getting briefed on the financial picture of the city. Testifying before the Committee, [University of Hawaii](#) Professor **Byron Gangnes** described what he calls a "two-speed recovery" for the economy, and pointed to a strong spike in tourism and related spending last month.

Real estate agent **Carl Worthy** told the Committee the region is also moving into a "pretty brisk market" for home sales, after positive numbers in December. He said the "market velocity" — how quickly properties are sold after being put on the market — was also at its best since 2005 last month.

"Mainland markets would die to have these kind of numbers," Worthy said. "When agents come here and see them,

they lose their minds."

[Read Previous Editions of Inside Honolulu](#)

Jan. 11, 2011: First Zoning Committee of the new year gets updates on pending amendments to Honolulu's Land Use Ordinance.

Jan. 10, 2011: Mayor Carlisle gives kudos to Kauai; Committees move forward with two director nominations; Statewide fireworks ban unlikely; City officials worry about fireworks hoarders.

Jan. 7, 2011: City transportation director preps to take up IMG report in Transportation Committee meeting next week; Mayor Peter Carlisle stays quiet on illegal rental to Obama; Carlisle plans business trip to Hollywood, jokes about wanting a cameo in Hawaii 5-0.

Jan. 6, 2011: Emergency official cites threat of "huge mudslide" in Kaneohe highway closure; City eyes user fees, but in what form? Mayor tells Pacific Club crowd about inevitable cuts during "financial crisis," calls city challenges "exciting."

Jan. 5, 2011: Council vice chair to host hearing on IMG report; Rail division moves down permitting check list; A new year means a new website for Honolulu.

Jan. 4, 2011: Carlisle's drinking buddies may be lonely this month; Honolulu's first mayor inaugurated 102 years ago today; Tom Berg isn't happy with his Council committee assignments.

Jan. 3, 2011: City Council to explore user fees as revenue generator; Nestor Garcia talks rail, APEC, city values in celebratory inaugural address.

Posted by [Michael Levine](#) and [Adrienne LaFrance](#) on 01/12/2011

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Oahu Burial Council Can't Keep Track of Its Members

The Oahu Burial Council canceled its monthly meeting at the last minute on Wednesday after three members failed to show due to scheduling conflicts and a fourth informed the group on the morning of the meeting that he's retiring.

The absences meant the group couldn't get enough members together to reach a quorum, according to a clerk who says she handles meeting notices. As a result, members of the public were greeted by a locked door Wednesday morning. The council's full agenda, which includes a Honolulu rail update, will have to wait another month, at least.

The State Historic Preservation Division, which oversees the council, declined to name the member who retired, saying it was a "personnel matter." It is accepting applications and expects to fill the vacancy soon.

A spokesman for the Honolulu Board of Water Supply told Civil Beat that Andy Keliikoa, a longtime construction inspector who sat on the burial council, had retired on Dec. 30, 2010.

The new vacancy and the missing members also threw off a needed ratio of three district representatives to one landowner or developer. The board's rules state:

"Each council shall be composed of at least one representative from each geographic region of the island and representatives of development and large property owner interests. The councils shall have a minimum of nine and a maximum of 15 members, and have a ratio of not more than three to one and no less than two to one in favor of regional representatives."

The Oahu group meets just once a month, every second Wednesday. Its posted meeting notice listed several agenda items, including an update from the city's Rapid Transit Division regarding 22 parts of the island that could be affected by the planned rail transit project.

The group falls under the State Historic Preservation Division within the Department of Land and Natural Resources. Members are appointed by the governor from a list provided by the department and require Senate confirmation.

As of its last meeting, the Oahu Burial Council's members included:

- Kawika McKeague
- Alice Greenwood
- Kehau Abad
- Cy Bridges
- Shad Kane
- Aaron Mahi
- Steve Hoag
- Hinamoanalei Falemei
- Andy Keliikoa
- Leimaile Quiteves

Posted by [Nanea Kalani](#) on 01/12/2011

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Nanea Kalani

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From the Pacific Business News:

<http://www.bizjournals.com/pacific/blog/2011/01/commercial-real-estate-forecast.html>

Commercial real estate forecast brightens

Pacific Business News - by Janis L. Magin

Date: Thursday, January 13, 2011, 4:38pm HST



- Janis L. Magin
- Reporter
- Email: jmagin@bizjournals.com

Honolulu's commercial real estate community got together Thursday morning for its annual industry forecast, and the consensus was that 2011 looks like it's going to be better than last year.

Not much better, but at least the doom and gloom of 2010 was replaced by a lighter mood among the seven speakers at the annual forecast, which is put on by the local chapters of the Building Owners and Managers Association, CCIM and the Institute for Real Estate Management, or IREM.

Economist **Paul Brewbaker** predicted that spending will start to turn upward in private construction in March.

Investment sales are expected to increase to \$2 billion after doubling in 2010 to \$1.34 billion, according to **Mike Hamasu**, consulting and research director at **Colliers Monroe Friedlander**.

Industrial lease rents will remain soft this year, and drop another 10 percent, according to **Mark Ambard**, president of Ambard & Co.

The office market is expected to remain flat, but **Kalani Schrader**, an executive vice president at **CB Richard Ellis**, predicted expansions among engineers, planners and construction companies involved with Honolulu's rail transit project and the Marines' move from Okinawa to Guam.

The nonperforming loans in the hotel sector should see some resolution this year, according to **Joe Toy** of Hospitality Advisors.

And Oahu's residential market should see price increases of 3 percent to 5 percent for single-family homes and 2 percent to 3 percent for condominiums, according to **Berton Hamamoto**, president of Property Profiles.

Mayors unite against tax grab

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Jan 13, 2011

Presenting a modest wish list of projects, mostly from Maui and the Big Island, the state's four county mayors appeared before the Legislature's money committees yesterday with the same message as last year: Don't touch our hotel room tax money.

The mayors were unified in calling on lawmakers to keep in place funding received by counties from the state hotel room tax, known as the Transient Accommodations Tax. This year's take is estimated to be about \$100 million, to be distributed among the four counties.

Last year, in an effort to balance the state budget, Gov. Linda Lingle tried to divert the revenue from the counties to the state's coffers. Lawmakers ultimately rejected the idea.

Gov. Neil Abercrombie has pledged to leave the tax money alone and legislative leaders have said a TAT scoop is unlikely, but the mayors acknowledged that anything can happen.

"I don't think it's an immediate danger, but you can't ever be certain what's going to happen during the legislative session," Honolulu Mayor Peter Carlisle said after the joint hearing of the House Finance and Senate Ways and Means committees. "So it's something that we are going to be defensive about."

Carlisle also asked lawmakers to leave in place all money dedicated to Honolulu from the 0.5 percent surcharge on the general excise tax. By law, 90 percent of those funds are set aside to the county for mass transit projects, with the rest going to the state for administrative costs.

"Borrowing or tampering with the fund may negatively affect federal support and funding of Honolulu's rail project," Carlisle told the committee.

Sen. J. Kalani English noted that in the past, the county, under the previous administration, had asked

the Legislature to return some or all of the 10 percent of the surcharge taken by the state to help it deal with its budget. Carlisle said he had no plans to ask for any of that money.

Carlisle and Kauai Mayor Bernard Carvalho presented their testimony without asking for any new spending from the state.

Among the requests from Maui Mayor Alan Arakawa were support for a proposal to create a regional park in central Maui and help in developing water resources for Upcountry Maui.

"We're not trying to ask for a lot of things because we know this is a tough economic year," Arakawa said.

Big Island Mayor Billy Kenoi's wish list included \$8.7 million for an extension of Kapiolani Street at the University of Hawaii at Hilo, for a project to open up 42 acres for development of badly needed student housing.

Kenoi also sought legislative support for \$10 million to expand and modernize the emergency room facilities at Kona Community Hospital, part of the Hawaii Health Systems Corp.

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State skips hearing on rail finance studies

By Gene Park

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Jan 13, 2011

What began as a City Council hearing on the rail transit project's two financial analyses ended up yesterday as something of a panel discussion on the larger merits of the \$5.5 billion project.



Peter Vincent:
He advocates a rail line at ground level, saying it is more flexible and cost-effective.

The state, under Republican former Gov. Linda Lingle, commissioned a financial review last year that came to a less-than-optimistic conclusion, saying the city faces a \$1.7 billion shortfall. Though invited yesterday, no state officials or report authors were present. The city has also done a financial analysis.

Councilman Breene Harimoto, chairman of the Committee on Transportation and Transit Planning, said he had hoped to hold a second hearing next week with state officials and the report's authors, Infrastructure Management Group Inc.

But Harimoto said he decided not to after the state did not respond to his invitation by the end of Tuesday. He said IMG officials wanted to attend, but said they needed permission from the state first.

"I leave it to you to draw your own conclusions on what's going on," Harimoto said. "To say the least, I am frustrated. It is expected that the commissioning agency would present that report to the subject agency. I believe it's not only common courtesy, but professionalism."

Instead, city officials present were given another opportunity to argue against IMG's conclusions, repeating criticism that the report relied on "erroneous analysis" and "questionable assumptions."

When council members opened the hearing up to the public, the discussion went off track, running the gamut of topics that often characterize panel discussions on rail transit.

Peter Vincent of the American Institute of Architects Honolulu made the case that placing the rail line partly at ground level would be more cost-effective and flexible.

Frank Genadio, a Makakilo resident, argued for a magnetic-levitation system.

"I really regret that we didn't look at alternatives," Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi said. "Why can't we use the modern buses and start at Ewa Beach? ... We could save so much money. We're just an island. We're talking from Kapolei to Ala Moana."

Toru Hamayasu, who heads the city's Rapid Transit Division, said bus stations would have a larger footprint than rail stations, and would not encourage as much transit-oriented development.

Councilman Ikaika Anderson, who was present

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although not a member of the transportation committee, again raised the issue of whether general city revenues would be used to replace funds diverted to the rail project from TheBus and Handi-Van. Hamayasu said it still remains a possibility, but "that's why we're trying our hardest to delete that possibility."

The rail project is mandated by law to use only money from the general excise tax, federal funding and private sources. Anderson had raised the issue in July. (Former Mayor Mufi Hannemann has said diverting federal money intended for bus operations to rail is a "worst-case scenario.")

Former council member Todd Apo attended the hearing, saying that the current council members should rely on the Federal Transit Administration's guidance.

"They have a standard process as to how they examine transit projects," Apo said. "If they saw something that didn't work, and they saw an assumption that they thought didn't make sense, they would let us know."

Hamayasu said the city will begin preparing an updated financial plan, which he expects should be ready this spring.

On Tuesday, the Council's transportation committee will hold a hearing on the city's application for a Special Management Area permit. The Department of Planning and Permitting has recommended to the Council that it approve the permit, which is required by law to ensure projects adhere to coastal zone management policies.

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Honolulu, HI 7:14 AM

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30 Minutes With the Most Powerful Man In Hawaii

By Chad Blair | 01/14/2011

Dan Inouye was so busy in Washington in 2010 that he says he only made six trips to the islands — even though he was running for re-election.

So, when his press secretary put out an alert on Tuesday that Hawaii's senior senator would hold a "media availability" in his Honolulu office Thursday, print, TV, wire and online reporters dutifully showed up (even if it meant hauling all their equipment through security at the Prince Kuhio Federal Building).



Chad Blair/Civil Beat

For 30 minutes Inouye quietly answered questions on political rhetoric, gun violence, threats against congressmen, bipartisanship, earmarks, filibusters, the Akaka bill, the power struggle at the state House and the meaning of last year's election.

For their part, reporters genuflected and basked in the aura of the most powerful man in Hawaii politics.

OK, maybe not *all* reporters worshipped at Inouye's feet. But The [Honolulu Star-Advertiser](#) sent no less than three reporters.

There is just something about Dan Inouye and his well-earned legendary status that seems to soften reporters and makes them hold back a little. This is the same pack of animals, mind you, that aggressively interrogates other congressmen, Hawaii governors and politicians on down the line.

(Full disclosure: I run with the pack.)

Of course, none of those pols are third in succession to the presidency. None rose to fame in the Watergate hearings. None lost an arm in World War II.

Inouye's office, where the news conference was held, is dignified and chronicles his legacy. Medals for military service hang on the wall. Ceremonial swords adorn wood and velvet casings. Framed black and white photos decorate his desk.

In that kind of atmosphere it's kind of tough for a reporter to say, for example, "Senator, why the heck can't you get the [Akaka bill](#) passed after 10 years of trying?"

Instead, one gently inquires about the status of the legislation. (His answer: "I'll do my absolute best to see that it comes up and passes," he promised, adding, "It's not going to be easy.")

A Little News, A Lot of Class

Nothing earth-shattering came out of the news conference.

Inouye did express concern about the fight over House speaker. He confirmed that he would be meeting with leadership Friday at the Capitol, a customary visit but also one that is bound to address the impasse.

Would the new battleground over earmarks impact Honolulu receiving federal funding for rail? Inouye anticipates Republicans will raise such issues and said some states had already declined federal money for high-speed rail.

(Inouye thinks the funds are a "necessity" for Honolulu, saying he will "do my best" to secure them.)

Inouye acknowledged that the 2010 national elections had changed the climate in D.C.

"Realism dictates that we should consider the mood of the people of United States," he said. "They spoke rather loudly this time. We can't ignore this election and wish it would fade way. The mood tells me they are not quite satisfied with how government operates — though there are not too many details."

Should senators vote to change the rules on filibustering, as has been proposed?

Inouye said he is open to changes, "but nothing drastic. There is good reason for extended debate."

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Chad Blair
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He also said the plan expressed by some Republicans to cut everything but defense spending "made no sense. We have to realize that we are dealing with mandatory and discretionary spending. It is not realistic to vote against a tax hike. If you are going to have services, someone has to pay for it."

One more news item, even though it has previously been reported — and, frankly, was a foregone conclusion: Inouye will run for re-election in 2016, when he will be 92.

Watergate, Spitting, Glocks

Reporters wanted to know Inouye's reaction to the Arizona shootings.

While concerned, he noted that such incidents have become all-too common, pointing out that there are nearly as many guns in America as people. "Why should private citizens be extended magazines and Glocks?" he asked.

He agreed political rhetoric had harshened, but he said it was the case for both the left and the right.

During the Watergate hearings, Inouye said he received threats on average of once a week. But he chose to keep them quiet so as not to inspire copycats.

He also recalled being spat upon when he first ran for political office.

"It's not a good feeling," he said.

He also shrugged off [John McCain's criticism](#) of him for funding the Polynesian Voyaging Society.

"That's a project I am proud of, instilling some pride among young Hawaiian kids," he said. "They know Polynesians sailed 700 years before Columbus and did not get lost. It prevents them from becoming juvenile delinquents. And we save money."

After 30 minutes, reporters ran dry on questions. Some left, others stood around for a little polite banter with Inouye.

And that was it. The most powerful man in Hawaii politics then went back to work.

DISCUSSION: *Got some thoughts?* [Hawaii politics discussion](#).

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Dial down political rhetoric, Inouye says

Hawaii's senior senator also expresses his disappointment over loss of federal earmarks

By B.J. Reyes

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Jan 14, 2011

Recalling times when he received threats and was even spat upon, U.S. Sen. Daniel Inouye joined the chorus of pundits and even President Barack Obama in calling for more restraint in political rhetoric in the aftermath of the fatal shootings in Tucson.

"Right now they're trying to point fingers," Inouye told reporters yesterday in his Honolulu office. "The right pointing fingers to the left, the left pointing fingers to the right -- I think both sides have some room to complain.

"I think our rhetoric has become a bit too harsh."

Inouye spoke on a wide variety of topics, including his disappointment at the loss of federal earmarks for Hawaii and the prospects for federal funding for Honolulu's rail mass transit system.

He said he expected a challenging environment in Washington, D.C., with Republicans now in control of the U.S. House, but he said lawmakers should resist the urge to ratchet up the dialogue.

Noting that the tone of political rhetoric has been angry for some time, Inouye recalled being spat upon in public during his first campaign and receiving threats by mail and phone when he served as a member of the Watergate investigative committee.

"Our democracy has been an active one, and I hope it continues to be active, where people will speak their minds and at times your voice gets loud. That's fine," he said. "But threatening, that's another thing."

Although he had only read Obama's speech from Wednesday night's memorial service for the Tucson victims, Inouye said he was pleased to see his call to move forward with a different tone.

"I'm glad that the president asked for calmness," he said. "Controlled rhetoric -- I think we're old enough and responsible enough to do that."

On other matters, Inouye said he was disappointed at the failure of the omnibus spending bill that included \$321 million in earmarks for Hawaii. The bill was scuttled by the Senate amid concerns over earmarks.

"Yes, there are earmarks that are questionable, but they're all transparent," he said. "We've cut it down to less than 1 percent of the discretionary funding, and as far as I'm concerned, I'd be willing to stand up for every earmark that I sponsored."

He also questioned why Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., singled out the Polynesian Voyaging Society as a symbol of wasteful spending.

"Of all the projects, he should've picked on something else," Inouye said, "because that's a project that I'm proud of. It instills some self-pride among the young Hawaiian kids.

"To receive calls from them telling me, 'Gee, I didn't know that my ancestors sailed the Pacific 700 years before Columbus and they never got lost.' Something like that would prevent that kid from becoming a juvenile delinquent, and when that happens we save money."

On federal funding for rail, Inouye said he would do everything in his power to ensure Honolulu receives the anticipated \$1.5 billion in federal funding for the city's rail transit project. He said he anticipates the fight to be tougher as Republicans in the House seek to rein in all federal spending.

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Inouye said he also plans to do his part to reintroduce the Akaka Bill and he plans to meet today with leadership in the state House and Senate. Regarding the stalemate in negotiations over House leadership, Inouye would not say what resolution he might suggest.

"I'm going to say this much," he said. "Both houses have unbelievable majorities. It's unheard of in other states. If we can't conduct ourselves like a majority party, then don't be surprised if the people of Hawaii get a little disgusted about it.

"That should be common sense."

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Letters to the Editor

For Friday, January 14, 2011

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Jan 14, 2011

No symphony but yes to rail?

It was so distressing to read of the demise of the Honolulu Symphony. I am wondering how the City and County of Honolulu, which cannot afford perhaps \$50 million to support such an awesome symphony orchestra, will be able to support an overhead fixed-rail system that will cost at least \$5 billion just to build.

Gloria Kaneshiro
Honolulu

Off the News

For Friday, January 14, 2011

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Jan 14, 2011

Seems like there's a game of hot potato going on at the state Department of Transportation. The spud: the financial analysis of the rail plan that former Gov. Linda Lingle commissioned. It cost the state \$350,000 and got a thumbs-down from the new mayor, Peter Carlisle.

There's also new leadership at the state DOT, and officials didn't accept the invitation to defend the plan before the City Council on Wednesday.

"I just want the public to know that I tried," said Breene Harimoto, who chairs the Council's transit committee.

DOT, now it's your turn to try -- by showing up for answers. We know this potato is a leftover from the Lingle days. But the public paid \$350,000 for it, owns it -- and owns you, too.

A Boeing 767-300ER was scheduled to touch down in Honolulu this morning on the return leg of Hawaiian Air's inaugural flight to South Korea. On board was the promise of brighter days.

The jet, with a 264-seat capacity, was said to be carrying 240 passengers. In the coming year, Hawaiian's nonstop, four-times-a-week service will offer 54,000 seats to paradise and could generate \$86 million in spending.

With tourism expected to be the islands' driving economic force during the recovery, a growing market of visitors from South Korea complementing the steady stream from Japan would be a huge boon.

"Many people are coming from Korea," said the president of an Oahu golf course, "and they're spending."

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City plan accounts for problematic burial sites

The state grants its blessing for a process to protect graves in the path of the rail project

By Gene Park

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Jan 16, 2011

The state has approved the city's plan on how it will address archaeological and historical finds, including ancient burials, along the route of the rail project, the interim state land director said yesterday.

William Aila, interim director of the Department of Land and Natural Resources, said he signed off on the rail project's "programmatic agreement" last week.

"The programmatic agreement provides us a process to protect historic properties and respectfully address any burials that may be found along the route of Honolulu's rail project," Aila said in an interview.

Aila's signature allows the \$5.5 billion transit project to clear another permitting hurdle. The agreement also needs approval of the Federal Transit Administration, the National Park Service, the Navy and the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

Aila, who is also interim state historic preservation officer, approved the city's plan to conduct its archaeological survey in phases. The Oahu Island Burial Council last year pushed for surveying the entire route before construction would be allowed to begin.



William

Aila:

The interim DLNR director signs off on a plan to handle any historical finds along the route of the Oahu rail project

The Burial Council last year passed a resolution asking the state not sign the agreement in its current form. The group opposes the plan because the project's final construction phase will be through Kakaako, which they said may contain ancient native Hawaiian burials.

"Doing it in phases is likely going to result in a lot of unaccounted-for costs, delays," said Moses Haia, executive director of the Native Hawaiian Legal Corp., which assisted the Burial Council. "There's no telling what's going to happen — litigation costs, delays in the construction time line because things need to be moved."

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Haia said a discovery of burials that late in the project would bolster a push by the city to relocate the remains.

"The city is going to argue that the amount of money they've expended precludes them from making any design alternatives to avoid these burials," Haia said. "But the law wants to give these native Hawaiian burials the dignity they deserve."

Aila said, "There are a number of mitigation measures to ensure that rail does not erase the diverse history of this corridor, including the creation of a preservation council to educate land and building owners around the route on the importance of historic preservation."

The city is waiting for all parties to sign the programmatic agreement. The next step would be for the FTA to issue a Record of Decision, which would allow construction to begin.

The project also requires City Council approval of the city's application for a Special Management Area permit. The council's transportation committee meets Tuesday to vote on the permit.

Also yesterday, the League of Women Voters hosted a public forum to discuss a financial analysis, commissioned by then-Gov. Linda Lingle, that predicted a \$1.7 billion funding shortfall for the project.

Much of the discussion centered around residents' unease over the project. One resident said the project was being "rammed down our throat." The forum ended with one of the moderators saying rail opponents should focus on trying to influence the City Council.

Not all were against the idea of some form of rail transit. Scott Wilson, a board member of the American Institute of Architects Honolulu and one of the forum's panelists, stressed his organization's preference for a light-rail system that is partially at ground level.

"The entire 20-mile system could be built within \$3 billion. That's well within our pocketbook," Wilson said. "For a world-class tourism destination to build an elevated concrete railway through the length of your city, it just boggles the mind."

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Sandi Yara

Honolulu Rail Project receives okay to move forward

January 18th, 2011 2:27 pm HAST

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Woo hoo ... big news just received from Honolulu Mayor Peter Carlisle's office today.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) today issued a Record of Decision (ROD) for the Honolulu Rail Transit Project. The ROD was presented to Mayor Carlisle and Toru Hamayasu, general manager for the City's Rapid Transit Division, in the FTA's office in Washington, DC.

