

## Public Involvement Overview

October 2009

	Month
Hotline Calls*	50
Comment Sense Submissions/Inquiries**	
FOIA requests	0
Speakers Bureau	
Presentation/Events	39
Neighborhood Boards	15
TAC	0
Community meetings	2

\*Calls directly to the hotline 808.566.2299

\*\* Includes all comments/inquiries via Project website from the end of the official DEIS comment period on February 6, 2009 to the end of the month.

## October 2009 website and hotline comments

Submission Date	Submission Content/Notes
10/01/2009	I would like to be put on the list to receive a DVD copy of the final EIS for the Honolulu High Capacity Corridor Project as soon as it is released for public comment. It would also be helpful to know in advance, if possible, the expected release date. Please confirm. Thanks!
10/01/2009	Please send me a copy of the FEIS as soon as it is available. Can you tell me when you expect it?
10/02/2009	Dear Dept. of Transportation Services, I was disappointed with the September 2009 issue of the "Honolulu on the Move" newsletter. There should be more updates about the funding: the original rail budget vs. revised budgets, projected vs. actual rail tax collections, actual federal funds secured, and money spent on PR/communications. In addition, two of the three articles were incomplete and unsubstantial. "Seattle is the Nation's Newest Rail System" states the \$2.8 billion cost, but does not reveal the projected budget and how much it is over- or under-budget. It tells us the opening date, but not how long it took to construct and whether it is on schedule. It projects the expected ridership in 2030, but not the actual ridership today. "FAQ on the Environmental Impact Statement" states vaguely that the final EIS will be released "this fall," but does not give a specific date. It tells us the difference between the Draft EIS and Final EIS, which is obvious and even insulting. It does not tell us how long the EIS process takes or how much it costs taxpayers. I understand that this is a short update and cannot contain detailed information, but this newsletter is paid for by taxpayer dollars. I expect more facts and less fluff. aloha, Rachelle Chang Honolulu resident
10/05/2009	I would like to respectfully request a copy of the "Final EIS" for the project on DVD be sent to me at the above listed address when it becomes available. I would like to "Thank you" for your Time, Cooperation and Assistance in regard to this matter. And if you should require any further information from me regarding this request please email me at jeb217@aol.com and I will promptly forward the requested information to you. Respectfully submitted, Jeb P. Brown
10/06/2009	I would like to know if there is a color scheme and name being considered for the rail system. (Maybe similar in color/name to the C&C Bus system). I would like to repaint an electric train, to run around a Christmas display in Honolulu, and would like for it to be reasonably accurate to whatever is projected. Thank you for any information you could provide.
10/11/2009	Property was sold last year with no intentions to ever own Hawaiian real estate in the future.
10/13/2009	When and how will the Phase 1 Design/Build selection be announced?
10/13/2009	Please tell me if there will be a procurement that includes O&M services. My Company is a contract operator and interested in the project. Please place us on your vendor list. Also, please direct me to the Transit Project Procurement site on the web.
10/13/2009	We are hardscape specialists and would like the opportunity to be involved in the construction of the rail project. Can you please help direct us so that we can get set up and qualified? Thanks, Scott Bauerle

Submission Date	Submission Content/Notes
10/15/2009	If my property at this address will be impacted by the rail and we need to move out, how much time will we have to relocate? Right now, my elderly mom and mentally disabled brother are living in the house and it will be difficult for them to uproot from a place where they have lived for most of their lives. Will there be any kind of assistance for them?
10/19/2009	I am interested in tracking with important project. Can you provide me with the most suitable contact for the Lead Engineer and Project Manager? Thank you in advance for your time. Mark.
10/19/2009	Would like to know the final status of engineering/construction contact at your earliest. Also, advise how to navigate the your website to get information regarding the status of the viaduct and each station. anwar Mirza anwar.mirza@rizzoassoc.com
10/20/2009	We are in the total transportation business and would like to contact and maintain communications with the people or department in charge with shipping the materials to the job site. We specialize in freight forwarding and trucking modes of transportation.
10/22/2009	whom do I contact about concessions and advertising goods at the stations
10/22/2009	I am seeking work. Who will be building the rail project and when will it start? thanks.
10/23/2009	Would you tell me who your System Communication specifier for emergency systems and ADA compliant endpoint devices will be? Will the communication systems be a separate design/build bid? Thank you, Jonathan Zeier
10/26/2009	I lived in Washington DC for 18 years and frequently utilized light rail (Metro). After pursuing much of the information provided, I do not see where getting the population TO the rail is addressed. Trust me this is not like "A Field of Dreams". If you build it "they" will not come. People need to have ready access. I lived a ten minute walk from a station and still needed to drive in inclement weather or carrying a significant load of material. The last station on the blue line was relatively new and we saw the parking structure go to smaller parking space foot prints in order to crowd in more cars to construction of a new larger parking structure. How is parking being addressed? Surely you do not think you will gain ridership if folks have to walk for miles to get there? Today's "now" generation will not stand for it. By the way, DC Metro has been in the "red" for decades and I know for a fact that that they are getting additional funds from utility companies utilizing the routes (Abovenet, Inc is paying \$2.5M annually). Words for thought.
10/26/2009	Aloha, My name is Jordan Rivers and I am the Associate Director for PI Management (Chicago talent agency). One of our clients (Lady Princess) talk show is about to go national in 2010. Currently, I am looking to advertise her show on buses, trains, rails, trolleys, interior, exterior, as well as bus shelters and benches. If it is possible can you please e-mail a package of your prices for advertising on those items? Thank You! Jordan
10/28/2009	I would like to request a map (e-mail preferred) of the station locations throughout the route. Mahalo in advance! Richard Crabbe



October 1, 2009

## Honolulu rail funding shortfall shrinks in city's latest estimate

*By Sean Hao  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

The city's latest financial plan for the East Kapolei to Ala Moana commuter rail line anticipates a \$360 million shortfall in tax collections.

The financial plan, which was revised in August, paints a rosier picture than a May version that showed tax collections coming in about \$500 million short. The improvement is based on an expectation that the economy will rebound sooner.

The city provided the new plan to The Advertiser yesterday in response to a Freedom of Information Act request made on Aug. 27.

The latest financial plan also revised the cost of the 20-mile, elevated rail line upward by \$190 million to an inflation-adjusted \$5.5 billion.

The city expects to rely on increased federal funds — including diverting federal money intended for TheBus — to help make up for the lower-than-anticipated tax revenue and higher costs, according to the financial plan.

City transportation Director Wayne Yoshioka yesterday said the lower revenue forecast and higher project costs contained in the new financial plan represent a "worst-case scenario." The potential for lower construction costs and a stronger than projected rebound in tax collections could eliminate the need to divert federal bus funds to pay for rail, Yoshioka said.

"There's a strong likelihood that construction costs may be lower than we're projecting" in the current financial plan, Yoshioka said. Mayor Mufi Hannemann "has made it very clear we won't compromise the bus system."

What is unclear is "whether we get the money from somewhere else (or) we delete features of the project," Yoshioka added.

The updated plan was sent by the city to the Federal Transit Administration as part of the city's application to begin the preliminary engineering phase of the project. The city hopes to begin construction of the train in December.

Under the updated financial plan, the city now expects transit tax revenues from fiscal 2009 to fiscal 2030 to total \$3.52 billion, which is up from \$3.32 billion in the May version of the plan. When combined with \$174 million in actual transit tax collections in fiscal 2007 and fiscal 2008, the city's total anticipated transit excise tax take rises to about \$3.69 billion. That's about \$360 million less than the \$4.05 billion in transit tax revenues forecast by the city in a draft environmental impact statement in October.

## Transit surcharge

A half a percentage point surcharge was added to the general excise tax in Honolulu in January 2007 to fund the rail.

During fiscal year 2009, which ended June 30, transit tax collections fell short of the October forecast by \$27.1 million. In the August financial plan, the city cut its forecast for 2009 tax collections and, as a result, collections were \$12 million more than the new forecast.

The updated report said the anticipated project costs will rise because of higher finance and vehicle costs.

It said the anticipated reduction in excise tax revenues collections will be offset by increasing the federal contribution to the project from \$1.4 billion to \$1.55 billion and by diverting \$305 million in federal funds for bus acquisition and preventative maintenance to pay for the train, under city plans.

Both the May and August versions of the financial plan outline several other options the city could pursue to make up for the lost revenue, including asking for more money from the state, the federal government, the military, private developers and the Honolulu International Airport.

## Bus gets 'robbed'

City officials have repeatedly stressed that property taxes will not be used to help pay for the train.

However, that could happen indirectly if federal bus money is diverted to pay for the train, said City Council member Charles Djou.

"Now it seems like they're robbing Peter to pay Paul — that the bus is going to get robbed to finance the rail system," he said. "If you keep on taking money from the bus, and you want to keep your bus operations at current levels, you're going to have to find the money somewhere else. That's more likely to be real property taxes ... or you have to raise the general excise tax again."

City Council Chair Todd Apo said the council will need to hold a detailed discussion before approving of material changes to the city's rail financial plan, including diverting money from the bus to rail.

Apo and Djou said they have yet to receive the city's latest financial plan. Both said the city could be more open about the rail project's finances.

"We all agree there needs to be transparency in this project, especially in the financial aspects of it and the administration needs to commit to an understandable set of milestone points where we're going to have that information available to the public," Djou said. "I don't expect them to proactively send us every little bit (of information), but we need to know what those big points are where they are going to send it to us."

"We all need to identify that better for ourselves and the public," Apo said.

## Additional Facts

### Projections

City's changing tax revenue projections for rail:

Oct. 2008 \$4.05 billion

May 1 \$3.49 billion

August \$3.69 billion



## ON THE RAIL

# All-elevated rail will be costly, inflexible and ugly

By Jeff Nishi

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 01, 2009

Flexibility with strength. These qualities are key to any good plan, be it business, military or urban design.

Local media outlets have recently reported on a transit study by Philip Craig that proposed a rail system for Honolulu that has the flexibility to be built above ground, below ground or at ground level.

That should be a wake-up call to look at alternatives to the all-elevated rail project proposed by the city administration. The advantages of a flexible rail system for Honolulu have been confirmed through research by the AIA's Transit Task Force and are documented in video, slideshow and written report formats on our Web site, <http://www.aiahonolulu.org/transit>.