This news means that the rail project meets all of the requirements of the environmental review process and construction can begin!

"This is one of the most significant milestones for the rail project," Carlisle said. "We will soon be able to provide residents with a sensible alternative to our congested roads and highways and improve their overall quality of life. Rail transit construction will also create thousands of jobs and fuel our state's economy – it's time to get those shovels in the ground."

"Today marks an important milestone in Oahu's quest to become a more transit-friendly island," said FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff. "With the completion of the National Environmental Policy Act process, the City of Honolulu has met all of the laws and regulations of the

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environmental review and we look forward to the day when Honolulu's citizens can ride the rails in comfort, breathe cleaner air, and avoid getting stuck in time-wasting traffic jams."

Carlisle said he was pleased to have the FTA's approval. "This is a huge accomplishment and reflects the strong confidence the FTA has in this project. Our transit team has worked closely with FTA throughout the process and this shows that our plan is sound and our project is on solid footing."

The construction contract for the first phase of the rail project (from East Kapolei to Pearl City) has already been awarded. The Waipahu train storage and maintenance facility contract is expected to be executed shortly. Two more major contracts will be awarded this year for the second phase of the rail route from Pearl City to Aloha Stadium and for the "core systems," which consists of the train vehicles and the control center for the rail system.

The Honolulu Rail Transit project is a 20-mile elevated rail line that will connect West Oahu with downtown Honolulu and Ala Moana Center. The system features electric, steel-wheel trains capable of carrying more than 300 passengers each.

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Inside Honolulu: Jan. 18

Mayor Peter Carlisle is in Washington, D.C., meeting with rail officials and mayors from around the country. He has six weeks until he presents his first budget. Back at Honolulu Hale, new City Council members are busy mapping out priorities. Civil Beat is reporting from the inside.

FTA Clears Major Hurdle in City Rail Plan

1:32 p.m.

After meeting with federal transit officials in Washington, D.C., today, Mayor **Peter Carlisle** is announcing the Federal Transit Administration issued a Record of Decision on the city's rail plan.

The move means the Federal Transit Administration finds the city has met all requirements of the environmental review process, and leaves the city just a handful of permits and approvals away from beginning construction on the project.

"It's time to get those shovels in the ground," Carlisle wrote in a statement.

The City has already selected a contractor for the first phase of construction. Officials said they expect they'll soon award a second contract — for train storage and maintenance facility.

Transportation Committee Takes Up Rail Permits in Special Meeting

1:23 p.m.

In a special Transportation and Transit Planning Committee meeting today, City Council members are considering a [resolution](#) granting a special management area use permit to begin rail construction.

The Department of Planning and Permitting already granted accepted the city's permit application, and the Transportation Services Department held public hearings about the permit earlier this month. DPP Director **David Tanoue** is briefing City Council members about the permitting process.

City Council members **Romy Cachola, Stanley Chang, Ikaika Anderson, Ernie Martin, Nestor Garcia** and **Breene Harimoto**, who chairs the committee, are present.

As the applicant for the permit, Department of Transportation Services Director **Wayne Yoshioka** is also appearing before the council. At least one well-known rail opponent, **Cliff Slater**, is in the audience.

The permit pertains to coastal areas along the proposed rail route.

Inouye Wants an Office at City Hall

12:42 p.m.

U.S. Sen. **Daniel Inouye** stopped by Honolulu Hale this morning with a special request for City Council Chairman **Nestor Garcia**. The senior senator wants an office at City Hall.

"Not for him, personally, but a liaison," Garcia told Civil Beat. "That way if someone comes here with a question and it turns about to be a federal issue, someone can help them."

Garcia said he plans to work with the mayor to follow up on the request. He said he hopes to be able to set up a small office with a telephone line and a computer.

Nestor Garcia Returns from D.C., Meets with Dan Inouye

10:32 a.m.

City Council Chairman **Nestor Garcia** is meeting with Sen. **Dan Inouye** in Garcia's Honolulu Hale office. The City Council leader returned this weekend from a short trip to Washington D.C., where he met with State Department officials about a plan to forge "sister city" relationships for the November 2011 APEC conference in Honolulu.

Garcia told Civil Beat he and other members of the [National Association of Counties](#) met with **Reta Jo Lewis**, who works as a liaison between state and local officials in the U.S. and their counterparts in other countries.

"It went well," Garcia said. "We met with Reta Jo and we talked about my sister-city initiative, which she was very

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Adrienne LaFrance
Honolulu Reporter-Host



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happy to hear, by the way. It's right along the lines of what her office does."

Garcia said fiscal concern was palpable in his encounters with Washington lawmakers.

"Just the overall atmosphere," Garcia said. "They are very conscious about the deficit."

Clean-Up Continues After Landfill Overflow

9:19 a.m.

City workers today are returning to leeward beaches where medical waste washed ashore, in a continuing effort to clean up contaminated waters. The hazardous garbage — including syringes and vials of blood — got into the ocean after the Waimanalo Gulch landfill flooded from heavy rains.

A spokesman for the mayor said he and other city officials, including Managing Director **Doug Chin**, visited clean-up crews yesterday. Chin is serving as acting mayor while Mayor **Peter Carlisle** is away on business.

The landfill today remains closed to the public. City officials report the rain made roads leading to the gulch too dangerous to use.

Tell It To The Mayor

Have an idea on how to improve to City and County of Honolulu? The mayor's office still regularly checks red suggestion boxes for messages to Honolulu Mayor **Peter Carlisle**, but usually finds them empty.

"We check them every other day and we rarely find anything in them," a spokesman from the mayor's office told Civil Beat. "The majority of the complaints come to Satellite City Hall."

There are suggestion boxes in the Fasi municipal building, at the library and at Honolulu Hale.

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Jan. 7, 2011: City transportation director preps to take up IMG report in Transportation Committee meeting next week; Mayor Peter Carlisle stays quiet on illegal rental to President **Barack Obama**; Carlisle plans business trip to Hollywood, jokes about wanting a cameo in Hawaii 5-0.

Jan. 6, 2011: Emergency official cites threat of "huge mudslide" in Kaneohe highway closure; City eyes user fees, but in what form? Mayor tells Pacific Club crowd about inevitable cuts during "financial crisis," calls city challenges "exciting."

Jan. 5, 2011: Council vice chair to host hearing on IMG report; Rail division moves down permitting check list; A new year means a new website for Honolulu.

Jan. 4, 2011: Carlisle's drinking buddies may be lonely this month; Honolulu's first mayor inaugurated 102 years ago today; Tom Berg isn't happy with his Council committee assignments.

Jan. 3, 2011: City Council to explore user fees as revenue generator; **Nestor Garcia** talks rail, APEC, city values in celebratory inaugural address.

Posted by [Adrienne LaFrance](#) on 01/18/2011

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Rail Officials Celebrate Feds' Record of Decision

By [Adrienne LaFrance](#) | 01/18/2011

The checklist city officials must complete before they can start construction on Honolulu's \$5.5 billion rail project is shrinking. Rail planners Tuesday afternoon got the word from Mayor [Peter Carlisle](#), who is in Washington D.C., that the Federal Transit Administration issued a Record of Decision approving the project.



Adrienne LaFrance/Civil Beat

For city planners, the federal decision is a major milestone after a half-decade of working to move the project forward.

"It's huge for us," said Transportation Services Director Wayne Yoshioka. "We're very excited and very happy that we're now able to proceed forward and get this project going."

"Bust out the champagne!" called out Corporation Counsel Carrie Okinaga when she passed Yoshioka in the hallway.

"What this project means is one thing: Jobs," said Honolulu Managing Director Doug Chin, who is serving as acting mayor in Carlisle's absence. "This project will create thousands of jobs. It will fuel the city and state's economy."

With the Programmatic Agreement and Record of Decision finalized, the city now just needs one major approval from the City Council that would grant a permit allowing construction in coastal zones. The City Council's Transportation and Transit Planning Committee Tuesday advanced the resolution granting such a permit, and the full City Council will vote on the resolution Jan. 26. City officials have said they expect construction to begin in March.

"The Committee voted, and I agreed with, passage of the resolution," said City Council member [Stanley Chang](#). "I don't anticipate there'll be any problems moving it through the full council."

After that, rail planners will need a slew of what Yoshioka describes as "routine" building permits. Those permits will be granted to the Transportation Services Department directly by the Department of Planning and Permitting.

However opponents have said they'll sue to block the project if it receives all its necessary approvals.

"My question remains" Where is the money?" said Panos Prevedouros, a vocal rail opponent who twice failed in his bid for Honolulu mayor.

Prevedouros emphasized that even a milestone as noteworthy as the Record of Decision doesn't seal Honolulu's transit fate.

"Past experience in Honolulu has shown that these things can be reversed, although the odds favor the applicant rather than the opponent," Prevedouros told Civil Beat. "Court action could make it reversible."

But even City Council member Tom Berg, who has expressed strong skepticism about the rail plan, agreed the news from Washington was positive for the city.

"What a feather in Mayor Carlisle's cap," Berg said. "To go over to D.C. and execute this, it's just dynamite for everybody here. All of this energy and effort we've been putting in could have been for naught. Whether your pro or against rail, it's a green light that means we can compete for money with other municipalities. Bring it on!"

In discussions of the city's rail plan, city officials' focus is squarely on finances. City Council members who had the opportunity to meet — in small groups, so as to comply with the sunshine law, they said — with U.S. Sen. [Daniel Inouye](#) today said they spoke about what kind of federal money the city can accept.

"I am looking forward to having some additional federal support for this project," Chang said. "Sen. Inouye was very helpful expressing support for the project with or without the existing earmarks process. He described other ways of helping this and other projects."

Chang declined to elaborate on the senior senator's ideas, but City Council Vice Chair [Breene Harimoto](#), who

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About the Author

Adrienne LaFrance
Honolulu Reporter-Host



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- [Doug Chin](#)

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chairs the Transportation and Transit Planning Committee, said he believes the city will secure the federal funds it needs.

"I have great confidence in Sen. Inouye's persuasiveness," Harimoto said. "I fully expect that we will get the money. How he works his magic, I'll leave to him."



DISCUSSION: *Share your thoughts about the city's latest milestone in our [rail discussion](#).*

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FTA gives go-ahead for rail construction

Posted: Jan 18, 2011 2:05 PM
 Updated: Jan 18, 2011 6:47 PM

HONOLULU (HawaiiNewsNow) - The Federal Transit Administration Tuesday issued a Record of Decision for the Honolulu Rail Transit Project, confirming that the project has met all the requirements of the environmental review process and clearing the way for construction to begin on Honolulu's first rail system.

FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff presented the Record of Decision to Mayor Peter Carlisle and Toru Hamayasu, general manager for the city's Rapid Transit Division, at FTA offices in Washington, D.C.

"This is one of the most significant milestones for the rail project," Carlisle said. "We will soon be able to provide residents with a sensible alternative to our congested roads and highways and improve their overall quality of life. Rail transit construction will also create thousands of jobs and fuel our state's economy - it's time to get those shovels in the ground."

"Today marks an important milestone in Oahu's quest to become a more transit-friendly island," said FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff. "With the completion of the National Environmental Policy Act process, the City of Honolulu has met all of the laws and regulations of the environmental review and we look forward to the day when Honolulu's citizens can ride the rails in comfort, breathe cleaner air, and avoid getting stuck in time-wasting traffic jams."

Carlisle said he was pleased to have the FTA's approval.

"This is a huge accomplishment and reflects the strong confidence the FTA has in this project. Our transit team has worked closely with FTA throughout the process and this shows that our plan is sound and our project is on solid footing," he said.

The FTA's approval follows Gov. Neil Abercrombie's acceptance of the state's Final Environmental Impact Statement in December. The project's EIS identified environmental, community and economic benefits and impacts of the rail system as well as mitigation measures for addressing these issues.

The \$5.5 billion transit project is a 20-mile elevated rail system connecting East Kapolei with Ala Moana Center. It includes 21 stations in communities including Waipahu, Pearl City, Aiea, Kalihi, Chinatown, Downtown Honolulu and Kakaako. There will also be stations at activity centers such as UH-West Oahu, Leeward Community College, Pearl Highlands, Pearlridge, Aloha Stadium, Honolulu International Airport and Honolulu Community College.

The City has already awarded a construction contract for the first phase of the elevated rail guideway from East Kapolei to Pearl City. A second contract for the train storage and maintenance facility in Waipahu is expected to be executed shortly. The city is scheduled to



Map courtesy of lightrailnow.org



Peter Carlisle



Doug Chin



[Click image to enlarge](#)

award two more major contracts this year for the second phase of the rail route from Pearl City to Aloha Stadium and for the "core systems," which consists of the train vehicles and the control center for the rail system.

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Rail gets federal environmental approval

Posted: Jan 18, 2011 10:37 PM
 Updated: Jan 18, 2011 11:37 PM

By Brooks Baehr - bio | email

WASHINGTON, D.C. (HawaiiNewsNow) – The Federal Transit Administration issued a Record of Decision for Honolulu's rail transit project Tuesday. The document affirms the project has met all the requirements of the environmental review process as required by the federal government.

"This shows that our plan is sound and our project is on solid footing," said Honolulu Mayor Peter Carlisle who is in Washington DC to meet with federal officials about the rail line.

FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff said, "... Honolulu has met all of the laws and regulations of the environmental review and we look forward to the day when Honolulu's citizens can ride the rails in comfort, breathe cleaner air, and avoid getting stuck in time-wasting traffic jams."

"The groundbreaking could begin as early as March, and at this point in time there's no reason to think otherwise," said Doug Chin, Honolulu City Managing Director.

The 20-mile line from Kapolei to Ala Moana still needs the Honolulu City Council to issue a permit called a Special Management Agreement, or SMA. The chairman of the council's Transportation Committee does not think that will be a problem.

"The SMA parameters are very narrow so we can consider only certain things in that decision making and I think it is likely it will pass," said committee chair Breene Harimoto.

The city estimates the entire project will cost \$5.5 billion. It is banking on getting \$1.5 billion from congress. But none of that money is expected until late 2011 at the earliest, months after the city hopes to break ground.

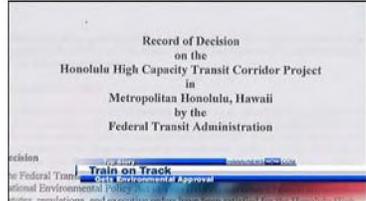
"It is a big risk we are taking if we start construction before the federal money starts coming in," said rail opponent Panos Prevedouros.

Prevedouros is perhaps Honolulu's best know rail opponent. He said the new congress may not want to fund the rail line and he is urging the city to hold off on groundbreaking until that money is secured.

"Wait for the process to play out, particularly with this congress," Prevedouros said.

Prevedouros worries if construction begins and then congress does not come up with its expected contribution, Honolulu tax payers will be stuck with the bill.

The city acknowledges there's no guarantee the fed will assist with funding.



The Record of Decision



Honolulu Mayor Peter Carlisle



Doug Chin



Breene Harimoto



Panos Prevedouros

[Click image to enlarge](#)

Carlisle will discuss the \$1.5 billion in Washington Thursday when he meets with House Transportation Committee chairman John Mica.

"That, we are hoping will be a very productive meeting. The indications we've had are that representative Mica and other members of the transportation committee are positive about the rail project and we're hopefully going to be confirming that this week," said Honolulu Managing Director Doug Chin.

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FTA approves Honolulu's rail transit project

Last Update: 1:33 pm

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Statement from Honolulu Mayor Peter Carlisle's office:

(Tues., Jan. 18, 2011)— The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) today issued a Record of Decision for the Honolulu Rail Transit Project, confirming that the project has met all the requirements of the environmental review process and clearing the way for construction to begin on Honolulu's first rail system.

FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff presented the Record of Decision (ROD) to Honolulu Mayor Peter Carlisle and Toru Hamayasu, general manager for the City's Rapid Transit Division, at FTA offices in Washington, D.C.

"This is one of the most significant milestones for the rail project," Carlisle said. "We will soon be able to provide residents with a sensible alternative to our congested roads and highways and improve their overall quality of life. Rail transit construction will also create thousands of jobs and fuel our state's economy – it's time to get those shovels in the ground."

"Today marks an important milestone in Oahu's quest to become a more transit-friendly island," said FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff. "With the completion of the National Environmental Policy Act process, the City of Honolulu has met all of the laws and regulations of the environmental review and we look forward to the day when Honolulu's citizens can ride the rails in comfort, breathe cleaner air, and avoid getting stuck in time-wasting traffic jams."

Carlisle said he was pleased to have the FTA's approval. "This is a huge accomplishment and reflects the strong confidence the FTA has in this project. Our transit team has worked closely with FTA throughout the process and this shows that our plan is sound and our project is on solid footing."

The FTA's approval follows Governor Neil Abercrombie's acceptance of the State's Final Environmental Impact Statement in December. The project's EIS identified environmental, community and economic benefits and impacts of the rail system as well as mitigation measures for addressing these issues.

The \$5.5 billion transit project is a 20-mile elevated rail system connecting East Kapolei with Ala Moana Center. It includes 21 stations in communities including Waipahu, Pearl City, Aiea, Kalihi, Chinatown, Downtown Honolulu and Kakaako. There will also be stations at activity centers such as UH-West Oahu, Leeward Community College, Pearl Highlands, Pearlridge, Aloha Stadium, Honolulu International Airport and Honolulu Community College.

The City has already awarded a construction contract for the first phase of the elevated rail guideway from East Kapolei to Pearl City. A second contract for the train storage and maintenance facility in Waipahu is expected to be executed shortly. The city is scheduled to award two more major contracts this year for the second phase of the rail route from Pearl City to Aloha Stadium and for the "core systems," which consists of the train vehicles and the control center for the rail system.

KHON2 will have more on this developing story tonight at 5 p.m. and 6 p.m.



Rail receives green light from Feds



Reported by: [Gina Mangieri](#)
Email: gmangieri@khon2.com

Last Update: 1/18 7:39 pm

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Rail construction in Honolulu has received the green light.

The federal government says the environmental review is done, but its funding share remains unknown.

By issuing what's called a "record of decision" it means the environmental review is complete as far as the Feds are concerned. The city intends to break ground on the multibillion-dollar project in just a couple of months, but how much the Feds will pay for for sure won't be known by then.

Mayor Peter Carlisle is in Washinton D.C. meeting with transportation and congressional officials and had this to say from the nation's capitol.

"This is one of the most significant milestones for the rail project, we have taken a giant step to provide residents with a sensible alternative to congested roads and highways and improve their overall quality of life," Carlisle said. "It's our hope to get shovels in the ground as soon as possible."

Back at home the news was met with enthusiasm especially in industries that stand to gain jobs.

"It's gone through a vetting process that gives us the best project we could possibly get. And if we don't do this project now, we will never have a chance to do rail again," said John White of Pacific Resource Partnership.

The project depends on about 25 percent or more than a billion dollars in federal funding the city hopes to get, but what's called a "full funding grant agreement" is not yet in place and likely wouldn't be until later this year or early next.

"We're one step closer to getting hammered with a \$7 billion bill," said rail opponent, Panos Prevedouros. "So the environmental process has been concluded, but the big question is, where is the money?"

The full funding grant would still have to go through Congress for annual budget appropriations -- Senator Inouye heads Senate Appropriations but the House is under new management with the Republicans in charge of their money committee saying purse strings will be tight. The city remains confident.

"I don't think there's a single incident in history that once you get full funding grant agreement they have not fulfilled their contract to deliver the funds that were negotiated," said Wayne Yoshioka of the City Transportation Department.

Meanwhile in Washington, Mayor Carlisle is meeting with Transportation Committee officials.

"The indications that we've had is that Representative (John) Mica and other members of the Transportation Committee are positive about the rail project," said Doug Chin, City Managing Director.



Some initial federal funding has already been pledged, and hundreds of millions of local dollars are on account for the project. A required "special management area" permit cleared a City Council committee Tuesday.

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Feds Clear Way For Transit Construction

Oahu Project Can Move Into Building Phase

POSTED: 1:35 pm HST January 18, 2011

UPDATED: 1:49 pm HST January 18, 2011

HONOLULU -- The Federal Transit Administration on Tuesday cleared the way for city to begin construction on the rail transit system for Oahu.

The FTA determined that the project met all of the requirements and environmental reviews, city officials said.

The \$5.5 billion transit project will connect Kapolei to Ala Moana Center by a 20-mile elevated rail system. The route will include 21 stations along the way, including UH-West Oahu, Leeward Community College, Aloha Stadium and the Honolulu International Airport.

"This is one of the most significant milestones for the rail project," Mayor Peter Carlisle said. "We will soon be able to provide residents with a sensible alternative to our congested roads and highways and improve their overall quality of life. Rail transit construction will also create thousands of jobs and fuel our state's economy -- it's time to get those shovels in the ground."

The first phase of construction from Kapolei to Pearl City has already been awarded to a contractor.

In October, shortly after his swearing-in, Carlisle told KITV4 News the latest estimate for breaking ground on rail transit is March.

Earlier this month, Gov. Neil Abercrombie signed off on the environmental impact study that had been withheld by Gov. Linda Lingle's administration while it studied the feasibility of the project.

The Federal Transit Administration is expected to provide at least \$1.55 billion for the project in total.

Previous Stories:

- January 5, 2011: [Environmental Group Complains About Rail Transit Hearing](#)
- December 17, 2010: [Gov. Approves Rail Environmental Study](#)
- October 15, 2010: [Exclusive: Carlisle Says Rail Construction Could Start In March](#)
- October 13, 2010: [Carlisle Heads To Washington For Rail](#)
- September 14, 2010: [Group Urges Lingle To Pass Rail Study](#)
- September 6, 2010: [Councilwoman Questions Transit Spending](#)
- August 26, 2010: [Inouye Says Lingle Wrong To Call Him Overly Dramatic](#)

- July 28, 2010: [City Awards \\$5.5 Million Rail Station Contract](#)
- June 30, 2010: [Oahu Voters Will Decide On Transit Authority](#)
- June 15, 2010: [City Officials Embrace Transit EIS](#)
- February 10, 2010: [Lawmakers, Hannemann Push For Transit](#)

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From the Pacific Business News:

<http://www.bizjournals.com/pacific/news/2011/01/18/fta-gives-honolulu-green-light-for-rail.html>

FTA gives Honolulu green light for rail

Pacific Business News

Date: Tuesday, January 18, 2011, 2:26pm HST

The Federal Transit Administration has given the City & County of Honolulu the green light to proceed with its \$5.5 billion rail transit system.

The FTA Tuesday issued a Record of Decision, or ROD, for the project to Honolulu Mayor **Peter Carlisle** and Rapid Transit Division General Manager **Toru Hamayasu**. The completion of the ROD means the project has met all the requirements of the environmental review process and clears the way for construction to begin.