We believe there is a compelling case for this flexible system, or Light Rail Transit (LRT), in Honolulu, and that there is an easy fix of the currently proposed system to allow it to run either at street level or on an elevated guideway. We urge concerned citizens to contact the City Council member in their district to consider this.

AIA Honolulu supports the concepts of rail transit, fixed guideway and steel-on-steel technology. Since 2005 it has offered to work in an advisory capacity with city transit planners on the design of the system.

From 2005 through 2007 the AIA was told that it was "too early" to be involved; then, in early 2008 the AIA was told it was "too late" to make any changes.

In 2008 a rail project was approved by voters, but wording on the ballot said nothing about the vertical configuration (elevated, street level or underground) or power technology ("hot" third rail, overhead wire or underground power) to be used.

The City Council has not voted on the specific vertical configuration or power technology of the system; the city administration made these decisions and notified the City Council afterward.

According to the Craig transit study, a system consisting of a mixture of elevated guideway and street level ("at-grade") rails is feasible, economical and timely for Honolulu.

The study indicates that for some riders (such as those between Waipahu and downtown) overall commute times will be shorter using at-grade rail because stations can be located at street level and

closer to riders' final destinations.

Under the federal Environmental Impact Study process, there is a relatively easy fix to convert the current system to a flexible one. Two changes in the wording of the project are required:

Change power technology from "hot" third rail to overhead power wire and in-ground wireless power for urban areas.

Change rail cars and elevated stations from high-floor to low-floor type.

The change in power technology and car type will require preparation of a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement and push back the start of construction by six to nine months, but this delay would be more than offset by a shorter overall construction time.

The AIA finds the strengths of the proposed alternative rail system compelling:

- » A savings of at least \$1.7 billion and two years of construction time.
- » Preservation of historic districts and sites along the route.
- » Preservation of street trees along the route in the urban core (using wireless power).
- » Protection of mauka-makai view corridors (as documented and adopted by policy as part of the Primary Urban Center Development Plan of 2004).
- » Ability to start the system in the urban core, bringing rail transit to the largest number of riders as soon as possible.
- » Increase in user safety by integrating ground level stations into our existing communities.
- » Rider capacity of 9,280 passengers per hour per direction. This capacity is 50 percent beyond the 6,000 passenger capacity specified in the current project documents.
- » Ability to extend the route easily into Waikiki and UH-Manoa, offering a "one-seat ride" to potential riders to these key destinations.

The technology of the city's rail project locks us in to a system that can't be changed once started.

It's not too late to fix the problem. If we do not act now, we will saddle ourselves and our children with a future we cannot afford.

*Jeff Nishi is president of the American Institute of Architects Honolulu.*

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[http://www.starbulletin.com/editorials/20091001\\_All-elevated\\_rail\\_will\\_be\\_costly\\_inflexible\\_and\\_ugly.html](http://www.starbulletin.com/editorials/20091001_All-elevated_rail_will_be_costly_inflexible_and_ugly.html)

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## ON THE RAIL

# Oahu will benefit from rail, but make sure it's elevated

By Richard Simonetta

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 01, 2009

Since speaking at the Honolulu Rail Transit Symposium earlier this summer, I have closely followed the progress of Honolulu's elevated rail system. It has been exciting to watch your community steadily move forward to groundbreaking for your rail system and an investment that will pay returns for generations.

Investing in rail transit will bring huge benefits to your community, as it already has to the Phoenix area. It will reduce traffic congestion and provide an environmental friendly alternative to the automobile. It will stimulate the economy in both the short term and ongoing. It will create thousands of good paying jobs from rail construction.

New mixed-use developments will spring up around rail stations, allowing sound urban growth to occur where it will be most beneficial. Phoenix, Tempe and Mesa have seen more than \$7 billion in new investment along our 20-mile route.

However, it concerns me when I read news accounts about a few advocates who want to change Honolulu's 20-mile elevated rail system to one that runs at least partly on surface streets.

I do not believe that a street-level rail system is the right choice for Honolulu. I say this as the CEO of a 20-mile rail system that runs completely at street level in Phoenix, Tempe and Mesa.

Surface rail works quite well in the Valley of the Sun because we have relative low density and wide arterial streets with ample room for the trains and cars to share the right-of-way.

From my observations, the same conditions do not apply in Honolulu. Widening streets to incorporate a rail system would seriously disrupt communities and be enormously expensive. With the density of development that already exists along your route, hundreds of businesses and residences would be dislocated for right of way. Surface rail would most likely result in the removal of traffic lanes, which would inevitably increase congestion where the desire is to reduce congestion.

The elevated system Honolulu has planned avoids this. With support columns placed in the roadway median, it won't consume through traffic lanes. And while it will require some right-of-way acquisitions, they will be far fewer than a surface route would require.

Honolulu's elevated rail system operating on an exclusive trackway will have other benefits. It will be

much faster than surface rail because the elevated trains won't have to compete with other traffic at intersections.

The Phoenix light rail system crosses 149 signalized intersections and takes 65 minutes to travel 20 miles. Increased speed also means more frequent service and more ridership. Honolulu's elevated rail is projected to carry 100,000 riders a day when fully operational. Our system carries about one-third of that.

Finally, an elevated rail line will also be safer for rail passengers, motorists and pedestrians. The Phoenix surface rail line has averaged five collisions per month since opening last December, resulting in personal injuries, costly damage to trains and vehicles, and service delays to passengers.

In contrast, the elevated, automated SkyTrain system in Vancouver, British Columbia, has operated for 23 years without a single accident.

I urge Honolulu to keep moving forward with your elevated rail system. You only have one opportunity to get it right.

In my opinion, you are making the right choice and your community will reap rewards for years to come.

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*Richard Simonetta is CEO of the new Valley Metro Rail system connecting Phoenix, Tempe and Mesa and has 38 years of experience in the transit industry.*

**Find this article at:**

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## Letters to the Editor

For Thursday, October 1, 2009

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 01, 2009

### **Rail's benefits will exceed costs**

I shook my head in disagreement after reading the article by my fellow East Oahu resident K.S. Kimura about rail transit ("Is rail transit really the best use of our scarce dollars?" Star-Bulletin commentary, Sept. 25).

Like Kimura, I live far from the rail route and won't directly benefit from it. Unlike Kimura, I believe that our island needs to invest in this modern piece of transportation infrastructure. It is a long-term solution for traffic and land use that will benefit communities across our island.

Clearly, rail will reduce the traffic congestion for our friends and family who live on West Oahu, and they deserve it. But I believe rail will also have traffic benefits for those of us who don't live in Kapolei, Waipahu, Aiea or Kalihi. Rail will take cars off the road. It also stands to reason that TheBus will be faster with fewer cars to compete with in town.

Just as importantly, rail will help us make best use of the extremely limited amount of land on our island. The rail system can be a pipeline to new residential housing in Ewa, where there is plenty of space. And because rail will reduce traffic congestion, it will help improve the quality of life for residents already there.

Rail is an expensive investment, but in the end, the benefits will outweigh any monetary cost.

Matthew Kealoha  
Hawaii Kai



October 2, 2009

## Hearing sought on rail plan

*By Sean Hao  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

Five City Council members are pushing for a public hearing on an alternative rail plan given to the city by the Kamehameha Schools.

Under council rules, that's enough support to force the discussion of the plan onto the agenda of a future City Council meeting. The next meeting of the full council is scheduled for Oct. 27.

Hawaii's largest private landowner commissioned a study that estimated the commuter rail project's price tag could be cut by \$1.7 billion by building about half of the planned 20-mile elevated train line at ground level. The city has said a partially at-grade train could save money in the short term but would create safety, traffic and other problems.

The project now is estimated to cost an inflation-adjusted \$5.5 billion.

Last month, city Managing Director Kirk Caldwell said a public hearing on the plan would be counterproductive because the city has considered and rejected at-grade alternatives.

Now five council members — Ikaika Anderson, Romy Cachola, Donovan Dela Cruz, Charles Djou and Ann Kobayashi — have written a letter to council Chairman Todd Apo insisting that a public hearing on the plan take place later this month.

Apo yesterday said the council would likely hold a special meeting to discuss the Kamehameha Schools alternative in conjunction with the project's environmental impact statement.

"We will have a public hearing on all that and I foresee doing that sometime in October," Apo said. "That has always been the plan, that when that (final environmental impact statement) came out, which would include the financial plan, we would definitely hold public hearings on them."

The Kamehameha Schools report was conducted by Phil Craig, a New Jersey railway system designer and transportation consultant. His study proposes building the train system at ground level from East Kapolei to Waipahu and from Middle Street to Ala Moana Center. Only the segment from Waipahu to Middle Street, or about 10 out of a total 20 miles, would be built on an elevated guideway.

A reduction in the cost of the rail project could help the city deal with smaller-than-anticipated tax collections needed to pay the city's \$4 billion share of the project. However, the city eliminated the ground-level transit option long ago on concerns that it would interfere with road traffic, operate at slower speeds, generate lower ridership and require the acquisition of more right of way.

# Star Bulletin

## City's priority should be roads

The question is what to do with the Natatorium that will cost millions of taxpayers' dollars. I say to Mayor Mufi Hannemann to "leave it alone" at this juncture in our poor economy, and please fix our neglected roads.

It's a shame this island is so small but the city and state governments cannot maintain good roads. I can imagine how the thousands of angry drivers that go to work have to drive over the same bumpy roads twice, going and coming.

We contribute but get nothing in return. Still, people keep voting for the same old, same old who cannot manage our money.

Lori Fukumoto  
Honolulu

October 8, 2009

## **Letter to the Editor**

### **rail transit**

#### **Elevated system makes most sense**

As one of the architects currently working on Pearlridge Station portion of the Honolulu Rail Transit, I am writing in support of this excellent project and its positive effects anticipated for Honolulu. As we are all well aware, the Department of Transportation Services proposes an all elevated urban rail system for Honolulu for very good reasons. An elevated system provides speed, reliability, greater carrying capacity and traffic safety. In short, this is best value for dollar.

Architects strive to design projects that are both functional and aesthetically pleasing, whether it is a high-rise residential building or a transit station. Architects would like to have utilitarian transportation primarily concealed from view, such as the subways we know in the San Francisco Bay Area, Tokyo, London and Paris.