"This is a huge accomplishment and reflects the strong confidence the FTA has in our project," Carlisle said in a statement from Washington, D.C. "Our transit team has worked closely with FTA throughout the process, and this shows that our plan is sound and our project is on solid footing."

Carlisle did not say when he hoped to break ground on the project.

City given go-ahead to begin rail construction

By Star-Advertiser Staff

POSTED: 01:32 p.m. HST, Jan 18, 2011



A artist's rendering shows what the West Loch transit station will look like.

More Photos



The Federal Transit Administration today gave its approval for the city to begin construction of Honolulu's \$5.5 billion rail transit system, Mayor Peter Carlisle's office announced.

In a news release, the FTA issued what is known as a record of decision, indicating that the project has met all the requirements of the environmental review process.

FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff presented the record of decision to Carlisle and Toru Hamayasu, general manager for the City's Rapid Transit Division, at FTA

offices in Washington, D.C.

"This is one of the most significant milestones for the rail project," Carlisle said in a news release. "We will soon be able to provide residents with a sensible alternative to our congested roads and highways and improve their overall quality of life."

FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff said the city has met all of the laws and regulations of the environmental review, "and we look forward to the day when Honolulu's citizens can ride the rails in comfort, breathe cleaner air, and avoid getting stuck in time-wasting traffic jams."

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Letters to the Editor

For Tuesday, January 18, 2011

Rail opponents marginalized

"The city is going to argue that the amount of money they've expended precludes them from making any design alternatives to avoid these burials," said Moses Haia, executive director of the Native Hawaiian Legal Corp. ("City plan accounts for problematic burial sites," Star-Advertiser, Jan. 16).

This is the strategy that most developers employ. Is there a single instance in which they have tried it any other way?

Anyone in opposition of the current rail plan will be characterized as being anti-business, anti-environment and an impediment to a glowing future. This is, of course, untrue.

Completing a full cultural and archeological survey prior to beginning the project may well be far more fiscally responsible and environmentally sound in the creation of a better future. In short, the state and feds are saying, "We don't care."

Paul-Kealoha Blake
Berkeley, Calif.



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Will Visitors Ride New Honolulu Rail System?

Jan 19, 2011 1 Comment by Rob



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The likelihood of both visitors and locals riding the new \$5.5 billion 20-mile elevated rail system may just have increased significantly. Plans for Honolulu's mass transit system have been in the works for a half-century. The city [announced](#) yesterday that it had received confirmation from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) that the project has met all the requirements of the environmental review process. That clears the way for construction to begin on [Honolulu's first rail system](#).

Will it be of help to visitors?

The new rail system will connect 21 Oahu stations, including the Honolulu Airport, downtown, and Waikiki-adjacent Ala Moana Center. The problem is that there are no plans that I can find for the rail lines to enter Waikiki. (Note: some earlier maps had shown Waikiki as a future extension). Visitors will need to board buses at Ala Moana for Waikiki destinations.

Today marks an important milestone in Oahu's quest to become a more transit-friendly island"— Peter Rogoff, FTA.

Honolulu's traffic is among the country's worst. The rail system should be of great help to those trying to cost-effectively transit the airport and other parts of Honolulu.

Trains will carry about 300 passengers each and be similar to Portland's MAX, Seattle's Sound Transit Light Rail and L.A.'s Gold Line. The project is slated to be completed in five stages taking place over the next six to nine years.

It comes at a good time in terms of rising fuel costs, of which Hawaii's are the nation's highest.

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One Response to "Will Visitors Ride New Honolulu Rail System?"

1. [Joy Brown](#) says:
[January 19, 2011 at 10:36 pm](#)

I like your question. Perhaps someone involved in planning will respond. One obvious answer is that tourists using the rail are not a priority in the planning or it would, at the least, have a planned future connection into Waikiki. Another possible answer is that Waikiki is very expensive

to lay rail due to its density and due to the negative impact on businesses during the construction phase. That is a tough one as the benefits later will more than make up for it but some business won't make it thru the transition. I lived in Portland, Oregon, before, during, and after the light rail was put in. Some businesses were put out of business during construction. However, the amazing transformation of the city later is nothing short of magical and encouraged many new businesses. Waikiki has too much traffic and it would be the best thing to happen there in the long term. I hope the rail will be like Portland's; it is user friendly, clean, quiet, and efficient. I hope they make it street level like Portland. That is very user friendly, more attractive, and less maintenance than the expensive platform idea.

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group called D-Rail to oppose the Honolulu Rail Transit system.

HONOLULU—The Honolulu Rail Transit Project passed a major hurdle yesterday.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) issued a Record of Decision for Honolulu Rail Transit, confirming that the project has met all the requirements of the environmental review process.

However, questions still linger as to how construction will affect the lives of those currently living on Oahu and whether the City can afford the hefty price tag.

On Tuesday, FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff presented the Record of Decision to Honolulu Mayor Peter Carlisle and Toru Hamayasu, general manager for the City's Rapid Transit Division, at FTA offices in Washington, D.C.

"With the completion of the National Environmental Policy Act process, the City of Honolulu has met all of the laws and regulations of the environmental review," Rogoff said in a statement.

At a national summit on the future of transit last May, Rogoff talked about the challenges facing the transit industry nationwide.

"Supporters of public transit must be willing to share some simple truths that folks don't want to hear. One is this: Paint is cheap, rails systems are extremely expensive," Rogoff said. "Yes, transit riders often want to go by rail. But it turns out you can entice even diehard rail riders onto a bus, if you call it a 'special' bus and just paint it a different color than the rest of the fleet."

A recent federal study found that more than 6,000 of the nation's almost 72,000 buses are in need of replacement, having exceeded their useful life. And 29 percent of all transit assets—rail, bus, and paratransit are in "poor or marginal condition."

Rogoff said maintaining a functioning rail system will depend on effective planning and the ability to keep riders riding for generations.

Honolulu's rail opponents don't think enough people will opt out of driving their cars to jump onto a train that doesn't yet go where everyone wants it to go. The \$5.5 billion transit project is a 20-mile elevated rail system connecting East Kapolei with Ala Moana Center. It includes 21 stations in communities including Waipahu, Pearl City, Aiea, Kalihi, Chinatown, Downtown Honolulu, and Kakaako. There will also be stations at activity centers such as UH-West Oahu, Leeward Community College, Pearl Highlands, Pearlridge, Aloha Stadium, Honolulu International Airport and Honolulu Community College.

Opponents also criticized the public hearing process that helped the rail transit receive FTA approval. Critics doubt the City's claims that it had considered other alternatives in relieving traffic and question the City's ability to afford such an undertaking.

One of Honolulu rail's most outspoken critics has been former mayoral candidate Panos Prevedouros.

"We cannot solve a traffic problem with a transit solution," Prevedouros told *The Hawaii Independent* in August. "The Federal Transit Administration clearly says that mass transit hardly ever dents congestion. We said this with TheBoat, which was a major mass transit failure of the Hannemann and Kirk Caldwell administration. The cost per ride was \$34 and the fare was \$2. It was a sure way to flush \$6 million in two years with nothing to show for it and they did exactly that. TheRail is an exact copy of TheBoat, only the M is a B, as in a billion dollars this time."

The FTA's approval follows Governor Neil Abercrombie's acceptance of the State's Final Environmental Impact Statement in December.

The City has already awarded a construction contract for the first phase of the elevated rail guideway from East Kapolei to Pearl City. A second contract for the train storage and maintenance facility in Waipahu is expected to be executed shortly. The City is scheduled to award two more major contracts this year for the second phase of the rail route from Pearl City to Aloha Stadium and for the "core systems," which consists of the train vehicles and the control center for the rail system.

Looking at how the City, now under Carlisle's watch, maintains its roads and buses might paint a picture as to how well Honolulu will manage the coming rail system.

Related Stories:



[As funding gets funneled into Honolulu rail, the transit industry struggles to stay on track \(http://thehawaiiindependent.com/story/rail-funding\)](http://thehawaiiindependent.com/story/rail-funding)

Mayor Peter Carlisle's priorities: Rail, sewers, then everything else
(<http://thehawaiiindependent.com/story/peter-carlisle>)

Verbatim: Lingle comments on rail EIS process
(<http://thehawaiiindependent.com/story/verbatim-lingle-comments-on-rail-eis-process>)

Panos Prevedouros: 'A civil engineer is the perfect professional for the job'
(<http://thehawaiiindependent.com/story/panos-prevedouros-a-civil-engineer-is-the-perfect-professional-for-the-job>)

With elections coming, officials navigate a bump in the road to rail
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Verbatim: Money, power, and politics paved the way for elevated rail
(<http://thehawaiiindependent.com/story/verbatim-money-power-and-politics-paved-the-way-for-elevated-rail>)

Rail gets OK to break ground

Federal officials approve the EIS for Honolulu's mass transit system

By Gene Park

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Jan 19, 2011

DOWN THE LINE FOR HONOLULU'S RAIL SYSTEM
 The Federal Transit Administration gave its final environmental approval for Honolulu's rail transit yesterday. Here is what that means for the city:

- Next Wednesday, the City Council will decide on whether to award the city administration a Special Management Area permit, which allows the rail project to be built near coastal management zones. Approval of this permit will clear the way for future permits for the project.
- The Federal Transit Administration must also issue a "letter of no prejudice," which allows the city to spend city money on local responsibilities, including any possible impact of federal funds.
- The FTA must also approve the Real Estate Acquisition Management Plan, which will allow the city to begin the acquisition of real property needed for the project, and the relocation of people, businesses and utilities affected by the project.
- The city still expects to break ground on the project sometime this March.

\$5.5B Estimated cost to build	20 Total miles	21 Stations	27,000 Jobs with a walking distance of stations	20M Travel hours saved annually by 2030
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[More Photos](#)

The city expects to break ground on Honolulu's rail system in March, moving ahead with construction of the \$5.5 billion transit project after receiving final environmental approval from the Federal Transit Administration.

The FTA issued a "record of decision" yesterday, which indicates the project met all the requirements of the environmental review process, which has been the largest roadblock to putting shovels in the ground.

Ending the environmental process is a significant milestone for the city, which has tried for decades to implement rail transit as a solution to backed-up freeway traffic.

The last serious effort ended in 1992 with a 5-4 City Council vote against raising taxes to pay for a transit system, even though more than \$600 million in federal funding was locked in.

The record of decision states that the project, which would connect East Kapolei with Ala Moana Center, would save residents more than 20 million hours of travel time every year by 2030. The project also would be a boon for the local construction industry, which saw a 6 percent drop in jobs last year, city officials said.

"What this project essentially means is one thing: jobs," said acting mayor and city Managing Director Douglas Chin. "Once it starts, this project will create thousands of jobs. It will fuel the city and state's economy."

The decision, signed by FTA Regional Administrator Leslie Rogers, states that "all reasonable steps are being taken to minimize the adverse environmental effects of the project, and where adverse environmental effects remain, no feasible and prudent alternative to such effects exists."

One remaining hurdle is a pending application for a Special Management Area permit, which the City Council will decide on next week. Other permits are required but need only administrative approval from the city Department of Planning and Permitting.

"With the completion of the National Environmental Policy Act process, the city of Honolulu has met all of the laws and regulations of the environmental review, and we look forward to the day when Honolulu's citizens can ride the rails in comfort, breathe cleaner air, and avoid getting stuck in time-wasting traffic jams," said FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff in a release.

Chin said yesterday that the city still expects to break ground in March. He said, "There's no reason to think

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otherwise. That is something we're shooting for."

The FTA still has to issue a "letter of no prejudice," which would allow city funds to be used on the project.

The city also must enter into a full-funding grant agreement with the FTA by committing to complete the project on time, within budget and in compliance with federal requirements.

The city expects to have a full-funding grant agreement with the FTA by late this year or early 2012.

Rail critics, such as former mayoral candidate Panos Prevedouros, have expressed concern about whether the city will obtain federal funding, now that the U.S. House is controlled by Republicans.

"I think the stars are out of alignment," said Prevedouros, a University of Hawaii engineering professor.

The city is seeking about \$1.5 billion in federal funding, which Prevedouros calls a "very bad deal."

"Every road we build, we build with 80 to 90 percent federal funding," he said. "Fifty-fifty is not even a particularly good deal. You can be pro-rail or anti-rail, but 25-75 is not a good deal."

Tomorrow, Mayor Peter Carlisle, who is in Washington, D.C., will meet with Republican U.S. Rep. John Mica, chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

"The indication that we've had is that Rep. Mica and other members of the Transportation Committee are positive about the rail project, and we're hopefully going to be confirming that this week," Chin said.

"Of course, it is subject to Congress appropriating the money every year in terms of their budget," said interim city Transportation Director Wayne Yoshioka. "But in the past I don't think there's a single incident in history, that once you get a full-funding grant agreement, they have not fulfilled their contract."

The gears in the environmental process stopped last year when the final environmental impact statement sat with former Gov. Linda Lingle while she commissioned a financial analysis.

The process moved again once Gov. Neil Abercrombie took office last month. He signed the EIS despite the Lingle financial report's conclusion that the city would

face a \$1.7 billion shortfall in project funding. Abercrombie said the financial report had no bearing on the environmental process.

The project also needed a programmatic agreement to be signed by several parties, including the state. The agreement would outline how to conduct archaeological surveys.

However, the agreement drew criticism last year from the Oahu Island Burial Council, whose members argued that a full survey of the route should be conducted before any agreement is signed. The city proposes a phased approach to conducting surveys.

Last week, William Aila, interim director of the Department of Land and Natural Resources and state historic preservation officer, signed the agreement, paving the way for the FTA to issue its record of decision.

The phased approach will allow the city to determine exactly where burials might be located, Yoshioka said. A full survey would still rely on estimates on where the rail transit would make an impact.

If the project was at grade, on ground level, the city would have to consider relocating the route, Yoshioka said.

"But because we're elevated and our contact on the ground is through concrete piers, we can alter the spacing and alter the location or configuration (of the piers) to avoid the burials," Yoshioka said.

Any changes to what the final EIS outlines must be approved by the FTA, Rogers said.

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The city is also pending approval of a Real Estate Acquisition Management Plan. It would authorize the city to begin acquiring any real property necessary for the route and begin the relocation of affected people, businesses and utilities.

Yesterday the City Council's Transportation Committee also held a hearing on the city's application for the Special Management Area permit, which is required because of the project's proximity to coastal resources.

Of the project's 20 miles, 1.6 miles are located within special management areas. They are:

- » Waipahu area between Pupupuhi and Waipahu Depot streets.
- » Near Leeward Community College.
- » Kamehameha Highway near Kaonohi Street.
- » Keehi Lagoon Beach Park.

The permit was voted out of committee and will be decided on by the full Council next week. Councilman Breene Harimoto, who chairs the committee, said remaining concerns, such as rail finances or technology, will still be addressed as the project moves along.

"It doesn't mean we don't need to address the concerns and issues," said Harimoto. "We do. But yet it's important that we're still moving forward. If we're ever going to get that federal funding, it's very important to show that we're committed and moving forward."

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Thursday, January 20th, 2011

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Honolulu, HI 6:44 AM

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Inside Honolulu: Jan. 19

Mayor Peter Carlisle is in Washington, D.C., meeting with rail officials and mayors from around the country. He has six weeks until he presents his first budget. Back at Honolulu Hale, new City Council members are busy mapping out priorities. Civil Beat is reporting from the inside.

It's Official: Honolulu Has Five New Council Members

3:46 p.m.

Honolulu City Clerk **Bernice Mau** today performed the swearing-in for District 1 City Council member **Tom Berg**. Berg will take part in the next full council meeting on Jan. 26, but he's also been a regular presence at Honolulu Hale since he won a special election late last month.

Berg told Civil Beat he is no longer concerned about his leadership assignments — the council organized before Berg was elected, and designated the District 1 representative as chairman of the Parks & Human Services Committee, and vice chair of the Planning Committee.

Earlier this month, Berg said he would campaign to reorganize so he could chair the Transportation Committee. Berg said City Council Chairman **Nestor Garcia** reassured him that he'll be able to participate in all committee discussions, even if he isn't chair.

Trash Clean-Up Continues on Leeward Beaches

10:24 a.m.

Waste Management crews are returning to leeward beaches today to continue cleaning up after a landfill flood sent medical waste into the ocean. The company is sending workers to Kahe, Nimitz and White Plains beaches.

Officials are asking people to report any garbage they find on the beaches by calling (808) 668-2985.

Tomorrow, the mayor's advisory committee on landfill site selection will hold its first meeting at City Hall to talk about how the city should manage garbage disposal in the future. Read the committee's [agenda](#).

Read the Record of Decision

9:02 a.m.

In its letter accompanying a [Record of Decision](#) (ROD) on the city's rail plan yesterday, the Federal Transit Administration urged the city to post the ROD to its website as soon as possible. Doing so enables the FTA to "start the 180-day clock" for a period of time in which people can legally challenge the federal decision.

While rail opponents finalize their strategy to attempt to stop the project, supporters like U.S. Sen. **Dan Inouye** continue to praise the FTA for its decision.

"I remain committed to the Honolulu Rail Transit project and I am appreciative that the Federal Transit Administration agrees that it is good for Oahu," Inouye wrote in a statement. "I will do all I can to secure federal funds to ensure the project's timely completion. Republicans in both chambers, despite their desire to reduce government spending, have indicated that they consider transportation projects critical to job creation and economic recovery."

Inouye visited Honolulu Hale yesterday morning, and reassured City Council members that he would find ways to secure funding for essential programs even if his ability to use earmarks is drastically reduced.

City Officials Call For Hearings On Landfill Overflow

When City officials first learned that syringes and vials of blood and urine had flooded from the Waimanalo Gulch landfill into the ocean, work crews were removing the debris from leeward shores by the "truckful," according to Markus Owens, spokesman for the city's Environmental Services Department.

"It had decreased to probably one bag (of garbage collected from the beach) on Monday," Owens told Civil Beat. "The volume is definitely decreasing. They're still in the process of working on it."

As of Tuesday afternoon, the city had ordered twice-daily combings of a long stretch of beaches where debris washed ashore. City workers are also scrambling to alter the landfill itself, so that heavy rains in the forecast don't

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lead to another contaminated flood.

At the same time, City Council members are planning hearings to better understand why the overflow happened, and how to prevent it. City Council Chairman **Nestor Garcia** told Civil Beat that both **Tulsi Gabbard Tamayo** and **Stanley Chang** are planning related hearings next week.

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Jan. 18, 2011: City officials celebrate after FTA issues Record of Decision on rail; Sen. **Dan Inouye** wants an office at Honolulu Hale; City still working to clean up medical waste from landfill flood.

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Posted by [Adrienne LaFrance](#) on 01/19/2011

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Mayor Carlisle to meet with President Obama tomorrow

Last Update: 1/20 2:35 pm

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Mayor Peter Carlisle will join more than 220 other mayors at the White House tomorrow to meet with President Barack Obama and discuss issues of concern to cities across the nation.

Carlisle is in Washington, D.C. to attend the 79th Winter Meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and to meet with federal officials and lawmakers regarding Honolulu's rail transit project.

The Federal Transit Administration on Tuesday issued a Record of Decision that completes the rail project's environmental review phase and clears the way for construction to begin.



Key Republican committee chairman in US House backs Honolulu's rail project

By Herbert A. Sample
Associated Press

POSTED: 06:04 p.m. HST, Jan 20, 2011

A key Republican committee chairman in the U.S. House on Thursday issued firm support for Honolulu's commuter rail project even as other GOP lawmakers proposed huge domestic spending cuts, such as funding for nascent transit systems.

Rep. John Mica of Florida, who heads the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, said he would work with U.S. Rep. Mazie Hirono of Hawaii and the Federal Transit Administration to ensure the project "does not get bogged down in bureaucratic red tape."

"I support this project, especially with Honolulu's local commitment," Mica said in a statement released by Honolulu Mayor Peter Carlisle.

"Honolulu is bordered by the mountains on one side and the ocean on the other. This project will service the area where the vast majority of Oahu's population live and work, and will help address the area's traffic congestion issues," Mica added.

Hirono, a Democrat, is a member of the transportation panel. Her district includes the project's western terminus in the Ewa area.

Mica's stand on the Honolulu project had been in question after he told The Associated Press soon after November's elections that gave control of the House to the GOP that some state and local rail proposals were unworthy of federal funding.

Carlisle, who is in Washington for a U.S. Conference of Mayors gathering, trumpeted the chairman's comments

on Thursday.

"I am very pleased and grateful to Rep. Mica for his continuing support for the Honolulu Rail Transit Project," Carlisle said. "Rep. Mica has offered to help us continue our implementation and expedite the construction of our project.

The Federal Transit Administration on Tuesday awarded the city a "record of decision," one of the last hurdles before construction can begin on the \$5.5 billion system that is to stretch 20 miles from Ewa to Ala Moana.

Mica's support for the rail project came the same day as the Republican Study Committee, whose conservative members make up about three-fourths of the House GOP caucus, unveiled a proposal to cut domestic spending by \$2.5 trillion over the next decade.

The GOP proposal would eliminate \$2 billion in annual "new starts" transit funding, of which

Honolulu's project is expecting to receive a share. Projects to which the federal government has not yet obligated itself would be affected by the proposed cut, said a spokesman for the study committee.

The city and the federal government later this year are to sign a full-funding agreement, said Carlisle spokeswoman Louise Kim McCoy.

The overall GOP proposal faces long odds, including likely opposition from some Republicans, the Democrat-led Senate, Senate Appropriations Chairman Daniel Inouye of Hawaii, and the White House.

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Rail reality requires public input

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Jan 20, 2011

Oahu residents, whether or not they're persuaded this is the right move for Honolulu, have to acknowledge that Jan. 18, 2011, was a day for the books. The Federal Transit Administration issued a document called the "record of decision," which amounts to the green light to start building the 20-mile elevated rail system ultimately linking Kapolei to urban Honolulu.

That means shovels can actually turn some dirt in March, which is when the city contractors expect to begin relocating utility lines, an essential chore before the first station, the first stretch of tracks, can start taking shape.

After all the decades of false starts, the years of tax collections, the contentious hearings, the islandwide vote, this thing now looks like a reality, though one that's still viewed from a distance. So much still has to happen that it's mind-boggling, not the least of which is the creation of a transit authority staffed with professionals who can give the project the informed oversight it needs.

Almost certainly their first priority will be to get the next contracts issued, beginning with building the train storage and maintenance facilities in Waipahu. The promised jobs for Hawaii's people and economy are eagerly awaited, as is the eventual easing of traffic. All of the steps along the way must be taken with a full measure of public notification; transparency at each stage of the project is of immeasurable importance to maintain public trust in the expenditure of some \$5.5 billion on Hawaii's largest-ever taxpayer-funded project.