The reality is that we cannot afford the extraordinary high cost of this given today's construction prices and Hawaii's water table. On grade is another choice, but as previously stated it is very problematic. Therefore Ho-nolulu's elevated system must balance functionality with its visual appearance within an urban setting. I believe that this can be achieved within the current development scheme for Honolulu's rail project.

mel choy, aia, raia | Principal, M5Architecture, LLC

## ISLAND COMMENTARY

# A lesson for rail transit

By Romy Cachola

POSTED: 05:40 p.m. HST, Oct 08, 2009

Recent news about the Convention Center falling short of its economic projections reminds me of the lively debate over its site selection during the 1980s and early 1990s.

For starters, we knew then that the Convention Center would be a money loser. The public, though skeptical, sent a strong message in support of a convention center, if built at no cost to taxpayers. Based on this, as then-House Tourism chairman I proposed several creative financing plans and cost savings mechanisms as follows:

» Fort Armstrong (Kakaako Waterfront Park): This site, owned by the state, was formerly a dumpsite. To revitalize Kakaako, I proposed converting the property from fee simple to leasehold and granting air rights for developers to build hotel, condo and commercial space in exchange for a free convention center. In addition, the state as lessor would receive annual lease rent estimated at \$7 million, which would have supplemented the operation, promotion and marketing of the convention center. This proposal did not materialize, since special interest groups preferred a site closer to Waikiki.

» Waikiki International Marketplace: As with Fort Armstrong, I proposed that the developer provide the state with a free convention center in exchange for an increase in height and density for the project. This idea became Act 96 of the 1988 Legislature. Unfortunately, Japan's economic bubble burst not long after, forcing the developer to withdraw.

» Aloha Motors site (Hawaii Convention Center):

I negotiated an agreement for the developer to build a convention center and give the state free lease rent in perpetuity that runs with the land in exchange for the right to build a hotel and commercial improvements at the site. The proposal did not materialize because special interest groups lobbied for a stand-alone convention center. This necessitated the purchase of land from the developer, a land swap and a bond float needed to construct the convention center.

In hindsight, the \$650 million predicament now facing the state could have been avoided had we opted for any one of my three proposals. We simply missed out on a golden opportunity to have a convention center built at no cost to taxpayers.

So what lessons have we learned from the Convention Center?

The city is about to embark on the most expensive public works project in Hawaii history. The experiences

and lessons from the Convention Center, I believe, are applicable to the city's rail project.

The following are instances where costs for the \$5.4 billion rail project can be reduced:

» Landowner HRPT Properties Trust offered to assist the city in building a transit station in Mapunapuna. We should welcome help from the private sector, especially since dwindling general excise tax revenues won't be enough to pay for the project.

» Keeping the rail alignment on Salt Lake Boulevard, rather than the airport. The switch added \$220 million to the overall cost. Worse, the draft environmental impact statement offers little explanation of the overly optimistic estimated daily ridership of 95,310.

» Starting the initial rail segment from downtown to Aloha Stadium, rather than from eastern Kapolei to Waipahu, is a no-brainer. This would reduce construction, operation and maintenance costs.

» A recent study by Kamehameha Schools showed that costs could be reduced by \$1.7 billion if parts of the alignment were built at ground level rather than all elevated. Since the administration brushed this proposal aside, despite potential savings, the Council should hold a public hearing to determine its merits.

» A pending \$917 million bond float, which would prove to the Federal Transit Administration that the city is financially capable of completing the project. This may be used in the final EIS to address the \$500 million shortfall that the administration admitted to the FTA in its report dated May 1.

We need to be more judicious on this bond float since taxpayers will be paying more than half a billion dollars in interest alone over a 10-year period. I hope that the administration will be more forthright and realistic with its financial projections in the upcoming final EIS.

In light of the Convention Center experience, the administration, despite its desire to begin construction by year's end, should be willing to consider all options that could reduce costs for the project and not empty taxpayers' pocketbooks.

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Romy M. Cachola is a member of the Honolulu City Council, representing District 7, which includes Kalihi, Kalihi-Palama, Aliamanu, Foster Village, Airport, Salt Lake, and Lower Halawa.

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Pacific Business News (Honolulu) - October 8, 2009  
</pacific/stories/2009/10/05/daily54.html>

## PACIFIC BUSINESS NEWS

Thursday, October 8, 2009, 2:38pm HAST

### Hawaii gas drops 6 cents in a week

Pacific Business News (Honolulu)

The average price of gas in Hawaii has dropped for the second week in a row.

A gallon of regular unleaded in Hawaii averaged \$3.27 on Thursday, down six cents from a week ago, according to the AAA daily fuel gauge report.

The statewide average is down 4 cents from a month ago and down from \$4.12 a year ago.

In Honolulu, the average price was \$3.16, down 5 cents from last week and down 6 cents from a month ago. A year ago it was \$3.99.

Gas prices for other Hawaii areas were:

- In Hilo, regular unleaded sold for an average \$3.28 a gallon, down 6 cents from last week and down 4 cents from a month ago.
- In Wailuku, gas was \$3.62 on Thursday, down 5 cents from last week and down 11 cents from a month ago.

Nationally, the average is \$2.46. Gas is the most expensive in Alaska at \$3.39 and is cheapest in Missouri at \$2.20.

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October 9, 2009

## Hawaii tax revenue down 9.7% so far

By *DERRICK DePLEDGE*  
*Advertiser Government Writer*

State tax collections fell 9.7 percent during the first three months of the fiscal year, the state Department of Taxation reported yesterday, a more significant drop than economists predicted.

The state Council on Revenues has estimated a 1.5 percent decline for the fiscal year that ends next June. While there is time for a recovery, the state is in a deep hole after the first quarter.

Economists believe tax collections will rebound. But the decline in actual revenue collections through September could prompt Gov. Linda Lingle and state lawmakers to consider further budget cuts, such as additional layoffs, or new revenue-generating ideas, such as the use of special funds like the state's hurricane relief fund or an increase in the general excise tax, next session.

The Lingle administration has estimated a \$1 billion budget deficit through June 2011. The administration has yet to calculate exactly how much the state will save from the furloughs agreed to by the Hawaii State Teachers Association and, in principle, by the Hawaii Government Employees Association.

The University of Hawai'i Professional Assembly rejected the university's final contract offer yesterday that included a 5 percent pay cut, while the United Public Workers and the Lingle administration are still in negotiations, so the full savings from reduced labor costs could be unknown for several more weeks.

Lingle told reporters yesterday that she remains opposed to a general-excise tax increase. The governor, who ordered more than 1,100 layoffs of state workers starting in November, also said she could not promise that there will be no further layoffs.

"I think raising the excise tax now would inhibit our ability to recover from this weak economy. It would put more businesses out of business, which means we would then collect less in taxes," she said.

Lingle said state lawmakers already raised the income tax, the hotel-room tax, the conveyance tax and tobacco taxes last session to help capture additional revenue.

The governor cited the lower tax collections announced yesterday as a reason she is unable to guarantee no further layoffs. "So there can't be those kinds of promises because we're required to have a balanced budget," she said.

"If revenues drop, just as in a business or in your home, we'll simply have to cut our expenses. We have no choice."

State Senate President Colleen Hanabusa, D-21st (Nanakuli, Makaha), said lawmakers want to see a few more months of figures to determine whether the fiscal year will be worse than expected. The council is scheduled to update its revenue forecast in January.

Some lawmakers, including state Senate Majority Leader Gary Hooser, D-7th (Kaua'i, Ni'ihau), have said lawmakers should return in special session now and tap the hurricane relief fund so teachers do not have to take furloughs on classroom instruction days. Others have said they would support a

general-excise tax increase.

But Hanabusa, and state House leaders, said there are no plans for a special session on the budget.

Hanabusa said lawmakers do not want to react to monthly fluctuations in tax collections but rather wait until there is a clear trend. "You would expect these ups-and-downs during these difficult economic times. We'd have to watch for at least a couple more months to see a trend going back up or if we're flat," she said. "We're not going to make a miraculous recovery."

The state Department of Taxation put the total general fund revenue decline for the first quarter at 9.7 percent compared to last year. General excise and use taxes are down 11.8 percent. Hotel room taxes are off 11.9 percent. Individual income taxes are down 6.7 percent. Corporate income taxes are down 27.3 percent.

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October 9, 2009

## Second Pearl Ridge Rail Station Workshop Set For October 15

*Honolulu Rail Transit Project  
Reader Submitted*

The City and County of Honolulu as part of the Honolulu Rail Transit project continues its series of rail station design workshops in the Aiea/Pearl Ridge area on Thursday, Oct. 15.

The community workshop is scheduled from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Pearl Ridge Elementary School, 98-940 Moanalua Road. This will be the second of three workshops for the planned Pearl Ridge station located near the intersection of Kamehameha Highway and Kaonohi Street.

Rail project officials at the Oct. 15 workshop will showcase sketches and rough designs for the area station based on ideas and opinions by residents from the first workshop in September. After gathering residents' feedback, the city will return with a final design for the Pearl Ridge station in December.

Areas of the train station to be discussed are the "touch down" sections where the elevated portions of the stations meet the street. Categories include color, landscaping, entryway design, exterior and interior wall finishes, seating areas, and plaques and monuments for the station.

Similar community-based workshops have been held for rail transit stations planned for Waipahu, Kapolei and West Oahu Leeward Community College.

For more information on the community workshops, contact the project office at 566-2299 or at [info@honolulutransit.org](mailto:info@honolulutransit.org).

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## As revenue falls by \$112M, Lingle tells unions to settle

[By Richard Borreca](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 09, 2009

The latest state tax collection figures show a nearly 10 percent drop, and the bad news is forcing Gov. Linda Lingle to increase her tough talk to the public employee unions to hurry up and settle their contracts.

The governor also said she is willing to look at ways to tap into the state's special funds to "buy down" the public school teachers' 17 furlough days next year to prevent students from losing instruction time.

The Tax Department reported yesterday that the state has taken in about \$112 million less in revenue during the first three months of this fiscal year compared with the same period last year.

During an impromptu news conference yesterday, Lingle warned that there will be more state worker layoffs, and singled out the blue-collar United Public Workers to settle its contract with the state.

"The fact that the UPW is dragging on like this is going to force our hand. We're going to have to make some movement soon on that second round of layoffs," Lingle said.

The union has declined to comment on the negotiations.