But the public has its duty, too. Along with the trains that someday will shuttle riders between Points A and B, the project will trigger the redevelopment of communities surrounding its 21 rail stations. Some of these stops will be located at established destinations that probably won't change as much -- Aloha Stadium, Pearlridge Center or Leeward Community College, for example.

However, some are districts that will be preparing for "transit-oriented development" or TOD, which is planner-speak for the more dense aggregate of retailers, workplaces and residences that grow up around stations. This is viewed as a means to jump-start the construction industry and provide multifamily housing developments more affordable than those in sprawling subdivisions.

But the residents already living there need to buy into this, too. If stops are envisioned well, these live-work-play complexes will become less of a jarring intrusion and more of an integrated addition to established neighborhoods. The community embraces what it's helped to design, making the improvements vibrant and lasting.

Conversely, the lack of a community buy-in produces the sad, abandoned stops that rail critics often picture as a byproduct of mass transit.

The process is well under way for the East Kapolei and Waipahu stops; the most recent community meetings took place in November to produce the Aiea-Pearl City station (comments on this one are still being taken, through Feb. 28). All the draft plans created so far can be viewed online (www.honoluluodpp.org/planning/).

City planners say the San Francisco-based firm Dyett & Bhatia has been hired for the next steps, including Kalihi and Downtown. Preparatory work, such as creating community opinion surveys, is being done, but residents should keep an eye out for announcements about public meetings. Chief planner Kathy Sokugawa invites people in those communities to e-mail lhonma@honolulu.gov to get on a mailing list.

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The most successful developments are those that are not imposed from above but come together at least somewhat organically, directed in part by the people who will be most affected by it. This must be what Honolulu wants for its rail-centered communities, but it won't happen unless people step up and help to sketch the outlines of their preferred future.

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Adrienne LaFrance/Civil Beat

Carlisle Reports Congressional Support for Honolulu Rail

4:21 p.m.

Honolulu Mayor **Peter Carlisle** reported a positive meeting today with U.S. Rep. **John Mica**, who chairs the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Carlisle and chief rail planner **Toru Hamayasu** met with the Florida Republican to discuss Honolulu's rail project. U.S. Rep. **Mazie Hirono**, of Hawaii's second Congressional district, also attended the meeting.

"I support this project, especially with Honolulu's local commitment," Mica wrote in a statement, according to Carlisle's office. "I will continue to work with Rep. Hirono and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to make sure the project does not get bogged down in bureaucratic red tape."

Neither Mica nor Carlisle returned Civil Beat's requests for interviews.

The mayor's office reports Carlisle also heard support from U.S. Rep. **John Duncan**, who chairs the House Highways and Transit Subcommittee, and from other congressmen who play key roles in federal transit planning.

Rail Job Opening

12:31 p.m.

City officials have repeatedly promised the rail plan will mean thousands of local jobs. With the news that the rail plan is moving forward — federal officials this week issued a Record of Decision on the project — comes at least one new rail job: Parsons Brinckerhoff is looking for a Honolulu rail planner.

The [listing](#) calls for someone with a broad range of transportation planning skills, including "experience conducting transportation impact analysis for environmental documents that follow the FTA New Starts process."

After a Week of Reaction, Managing Director Thanks Task Force for Proactivity

10:03 a.m.

The city's managing director, **Doug Chin**, welcomed members of an advisory committee tasked with recommending a new landfill site for the City and County of Honolulu.

Chin, who is serving as acting mayor while Mayor **Peter Carlisle** is in Washington D.C., acknowledged the recent landfill flooding would likely inform much of the task force discussion.

"I can tell you, as managing director, one of the things I'm always trying to do is be proactive," Chin said. "But in the last seven days, all I've done is react. React react react. Your task is completely proactive. You're here to look at something and be able to give us input that we desperately need, that the entire island needs, and we really appreciate you guys for being able to do this."

This is the volunteer task force's first of seven planned meetings. Some of the questions that are arising thus far involve how to get information about sites' proximity to agricultural lands, groundwater and cultural sites. Task force members are also asking how big the landfill will be, how much trash it will hold, and whether they can study rain patterns over potential sites.

Chin excused himself from the meeting before it began, saying he didn't want the task force to feel any "political

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Adrienne LaFrance
Honolulu Reporter-Host



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pressure."

City Eyes Bellows, Waimanalo North for Landfill Sites

9:31 a.m.

City officials are eyeing the area near Bellows Beach as the site for a new landfill. City officials sent letters to Marine Corps Base Hawaii, asking about the possibility of using the site. Clean-up of a one-acre site that served as a World War II-era landfill at Bellows was completed in 2009.

City officials also sent a letter to the Department of Land and Natural Resources, with interest in state-owned land known as Waimanalo North. That site has been explored for possible landfill in the past.

Members of a task force assembled to make recommendations on the new landfill site received copies of those letter this morning. Over the course of seven meetings, the task force is being asked to rank sites in a recommendation to the mayor.

A consultant told the group the city sent the letters to DLNR and Marine Corps Base Hawaii "recently," and has yet to receive letters back from either agency regarding the request.

Landfill Advisory Committee Meets at City Hall

7:53 a.m. Officials have created a three-hour window for the first meeting of the mayor's advisory committee on landfill site selection. Members of the committee plan to gather at city hall at 9 a.m.

The purpose of the task force is to explore ways for Honolulu to manage waste disposal in the future. The meeting comes on the heels of heavy rains that sent a flood of medical waste — including vials of urine and blood, IV bags and syringes — from the Waimanalo Gulch landfill into the ocean. Swimmers on the leeward coast have been cautioned after that waste began washing ashore late last week.

Clean-up crews continue to scour the beaches. At the gulch, officials are assessing whether it's safe to re-open the site.

Carlisle Meets with House Transit Leaders in D.C.

Mayor **Peter Carlisle** is today meeting with U.S. Rep. John Mica, the new GOP chair of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

The mayor is also attending the U.S. Conference of Mayors' winter meeting but making time to talk to federal officials about Honolulu's rail aspirations, and the necessary funding aide.

The shift to the balance of power in the House has increased worries over securing the federal help.

Read Previous Editions of Inside Honolulu

Jan. 19, 2011: Advisory committee to meet on landfill site selection; **Tom Berg** is officially a City Council member; Sen. **Dan Inouye** reiterates his support for rail; Read the Record of Decision.

Jan. 18, 2011: City officials celebrate after FTA issues Record of Decision on rail; Sen. **Dan Inouye** wants an office at Honolulu Hale; City still working to clean up medical waste from landfill flood.

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Posted by [Adrienne LaFrance](#) on 01/20/2011

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From the Pacific Business News:
<http://www.bizjournals.com/pacific/blog/2011/01/fta-funding-next-step-for-honolulu-rail.html>

FTA funding next step for Honolulu rail

Pacific Business News - by Curtis Lum , Pacific Business News

Date: Friday, January 21, 2011, 12:20pm HST



- Curtis Lum
- Reporter
- Email: clum@bizjournals.com

Last June, then-Mayor **Mufi Hannemann** held a rousing press conference on the steps of Honolulu Hale to announce the completion of a federal environmental impact statement on the city's rail transit project.

The event resembled more of a pep rally than typical press briefing as it featured upbeat music blaring over loud speakers, people wearing matching rail T-shirts and waving signs, and just about every key supporter of the project sweltering under the sun to cheer on the mayor.

But then the EIS was sent to then-Gov. **Linda Lingle** for her signature, and everything came to a screeching halt. Lingle refused to sign off on the document until she was certain that the city's financial plan for the project was sound.

She [commissioned](#) a study, which was [completed](#) just before she left office in December. But Lingle departed without putting pen to paper and the \$5.5 billion rail project sat in limbo.

The city's plan to break ground on the project in December was put on hold. [Eager contractors](#) hoping to get their workers off the bench had to wait.

But then the elections happened and everything changed.

Peter Carlisle was elected mayor and he made the rail project a [top priority](#). Soon after **Neil Abercrombie** was elected governor, he dusted off the EIS and [signed the document](#).

This week alone the Federal Transit Administration issued a final [record of decision](#), which clears the way for the city to begin construction. A Honolulu City Council committee approved a special management area use permit, and a key Republican congressman said that he has the city's back.

"I support this project," said House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee chair **John Mica**, R-Florida, "especially with Honolulu's local commitment. And I will continue to work with Rep. [Mazie] Hirono and the Federal Transit Administration to make sure the project does not get bogged down in bureaucratic red tape."

Mica's endorsement follows statements by Hawaii's Democratic Sen. **Daniel Inouye**, who expressed his concerns that federal funding for the rail project would be difficult because of the shift in control of the House. So any support from the other side of the aisle is important, especially since a House Republican study committee recently released a proposal to cut \$2 billion in annual new-starts transit funds, of which the rail project is expected to share.

The next step for the city will be to sign a full funding agreement with the FTA, which has committed \$1.5 billion to the city. With the speed at which the rail project has progressed in the past month, could that money be far behind?

Reporter Curtis Lum can be reached at 808.955.8001 | clum@bizjournals.com

Stop signals

A consortium of traffic stakeholders forges a five-year strategy to halt and hold the alarming number of fatalities at 100

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Jan 23, 2011



FL MORRIS / FMORRIS@STARADVERTISER.COM

A multi-vehicle crash in Kunia on Jan. 1 killed two people and injured six. A coalition has been working to lower the number of traffic-related deaths, targeting several areas under a five-year plan.

More Photos



It was just brutal out there.

In 2006, 161 Hawaii residents lost their lives in traffic-related incidents, including 32 pedestrians.

From 2001 to 2005, the average yearly statewide toll was 135. From 2001 to 2006, the total was 835.

In 2007, the state Department of Transportation launched an ambitious project — the Hawaii Strategic Highway Safety Plan — that aimed to reduce the number of traffic-related deaths to 100 or fewer a year by 2012.

More than 150 participants from a broad-based

consortium of interests including public safety, public health, law enforcement, the judiciary, highway design, private advocacy groups and data management got involved.

In creating the plan, areas of emphasis were designated — with much of the initial focus on impaired driving, as statistics show 39 percent of drivers involved in traffic fatalities in Hawaii test positive for alcohol or drugs. More than 100 strategies were put forward, some involving enforcement, others pushing education, new laws, even engineering solutions.

"The plan has a lot of key areas in it and it has helped to save lives, but there's still a lot of work to do," says Dr. Sharon Vitousek, director of the North Hawaii Outcomes Project and one of four original leaders of the effort.

Since the plan was put into effect, fatalities have fallen significantly — 138 in 2007, 107 in 2008, 109 in 2009 and, unofficially, 114 in 2010.

There is no way to say for certain that the plan is directly responsible for the drop in deaths since it can only suggest changes and has no authority to create public policy. Even participants admit that.

But they say the plan has mobilized safety advocates and played a vital role in raising public awareness of issues such as seatbelt use, speeding and drunken driving, and in that way it has been a huge success.

And all that really matters, they say, is the bottom line: Fewer deaths on Hawaii's roads and highways. —

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Shortly before 7 p.m. on New Year's Day, on an unlit stretch of Kunia Road, the first of two cars that police would later say were being driven "erratically and at a high rate of speed" crossed the centerline of the two-lane blacktop and into oncoming traffic.

The initial collision turned two sedans into lumps of crumpled metal in an instant and set off a five-vehicle, chain-reaction crash that left wreckage scattered for 100 yards.

Jennifer Parsons, a 42-year-old mother of three from Waianae, and 12-year-old Samson Sese of Kaneohe became the state's first traffic fatalities of 2011. Six others were injured.

In the aftermath, some wondered if there was anything that could have been done to prevent the tragedy. On what was an almost pitch-black night, would lights along Kunia Road have helped? What about rumble strips on the centerline and along the shoulders of the narrow country road that sees heavy use as a shortcut from Wahiawa to Ewa Beach and Kapolei?

Sadly, in this case, no. There are no engineering remedies for human behavior.

**Preliminary figures Source: Walk Wise Hawaii*

Still, if signage or lighting can make a rural road a little safer, if technology can keep drunken drivers from starting their cars, if a computer database can pinpoint dangerous stretches of highway, if overhauling the driver's license manual can make motorists more aware of the rights of pedestrians and bicyclists, in fact, if anything can be done to save lives ... shouldn't it be done?

That's the idea behind an ambitious and sprawling project — the Hawaii Strategic Highway Safety Plan, spearheaded by the state Department of Transportation in 2006 — that involves multiple government and private-sector agencies working toward a goal of reducing traffic-related deaths in the state to 100 or fewer a year by 2012.

According to the state, 161 people died in Hawaii in traffic-related incidents in 2006, including 32 pedestrians. From 2001 to 2005, the average yearly statewide toll was 135.

Since the highway safety plan was implemented, the fatality numbers have fallen significantly. In 2007, it was 138, including 28 pedestrians. In 2008, it was 107 (21 pedestrians). In 2009, it was 109 (16 pedestrians). Last year, it was an as-yet unofficial 114,

including 27 pedestrians.

But what makes the trend truly remarkable is that while the plan places no limits on ideas or visions, it has no direct policy-making authority.

"I would love to be able to say the plan is directly behind (the drop in deaths), but there's just no way to be certain with these things," says Dr. Sharon Vitousek, director of the North Hawaii Outcomes Project and a leader in efforts to cut traffic-related deaths on the Big Island, where the fatality rate has been historically higher than the state average.

"I think (the traffic-related death total) has dropped for multiple reasons," says Vitousek. "But I do strongly believe that the plan has helped tremendously by broadly increasing awareness of many of the problems."

» **Aggressive driving** (speeding, passing on shoulders or solid lines, gesturing at other drivers). Among proposed solutions: use of wheel "boots" to immobilize cars of drivers whose licenses have been revoked; install cameras at dangerous intersections to catch drivers who run red lights.

» **Impaired driving.** Among proposed solutions: ignition interlock devices; install rumble strips on centerline and along shoulders, especially in rural areas.

» **Protecting vehicle occupants.** Among proposed solutions: ban passengers from beds of pickup trucks; step up nighttime enforcement of seatbelt compliance laws.

» **Safeguarding pedestrians and bicyclists.** Among proposed solutions: install cameras at dangerous intersections to catch drivers who run red lights; modify

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driver's license manual to include major section on safety and the motorist's responsibility toward pedestrians and bicyclists.

» **Ensuring motorcycle and mo-ped safety.** Among proposed solutions: enact universal helmet law.

» **Building safer roadways by design.** Among proposed solutions: install rumble strips on centerline and along shoulders, especially in rural areas; install or improve lighting at locations with a history of nighttime crashes; install delineators where the roadway alignment is confusing or unexpected.

» **Improving data and safety management.** Among proposed solutions: develop comprehensive safety management system using crash data to identify high-risk locations.

Source: Hawaii Strategic Highway Safety Plan

Vitousek was an original participant in the plan, and was designated one of its four "champions," or leaders, along with then-Transportation Director Brennon Morioka, Honolulu police Assistant Chief Bryan Wauke and Dr. Linda Rosen, chief of the state Department of Health's Emergency Medical Services and Injury Prevention System. She and Rosen remain active participants.

The origin of the plan dates to 2005, when President George W. Bush signed the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users. "SAFETEA-LU," as it was referred to, required all states to develop highway safety plans in order to qualify for federal highway funds.

After laying the groundwork for a statewide partnership of safety advocates in 2006, the state DOT organized a kickoff summit for the five-year Hawaii Strategic Highway Safety Plan in January 2007. The gathering involved more than 150 people, stakeholders from a broad-based consortium of interests including public safety, public health, law enforcement, the judiciary, highway design, private advocacy groups and data management.

DOT engineers were there. So were police officers, prosecutors and liquor control administrators from every county. Emergency responders. Bicycle leagues. The Federal Highway Administration. Mothers Against Drunk Driving. AARP. Insurance companies. Hospitals. Road construction contractors. Anyone with a stake in traffic safety, it seems, was in attendance.

Participants met in groups determined by their specialties and defined seven emphasis areas — aggressive driving, impaired driving, occupant

protection, pedestrians and bicyclists, motorcycle and mo-ped safety, facility design, and data and safety management.

Impaired driving was an obvious target, with 39 percent of drivers involved in traffic fatalities testing positive for alcohol or drugs. But speeding was the No. 1 contributing factor in fatal crashes in Hawaii: 42 percent in motorcycles and 36 percent for motor vehicles.

By June, more than 100 strategies had been recommended for inclusion in the plan.

Some were common-sense solutions, such as stricter enforcement of seatbelt compliance laws, stepped-up impaired driver checkpoints or installation of rumble strips on poorly lit rural roads. Others were more prescient, such as MADD's signature project, an on-board breathalyzer that would prevent drivers convicted of DUI from starting their cars if they had been drinking. That initiative became law this year, shepherded through the Legislature by state Rep. Sharon Har, herself a victim of a drunken driver who smashed into her car three years ago.

But so much for the easy part.

"Strategies are great, but without implementation it's just a list," says participant Kari Benes, the traffic safety coordinator of the state Health Department's EMS.

Without policy-making authority, the plan depends on the long-term commitment of stakeholders to advocate in their areas of specialty to help push proposals through.

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That means gathering participants on a regular basis — mostly on their own time — and providing them with a forum for exchanging information. Some emphasis committees meet monthly. A core committee of leaders meets every two months.

Updates on recommendations are provided on an online "scorecard" which tracks the progress of proposals, identifies which strategies need a boost and which are struggling to gain acceptance and may need to be reconsidered.

Now entering its fourth year, the project remains something of a logic-defying conglomerate in which stakeholders are in near-constant communication yet work independently toward a common goal.

It is, one state highway engineer noted, an example of how committed safety advocates are.

"It's about shared responsibility," Benes says. "Probably one of the biggest pet peeves is that people often look at plans like this and say, 'What good is it if it doesn't have legs?' Well, there is a charge behind the individuals here; they can move forward because they know they have a caucus that supports them.

"We know some of the strategies are now in the implementation stage, but it can be up to a couple of years before we actually see them happen. And things keep changing. I mean, five years ago, we had speculative data, but nothing hard, on the dangers of (driving while using) cell-phones and handheld devices. So we're always streamlining priorities."

To add more weight to the plan's recommendations, yet another committee was recently created — the Strategic Alliance for Roadway Safety, or STARS, made up of the heads of agencies such as the health and transportation departments and county police chiefs. There also is talk of revising the highway safety plan and creating a second phase after 2012.

Participant Arkie Koehl of MADD says state Sen. Will Espero, chairman of the public safety committee, is a strong backer of the highway safety plan.

This year, Espero is sponsoring or co-sponsoring a number of traffic-related bills including mandatory training for alcohol servers; a prohibition on riding in pickup truck beds; wheel locks, or "boots," that would immobilize vehicles of drivers whose licenses have been revoked; and cameras at dangerous intersections that would photograph cars running red lights.

Vitousek says she'll be working with the Hawaii County

Department of Public Works to improve use of data "to pinpoint where engineering interventions need to happen" on the Big Island's vast road and highway system, where 28 people lost their lives in 2010.

"What that's going to require is that police have a GPS system, so a location of an accident can be entered into a database," she says. "Right now, it's just a description — 'between mile marker 61 and 62' — which can be a long area. We can do a better job of pinpointing crashes."

Vitousek says she initially was skeptical about participating in the highway safety plan because she feared the state would do little more than the minimum required to receive federal funding. She says she has been impressed with the scope of the project and the quality of ideas and is excited to see some of the engineering strategies beginning to be implemented.

Benes also remains upbeat. All that matters, she says, are the falling numbers.

"Maybe we can't say that (the plan is) directly responsible," Benes says. "We know there are other factors. But we also know that public awareness has definitely increased and we know that the strategies in the plan have been proven to help reduce injuries and fatalities."

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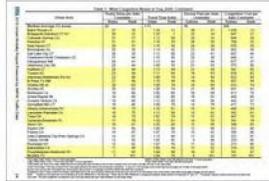


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Traffic increases when economy improves

January 24th, 2011 9:48 am HAST

By **Sandi Yara**, Oahu Transportation Examiner

What's On Now

Monday, January 24, 2011 - 4:56:55 pm









The Good News About Car Crashes



In a recent report published by Metro magazine, it appears that traffic is increasing now that the economy is rebounding.

Traffic congestion declined the past couple of years ... largely due to higher gas prices ... but that has since changed. The 2010 Urban Mobility Report provides a snapshot of congestion in 438 U.S. urban areas.

The above data for medium-size urban areas was taken from the 2010 Urban Mobility Report, published by TTI at Texas A&M University.

Interesting highlights from the research illustrate the effects of the nation's traffic problems:

- Congestion costs continue to rise: measured in constant 2009 dollars, the cost of congestion has risen from \$24 billion in 1982 to \$115 billion in 2009.
- The total amount of wasted fuel in 2009 topped 3.9 billion gallons – equal to 130 days of flow in the [Alaska Pipeline](#).
- Cost to the average commuter: \$808 in 2009, compared to an inflation-adjusted \$351 in 1982.

The congestion reduction benefits of two significant solutions are discussed — public transportation and

roadway operations. **Without public transportation services, travelers would have suffered an additional 785 million hours of delay and consumed 640 million more gallons of fuel — a savings of \$19 billion in congestion costs. Roadway operational treatments save travelers 320 million hours of delay and 265 million gallons of fuel for a congestion cost savings of \$8 billion.**

Researchers recommend a balanced and diversified approach to reducing traffic congestion – one that focuses on more of everything. Their strategies include:

- Get as much use as possible out of the transportation system we have.
- **Add roadway and public transportation capacity in the places where it is needed most.**
- Change our patterns, employing ideas like ridesharing and flexible work times to avoid traditional "rush hours."
- Provide more choices, such as alternate routes, telecommuting and toll lanes for faster and more reliable trips.
- **Diversify land development patterns, to make walking, biking and mass transit more practical.**
- **Adopt realistic expectations, recognizing for instance that large urban areas are going to be congested, but they don't have to stay that way all day long.**

The report pretty much validates why rail supporters lobby for the Honolulu Rail Transit project.

For information on the complete report, visit http://tti.tamu.edu/documents/mobility_report_2010.pdf

For information on Honolulu Rail Transit, visit <http://www.honolulustransit.org/>

Tags:

[Rail, Honolulu Rail Transit](#)



Sandi Yara

Oahu Transportation Examiner

Sandi Yara is a lifelong West Oahu resident, working in Hawaii's visitor industry for 25+ years. She has planned and executed numerous marketing...
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Inside Honolulu: Jan. 26

With just five weeks to go until Mayor Peter Carlisle must present his first budget, he still doesn't have a permanent budget director. One big distraction: Cleaning up the literal and figurative mess at Waimanalo Gulch Sanitary Landfill. It's a busy week, and Civil Beat is reporting from the inside.

Hansen to Stay on as Permanent Budget Director... For Now

1:36 p.m.

Honolulu Mayor **Peter Carlisle** is asking the City Council to approve a resolution that makes Budget and Fiscal Services Director **Mike Hansen** the permanent director of that department — with a catch.