Lingle said the state has been unable to get together with the county mayors to make one offer to UPW, and the result is brinkmanship.

UPW has 8,800 members in state, county, public school, hospital and court positions as custodians and other blue-collar positions.

"They have the right to strike, and we have the right to implement our last best offer, but because the mayors won't join us in that last best offer, people are questioning our ability to even make an offer. They're saying until you have the mayors, you can't make that offer," Lingle said.

The governor did respond to increasing calls from legislators that the teachers should not be furloughed.

State Sen. Gary Hooser, Senate majority leader, is calling for a one-day special session to tap the state Hurricane Relief Fund to pay for the days that teachers would be out on furlough.

"The 17 days of furlough — of our students losing school — is unacceptable. To me that is bottom line," Hooser (D, Kauai-Niihau) said. "The only thing I could come up with in talking to my colleagues is to access part of the hurricane fund."

But Senate President Colleen Hanabusa cautioned yesterday that lawmakers "should not build false expectations or false hopes."

"When we are talking about families and their stability, let's make sure we can deliver," Hanabusa warned.

She added that she was "not confident that the governor is on board or that two-thirds of each house is."

Lingle said yesterday she is willing to explore the subject during the 2010 legislative session, but not now.

# Star Bulletin

## Ben Cayetano

The candid former governor shares his views on the fiscal crisis, rail transit and the 2010 election

[By Christine Donnelly](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 09, 2009

(Single Page View) | [Return to Paginated View](#)

Ben Cayetano might have another book in him. The former Hawaii governor, whose revealing memoir, "Ben: A Memoir, from Street Kid to Governor," was published early this year, is considering tackling a historical novel, covering the decades after the 1954 Democratic revolution that brought sweeping changes to the islands.

"There's a lot of material, that's for sure, if not for me, for somebody," Cayetano, who turns 70 next month, said in an interview Wednesday at the Waiialae Iki home he shares with his wife, business executive Vicky.

The iconoclastic Democrat, whose second gubernatorial term ended in 2002, spent about three years researching and writing the memoir, revisiting his Kalihi youth and sometimes bumpy political rise to become the first Filipino-American governor in the United States. Always an avid reader, the Farrington High School graduate found he relished writing as well.

Cayetano, who participates in a panel discussion tomorrow at the main library in celebration of Filipino-American History Month, sat down to discuss how he would have dealt with the state's current fiscal crisis, his picks in some hot political races, and the pitfalls of naming names.

**QUESTION:** The instructional gains your administration helped achieve by lengthening the school year have been wiped out by the teacher furloughs. What's your take on the Hawaii State Teachers Association deal?

**ANSWER:** First, I think that the HSTA did a good thing by coming up with a furlough plan of their own. However, I think that they made a mistake by (cutting so many class) days. Of course, I think there are things that could be done which would not require furloughs by the teachers.

**Q:** Like what?

**A:** There's money that they can go to, whether it's the Hurricane Relief Fund or doing things like lagging the payroll, which is something that is done in the private sector. You just put one

paycheck into the next fiscal year so from a budgetary purpose you "save" maybe something like \$65 million. Or use the half-percent general excise tax for rail because it's not going to endanger the rail project, if you do it on the condition that when the federal government approves the project, then the tax will be reinstated. Meanwhile, the money can go, \$175 million roughly a year, into the general fund and help deal with the \$800-something million (state budget) shortfall.

**Q:** Was diverting the rail tax seriously considered?

**A:** It was considered at the beginning of the session, ... but then I think Sen. (Daniel) Inouye said if you do that you might endanger the rail project. And I disagree with him because I've been dealing with this rail issue ever since I was a chairman of the Transportation Committee in the (state) House, and all the federal government requires is that the local government have a funding mechanism in place when they approve the project. They don't require you to collect the tax in advance, as the city is doing. You try that on mainland constituents, they'll vote you out of office.

**Q:** Word is that the HGEA has agreed to a similar (furlough) deal. What's your assessment of the negotiations and the outcome?

**A:** Well, I think the unions are wise to go with the furloughs. The furlough approach is better for everyone.

**Q:** How would you have dealt with this fiscal crisis if you were still governor?

**A:** Well, I wouldn't have dealt with it the way she (Gov. Linda Lingle) has dealt with it. ... Apparently they didn't read the labor contract, which requires the administration to sit down, whether it's layoffs or furloughs, and enter into good-faith consultations with the unions. That's in the contract. You don't have to agree with the unions ... but you do have to consult with them.

So that's what I would have done. Some of the statements that the governor makes lead me to wonder whether she understands the fiscal crisis, because she was quoted as saying, 'We already cut \$2 billion and that's without touching labor costs.' She never cut \$2 billion. ... Now, from my recollection, the general fund in one year is about \$4 billion. You can't cut \$2 billion from \$4 billion without everybody noticing. So what she's done — and unfortunately the press has not corrected her — she has taken the revenue projections by the state Council of Revenues and called that a cut. That's not a cut; that's a projection. I'd go and use the money in the Hurricane Relief Fund. I'd implement a payroll lag. Then I'd use that rail tax, divert it temporarily.

**Q:** Let's talk about some of the 2010 political races. Will you make official endorsements?

#### **LET'S TALK**

Former Gov. Benjamin J. Cayetano will participate in a discussion tomorrow at 1:30 p.m. at the Hawaii State Library in celebration of Filipino-American History Month. The two-hour discussion, in the First Floor Reading Room, will center on Cayetano's recent memoir, "Ben: A Memoir, from Street Kid to Governor."

The Hawaii State Library is at 478 S. King St. across from Honolulu Hale. For more information, call 586-3499.

**A:** Well, since I'm retired, there's not a problem for me, and, of course, I'm supporting Neil Abercrombie (for governor), and I'm supporting Ed Case (in the 1st Congressional District).

**Q:** Anything to say about Colleen Hanabusa?

**A:** Colleen is a very bright person, and I think she's been a good legislator, but if I have to choose between her and Case, I'll go with Case. I think it's important to have someone there who has independent thought.

**Q:** What about Charles Djou (a Republican Honolulu City Councilman running for the seat)?

**A:** I think he is an intelligent person. I like him. But he's in the wrong race. He should be running for mayor.

**Q:** In your memoir, you discuss your opposition as a state legislator to then-Honolulu Mayor Frank Fasi's rail transit. How do you feel about the current plan?

**A:** I'm against it. The reasons I'm against it are basically the same. First of all, the mayor's rail transit plan is so expensive. They estimate \$5.6 billion, something like that. If the historical patterns on the mainland follow through, you can probably add another \$2 billion or maybe even \$3 billion to that. And they're forecasting unreasonably high ridership. That means that real property taxes are going to go up, and the cost of living is going to go up. And I don't think it's going to relieve traffic congestion to the point that it's worth the cost.

**Q:** Also in the book, you emphasize the importance of native Hawaiian issues but conclude that it will take a strong, charismatic native Hawaiian leader to openly address them. Did you have someone in mind?

**A:** No. I don't see anyone like that on the horizon. The conclusion that I reached was that the activists ... have been successful in creating these expectations. The revisionist history that they've been teaching at the university has made it very difficult politically for Hawaiian leaders who understand what *Rice v. Cayetano* meant, for example, that sovereignty is probably something that's not achievable. Because I can't see for the life of me our federal government approving any scheme that's going to allow people to elect members of this entity on a race basis. You read *Rice*. To me it's very clear.

**Q:** So you don't think the Akaka Bill will stand up, even if it passes?

**A:** I think the Akaka Bill will be declared unconstitutional, if it passes. Clearly the president has said he will sign it. First thing that will happen (after that) is that you're going to have people who are going to challenge it. Meanwhile, OHA is talking about cutting positions. I wonder if they are cutting anything from their lobbying budget or the PR budget that they have, which is highly unusual for a state agency. What people don't understand is that the 20 percent that everybody's talking about (to help native Hawaiians) is set by general law. The Legislature could amend the law to make it 100 percent or 1 percent. But the 20 percent has sort of taken on a life of its own.

**Q:** Any personal fallout (from writing the book)? Anybody no longer speaking to you?

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Pacific Business News (Honolulu) - October 9, 2009  
[/pacific/stories/2009/10/05/daily61.html](#)

## PACIFIC BUSINESS NEWS

Friday, October 9, 2009, 8:26am HAST

# Hawaii general fund revenues down 9.7%

Pacific Business News (Honolulu)

Hawaii's general fund revenues for the first three months of this fiscal year were down 9.7 percent from \$1.1 billion last year to \$1 billion this year.

General excise and use taxes, the largest single category of tax collections, amounted to \$183.5 million in September, the department said. Year to date, general excise and use taxes have decreased by 11.8 percent to \$577.8 million compared to \$655 million during the same period last year.

Transient accommodations tax collections were \$17.5 million in September. The funds were \$52.5 million year to date, down 11.9 percent compared with the same period last year.

Individual income tax collections totaled \$142.3 million in September. Year to date, individual income tax collections decreased 6.7 percent to \$357.1 million compared to the \$382.9 million during the same period last year.

Corporate income taxes are down 27.3 percent year to date, from \$17.1 million last year to \$12.4 million this year.

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## Letters to the Editor

For Friday, October 9, 2009

### City not ignoring upkeep of roads

I'm writing to clarify a few issues in response to Lori Fukimoto's Oct. 7 letter linking the Waikiki Natatorium's future to road maintenance.

The city is aggressively repairing long-neglected roads and other infrastructure, and a final decision by Mayor Hannemann on the Natatorium will have no impact on the \$150 million in roadway improvements scheduled over the next 18 months.

Over the past six months, the city has awarded more than \$40 million in contracts for roadway work in Kailua, Pearl City, Aiea, Nuuanu and Pauoa, along with another contract for various projects islandwide. On Sept. 29, we held a major symposium with design consultants and contractors to expedite future projects.

We appreciate the concerns of Ms. Fukimoto and others, and invite them to learn more about what we're doing to improve our infrastructure.

Sharon Ann Thom  
Deputy director, Honolulu Department of Transportation Services



October 10, 2009

## Rail tax collection down 19%

Financial plan calls for city to take in an average of \$13.7 million a month

*By Sean Hao  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

Transit tax collections fell 19 percent last month compared with September 2008 to nearly \$13.4 million, according to figures provided by the state Department of Taxation.