"We're still looking," Managing Director **Doug Chin** told Civil Beat, who added that the mayor always reserves the right to hire and fire Cabinet members.

Hansen has said he doesn't want the full-time director position. He's been serving as acting director since October, and his temporary commission was set to expire Jan. 31. Carlisle said he had expected to find a new budget director by that date. The new appointment — without a built-in termination date — provides some stability for the city.

But Chin emphasizes, titles notwithstanding, Hansen has been doing the work of a permanent director all along. The managing director said the mayor is still on track to turn in his first budget on time, the first week of March.

[Read the nomination](#), including Hansen's résumé.

Tam Sentencing Pushed Back

1:09 p.m.

Former City Council member **Rod Tam** was set to be sentenced tomorrow after pleading guilty in November to 26 counts of theft.

A District Court staffer told Civil Beat Tam's attorney, Nelson Goo, asked for the date to be moved. Tam's new sentencing date is March 28. Goo could not be reached for comment.

The new date may be welcome news for a couple of City Council members, who cringed after a ceremony this morning honoring Tam and other former council members.

If City Council Chairman **Nestor Garcia** was bothered by honoring a man who is facing jail time for stealing from the city, it didn't show. Garcia commended Tam — calling him "Mr. Sunshine," an old nickname on which Tam prided himself — for helping the council pass a cell phone ban for drivers and other city laws, as well as reaching out to his constituents on a grassroots level.

Garcia congratulated Tam for "leaving the city and his district in better shape than when he arrived," and wished him "warmest aloha and continued success."

Shovels Ready: City Edges Closer to Rail Construction

12:39 p.m.

Brace yourselves for the splashy ribbon-cutting: The City Council today unanimously approved permits allowing rail construction to begin.

"This is a very important permit for us because it allows us to technically break ground," Honolulu Transportation Services Director **Wayne Yoshioka** said. "It clears the way for all the other permits we need to get."

The permits approved today pertain to construction in coastal zones. The rest of the permits the city needs are not subject to council approval, but will come directly from the Department of Planning and Permitting in most cases.

Five people turned out to give testimony opposing the permits. Many of them cited concerns over a high concentration of iwi in a later portion of rail construction. Three members of the public expressed their support for the project.

The only City Council member who didn't support the permitting with an "aye" was **Ann Kobayashi**. Without

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Honolulu Reporter-Host



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saying, "nay," though, her vote still counted as approval. City Council member **Romy Cachola** is not present.

City transit planners don't need to consult the City Council again before beginning rail construction, but Yoshioka emphasizes his department will still answer to the council as the rail project moves forward.

"There are many checkpoints along the way after this," Yoshioka said. "FTA specifically noted what things we were authorized to proceed on, and we will do only those things. ... We will be coming before council on numerous other things in the future."

As for the inevitable groundbreaking ceremony with Mayor **Peter Carlisle** holding a shovel? Yoshioka says it will happen "early this year." This month? Next month? He won't say.

Full City Council Still Not in Action

10:30 a.m.

Today marks the first opportunity for the full City Council to officially conduct business. The last member to join the group is **Tom Berg**, who was elected to represent District 1 in a special election late last year.

So far, just eight City Council members are present. Berg isn't the only newcomer. This is only the second full council meeting for **Stanley Chang**, **Tulsi Gabbard Tamayo**, **Breene Harimoto** and **Ernie Martin**.

City Council Chairman **Nestor Garcia**, **Ikaika Anderson** and **Ann Kobayashi** are the veterans on the council.

Romy Cachola is not present.

Managing Director Responds to Civil Beat's Fact Check on Mayor

10:07 a.m.

When Civil Beat heard Mayor **Peter Carlisle** tell a crowded City Council committee hearing that landfill operator Waste Management had never violated its permit requirements, we immediately thought to [Fact Check](#) his statement.

A quick Google search turned up reports of the millions of dollars in fines the landfill company has paid in the past five years. When Civil Beat reported the mayor's statement was false, the mayor's office responded quickly with a hand-delivered statement admitting Carlisle's statement was unintentionally misleading.

Managing Director **Doug Chin** explained that the mayor meant to specify he was talking about permit violations pertaining to medical waste. But Carlisle didn't say so before the City Council.

"He omitted that phrase but the omission was unintentional," Chin told Civil Beat. "The funny thing was, I didn't catch that because I think I knew what he was going to say. So it wasn't until I read the article that it was like, 'Wait a second, what did he say?' We appreciate Civil Beat catching that because it helps us. We don't want to mislead people."

No More Camping Out for Holiday Camping Permits?

For years, those who wanted to enjoy the great outdoors on two of the biggest holidays of the year have needed to camp out near satellite city halls to obtain city camping permits.

That could become a thing of the past if a proposed city ordinance becomes law.

[Bill 1](#) [pdf], introduced by City Council member Ann Kobayashi, will get its first reading in today's full council meeting. If passed, it would create exemptions from city park rules, carving out permit-free camping nights on New Year's and the Fourth of July.

The proposal comes even as the city has said it's counting on permit fees for revenue. [Bill 60](#) [pdf], introduced by Ikaika Anderson at the request of the administration, would introduce fees for use of city campsites. Anderson and other City Council members said in a committee hearing they were skeptical about the bill and how it might affect their constituents. It's set for second reading and public hearing in the Committee on Executive Matters and Legal Affairs.

— *Michael Levine*

Read Previous Editions of Inside Honolulu

Jan. 25, 2011: Honolulu Mayor **Peter Carlisle** appointments more city leaders; State and city agencies announce safe chromium levels in Honolulu drinking water; Lawmaker considered banning elephants in Hawaii.

Jan. 24, 2011: Until EPA intervened, landfill operator **Joe Whelan** was putting debris from spill back into closed dump.

Jan. 21, 2011: Waimanalo Gulch to stay closed until next week; Honolulu Mayor **Peter Carlisle** among mayors meeting with President Obama today.

Jan. 20, 2011: Mayor **Peter Carlisle** reports a positive meeting with congressional transit leader; City eyes

Bellows, Waimanalo North for new landfill site.

Jan. 19, 2011: Advisory committee to meet on landfill site selection; **Tom Berg** is officially a City Council member; Sen. **Dan Inouye** reiterates his support for rail; Read the Record of Decision.

Jan. 18, 2011: City officials celebrate after FTA issues Record of Decision on rail; Sen. **Dan Inouye** wants an office at Honolulu Hale; City still working to clean up medical waste from landfill flood.

Jan. 14, 2011: Deputy prosecutor sworn in; City confronts myriad trash issues; Ikaika Anderson creating task force to consider sweeping overhaul to property tax structure; City workers hit the Furlough Friday halfway point.

Jan. 13, 2011: City opens emergency shelter on Leeward Coast; Heavy rains continue to hamper city business; City Council Chairman Nestor Garcia is in Washington, D.C., to discuss APEC.

Jan. 12, 2011: City Transportation hearing a one-sided affair; Council members concerned about camping fees; Customer Services director nominee **Gail Haraguchi** breezes through committee; Hawaii could get a preseason NFL game; Former Mayor Mufi Hannemann says air travel is key for economic recovery.

Jan. 11, 2011: First Zoning Committee of the new year gets updates on pending amendments to Honolulu's Land Use Ordinance.

Jan. 10, 2011: Mayor **Peter Carlisle** gives kudos to Kauai; Committees move forward with two director nominations; Statewide fireworks ban unlikely; City officials worry about fireworks hoarders.

Jan. 7, 2011: City transportation director preps to take up IMG report in Transportation Committee meeting next week; Mayor Peter Carlisle stays quiet on illegal rental to President **Barack Obama**; Carlisle plans business trip to Hollywood, jokes about wanting a cameo in Hawaii 5-0.

Jan. 6, 2011: Emergency official cites threat of "huge mudslide" in Kaneohe highway closure; City eyes user fees, but in what form? Mayor tells Pacific Club crowd about inevitable cuts during "financial crisis," calls city challenges "exciting."

Jan. 5, 2011: Council vice chair to host hearing on IMG report; Rail division moves down permitting check list; A new year means a new website for Honolulu.

Jan. 4, 2011: Carlisle's drinking buddies may be lonely this month; Honolulu's first mayor inaugurated 102 years ago today; Tom Berg isn't happy with his Council committee assignments.

Jan. 3, 2011: City Council to explore user fees as revenue generator; **Nestor Garcia** talks rail, APEC, city values in celebratory inaugural address.

Posted by [Adrienne LaFrance](#) on 01/26/2011

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Permit approval allows city to start rail project construction

Posted: Jan 26, 2011 5:18 PM

Updated: Jan 26, 2011 5:20 PM

HONOLULU (HawaiiNewsNow) - The Honolulu City Council Wednesday approved a Special Management Area Use Permit that allows the Honolulu Rail Transit Project to begin early construction.

The City Council voted 8-0 to approve the permit, which allows the city to move ahead with the construction permitting process for the rail project.

Initial work for the rail project can start soon with the relocation of utilities and site preparation for the eventual construction of the elevated rail guideway.

The city Department of Planning and Permitting, which oversees the SMP process, recommended approval of the permit. The permit application concluded the rail project will have no significant adverse environmental or ecological effects on coastal ecosystems, beaches or other coastal resources.

About 1.6 miles of the 20-mile rail project route will be inside the Special Management Area district, with a 2.8-mile portion of the rail transit route bordering the district.

The permit approval follows the Federal Transit Administration issuing a Record of Decision last week for the project.

In December, Gov. Neil Abercrombie accepted the project's Final Environmental Impact, which identified environmental, community and economic benefits and impacts of the rail system as well as mitigation measures for addressing these issues.

The city has already awarded a construction contract for the first phase of the elevated rail guideway from East Kapolei to Pearl City. A second contract for the train storage and maintenance facility in Waipahu is expected to be executed shortly.

The city is scheduled to award two more major construction contracts this year for the second phase of the rail route from Pearl City to Aloha Stadium and for the "core systems," which consists of the train vehicles and the control center for the rail system.

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City Council approves permit for Honolulu rail

Last Update: 1/26 7:56 pm

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The Honolulu City Council has approved a permit allowing construction to begin on the city's rail line.

The city said in a news release Wednesday the council voted 8-0 to approve the permit for the Honolulu Rail Transit Project.

Initial work is due to begin soon with the moving of utilities and preparation of sites for the eventual construction of an elevated rail guideway.

The city has already awarded a construction contract for the first phase of the line going from East Kapolei to Pearl City.

The Federal Transit Administration last week issued a "record of decision" for the 20-mile-long, \$5.5 billion system.

The FTA's move confirms the project met the requirements of the environmental review process.

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Council approves permit for city's rail project

By Gene Park

POSTED: 04:43 p.m. HST, Jan 26, 2011

The City Council today approved the special management area permit for the city's rail transit project.

The Council voted 8-0, with Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi remaining silent, to allow the city to build the project near shorelines.

Of the project's 20 miles, 1.6 miles are located within special management areas. They are:

- » Waipahu area between Pupupuhi and Waipahu Depot streets.
- » Near Leeward Community College.
- » Kamehameha Highway near Kaonohi Street.
- » Keehi Lagoon Beach Park.

The permit is likely to be the last needing City Council approval. The city still needs several other permits, but all will be handled directly with the city Department of Permitting and Planning.

City officials have said they expect to break ground on the project in March. Last week the Federal Transit Administration issued a record of decision, clearing the project to begin relocating utilities and negotiating acquisition of real property needed for the project.

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Council approves pivotal rail permit

By Gene Park

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Jan 27, 2011

The city has cleared the final major environmental hurdle for it to begin construction of Honolulu's rail project.

The City Council awarded a Special Management Area permit that allows the \$5.5 billion project to be built near coastal management zones.

The Council approved the permit 8-0 yesterday with Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi withholding her vote, which was registered as an "aye." Councilman Romy Cachola was absent.

"It (the permit) allows us to technically break ground, and it clears the way for all the other permits we need to get," said Wayne Yoshioka, interim Department of Transportation Services director.

Of the project's 20 miles, 1.6 miles are within coastal management areas.

The permit is likely to be the last requiring Council approval. The project still needs several others that will be handled directly through the city Department of Permitting and Planning.

City officials have said they expect to break ground on the project in March. Last week, the Federal Transit Administration issued a record of decision, clearing the project to begin relocating utilities and negotiating the property acquisition.

David Frankel of the Native Hawaiian Legal Corp. voiced the group's opposition to the permit because of the city's plan to conduct archaeological inventory surveys in phases rather than before the entire project begins.

The group's concern stems from the likely scenario that burial sites will be found in the Kakaako area, where the fourth phase of the project will run through.

The programmatic agreement between various state and federal agencies requires that an archaeological survey be conducted prior to construction of a phase.

Councilman Tom Berg asked why the city couldn't do a survey on the fourth phase before breaking ground on the project.

"We've already engaged in segment one in terms of an AIS (archaeological inventory survey), as well as segment two," Yoshioka said in an interview. "Because of the concerns we've heard, we're going to accelerate segment four's survey ahead of three."

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Mileage Tax Could Get Test Drive in Hawaii

By Michael Levine | 01/31/2011

With gas consumption projected to decrease in coming years, lawmakers are looking for a new way to pay for roads — taxing drivers based on their mileage.

House Bill 1531 and Senate Bill 819 each note that revenue from gas taxes, a main source of infrastructure funding, will diminish as fuel-efficient and electric vehicles proliferate. They say there's a better way.

"The number of miles each vehicle travels is a gauge of actual use and associated impact on the land transportation infrastructure," says HB 1531, which was introduced by Transportation Committee Chair Joe Souki and eight others. That bill and SB 819 each instruct the Hawaii Department of Transportation to develop pilot programs to test alternatives to the existing fuel tax schemes.

The program would tally the number of miles traveled by particular vehicles and collect payments from their owners. The state would refund fuel taxes paid by those drivers, and could otherwise compensate the participants through a sweepstakes. The bills are light on specifics, and it would be up to the Hawaii Department of Transportation to figure it all out.

In [testimony](#) [pdf] opposing the Senate measure, the Hawaii Department of Transportation says it would be "fiscally prudent" to look at studies conducted by other states with similar pilot programs before implementing a Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) tax program in the islands.

It says a similar pilot program in Oregon took six years and cost \$3 million.

Under Oregon's program, some vehicles were equipped with Global Positioning Systems that recorded each mile traveled. Drivers paid the per-mile tax at the gas pump, regardless of their vehicle's fuel efficiency, according to [media reports in 2009](#). A [survey showed](#) residents didn't like the idea of a mileage tax, but didn't like the idea of tolls, either.

Two years later, with fuel efficiency continuing to rise and gas tax revenues continuing to fall, other jurisdictions are toying with the idea of a mileage tax.

Nevada sought a [test program](#) last year that was opposed by the local chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union on privacy grounds. An e-mail to the ACLU of Hawaii was not immediately returned.

Last week, the [New York Times reported](#) on a pilot program in Austin, Texas. One area editorial board said it was [still a bad idea](#) because it would unfairly punish drivers in rural areas.

Former U.S. Secretaries of Transportation Norman Mineta and Samuel Skinner [called for switching](#) to a VMT program from a gas tax. They argued in a [report](#) [pdf] that the tax could be higher during peak hours, and said technology exists to assuage privacy concerns.

SB 819 was introduced by Transportation Committee Chair Kalani English and 10 colleagues, including Ways and Means Chair David Ige. English's committee held a [hearing](#) Friday afternoon, then voted 5-1 in favor of the bill.



Flickr: @cdharrison

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Michael Levine
Land Reporter-Host



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City rail team ready to surge ahead on project

By Toru Hamayasu

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Jan 30, 2011

The Honolulu Rail Transit Project achieved a key milestone recently in receiving a Record of Decision (ROD) from the Federal Transit Administration, which clears the way for construction to begin on the 20-mile rail line that has been decades in the making.

The issuance of the ROD completes the National Environmental Policy Act review process. It describes the transit project, explains the reasons for the decision and makes commitments regarding how the project will mitigate the impact on historic, cultural and environmental resources.

This achievement is also the culmination of years of work and collaboration between the city and its public and private-sector partners. In June of last year, the project's Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was released. The FEIS is a detailed disclosure of the public process, evaluations of alternatives and environmental analysis that the project team performed since the project's inception back in 2005. The FEIS and the Record of Decision will guide the development of the rail transit project.

TO LEARN MORE

For information on the rail project, see www.honolulutransit.org.

For information on the rail project, see www.honolulutransit.org.

With the acceptance of the FEIS and the ROD, momentum for the project has been reestablished — the project is once again moving forward and residents can look forward to rail as a reliable and efficient transportation alternative.

The city will continue working with the Federal Transit Administration to make sure that the project and its financial plans are robust. Only by doing so will the FTA agree to fully fund the \$1.55 billion, which the agency said it expects to contribute to the project.

Federal support for the rail project is strong: U.S. Sen. Daniel Inouye has pledged his full support for the rail project, and just reiterated his support, adding that he will work to secure federal funding in Congress to ensure the project's timely completion. Two weeks ago, Mayor Peter Carlisle, U.S. Rep. Mazie Hirono and I met with the new chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, U.S. Rep. John Mica. The Florida Republican is well aware of the Honolulu project and said he supports federal funding and implementation of Honolulu's rail transit. Mica noted Honolulu is geographically well suited for rail transit and needs to improve mobility for both residents and visitors.

The city has worked long and hard to bring the project to this important point. But there is still much work in the process that needs to be done, and the city is well aware of the remaining milestones it needs to achieve on the project schedule checklist. As has been the case to date, the city will deliberately and transparently move the project along in the right direction, with full concurrence from the FTA. The project will continue its long-established practice of holding community meetings to discuss everything from station design to construction impacts. Last year alone, the city conducted 165 presentations, workshops and meetings on the project, and participated in 149 neighborhood board meetings. Since the project began in 2005, our project team has conducted or participated in more than 900 meetings, presentations,

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updates and public hearings, and participated in an additional 483 neighborhood board meetings.



Toru Hamayasu is second deputy director in the city's Department of Transportation Services.

The city has already awarded some contracts for the project that have come in under budget. More contracts will be awarded this year, with an eye toward securing the best possible outcome for taxpayers.

The city plans to hold a ground-breaking ceremony for the project in the coming weeks. Soon, island residents will see the preparations for the beginning of the construction of the rail system. Workers will be busy relocating utilities, conducting soil tests and more. In the next several months the expectation is that hundreds of workers will be back on the job. These workers are our family, friends and neighbors who will take pride in building the transportation infrastructure that our island residents have asked for and voted for. And this will all be done with the awareness, sensitivity and respect that our aina deserves.

With the FTA's Record of Decision, the city has turned a critical corner in developing a long-overdue transportation alternative for Oahu's residents and visitors. It's a reason to celebrate, and a big step in moving this complex project forward. The city is committed to maintaining the momentum and keeping its rail transit project on track.

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Letters to the Editor

For Monday, January 31, 2011

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Jan 31, 2011

Bangkok wisely built rail system

I recently returned from Bangkok for the first time since I had visited in 1995 -- just before construction began on its now famous Skytrain.

This thriving metropolis is a testament to the return on investment derived from a much-needed train system. Considered to have the worst traffic congestion in the world, old Bangkok was mired in pollution and paralysis.

Bangkok's citizens knew something had to be done, fully understanding that construction was going to make the present situation even worse, but only for a while. This was a long-term investment in their quality of life, as well as that of their children for generations to come.

Traversing this complex city is now much more effortless as its citizenry combines train, bus, auto and even a centuries-old river taxi system to achieve an optimum blend of comfort and efficiency -- both in terms of time and usage of natural resources.

Bangkok demonstrates that it is never too late to do the right thing.

Timothy Deegan
Honolulu

Next Stop: Rail transit authority

A powerful new 10-member panel to oversee and operate rail will be determined by July

By Vicki Viotti

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Jan 30, 2011



This rendering shows what a rail station platform might look like on Oahu. COURTESY HONOLULU RAIL TRANSIT PROJECT

More Photos



The new train boss is in town — or will be, by the midpoint of this year.

City ordinance sets July 1 as the date when the city's new transit authority, the semi-autonomous agency authorized by Honolulu voters in November, will be born.

This will be an auspicious occasion: This authority will have substantial powers for an unelected board, an entity created to oversee the construction and eventual operation of the city's planned 20-mile elevated rail system.

A panel of 10, including one nonvoting member, will manage the budget of the transit project, pursue the purchase or condemnation of land along the route, set fares, draw up contracts, deal with labor issues.

This bothers some people, including former mayoral candidate Panos Prevedouros, the University of Hawaii engineering professor and longstanding opponent of the whole project.

Putting a transit project under the supervision of a separate agency, Prevedouros said, is "essential" in cases where the system crosses county or state lines and therefore can't be controlled by any one government. But Honolulu is a single city-and-county jurisdiction, he said, meaning that the authority represents an unneeded bureaucratic layer placed between the project and the voting and taxing public.

"At the most we would need a separate division at the city within the Department of Transportation Services," he said. "The largest problem is lack of accountability."

Mayor Peter Carlisle disagrees and feels confident this authority will help ensure that key decisions are put in the hands of people with the right professional training and experience, rather than politicians.

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THE RAIL AUTHORITY'S AUTHORITY

The City Charter, as amended by the voters in November, gives the transit authority general powers, including:

- » Making and executing contracts and labor agreements for the project.
- » Acquiring by eminent domain, purchase, lease all real property needed for construction, maintenance, repair, extension or operation. After being notified, the City Council has 45 days to object.
- » Recommending to the council the sale, exchange or transfer of real property under its control, with proceeds to go to the authority funds.
- » Directing system planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance.
- » Setting all fares, fees, and charges.
- » Preparing budgets and maintaining accounts for the system and authority.
- » Adopting administrative rules and policies.
- » Creating or abolishing positions and setting pay, according to charter rules for each job classification.
- » Entering into agreements with any public agency or private entity.
- » Creating and assisting transit oriented development projects near rail stations.
- » Receiving grants of property, money and services.
- » Issuing revenue bonds, subject to council approval.
- » Appointing and removing the executive director, setting the qualifications, powers, duties, functions and compensation for the job.
- » Evaluating the executive director at least annually, submitting a report to the mayor and the Council.
- » Submitting an annual report to the mayor and council on its activities.

In the next few weeks the City Council and administration will put together a list of qualifications needed for the authority posts and put them in a resolution to be heard.

But even though board members won't be elected, they can't be babes in the political woods, either. The authority will need to work with people in the Capitol when the project touches on state issues, Carlisle said,

and the City Council signs off on land transactions and ultimately holds the purse strings.

"You have to have someone who's got a good idea of how to deal with the politics of city and county government, that is somebody who knows how to get things done and what hurdles can be brought about by the political process," he said.

There are semi-autonomous boards and commissions throughout the state and county governments of Hawaii, but none of them with the range of powers to be vested in the new transit authority that will oversee the planned rail project linking Kapolei with Ala Moana in the urban core.

The Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation, as it's known in the legislation that placed the idea on the ballot last November, is essentially a satellite of municipal government with its own bailiwick and largely fiscal accountability to the city's elected leaders.

The powers (see box for a summary) comprise everything needed for day-to-day decision-making on the process of planning and construction and, ultimately, on operating the rail line when it begins service.

When the voters passed a change in the City Charter enabling the authority to be set up, they were opting for such matters to be handled by a professional body rather than a political entity that is juggling multiple city concerns with one eye on the public reactions to a constantly shifting landscape of priorities.

The board will consist of 10 individuals, one of them a

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nonvoting member: the director of the city's Department of Permitting and Planning, who can help the project navigate county land-use regulations.

Of the nine voting members, two are ex-officio, meaning they are there because they were appointed to another office. They are the directors of the city Department of Transportation Services and the state Department of Transportation.

The rest will be appointed to staggered terms so that while individual members can be replaced over time, there won't be a wholesale shakeup in any one year, protecting continuity in planning and oversight.

Following the design of many other such panels, here the aim is to keep the board from being under the thumb of any single politician. The City Council and the mayor each will appoint three members. Those six, plus the two transportation directors, will choose the final voting member of the board.

Breene Harimoto, who chairs the Council Transportation Committee, said a list of qualifications are being drafted now, in consultation with the city administration. He declined to release a copy of the draft until Mayor Peter Carlisle signs off on it.

But the mayor did offer a few comments on what he thinks the list should include.

"There's a number of things that you want," Carlisle said. "You want somebody that has good financial background, because obviously if you're funding a project that's the most expensive public works project in the history of Hawaii, you want to make sure the money trail, one, is accounted for but, two, that you're using your money wisely and are perfectly aware of all the different type of devices and instruments that can be used to assist you in that funding.

"It's going to be put together in large part by local workers, many of whom are unionized," he added. "You want to have somebody who is very, very highly qualified and skilled in the area of union matters and can help work toward the goal of 'on time and under budget.'"

Honolulu can draw on the advice of urban planners and other advisers who deal with these policies.

Karl Kim, on the faculty of the University of Hawaii Department of Urban and Regional Planning, agrees that "in addition to understanding of transit development, operations and maintenance, an understanding of debt finance, capital planning, urban

development and planning are essential."

The Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization, which takes a look at the big picture of transportation facilities and recommends whether proposed projects are feasible, is revising its long-range plan to incorporate rail.

Brian Gibson, the agency's executive director, also believes that a project of this magnitude is better off in the hands of those with a technical bent.

"The intent was by creating a separate authority you're taking the decision-making process out of the political arena and giving it to technical people," he said. "The transit authority wouldn't have taxing authority; the city controls the purse strings."

Panos Prevedourous is a professor in the University of Hawaii's Civil and Environmental Engineering Department, but he's best known as a vocal opponent of the steel-wheel, elevated rail project itself. He's also a skeptic of the transit authority's ability to govern a system operating within a single county.

"For example, Portland (authority) is tri-metro, involving other counties," he said. "Here, there's no integration involved, no integration of government entities."

Carlisle acknowledges that the idea of the authority is to pull the project free of most political pressures, but that's where he and Prevedourous, who ran against him in the mayoral special election, part company. In addition to technical expertise and experience with transit systems and their accompanying development plans, Carlisle said, the mix of talent on the authority

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has to include political acumen.

"You're still going to have to deal with political entities," he said. "I'm an elected politician; the City Council is an elected legislative branch. You want to make sure that you're taking that type of control out of our hands and put it with somebody who can work with the politicians but will not ultimately have to kow-tow.



"You have to have someone who's got a good idea of how to deal with the politics of city and county government, somebody who knows how to get things done and what hurdles can be brought about by the political process."

Peter Carlisle
Mayor, about transit authority members

"One of the real big purposes of the authority is to take politics out of the decision-making," the mayor added. "But that doesn't mean your decisions don't require some sort of political process to get them

accomplished."

The history of transit authorities includes a variety of models. The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey governs bridges, tunnels, airports and seaports within the port of those two states. The New York City Transit Authority, which now runs the city's buses and rapid transit lines, formed when the municipal and two private systems were unified.

The general sense in the transit policy world nationally is that the construction and operation of transportation systems requires oversight by people who can take the long view: Planning involves calculations of future needs and a sustainable funding source that won't be siphoned off by demands of changing priorities, they say.

Among the chief concerns of those who look at the authority with trepidation is its power of eminent domain, dealing with the acquisition of property needed along the corridor. But Carlisle said they don't understand that the authority must follow the same legal procedures as any other entity condemning land for public purposes.

"You have to try and negotiate a voluntary sale," he said. "The authority can condemn the property using eminent domain. But first, before they do that they have to submit a list of the properties to be condemned to the City Council, which would have 45 days to object."

Coordination with other government agencies will be needed, too, should a ferry or other transportation modes be launched; "semi-autonomous" does not equate with "independent," he said.

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"They're not independent of ultimately having to sit there and deal with checks and balances," Carlisle added. "They'll be required to hold public meetings prior to setting the rates and adopting the budget, audits of the transit authority can be conducted by the city managing director or the city auditor, or required by the City Council, and any use of city general funds would require approval of the City Council.

"So you've got essentially those checks and balances in line, where they can't go off on a tangent without ultimately having to answer for what they've done."

Although the legal framework is designed to keep everyone accountable, the authority is a human enterprise. And that, Kim said, means the creation of a supervisory body would benefit from public supervision at every step possible.

"The devil is in the details in terms of not just how the authority is set up, but also its responsibilities, administrative rules, governance, appointment of members, and so many other concerns," he said. "Such an authority should be designed to increase accountability to taxpayers, system users, and the people of Hawaii."

Carlisle agreed.

"I think the real key is making sure those of us who have the appointing authority, including myself and City Council, don't try and make this rewarding friends and punishing enemies but finding the best people we can for the needs of this authority to be effective, well informed and highly regarded in the community," he said. "And frankly, we know that doesn't always happen."

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Honolulu Rail Transit Project



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 - From 4 a.m. to Midnight
 - Every 3 minutes during morning and afternoon rush hour
 - Every 6 minutes during mid-day hours
 - Every 10 minutes during evening hours
- **How fast will trains travel?**
 - Over 55 mph top speed
 - 30 mph average with stops



Operating Details

- **How much will a ride cost?**
 - Same as TheBus; one-way transfers valid on both
- **How do I get to a rail station?**
 - Bus circulators will connect communities to the fixed guideway system
 - Every station will have bus stops, bike racks and sidewalks
 - Four stations will feature park-and-rides totaling 4,100 parking spaces

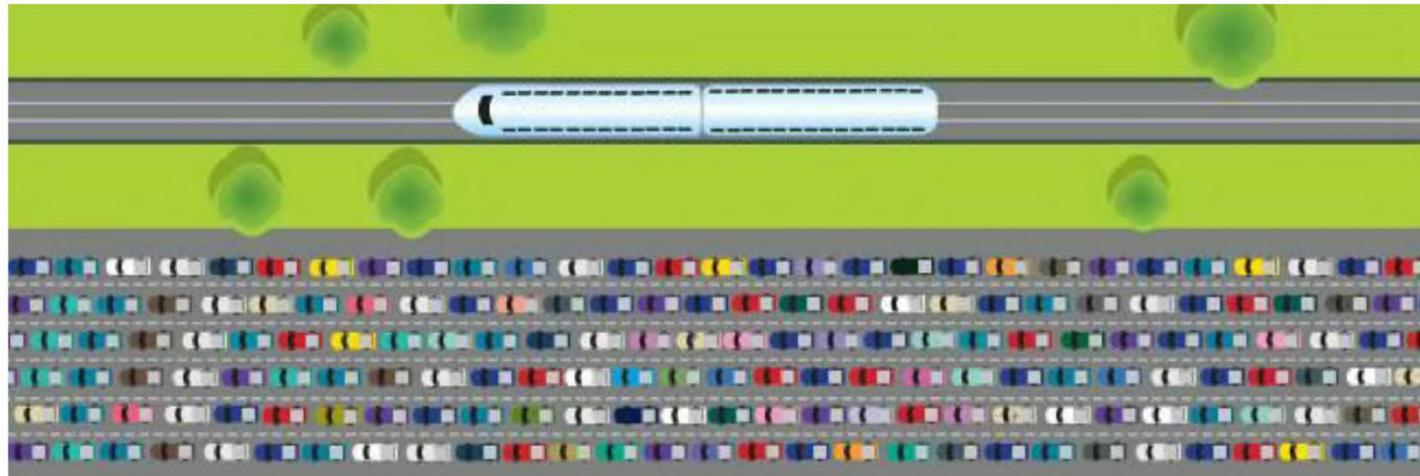


Travel Times to Ala Moana Center

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East Kapolei	42 minutes
Leeward Community College	29 minutes
Aloha Stadium	21 minutes
Honolulu International Airport	16 minutes
Kalihi	10 minutes
Kapalama (HCC)	8 minutes
Downtown	4 minutes
Kaka`ako (Ward)	2 minutes

Transportation Benefits

- Estimated 116,000 average weekday ridership in 2030
- Reduced traffic delay by 18% in 2030
- Estimated 40,000 fewer vehicles on the road in 2030



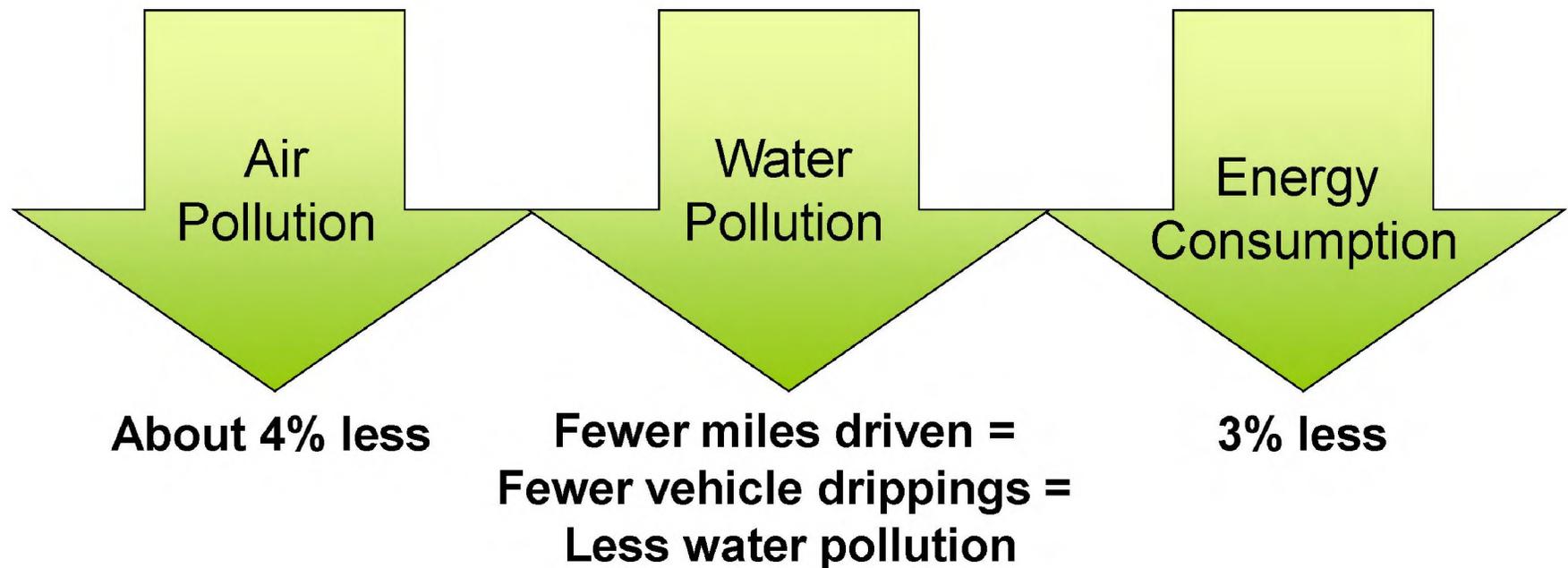
Economic Benefits

- Approximately 10,000 jobs each year attributed to rail construction
- Along with TOD, rail will infuse our economy with Billions of Dollars in the next decade.
- Rail will be Hawaii's single largest job creator
- Supports City of Kapolei as urban center
- Redevelopment around stations



Environmental Benefits

- REDUCED because of rail:



Data source: Final Environmental Impact Statement, June 2010

Sustainable Construction & Design

- Sustainable Action Plan & Waste Management Plan
- Minimize energy use/fuel consumption
- Minimize environmental impacts
- Sustainable design criteria
- Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)
- Silver LEED certification for train yard

Next Steps

- Groundbreaking
- Creation of Transit Authority – “Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation” (HART)
- Award 2011 Contracts

Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation (HART)

Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation (HART)

- Honolulu City Council approved placing a City Charter Amendment question on November 2 ballot:

“Shall the revised City Charter be amended to create a semi-autonomous public transit authority responsible for the planning, construction, operation, maintenance, and expansion of the City’s fixed guideway mass transit system?”

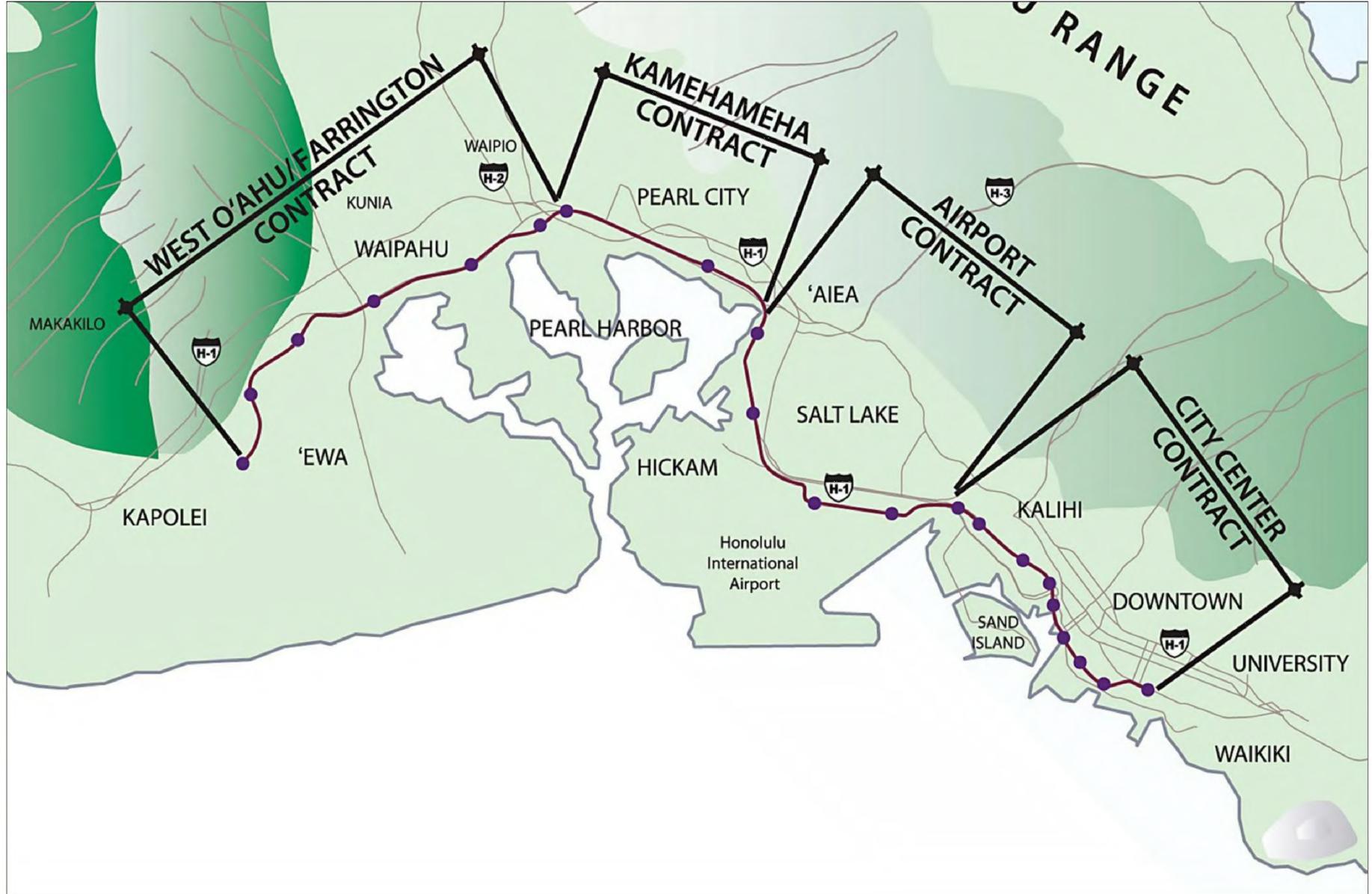
What is a Transit Authority?

- Singular focus – success of the rail system: planning, construction, operation, and maintenance
- Appointed board of business and transit leaders
- Manage rail's budget, fares and maintain financial status
- Regardless of the vote on the Transit Authority, work on the project will continue.

What are the Benefits?

- Timely and efficient management
- No additional cost to create the authority; volunteer members; use existing staff and facilities
- Fiscal autonomy and accountability
- Checks and balances – requires City Council approval for funding and public meetings for crucial issues
- Transparency and accountability
- For more detailed information on the Charter Amendment, visit HonoluluTransit.org

Contract Packaging



Contracts to be Selected & Awarded Early 2011

- Kamehameha Highway Guideway
- Vehicle/CORE Systems
- West O`ahu Station Group
 - East Kapolei Station
 - UH West O`ahu Station
 - Ho`opili Station

Requests for Proposals

- Airport Systems Guideway
- Kamehameha Station Group
 - Pearl Highlands
 - Pearlridge Station
 - Aloha Stadium

Canopy Design for Stations

Canopy Design for Stations



Artist Rendering

Canopy Design for Stations



Artist Rendering

Honolulu Rail Transit Station Designs

East Kapolei Station Rendering

Artist Rendering



East Kapolei Station Rendering

Artist Rendering

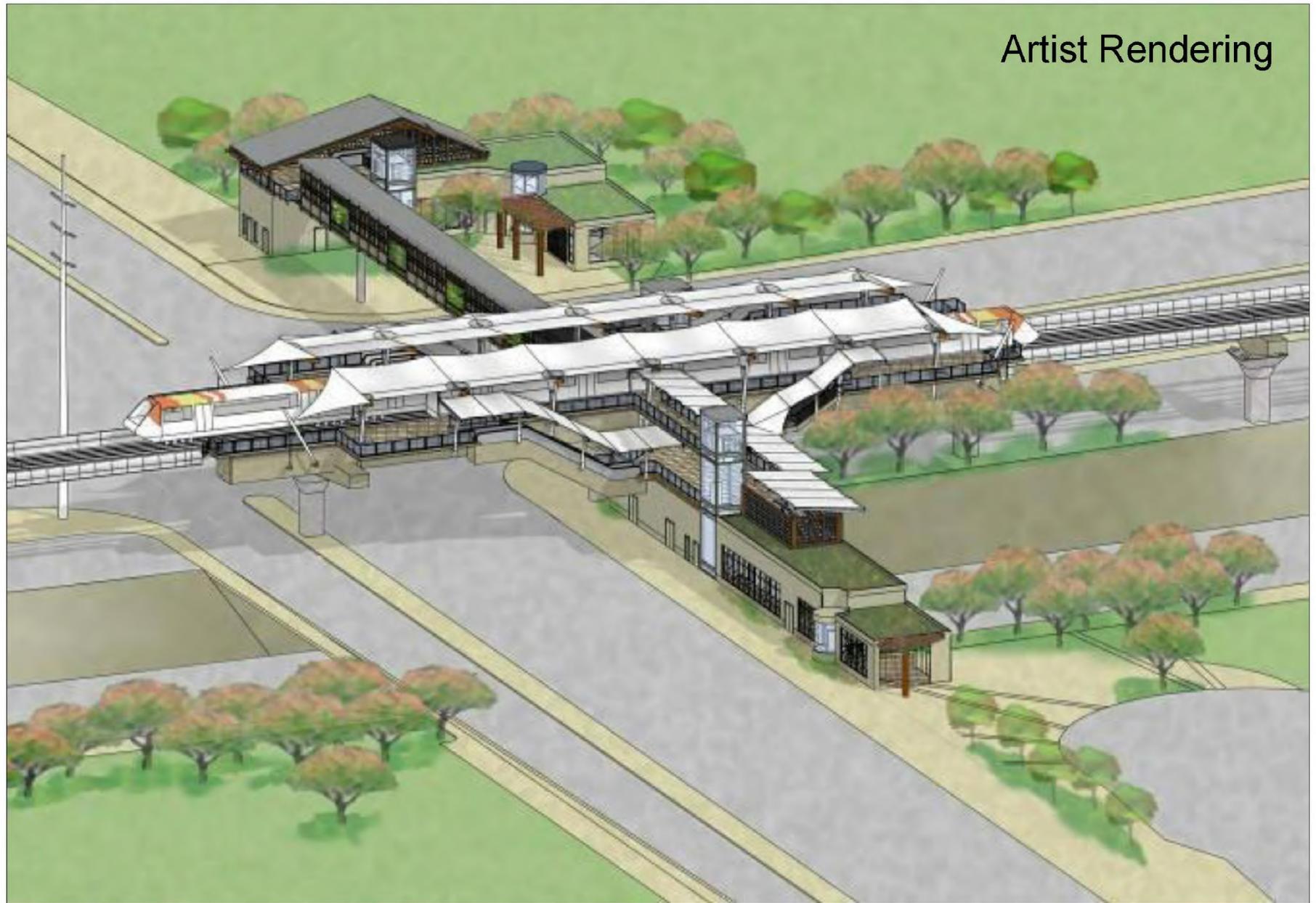


UH West O`ahu Station Rendering

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UH West O`ahu Station Rendering