A half-percentage-point surcharge was added to the general excise tax in Honolulu in January 2007 to fund the rail. Collections in September 2008, when state economic growth was stronger, totaled \$16.6 million.

Through the first three months of the current fiscal year, transit tax collections are up nearly 2 percent to \$42.4 million. Average monthly collections were \$14.4 million. Those figures account for the 10 percent the state takes off the top to pay for administering the tax.

The city had anticipated raising an average of \$16.5 million a month in the current fiscal year to pay for the planned 20-mile East Kapolei to Ala Moana elevated commuter train.

However, according to a recently revised financial plan, that fiscal 2010 train tax collection forecast was reduced from about \$198 million to \$164 million. That's an average of \$13.7 million a month.

Overall, that August-dated financial plan for the \$5.5 billion rail line anticipates a \$360 million shortfall in tax collections through 2022. The city expects to rely on increased federal funds — including diverting federal money intended for TheBus — to help make up for the lower-than-anticipated tax revenue and higher costs, according to the financial plan.

Under the updated financial plan, the city now expects transit tax revenues to total \$3.52 billion. When combined with \$174 million in actual transit tax collections in fiscal 2007 and fiscal 2008, the city's total anticipated transit excise tax take rises to about \$3.69 billion. That's about \$360 million less than the \$4.05 billion in transit tax revenues forecast by the city in a draft environmental impact statement in October.

During fiscal year 2009, which ended June 30, transit tax collections fell short of the October forecast by \$27.1 million. However, in the August financial plan, the city cut its forecast for 2009 tax collections and, as a result, the shortfall was converted into a \$12 million surplus.

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October 11, 2009

## A banker's view of rail and risk in perilous times

*By Don Horner*

Emma: My question is about rail. Can we afford this project, particularly in this current economy?

Don Horner: I had the privilege of chairing a committee for Business Roundtable to look at this subject when the heated debate was going on, and just before...we all voted for rail. I think the short answer is yes. I've been with the bank for over 30 years and pretty conservative when it comes to looking at numbers. I think it's a combination of things. One, we took the revenue numbers that were given and frankly we discounted those.

Jeanne Mariani-Belding: The city's numbers?

Horner: Yes, I think they were a bit optimistic. Because they had a growth curve that we didn't foresee and this was about 18 months ago. And we're pretty well where we thought the numbers would be now, about \$150 (million)-\$160 million a year (with) the 0.5 GET. So the revenue side is OK.

We are the largest construction lender in the state and this is really a question of concrete and these things. You can imagine given the economic realities is there's not a lot of demand. The technology prices are going down, the equipment prices are going down, the raw material costs are going down, the margins for the contractors and sub contractors is going down.

Mariani-Belding: Labor?

Don Horner: Not so much the labor cost and they shouldn't go down. The carpenters and concrete people are still entitled to a fair wage. It's just the margins, some of the profit margins are being squeezed to death. What people don't understand is this system is designed to be a 16-year full payout. So it's just like a 15-year mortgage. So at the end of 15 years, this is fully paid off. By adding, if you had to, one or two more years on the back end, you'd be able to also offset any of those savings. Additionally, it looks like the federal government is gonna kick in more money than what was budgeted. Quite a bit more from what I'm hearing from various certain places.

Mariani-Belding: Where are you getting that information?

Horner: From our delegation. Our delegation has been extremely supportive. I mean we are so blessed to have the delegation we have in Washington.

Tyler Eng: Why should businesses support rail, particularly those not on the route?

Horner: That's a very fair question. Why should somebody in Hawaii Kai or the Windward side support rail? I think rail is good for Hawaii in general. The gridlock we are experiencing on the west side is not sustainable. That's where are growth is. I mean the same question could be asked why should we build H-3? Why should we widen Kalaniana'ole Highway? Why did we widen that road all the way to Hawaii Kai? So I think it's the west side's turn. The west side has not ever been endowed with a lot of infrastructure, historically. So, I think it's good that we start on the west side. That's where the growth population is, that's where the people that come in to Waikiki to work. So I think most of the Business Roundtable came out in full support of rail for very pragmatic reasons.

Ikaika: Do you support the bailouts and the stimulus packages? People in Washington seem to forget

that this is taxpayers' money. Even worse, as a financial strategy, printing money to solve the problem seems wrong ethically and strategically. Do you agree?

Homer: Number one, Ikaika, I do agree with you personally. Obviously, it's a complex issue. I think in general, the "bailout" with taxpayers' money should be a very, very rare event. It should not be taken lightly, it should not be policy. Have we gone too far? Probably, in my opinion. I understand why, but the more basic issue is a lot of these problems came from Wall Street. And Wall Street is designed that way. I don't know why people think otherwise. I worked on Wall Street before I was a banker. Wall Street is a place of risk and return. It's a place where you can make a lot of money and you can lose a lot of money. But if the government prevents you from losing money then all of a sudden the economics start to change and the taxpayer covers the sins of folks who were greedy. There's investment banking and Main Street banking. I'm a Main Street banker, I'm not a Wall Street banker. I'm not smart enough to be a Wall Street banker. I don't understand all those fancy things. That's why we are not in trouble. We do things pretty simple. We loan money to people who can pay us back. That's the reason I love Hawaii because most of the people in Hawaii pay you back. There's a very moral code here that's prevented some of the problems that have (occurred) in other places. My point is that there is a balance that in certain situations in order to stabilize the economy certainly you had to do some of the things that was done.

Jim: Lending has certainly changed over the last two years. Have you had to make changes to your scoring models? And what impact has that had on both volume and delinquency?

Homer: Good question. I've been a banker at First Hawaiian bank for 30 years and I've been a lender for 30 years. The guy that taught me credit spent 40 years in the bank. Forty years when he taught me credit. So I know it's been 70 years this way. I've done a lot of research on Mr. Bishop. I can honestly tell you that we have changed not one thing as far as the way we lend money. Not credit scores, no underwriting changes, nothing. The economy shouldn't drive the way you lend money. As I said earlier, it's a pretty simple formula. We look for people who have character, that if they get in trouble they'll try to pay you back, and they have the capacity to pay you back. You get in trouble if you try to adjust your standards to the market as it changes because people don't know what your standards are. We are very, very consistent.

## Additional Facts

The Hot seat

See the full discussion at  
[www.honoluluadvertiser.com/hotseatsunday](http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/hotseatsunday)

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October 11, 2009

## Hawaii rail transit faces tight schedule

To avoid delay, city must clear several key hurdles

*By Sean Hao  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

It's crunch time for the Honolulu commuter rail project.

In just over two months, the city plans to begin construction on its new \$5.5 billion elevated train system.

Breaking ground in December will represent the culmination of decades of on-and-off planning for the massive public works project, while providing a major political victory to the train's biggest champion, Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann.

But to get there the city has to avoid being derailed by a prolonged environmental impact review, legal challenges or financing problems.

The next few months are key in determining whether the project stays on schedule to launch the first phase of service between West Loch and Waipahu in late 2013, and the full service between East Kapolei and Ala Moana Center in 2018.

### Delays costly

The city has said that every month the project is delayed costs taxpayers \$10 million in added inflation and interest.

Not breaking ground in December could also sap momentum from the project and lead to further attempts by state lawmakers to raid transit tax revenues to balance the state's budget, city officials have said.

The first indicator of whether the city can stick to its schedule is whether the Federal Transit Administration approves the project's environmental impact statement.

That milestone was expected to be reached in August, then September. Now the FTA approval is expected to occur this month, said city transportation Director Wayne Yoshioka. The delays shouldn't affect plans to start construction in December, he said.

"We've always said toward the fall and we thought maybe toward the end of September, but probably now we're looking at mid-October somewhere," Yoshioka said. "If we get something out by the end of October, I think it allows time for the review period, and if we can get a (record of decision) by the end of November, that still gives us time to break ground" in December, he said.

That revised timetable assumes the 20-mile train project will quickly clear any environmental legal hurdles that may arise from the report.

The project also must clear a number of procedural hurdles, including a special City Council hearing and more federal approvals to begin construction.

If the project receives needed federal approvals, it would indicate that the Federal Transit Administration has no major qualms about the project's environmental impacts. However, the project could face a lawsuit from environmental/cultural groups, private landowners or other special interests.

"I would be shocked if there were not a legal challenge to the (environmental impact statement); there are so many problems with it," said Henry Curtis, executive director of Life of the Land, an environmental and community action group.

Environmental concerns ultimately scuttled the inter-island Hawaii Superferry service. That project initially sidestepped the required environmental impact study and was halted by the courts. The city has done an environmental impact study for the train. However, several groups ranging from the Environmental Protection Agency, Kamehameha Schools and the American Institute of Architects have expressed concerns that it was inadequate.

Part of the concern is whether the city adequately explored options such as an at-grade train system, or managed, elevated highway lanes.

A lawsuit could delay the transit project, Curtis said.

"If the city thinks that they're going to break ground in December, that's weird," he said.

## funds tempting

Another issue is the funding. The state has been collecting a tax surcharge to pay for the rail project, but a budget crisis is tempting state lawmakers to consider using that revenue to pay for more pressing services.

Earlier this year the Senate considered, but rejected, a bill that would have borrowed \$150 million from Honolulu's rail-transit tax. The bill would have given the city the option to extend the tax surcharge for another two years through 2024. As an incentive for city cooperation, the state would also have repaid the city with \$250 million in bonds.

Lawmakers may renew efforts to divert or borrow train taxes next spring, depending on how dire the state's finances become. Momentum for such a move could grow, if the project bogs down.

"I'm not sure what the sense of the Legislature will be at the time depending on how severe the shortfall grows between now and then and where we're at," said Senate Ways and Means chairwoman Donna Mercado Kim, D-14th (Halawa, Moanalua, Kamehameha Heights). The issue is "whether or not it will in fact derail rail."

Other milestones the city must meet to begin construction include:

- Receiving federal permission to begin the preliminary engineering phase of the project. During preliminary engineering, the city will finalize management plans, refine the route's alignment and project costs, and further identify benefits and impacts.
- The city also will need to award the biggest transit-related contract so far — a \$550 million to \$600 million deal to design and build an elevated six-mile guideway from East Kapolei to Leeward Community College. That estimated amount excludes an unspecified amount to cover contingency costs.
- The city also will need a "letter of no prejudice" from the Federal Transit Administration. That gives the city permission to spend city money on the project without jeopardizing the possible future influx of federal funds. The city needs \$1.55 billion in federal funds to pay for the project. However, the city doesn't expect to find out whether it will get that money until early 2011.