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Ho`opili Station Rendering



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Ho`opili Station Rendering



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Ho`opili Station Rendering

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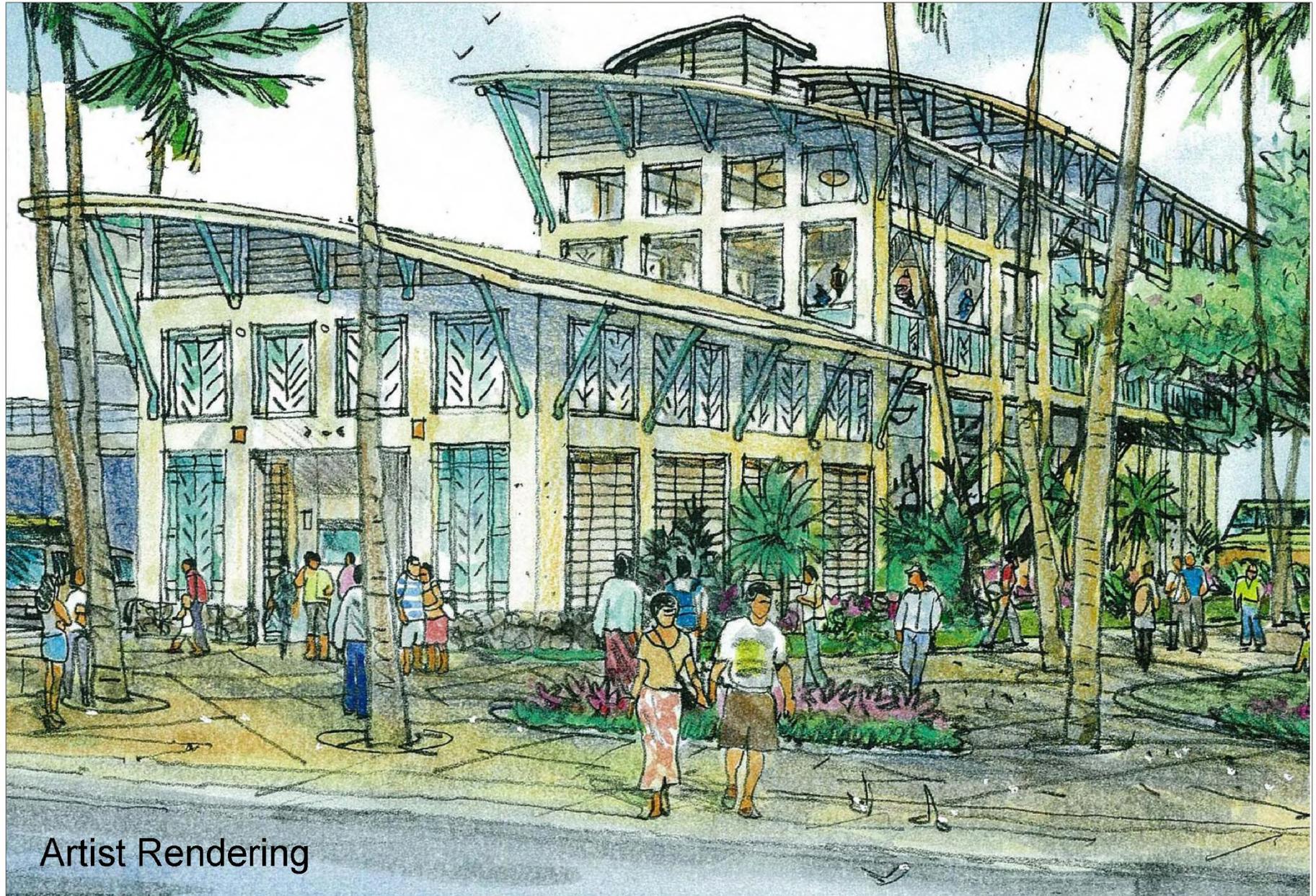


West Loch Station Rendering

Artist Rendering



West Loch Station Rendering



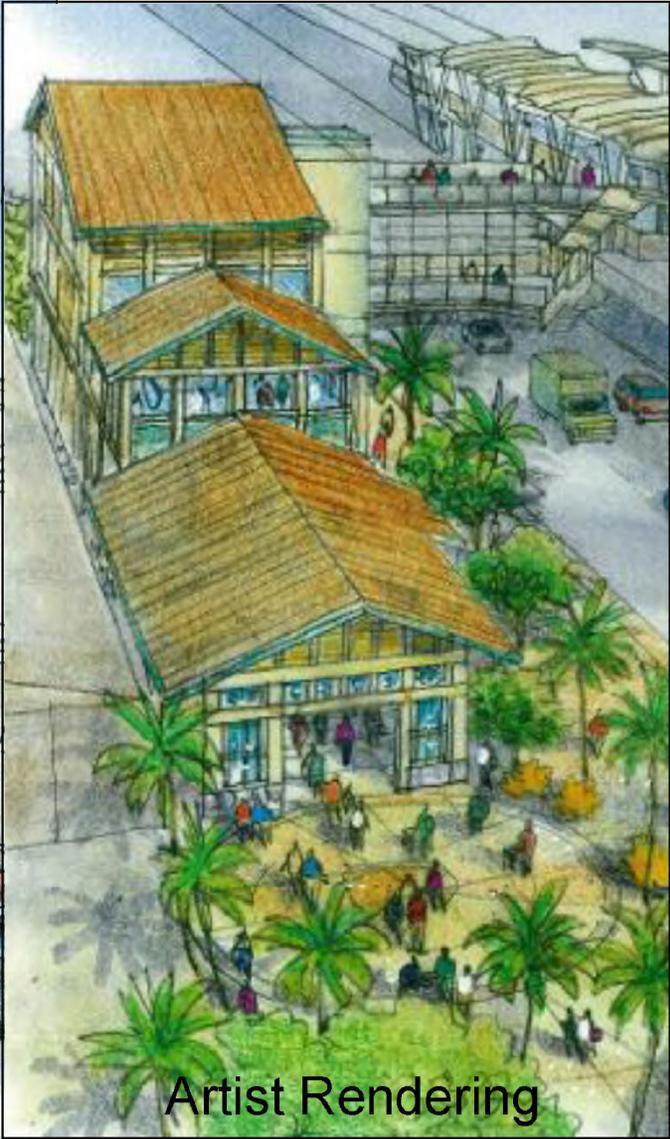
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West Loch Station Rendering



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Waipahu Station Rendering



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Waipahu Station Rendering



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Waipahu Station Rendering

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LCC Station Rendering



Artist Rendering

LCC Station Rendering



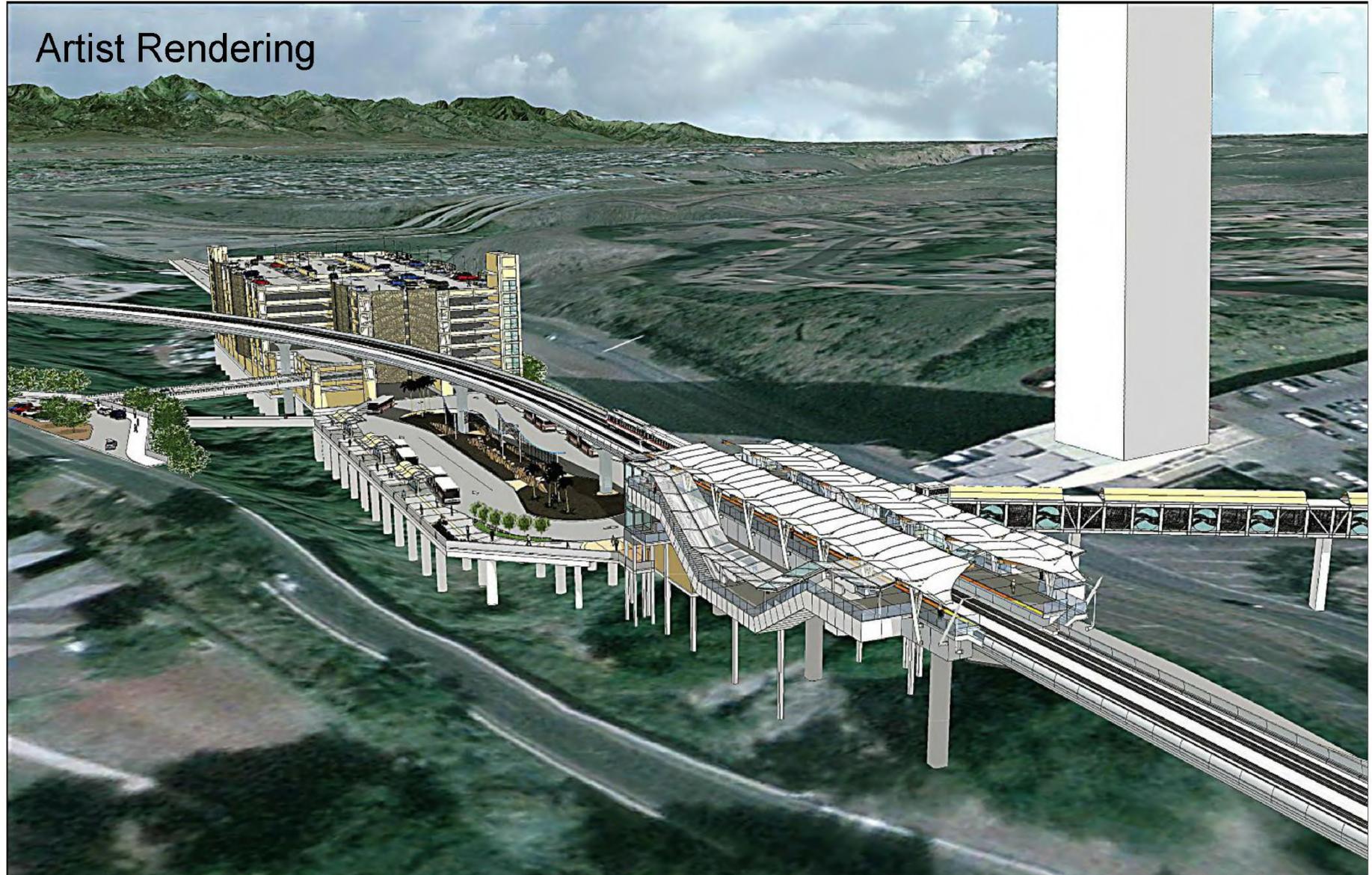
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LCC Station Rendering



Artist Rendering

Pearl Highlands Station Rendering



Pearl Highlands Station Rendering



Artist Rendering

Pearlridge Station Rendering



Artist Rendering

Pearlridge Station Rendering



Artist Rendering

Pearlridge Station Rendering



Artist Rendering

Keep in Touch with Rail Transit

- Monthly Newsletter
- www.HonoluluTransit.org
- Facebook.com/Honolulu.Transit
- Twitter.com/HNL_RT D | @HNL_RT D
- YouTube.com/HonoluluOnTheMove
- Vimeo.com/Honolulu.Transit
- 'Ōlelo TV Show – Sundays at 4:30pm

Mahalo!





West O'ahu/Farrington Highway Guideway Contract

SHAFT TESTING PUBLIC NOTICE TO MOTORISTS (As of January 2, 2011)

The City & County of Honolulu and Kiewit Infrastructure West Co. want drivers to know that preliminary engineering field work continues along Farrington Highway in Waipahu as part of the Honolulu Rail Transit Project.

Shaft testing and soil sampling work will be conducted next week (January 2, 2011- January 9, 2011) along the Kamehameha Highway and Farrington Highway median and shoulder between Acacia Road and Kualakai Street.

Work will not require lane closures.

For additional information, visit Honolulustransit.org or call the Honolulu Transit's information line at 566-2299.



West O'ahu/Farrington Highway Guideway Contract

SHAFT TESTING PUBLIC NOTICE TO MOTORISTS (As of January 9, 2011)

The City & County of Honolulu and Kiewit Infrastructure West Co. want drivers to know that preliminary engineering field work continues along Farrington Highway in Waipahu as part of the Honolulu Rail Transit Project.

Shaft testing and soil sampling work will be conducted next week (January 9, 2011- January 16, 2011) along the Kamehameha Highway and Farrington Highway median and shoulder between Kahualii Street and Kualakai Parkway.

In addition, crews will be working between Leokane Street and Leoku Street performing traffic lane restriping, signing, tree relocating, and setup of Farrington Highway median work area.

Work will require some daytime lane and intersection closures Sundays through Fridays between 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. for both westbound and eastbound lanes. One lane of traffic in each direction along Farrington Highway will remain open during the work.

For additional information, visit Honolulutransit.org or call the Honolulu Transit's information line at 566-2299.



West O'ahu/Farrington Highway Guideway Contract

SHAFT TESTING PUBLIC NOTICE TO MOTORISTS (As of January 16, 2011)

The City & County of Honolulu and Kiewit Infrastructure West Co. want drivers to know that preliminary engineering field work continues along Farrington Highway in Waipahu as part of the Honolulu Rail Transit Project.

Shaft testing and soil sampling work will be conducted next week (January 16, 2011- January 23, 2011) along the Kamehameha Highway and Farrington Highway median and shoulder between Kahualii Street and Kualakai Parkway.

Work will require some daytime lane and intersection closures Sundays through Fridays between 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. for both westbound and eastbound lanes. One lane of traffic in each direction along Farrington Highway will remain open during the work.

For additional information, visit Honolulustransit.org or call the Honolulu Transit's information line at 566-2299.



West O'ahu/Farrington Highway Guideway Contract

SHAFT TESTING PUBLIC NOTICE TO MOTORISTS (As of January 23, 2011)

The City & County of Honolulu and Kiewit Infrastructure West Co. want drivers to know that preliminary engineering field work continues along Farrington Highway in Waipahu as part of the Honolulu Rail Transit Project.

Shaft testing and soil sampling work will be conducted next week (January 23, 2011- January 30, 2011) along the Farrington Highway median and shoulder between Kahualii Street and Kualakai Parkway.

In addition crews will be working in the median of Farrington Highway between Leokane Street and Leoku Street, and at the H-1 Waikele off ramp near the Nimitz Highway bike path.

Work will require some daytime lane and intersection closures Sundays through Fridays between 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. for both westbound and eastbound lanes. One lane of traffic in each direction along Farrington Highway will remain open during the work.

For additional information, visit Honolulustransit.org or call the Honolulu Transit's information line at 566-2299.



West O'ahu/Farrington Highway Guideway Contract

SHAFT TESTING PUBLIC NOTICE TO MOTORISTS (As of January 30, 2011)

The City & County of Honolulu and Kiewit Infrastructure West Co. want drivers to know that preliminary engineering field work continues along Farrington Highway in Waipahu as part of the Honolulu Rail Transit Project.

Shaft testing and soil sampling work will be conducted next week (January 30, 2011- February 6, 2011) along the Farrington Highway median and shoulder between Kahualii Street and Kualakai Parkway.

In addition crews will be working in the median of Farrington Highway between Leokane Street and Leoku Street.

Work will require some daytime lane and intersection closures Sundays through Fridays between 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. for both westbound and eastbound lanes. One lane of traffic in each direction along Farrington Highway will remain open during the work.

For additional information, visit Honolulustransit.org or call the Honolulu Transit's information line at 566-2299.



West O'ahu/Farrington Highway Guideway Contract

Traffic Update
Week of January 2, 2011
Kiewit Preliminary Engineering Field Work

Traffic Impacts:

- Crews may be working between the hours of 7 a.m. - 4 p.m. along Kamehameha Highway and Farrington Highway between Acacia Road and Kualakai Parkway off the highway with Pre-Engineering Soil Sampling and Testing activities.

Kamehameha and Farrington Highway Traffic Plan:

- Work will not require lane closures.

Contact Us:

For more information, community members can visit honolulustransit.org or call the information line at 566-2299.

Summary:

In 2009, Kiewit Infrastructure West Co. was awarded the contract to build the first 6.5 miles of the Honolulu Rail Transit Project from East Kapolei to Pearl Highlands. The City and County of Honolulu recently issued a notice to proceed to Kiewit for design and pre-engineering activities including surveying and potholing to locate existing utilities and exploratory soil sample borings in East Kapolei and along Farrington Highway in Waipahu. During the pre-engineering field work, crews will be working on Kamehameha Highway and Farrington Highway between Acacia Road and Kualakai Parkway along the median and shoulder lanes. Kiewit continues safety, public information and environmental training for all Kiewit staff, craft, subcontractors and consultants related to the project. Kiewit and the City continue with community relations efforts by keeping the public informed of lane closures and possible impacts.



West O'ahu/Farrington Highway Guideway Contract

Traffic Update
Week of January 2, 2011
Kiewit Preliminary Engineering Field Work

Traffic Impacts:

- Crews may be working between the hours of 7 a.m. - 4 p.m. along Kamehameha Highway and Farrington Highway between Acacia Road and Kualakai Parkway off the highway with Pre-Engineering Soil Sampling and Testing activities.

Kamehameha and Farrington Highway Traffic Plan:

- Work will require lane closures from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. and shoulder work signage/cones along the side of the road to delineate work area.
- One lane of traffic in each direction along Kamehameha Highway, and Farrington Highway will remain open.

Contact Us:

For more information, community members can visit honolulustransit.org or call the information line at 566-2299.

Summary:

In 2009, Kiewit Infrastructure West Co. was awarded the contract to build the first 6.5 miles of the Honolulu Rail Transit Project from East Kapolei to Pearl Highlands. The City and County of Honolulu recently issued a notice to proceed to Kiewit for design and pre-engineering activities including surveying and potholing to locate existing utilities and exploratory soil sample borings in East Kapolei and along Farrington Highway in Waipahu. During the pre-engineering field work, crews will be working on Kamehameha Highway and Farrington Highway between Acacia Road and Kualakai Parkway along the median and shoulder lanes. Kiewit continues safety, public information and environmental training for all Kiewit staff, craft, subcontractors and consultants related to the project. Kiewit and the City continue with community relations efforts by keeping the public informed of lane closures and possible impacts.



West O'ahu/Farrington Highway Guideway Contract

Traffic Update
Week of January 9, 2011
Kiewit Preliminary Engineering Field Work

Traffic Impacts:

- Crews may be working between the hours of 7 a.m. - 4 p.m. along Kamehameha Highway and Farrington Highway between Kahualii Street and Kualakai Parkway off the highway with Pre-Engineering Soil Sampling and Testing activities.
- Crews may be working between the hours of 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. along Farrington Highway between Leokane Street and Leoku Street with traffic lane restriping, signing, tree relocating, and setup of median work area.

Kamehameha and Farrington Highway Traffic Plan:

- Work will require lane closures from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. and shoulder work signage/cones along the side of the road to delineate work area.
- One lane of traffic in each direction along Kamehameha Highway, and Farrington Highway will remain open.

Contact Us:

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West O'ahu/Farrington Highway Guideway Contract

Traffic Update
Week of January 16, 2011
Kiewit Preliminary Engineering Field Work

Traffic Impacts:

- Crews will be working between the hours of 7 a.m. - 4 p.m. along Farrington Highway between Kahualii Street and Kualakai Parkway
 - Off the highway with Pre-Engineering Soil Sampling and Testing activities.
 - On the highway median & shoulder with site preparation.

Kamehameha and Farrington Highway Traffic Plan:

- Work will require lane closures from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. and shoulder work signage/cones along the side of the road to delineate work area.
- One lane of traffic in each direction along Farrington Highway will remain open.

Contact Us:

For more information, community members can visit honolulustransit.org or call the information line at 566-2299.

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West O'ahu/Farrington Highway Guideway Contract

Traffic Update
Week of January 23, 2011
Kiewit Preliminary Engineering Field Work

Traffic Impacts:

- Crews will be working between the hours of 7 a.m. - 4 p.m. along Farrington Highway between Kahualii Street and Kualakai Parkway
 - Pre-Engineering Soil Sampling and Testing activities.
- Crews will be working between the hours of 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m. along Farrington Highway between Leokane Street and Leoku Street
 - Pre-Engineering Testing site preparation.
- Crews will be working between the hours of 7 a.m. - 4 p.m. at the H-1 Waikele Off Ramp and Nimitz Hwy Bike Path
 - Landscaping activities

Kamehameha and Farrington Highway Traffic Plan:

- Work will require lane closures from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. and shoulder work signage/cones along the side of the road to delineate work area.
- One lane of traffic in each direction along Farrington Highway will remain open.

Contact Us:

For more information, community members can visit honolulustransit.org or call the information line at 566-2299.

Summary:

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West O'ahu/Farrington Highway Guideway Contract

Traffic Update
Week of January 30, 2011
Kiewit Preliminary Engineering Field Work

Traffic Impacts:

- Crews will be working between the hours of 7 a.m. - 4 p.m. along Farrington Highway between Kahualii Street and Kualakai Parkway
 - Pre-Engineering Soil Sampling and Testing activities.
- Crews will be working between the hours of 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m. along Farrington Highway between Leokane Street and Leoku Street
 - Pre-Engineering Testing site preparation.

Kamehameha and Farrington Highway Traffic Plan:

- Work will require lane closures from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. and shoulder work signage/cones along the side of the road to delineate work area.
- One lane of traffic in each direction along Farrington Highway will remain open.

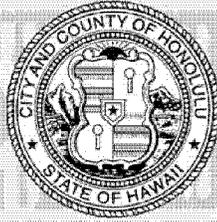
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NEWS RELEASE



Office of the Mayor
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 18, 2011

HONOLULU RAIL PROJECT RECEIVES RECORD OF DECISION

(Tues., Jan. 18, 2011)— The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) today issued a Record of Decision for the Honolulu Rail Transit Project, confirming that the project has met all the requirements of the environmental review process and clearing the way for construction to begin on Honolulu’s first rail system.

FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff presented the Record of Decision (ROD) to Honolulu Mayor Peter Carlisle and Toru Hamayasu, general manager for the City’s Rapid Transit Division, at FTA offices in Washington, D.C.

“This is one of the most significant milestones for the rail project,” Carlisle said. “We will soon be able to provide residents with a sensible alternative to our congested roads and highways and improve their overall quality of life. Rail transit construction will also create thousands of jobs and fuel our state’s economy – it’s time to get those shovels in the ground.”

“Today marks an important milestone in Oahu’s quest to become a more transit-friendly island,” said FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff. “With the completion of the National Environmental Policy Act process, the City of Honolulu has met all of the laws and regulations of the environmental review and we look forward to the day when Honolulu’s citizens can ride the rails in comfort, breathe cleaner air, and avoid getting stuck in time-wasting traffic jams.”

Carlisle said he was pleased to have the FTA’s approval. “This is a huge accomplishment and reflects the strong confidence the FTA has in this project. Our transit team has worked closely with FTA throughout the process and this shows that our plan is sound and our project is on solid footing.”

The FTA’s approval follows Governor Neil Abercrombie’s acceptance of the State’s Final Environmental Impact Statement in December. The project’s EIS identified environmental, community and economic benefits and impacts of the rail system as well as mitigation measures for addressing these issues.

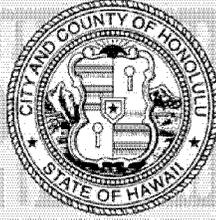
The \$5.5 billion transit project is a 20-mile elevated rail system connecting East Kapolei with Ala Moana Center. It includes 21 stations in communities including Waipahu, Pearl City, Aiea, Kalihi, Chinatown, Downtown Honolulu and Kakaako. There will also be stations at activity centers such as UH-West Oahu, Leeward Community College, Pearl Highlands, Pearlridge, Aloha Stadium, Honolulu International Airport and Honolulu Community College.

The City has already awarded a construction contract for the first phase of the elevated rail guideway from East Kapolei to Pearl City. A second contract for the train storage and maintenance facility in Waipahu is expected to be executed shortly. The city is scheduled to award two more major contracts this year for the second phase of the rail route from Pearl City to Aloha Stadium and for the “core systems,” which consists of the train vehicles and the control center for the rail system.

-30-

Media contact: Louise Kim McCoy, Mayor's Office, 768-7798.

NEWS RELEASE



Office of the Mayor
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 20, 2011

THE HONOLULU RAIL PROJECT RECEIVES STRONG SUPPORT FROM U.S. HOUSE TRANSPORTATION CHAIRMAN, REP. JOHN MICA

(Thurs., Jan. 20, 2011)— Mayor Peter Carlisle, U.S. Rep. Mazie Hirono and Toru Hamayasu, the City’s General Manager of the Rapid Transit Division, met with House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman John Mica (R-FL) earlier today in Washington D.C. During the meeting, Chairman Mica expressed his support for the Honolulu Rail Transit Project.

“Honolulu is bordered by the mountains on one side and the ocean on the other. This project will service the area where the vast majority of Oahu’s population live and work and will help address the area’s traffic congestion issues,” said Chairman Mica. Citing the benefits of rail transit in Honolulu and Rep. Hirono’s efforts in keeping his committee informed about the project’s progress Rep. Mica said, “I support this project, especially with Honolulu’s local commitment and I will continue to work with Rep. Hirono and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to make sure the project does not get bogged down in bureaucratic red tape.”

“I am very pleased and grateful to Rep. Mica for his continuing support for the Honolulu Rail Transit Project,” said Mayor Carlisle. “Receiving the Record of Decision was a tremendous step forward for Honolulu and Rep. Mica has offered to help us continue our implementation and expedite the construction of our project by working with the FTA, Rep. Hirono, our entire Congressional Delegation, and the U.S Congress,” said Carlisle.

“I, too, am grateful for Chairman Mica’s support for the Honolulu Rail Project and his commitment to help advance this vital transportation and quality of life initiative,” said Rep. Hirono. “His support is another core building block as we enter the final phase of development and begin construction,” she concluded.

Mayor Carlisle also met with Rep. John Duncan (R-TN), Chairman of the House Highways and Transit Subcommittee, Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR), the Ranking Member of that Subcommittee, and Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV), the Ranking Member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Each of the members expressed their willingness to work with the City and County of Honolulu as it advances its rail project. Mayor Carlisle also met with the Federal Transit Administration earlier this week.

The City plans to begin the initial stages of construction by relocating utilities along the project alignment within the next month giving Oahu residents the chance to see tangible evidence of the project coming to fruition.

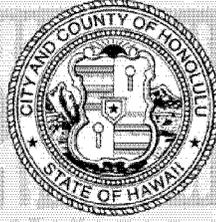
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Media contact: Louise Kim McCoy, Mayor’s Office, 768-7798.

AR00077381



NEWS RELEASE



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 26, 2011

HONOLULU RAIL TRANSIT PROJECT RECEIVES KEY COUNCIL PERMIT APPROVAL

(Wed., Jan. 26, 2011) — The Honolulu Rail Transit Project received a key permit approval today from the Honolulu City Council that allows the project to begin early construction activities.

The City Council voted 8-0 to approve the Special Management Area Use Permit (SMP), which allows the City to move ahead with the construction permitting process for the rail project. Initial work for the rail project will begin shortly with the relocation of utilities and site preparation for the eventual construction of the elevated rail guideway.

The City Department of Planning and Permitting, which oversees the SMP process, recommended City Council approval of the permit. The permit application concluded the rail project will have no significant adverse environmental or ecological effects on coastal ecosystems, beaches or other coastal resources.

About 1.6 miles of the 20-mile Honolulu Rail Project route will be inside the Special Management Area district, with a 2.8-mile portion of the rail transit route bordering the district.

The permit approval follows the Federal Transit Administration issuing a Record of Decision last week for the Honolulu Rail Transit Project, confirming that the project has met all the requirements of the environmental review process.

In December, Governor Neil Abercrombie accepted the project's Final Environmental Impact, which identified environmental, community and economic benefits and impacts of the rail system as well as mitigation measures for addressing these issues.

The City has already awarded a construction contract for the first phase of the elevated rail guideway from East Kapolei to Pearl City. A second contract for the train storage and maintenance facility in Waipahu is expected to be executed shortly.

The city is scheduled to award two more major construction contracts this year for the second phase of the rail route from Pearl City to Aloha Stadium and for the “core systems,” which consists of the train vehicles and the control center for the rail system.

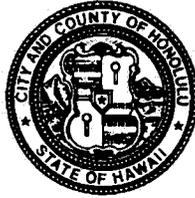
-30-

Media contact: Scott Ishikawa, 768-6172.

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND PERMITTING
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

650 SOUTH KING STREET, 7TH FLOOR • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
PHONE: (808) 768-8000 • FAX: (808) 768-6041
DEPT. WEB SITE: www.honolulu.dpp.org • CITY WEB SITE: www.honolulu.gov

PETER B. CARLISLE
MAYOR



DAVID K. TANOUE
DIRECTOR
ROBERT M. SUMITOMO
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

(LK)

NOTICE OF APPLICATION AND PUBLIC HEARING

This is to inform you that we are reviewing an application for a Special Management Area (SMA) Major Use Permit to allow the construction of the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor (HHCTC) Project. The total guideway length will be about 20 miles, about 1.6 miles of which lie within the SMA, which requires a Major SMA permit. See the enclosed map showing the portions of the rail alignment in the SMA, including a description of the proposed work.

APPLICANT:	City and County of Honolulu, Department of Transportation Services
LANDOWNER:	Various
AGENT:	City and County of Honolulu, Department of Transportation Services, Rapid Transit Division (DTS-RTD)
LOCATION:	See attached map.
TAX MAP KEY:	1-1-3: 3, 4, 6, 138; 9-4-1; 9-4-8: 30; 9-4-11; 9-4-11: 37, 61; 9-6-1: 1; 9-6-3:1; 9-8-9: 5, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20; 9-8-14: 5, 6, 10, 12; 9-8-15: 45; 9-9-3; 9-9-12
FILE NO.:	2010/SMA-57
ACCEPTANCE DATE:	December 15, 2010

In accordance with Revised Ordinances of Honolulu (ROH), Chapters 25, the Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP) will conduct two public hearings regarding this application on the following dates and locations:

- Wednesday, January 5, 2011 at 10 a.m., at the Aloha Stadium Hospitality Room, 99-500 Salt Lake Boulevard, Aiea, Hawaii 96701; and
- Thursday, January 6, 2011 at 10 a.m., at the Keehi Lagoon Hall (Disabled American Veterans), 2685 North Nimitz Highway, Honolulu, Hawaii 96819.

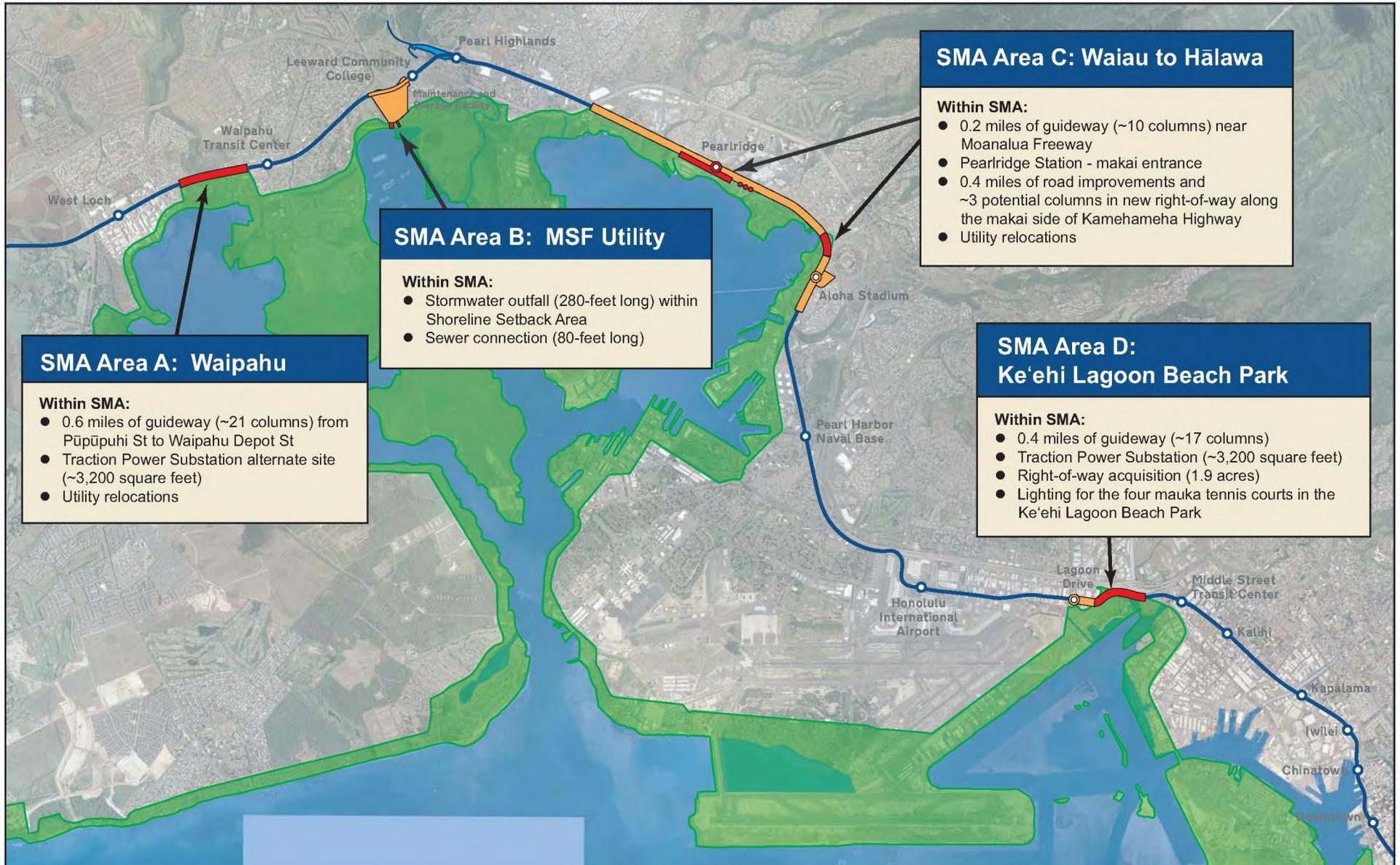
The public hearing will also be advertised in the Honolulu Star-Advertiser. All interested persons are invited to attend. Any disabled persons requiring special assistance should contact the DTS-RTD at least two working days prior to the scheduled hearing at 566-2299 for details.

You may review the application material at the DPP, Permit and Zoning Records Access, First Floor, Frank F. Fasi Municipal Building, 650 South King Street, during office hours, 7:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The application material is also available at www.honolulustransit.org. We have attached a map of the proposed project's location as a reference.

Those persons desiring to testify may register prior to the public hearing at the public hearing site and are encouraged to submit one copy of their testimony in writing. Attendance at the public hearing is not necessary to submit testimony. Written testimony which is received by the DPP at the above address prior to the public hearing will be considered in the evaluation of the application.

Should you have any questions regarding the project, please contact Lynne Kauer of our staff at 768-8011 and refer to the above file number.

Attachment (location map)



LOCATION MAP - SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREA

Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project

TAX MAP KEY(S): Varies
FOLDER NO.: 2010/SMA-57

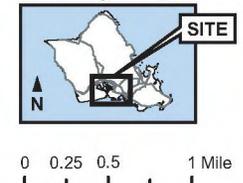
Date Prepared: December 2010
 Prepared by: Department of Planning & Permitting, City and County of Honolulu
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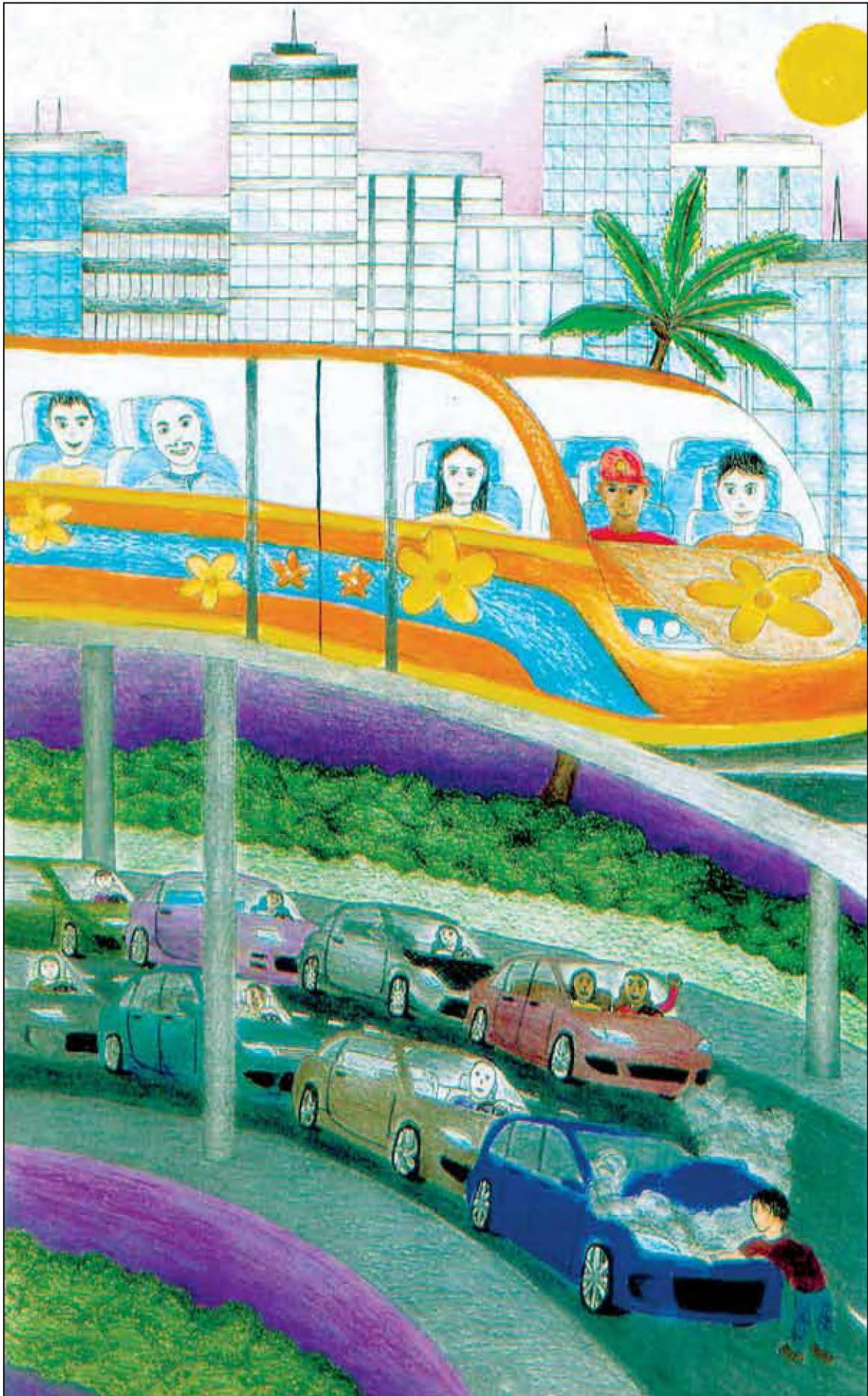


Map Legend

	Within SMA
	Adjacent to SMA
	Outside SMA
	SMA Area

Vicinity Map





John Paul Nartatez
"Should Have Caught the Rail"
Farrington High School



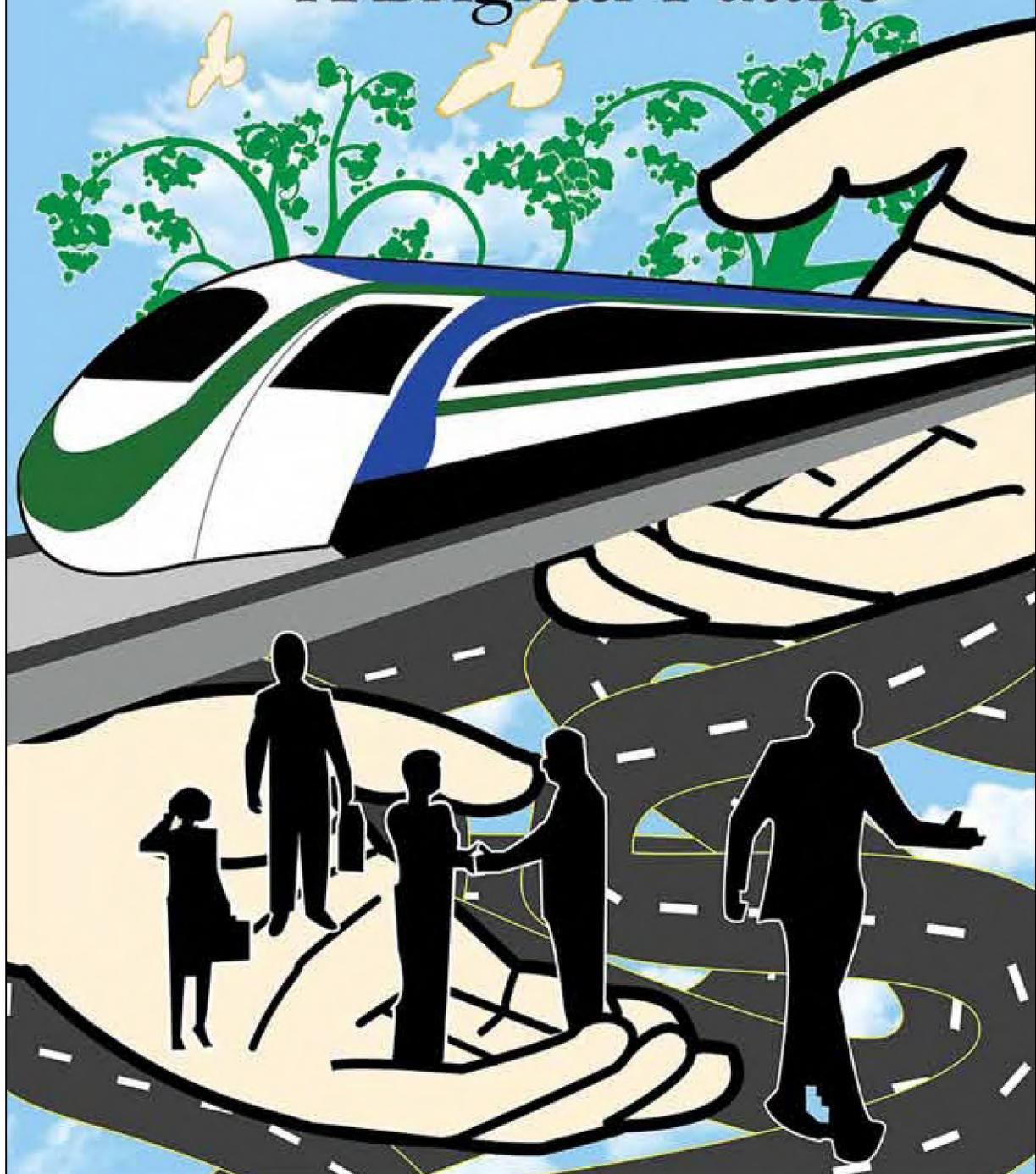
Erica S. Buxton

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FUTURE OF OAHU



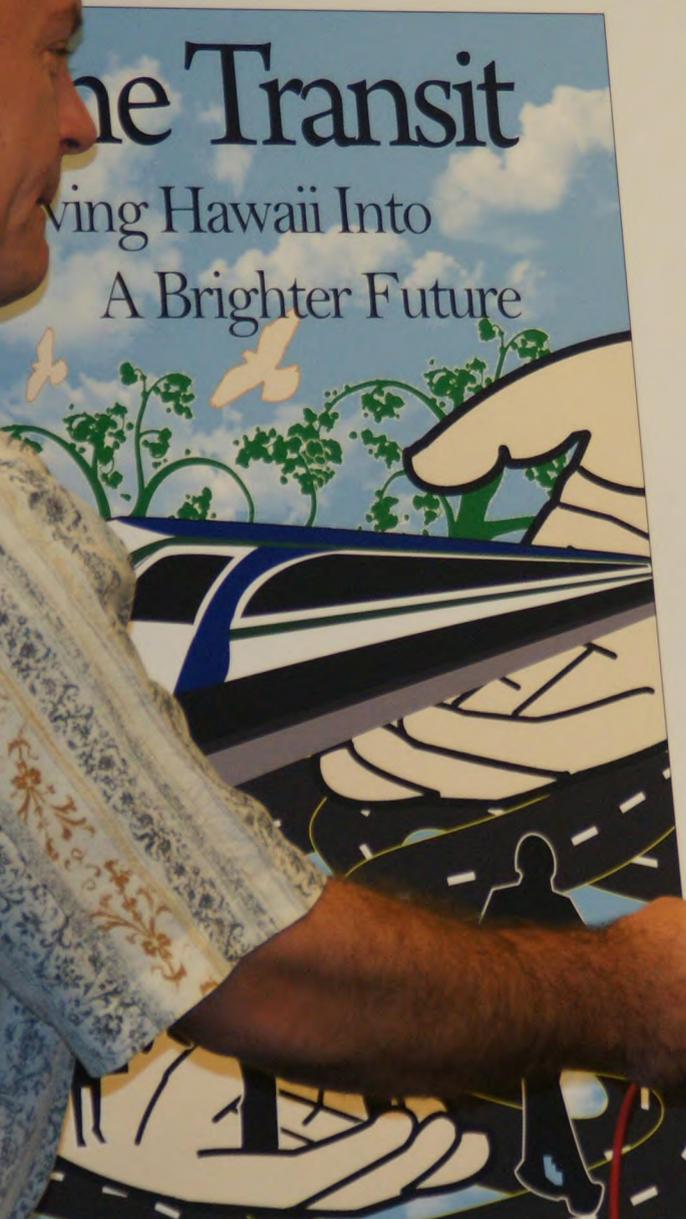
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YOU SAVE TIME
YOU SAVE FOSSIL FUELS

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 YOU SAVE MONEY
 YOU SAVE TIME
 YOU SAVE FOSSIL FUELS
 ENVIRONMENT

YOU SAVE THESE FOUR THINGS YOU RISK THE RAIL

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THE FUTURE OF OAHU

- YOU SAVE MONEY
- YOU SAVE TIME
- YOU SAVE FOSSIL FUELS
- ENVIRONMENT

THINGS IF YOU RIDE THE RAIL

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John Paul Nartatz
"Should Have Caught the Rail"