## Bond financing

City administration officials also will eventually need City Council authorization to issue up to \$1 billion in bonds needed to complete the project. Yoshioka said the city can begin construction without bond financing. The city has about \$154 million in transit tax collections, according to an August version of the city's financial plan.

"We have enough cash on hand to start right now without bonding," Yoshioka said.

City Council member Charles Djou said the deadline to begin construction in December carries risks. That's because there are still unresolved issues relating to the train's route and finances. Federal officials have asked the city to shift the route of the planned train away from the Prince Kuhio Federal Building because of security concerns. Major landowner Kamehameha Schools also has asked the city to consider building the train at ground-level along an alternative Downtown route.

## Ho'opili uncertain

In addition, the train's current route through East Kapolei was designed to accommodate the proposed 11,750-home Ho'opili community. However, the future of that project, which would be built on prime agricultural lands, remains uncertain following a setback in August before the state Land Use Commission and increasing community opposition.

Apart from route issues, the city's latest financial plan for the East Kapolei-to-Ala Moana commuter rail line anticipates a \$360 million shortfall in tax collections. The city expects to rely on increased federal funds — including diverting federal money intended for TheBus — to help make up for the lower-than-anticipated tax revenue and higher costs, according to the financial plan.

"There's just so many questions still floating out there that I think prudence would dictate that we take a deep breath and make sure we're doing this properly, instead of just rushing headlong forward into doing a project that may not be properly vetted," Djou said. "This is not a credible, cautious, prudent, dot your i's cross your t's style of doing business."

City Council Chairman Todd Apo said the council will hold a special public hearing on rail soon that will provide an opportunity to discuss questions about rail finances and alternatives. However, that hearing isn't expected to lead to any council action that could delay the project.

"We are now moving forward on this project, but we need to ensure this project is moving forward correctly," Apo said. That means "not looking back on all the decisions that have already been made," Apo said.

A delay in the start of construction wouldn't necessarily be a setback, Apo said.

"In the short term, I don't think there's any problem as long as we are progressing — coming out with the (final environmental impact state- ment) — and having the public hearing on it," Apo said. "If those things stay on schedule, then even if there isn't an actual groundbreaking in December, I think everybody will recognize the project is moving along."

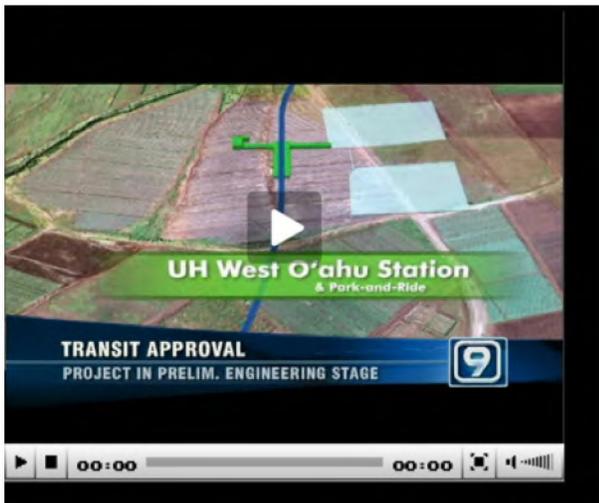
"Now if something runs completely sideways, then yes, I think you run into that risk," Apo added. But, "I don't see that happening, at least right now."

# FTC Approves Rail Transit Plan; Critics: Not a Big Deal



Written by KGMB9 News - news@kgmb9.com

October 12, 2009 05:40 PM



Oahu's rail transit plan got a bright green light from Washington Monday. The Federal Transportation Administration has officially approved the \$5.3 billion project which moves it to the preliminary engineering phase.

The rail planners now have to complete and publish a final environmental impact statement and then get state and federal approval on that. The mayor still expects construction to begin at the end of the year.

"This is an important objective that has been reached for the City and County of Honolulu in our quest to bring to passed 40 years of a dream," Mayor Mufi Hannemann said.

Monday's approval also means the project maintains eligibility for federal funding which could add up to \$1.5 billion.

"A lot more to do, preliminary engineering as they said themselves, they started two years ago, so what is the big deal today?" Rail Critic Panos Prevedorous said. "We still don't have a final EIS, we don't have the governor's signature, we don't have the federal signature, we don't have the letter of no prejudice, a lot of significant steps still, on the way."

Prevedorous said he does not expect the governor to sign the bill this year.



Last Updated ( October 12, 2009 11:32 PM )

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# Honolulu Mass Transit Receives Federal Approval



Written by KGMB9 News - news@kgmb9.com

October 12, 2009 02:24 PM

Honolulu's Mass Transit plans have hit a milestone.

Today, Hawaii's congressional delegation announced the project was approved by federal overseers, and has entered the Preliminary Engineering phase.

"We can't miss this window of opportunity now for building this much needed transit line. Getting into PE shows that this project is very sound financially," said Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann in a statement. "We're in the home stretch now and we need to move forward so we can put people back to work, help the economy turn around and create the option that our residents need to help relieve traffic congestion on our island."

Honolulu says the project is eligible for \$1.5 Billion in federal funding for construction. The project can immediately start using \$39 Million in federal funds, which includes \$4 Million in stimulus money.

"The Hawaii Congressional delegation remains steadfast in its support for a rail transit system in Honolulu. We look forward to continuing our work with Mayor Hannemann to obtain the necessary federal funding. The next big step will come with our push to authorize the federal share of \$1.5 billion," added Senator Daniel Inouye in a statement.

Related Story:

[Rail Transit Plan Approved From Washington](#)



Last Updated ( October 12, 2009 06:57 PM )

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## KITV.com

### Feds Approve Next Phase For Transit

## ***Mayor Says City Cleared To Begin Groundbreaking This Year***

POSTED: 2:22 pm HST October 12, 2009

UPDATED: 4:12 pm HST October 12, 2009

**HONOLULU** -- The Federal Transit Administration approved a key step for Honolulu's rail transit system, Sen. Daniel Inouye's office and the city announced on Monday.

The FTA cleared the way for the project to enter "preliminary engineering" that will allow the city to focus on refining engineering, construction schedules financial plan and more, Inouye said.

"This is a critical federal milestone and an important accomplishment in the development of Honolulu's Rail Transit Project. The competition for preliminary engineering among our nation's cities is fierce. This approval is, in large part, a credit to Mayor Mufi Hannemann's administration, and a result of the Honolulu project meeting the stringent federal planning and financial justification requirements," Inouye said in a written statement.

The FTA approval means the project's financial and engineering plans have passed strict federal requirements. Entering the preliminary engineering phase keeps Hawaii eligible for about \$1.5 billion in federal funding, city officials said.

"Our financial and engineering plans have successfully passed detailed scrutiny by federal transit officials and their oversight consultants to enter PE," Hannemann said. "Today's announcement takes us a giant step closer to groundbreaking at the end of the year and rail construction that will create hundreds of new jobs in 2010 and thousands of jobs in coming years."

The city can begin using \$30 million in federal funds that Congress already approved for the transit project, officials said.

There are still two major steps to complete: an environmental impact statement and what is called a "record of decision" by the federal government.

### **Previous Stories:**

- July 23, 2009: [Fed's Study Say Oahu Transit Project Reasonable](#)
- April 15, 2009: [Inouye Says EPA Findings Won't Hurt Transit](#)
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- December 18, 2008: [City Extends Time For Comments On Transit Plan](#)
- December 7, 2008: [Residents Offered Final Input On Rail](#)
- November 12, 2008: [Council Moves To Divert Rail Line From Salt Lake](#)

- November 6, 2008: [Djou, Apo's Change Of Heart Could Divert Rail Route](#)
- November 5, 2008: [City Moves Forward With Rail Transit After Vote](#)
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- September 4, 2008: [Honolulu Mayoral Candidates Appear In First Forum](#)

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Pacific Business News (Honolulu) - October 12, 2009  
</pacific/stories/2009/10/12/daily9.html>

## PACIFIC BUSINESS NEWS

Monday, October 12, 2009, 2:14pm HAST

### Feds OK Honolulu rail engineering plan

Pacific Business News (Honolulu)

The Federal Transit Administration has approved Honolulu's application to enter the preliminary engineering phase of its proposed rail transit system.

During the preliminary engineering phase, the city will create a more precise construction schedule and project management plan, as well as update its financial plan. It will also complete the federal environmental review process, U.S. Sen. Daniel Inouye announced Monday.

"This is a critical federal milestone and an important accomplishment in the development of Honolulu's Rail Transit Project," Inouye said in a statement. "The competition for Preliminary Engineering among our nation's cities is fierce. This approval is, in large part, a credit to Mayor Mufi Hannemann's administration, and a result of the Honolulu project meeting the stringent federal planning and financial justification requirements."

Inouye said the next step is to push for \$1.5 billion in federal funding for the project, which has a pricetag of about \$5 billion.

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October 13, 2009

## Honolulu rail gets federal OK

*By Sean Hao  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

Honolulu's proposed \$5.5 billion elevated commuter train project won a key endorsement from the federal government yesterday.

The Federal Transit Administration gave the city approval to begin the preliminary engineering phase of the project. During preliminary engineering, the city will finalize management plans, refine the route's alignment and project costs and further identify benefits and impacts.

The 20-mile East Kapolei to Ala Moana project still must overcome several major hurdles before construction can begin as scheduled in December.

But yesterday U.S. Sen. Daniel K. Inouye and Mayor Mufi Hannemann took a moment to celebrate this initial support from the federal agency that they hope will provide about 28 percent of the project's funding.

"This is a critical federal milestone and an important accomplishment in the development of Honolulu's rail transit project," said Inouye in a news release. "The competition for preliminary engineering among our nation's cities is fierce."

"The Hawai'i Congressional delegation remains steadfast in its support for a rail transit system in Honolulu," Inouye said.

Hannemann added, "We're in the homestretch now and we need to move forward so we can put people back to work, help the economy turn around and create the option that our residents need to help relieve traffic congestion on our island."

The city's entry into preliminary engineering was delayed by at least six months in part because of a February decision to alter the train's route to pass through the airport district rather than the Salt Lake area.

## EIS awaited

The next major milestone for the project is a release of a final environmental impact statement, which the city has said should occur this month. If all goes well, the city expects to receive a "record of decision" from the FTA about five weeks later.

The city also will need a "letter of no prejudice" from the FTA. That gives the city permission to spend city money on the project without jeopardizing the possible future influx of federal funds. The city needs \$1.55 billion in federal funds to pay for the project. However, the city doesn't expect to find out whether it will get that money until early 2011.

The city also will need to award the biggest transit-related contract so far — a \$550 million to \$600 million deal to design and build an elevated six-mile guideway from East Kapolei to Leeward Community College. That estimated amount excludes an unspecified amount to cover contingency costs.

City administration officials also will eventually need City Council authorization to issue up to \$1 billion in bonds needed to complete the project. The city has about \$154 million in transit tax collections in the bank, according to an August version of the city's financial plan.

Hannemann in a news release yesterday said the entry into the preliminary engineering keeps the project eligible for about \$1.5 billion in federal funding for rail construction. In addition, the city now can spend \$39 million in federal transit funds, including \$4 million federal stimulus money.

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- 02:00AM Wall Street Journal This Morning
- 04:00AM First Light
- 05:00AM America In The Morning with Jim Bohannon
- 06:00AM KPUA Morning News with anchor Ken Hupp
- 09:00AM Community Forum
- 10:00AM Rush Limbaugh
- 01:00PM Dr. Dean Edell
- 02:00PM Dateline: Washington
- 03:00PM Sporting News
- 04:00PM Sports Byline with Ron Barr
- 07:00PM Coast to Coast

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**HAWAII NEWS**

[Back to Hawaii News index](#)

Posted: Tuesday, October 13th, 2009 4:32 AM HST

**Feds give approval to Honolulu rail project**

By Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — The federal government is giving its go-ahead for Honolulu's proposed 20-mile rail line to begin preliminary engineering.

Hawaii Democratic Sen. Daniel Inouye says the Federal Transit Administration's approval yesterday will allow the city to refine its construction schedule, project management plan and financial plan.

Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann says the rail line is on schedule to break ground by the end of the year.

A final environmental impact statement is expected to be released this month, and then the city will need a letter from the government giving the city permission to spend city money on the project without jeopardizing possible future federal funds.

The city needs \$1.55 billion in federal money to help pay for the \$5.5 billion project.

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## 2 News Now: Salt Lake Shooting, Rail Project Milestone, FAA Investigates Parachuter's Death

Reported by: Jessica Gellert

Email: [jgellert@khon2.com](mailto:jgellert@khon2.com)

Last Update: 11:13 am

Some new information on a developing story out of Salt Lake this morning.

That's where Honolulu Police have responded to a shooting.

The incident was first reported on Likini street at about two this morning.

According to Bryan Cheplic with Emergency Medical Services, four victims were transported via ambulance to a trauma center in serious condition.

Cheplic says all four appeared to be in their late teens.

Police say no arrests have been made.



Meanwhile officers are investigating the discovery of a gun found in a stolen truck in Waikele.

The driver of the truck reportedly ran through the fence of the Waikele Golf Course, and into a ditch.

Police believe the driver then took the truck down the ditch at least a half mile past managers drive.

Police were alerted when a resident reported someone in her backyard.

No arrests have been made in either incident.

Honolulu's rail transit project has reached a critical milestone.

The Federal Transit Administration has given the project permission to enter the preliminary engineering phase.

Senator Daniel Inouye says the next big step on the federal level is a push to authorize the federal share of \$1.5 billion.

There are still a few more steps before construction can begin as scheduled in December.

The Federal Aviation Administration is looking into the death of a Navy Seal who died yesterday while skydiving.

27-year-old Kenneth Owen plunged to his death after both his main and reserve parachutes failed to open.

His body was found about a quarter mile east of Dillingham Airfield on Oahu's north shore.

Friends say Owen was on his third jump of the day when the accident happened.

He leaves behind a wife and child.

The Hawaii Government Employees Association is still hammering out the details of a new two year contract.

HGEA leaders say they are pushing to get the tentative labor agreement finalized and to their members for a vote by the end of the week.

A ratification vote could then take several days.

Last Friday, Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann said the only item holding up an agreement with The HGEA involves the state's contribution to workers' health insurance.

NASA's twin spacecrafts "Ahead" and "Behind" captured remarkable video of a massive solar eruption.

The phenomenon is called a prominence eruption.

Clouds of cooler gas are suspended above the sun by magnetic forces.

The space craft "Behind" shot the left side of the sun.

"Ahead" captured the right side.

This is one of the first times NASA cameras have been able to observe this rare occurrence.

The eruption lasted about 30 hours between September 26th and 27<sup>th</sup>.



## ISLAND COMMENTARY

# Isle workers should be used for public projects

By Donovan M. Dela Cruz

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 13, 2009

"Local jobs for local people."

Simply put, this slogan could have a profound impact on the sustainability of our island community.

In these tough times, many families are finding it hard to make ends meet. Solutions seem to be in short supply, but making sure that local construction jobs are filled by local residents could make a huge difference in our immediate economic recovery and continued growth.

The city and state continue to put contracts out to bid for projects, but it is becoming increasingly difficult for local workers to compete for jobs, especially when mainland companies win the bid and bring mainland workers to Hawaii to fill the positions. We have all seen the commercials showing how this is the case with Aloha Stadium, where millions of construction payroll dollars will be spent somewhere on the mainland instead of here at home.

Government contracts can help rebuild our state's economy if the money stays here at home. Project labor agreements, or PLAs, require that government contract jobs be filled with local hires. Earlier this year, President Barack Obama signed an executive order encouraging the use of PLAs on federal projects, saying they promote efficient and timely completion of large-scale projects.

Detractors of PLAs claim that they are discriminatory and contrary to the principles of free enterprise. However, a study conducted by three major universities found that PLAs actually had no effect on the number of bidders on a project, and that the cost of a project was not directly correlated to the existence of an agreement but rather the complexity of the project.

If local government contracts are awarded to companies that use labor from the mainland, our tax dollars will help other municipalities, not our own. Outsourcing labor may appear to cut costs, but in the long run it has a negative impact. Mainland workers earn paychecks here but spend the bulk of the money and pay income taxes in their home states, money that supports their state's economy and not ours.

Let's take, for example, a transit station for the rail project. If a construction company is awarded the contract for this station but goes to sources on the mainland for cheaper labor, how does that help stimulate our local economy? The economic stimulus of rail is primarily the creation of jobs. What have we accomplished if our local labor force is not utilized? We are providing jobs for workers from other states, like those working on refurbishing Aloha Stadium.

I would like to see a standard PLA be used for all public works projects that go out to bid. Simply put, project labor agreements mean local jobs go to local people.

---

*Donovan M. Dela Cruz is a Honolulu city councilman, representing District 2, which ranges from Mililani Mauka to the North Shore and around Windward Oahu to Heeia.*

**Find this article at:**

[http://www.starbulletin.com/editorials/20091013\\_Isle\\_workers\\_should\\_be\\_used\\_for\\_public\\_projects.html](http://www.starbulletin.com/editorials/20091013_Isle_workers_should_be_used_for_public_projects.html)

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



## Rail project gets federal OK

Details will be refined during the preliminary engineering phase

By [Star-Bulletin staff](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 13, 2009

The Federal Transit Administration has given its approval for the city to begin preliminary engineering on the proposed \$5.3 billion rail transit project, U.S. Sen. Daniel Inouye's office announced.

Acceptance of the city's application was expected, after a report prepared earlier this year by a federally approved consultant, Jacobs Engineering Group, indicated the project should move forward.

"The next big step will come with our push to authorize the federal share of \$1.5 billion," Inouye said in a news release yesterday.

During the preliminary engineering phase, the city is expected to refine details of the project, including a more precise construction schedule and an updated financial plan.

The Jacobs report estimated the cost of the project at \$5.29 billion, about \$117 million more than the administration's most recent cost estimate of \$5.17 billion derived in the past year.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann had noted the figure was less than the administration's original estimate of \$5.43 billion.

To date, Hawaii's congressional delegation has obtained about \$35 million in federal money to assist the project, Inouye's office said.

Hannemann said yesterday he remains hopeful the city can break ground in December on the initial phase of the 20-mile rail route from East Kapolei to Ala Moana Center.

He said the city is awaiting final state approval of an environmental impact statement and then a federal record of decision before ground can be broken.

### Find this article at:

[http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20091013\\_Rail\\_project\\_gets\\_federal\\_OK.html](http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20091013_Rail_project_gets_federal_OK.html)

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## Letters to the Editor

For Tuesday, October 13, 2009

### **Cayetano skipped relevant rail facts**

Even when I disagree with former Gov. Ben Cayetano's positions, such as his anti-rail stance, I have always respected his honesty.

In that spirit, I would like to correct the misinformation in his Oct. 9 Star-Bulletin interview about the Honolulu rail transit project.

The governor's comments disregard the intense scrutiny, oversight and supervision that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the U.S. Department of Transportation exercise over this project, including its financial plan and ridership projections.

For example, the project budget includes more than \$1 billion in contingency funds at the request of the FTA and its oversight consultants to cover unexpected costs.

Just a few months ago, Jacobs Engineering, one of the FTA consultants, validated our costs and construction schedule. Earlier, Booze Allen, another third party consultant hired by FTA, validated the city's \$1 billion contingency as sufficient for covering rail's construction costs.

Similarly, the ridership projections utilize forecasting models that have been approved by the FTA. Our partners in the federal government would not have allowed the project to advance this far if our facts and figures did not meet their stringent standards.

We would be happy to sit down with Gov. Cayetano to go over the facts about cost and ridership, just as we have with hundreds of others in community group meetings.

Armed with the facts about rail transit, we hope Gov. Cayetano will contribute meaningfully to the public discussion of the biggest transportation project of our lifetimes.

Kirk Caldwell  
Managing director, Honolulu City & County

High Speed Rail

The Rail Professionals' Information Source

**Federal Oversight** 10/14/2009

## FTA approves Honolulu's request to start preliminary engineering for commuter-rail line

Earlier this week, Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii) announced the [Federal Transit Administration](#) approved the city of Honolulu's application to begin preliminary engineering for the Honolulu Rail Transit commuter-rail project through the New Starts funding program.

The project calls for constructing a 20-mile elevated line to connect West Oahu with downtown Honolulu and Ala Moana. The line eventually will be extended to Honolulu International Airport, Waikiki, the University of Hawaii-Manoa and Kalaeloa.

In March, the city accepted design/build bids for the 6.5-mile first segment of the elevated guideway between East Kapolei and Pearl Highlands. Estimated to cost between \$550 million and \$600 million, the project includes track and guideway viaduct construction, and surface restoration. The city plans to award a contract this fall and start construction by year's end.

Now, the city will begin to refine the engineering aspects of the entire project, including a more precise construction schedule and project management plan, and updated financial plan. The city also will complete the environmental review process.

The project maintains eligibility for about \$1.5 billion in federal New Starts funding. The city already has obtained \$39 million in federal funds, including \$4 million in stimulus dollars. In addition, Congress is working to provide an additional \$30 million appropriation for fiscal-year 2010, according to the city.

Comments

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October 14, 2009

## Council must stay the course on rail plans

The city's \$5.3 billion rail project, its largest-ever investment in public works, has passed a critical juncture this week, with federal authorities flashing a green light for preliminary engineering work to begin.

Now the ball is in the City Council's hands, and its members must not fumble.

The importance of this Federal Transit Administration approval must not be underestimated. Permission of the FTA to proceed with preliminary engineering means that the Honolulu project has risen to the top of the stack of "new starts" proposals vying for federal dollars. That signifies a consensus among key FTA officials that the project meets the high bar set by federal regulations for its initial planning and financial blueprint.

On the most practical level, it clears the way for the expenditure of \$39 million in engineering — no small matter during these recessionary times. And it maintains the project's place in line for \$1.5 billion in federal construction dollars.

Scanning similar reports on other FTA projects in recent years reveals that this is a milestone celebrated as a sign that the odds of final approval are excellent. It means a project meets criteria for cost effectiveness, support of land use plans and the local financial commitment, among others.

That's great news for Hawaii. And it's an opportunity that must not be wasted. Honolulu can't afford to repeat past history by causing needless delays.

The City Council plans a public briefing at the next juncture: release of the city's final environmental impact statement. Chairman Todd Apo said this is to make sure the council is grounded on the project before issuing the bonds to finance early construction. That's fine, but elected officials must keep the discussion focused there.

Some critics have faulted the EIS for lacking information on some impacts or alternatives that could be considered, despite the strong case the city has built for its present course for an elevated rail system.

Endlessly revisiting past decisions on technology puts critical federal funding at risk. Political bickering, ignoring the analysis already performed, wastes time and money. The council has a fiduciary duty to taxpayers to avoid needless delays.

The FTA approval demonstrates that the professionals have faith in the plans to this point. Now the council must echo that faith by seeing that the project proceeds, on time and on budget.

October 14, 2009

## Bunda joining race for state's No. 2 job

Ex-chamber leader focuses on economy, alternative energy

By *DERRICK DePLEDGE*  
*Advertiser Government Writer*

State Sen. Robert Bunda yesterday announced his campaign in the Democratic primary for lieutenant governor, saying his experience as a lawmaker would help him bridge the gap between the next governor and the state Legislature.

Bunda, an insurance broker, was elected to the Senate in 1994 and served as the chamber's leader for six years until he was replaced by state Senate President Colleen Hanabusa, D-21st (Nanakuli, Makaha), in November 2006. He served in the state House from 1983 to 1994.

"I'd like to think I have something to give back," said Bunda, D-22nd (North Shore, Wahiawa), who described himself as a consensus builder.

Bunda, 62, is from the conservative wing of the party on social and fiscal issues. He opposed civil unions last session, casting a key vote that helped block a bill from advancing from the Senate Judiciary and Government Operations Committee. As president, he pushed for tax relief for lower and middle-income residents.

Bunda said he would focus on such issues as economic revitalization and alternative energy in his campaign. He said, for example, that he would call for bid preferences for local contractors in state contracts and encourage local hiring for major infrastructure projects such as Honolulu rail. He said he would also promote the development of solar energy production.

"The whole idea is local jobs for local people," he said. "Rail is going to create a lot of jobs. And we need those jobs to go to people who are from Hawai'i. We need those dollars to stay in Hawai'i."

Bunda is the third state senator to announce a campaign for lieutenant governor, following Senate Majority Leader Gary Hooser, D-7th (Kaua'i, Ni'ihau), and Sen. Norman Sakamoto, D-15th (Waimalu, Airport, Salt Lake).

State Rep. Jon Riki Karamatsu, D-41st (Waipahu, Village Park, Waikale), and state Rep. Lyla Berg, D-18th (Kuli'ou'ou, Niu Valley, 'Aina Haina), are also running.

State Democratic Party chairman Brian Schatz is also expected to enter the primary.

State lawmakers have to resign to run for another state office, but have until the filing deadline next July to formally file paperwork.

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## EDITORIAL

# Rail seems to be on track

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 14, 2009

Honolulu's plan for a 20-mile elevated rail transit system between Kapolei and Ala Moana has reached an encouraging benchmark that should provide momentum for the city to break ground on the project by the end of this year. After decades of controversy, construction of the project should go forward on a timetable to reach completion in fewer than 10 years.

U.S. Sen. Daniel Inouye announced this week that the Federal Transit Administration has approved the city's application to enter the preliminary engineering phase of the project. The approval was expected, but Inouye celebrated "a critical federal milestone," as Honolulu faced "fierce" competition with other cities for federal funds amounting to nearly \$39 million for the engineering. The city eventually will be eligible for \$1.5 billion for its construction.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann celebrated reaching "the home stretch," but other benchmarks are as critical. The city awaits final federal approval of an environmental impact statement, which is expected to be completed this month.

The city also might face threats by state legislators to reach deeply into a fund created by a tax surcharge to pay the city's share of the cost. They will be pressured by powerful state employee unions whose members face layoffs or days off from work without pay for the state to achieve a constitutionally required balanced budget during the economic crisis.

The city also could face a legal challenge from environmental groups that have opposed the project and recently maintained that a street-level system would be preferable to the elevated system. Such assertions were refuted by Richard Simonetta, who heads a 20-mile street-level system connecting Phoenix, Tempe and Mesa, Ariz. Simonetta, who spoke at a Honolulu-sponsored transit symposium in June, wrote in a column on these pages two weeks ago that a street-level system would be inappropriate for Honolulu, slowing its operation and causing accidents by competing with street traffic at intersections.

The Phoenix area has "relative low density and wide arterial streets with ample room for the trains and cars to share the right-of-way," he explained. Still, he added, the Phoenix system averages five collisions per month, while the elevated rail system in Vancouver, B.C., has operated for 23 years without an accident.

U.S. District Judge Helen Gilmore also has asked the City Council to move the rail away from Halekauwila Street, next to the Prince Kuhio Federal Building, to Queen Street because of security concerns; it would be at the same level as the windows of three judges' chambers. However, the rail

plans meet requirements of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and can be changed if needed.

While controversy about the project remains, none of those issues should be allowed to prevent Honolulu's train from running on time.

**Find this article at:**

[http://www.starbulletin.com/editorials/20091014\\_Rail\\_seems\\_to\\_be\\_on\\_track.html](http://www.starbulletin.com/editorials/20091014_Rail_seems_to_be_on_track.html)

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

October 16, 2009

## Careers in Rail Excite UH Engineering Students

*Bobby Lambrix*  
*Reader Submitted*

The strong turnout of students at an informational session hosted by the Sumitomo-led rail transit consortium, Honolulu Rail for Growth, at the UH College of Engineering, and their return to meet with executives during the job fair on Career Day reflected the interest that engineering students have in Honolulu's proposed rail system and what it will mean to their careers.

The rail project piqued the interest of Mililani's Jason Ohta, "As a mechanical engineer, I'm interested in all parts of the rail project. The train being built here is of great interest to me as a mechanical engineer in Hawaii. There seems to be a lot of chances to grow," he added.

An April 2009 study by the Economic Research Group estimates that through federal funding of public transportation "30,000 jobs are supported per billion dollars of spending." Locally, city rail planners are also optimistic about the employment potential of the rail project. "No other single project in Hawaii, in the public or private sector, can create as many jobs or generate as much economic activity during this recession," said Honolulu's City and County Managing Director, Kirk Caldwell, in a recent commentary.

Gino Antoniello, Vice President of Transportation Systems and Equipment for Sumitomo Corporation of America, and Ken Bauer, Vice President of Business Development at Thales Transport & Security, shared their combined career experience of nearly 60 years in rail with engineering students who were anxious to understand all the different tracks their careers could take.

Antoniello represents the Sumitomo-led consortium, Honolulu Rail for Growth (HRFG) that includes partners, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries of America, Inc. (MHIA), KinkiSharyo International, LLC (KI), Thales Transport & Security, Inc. and Wasa Electrical Services, Inc. The HRFG consortium is comprised of leading companies in the rail industry and is headed by professionals who have designed, built, operated and maintained many commuter light rail systems throughout the U.S. and around the world, as well as Automated People Mover (APM) systems used at airports. Just last month the consortium put into service the first-ever rail transit system in Dubai.

"I've never been unemployed in this industry," said Antoniello, reflecting on his career in the rail industry. He told the engineering students, "Your field is essential to the industry - it can't be done without you or your expertise."

HRFG collected a thick stack of resumes and expressions of interest from students at both events. Qi Zhang, graduate student in electrical engineering, was one of them. "Working on rail transportation for Honolulu will be an exciting experience," said Zhang.

Commenting on yesterday's news of Federal approval on the first phase, Antoniello said, "We congratulate the City on receiving Federal approval to embark on the preliminary engineering phase of the rail project," said Antoniello. "We look forward to further progress and our possible participation in this historic project, as much as the young people we met at the University of Hawaii look forward to the careers it promises," he added.

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October 16, 2009

## H-1 lanes closed after truck hits Gulick Avenue overpass

*Advertiser Staff*

Two far-left east-bound lanes of H-1 Freeway have been closed after a truck damaged the Gulick Avenue overpass.

Police say debris from the overpass is on the freeway.  
The state Department of Transportation is responding.  
Police say they do not know how long the closures will be in effect.

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# Debris from damaged overpass causing traffic backlog on H-1

By Star-Bulletin staff

POSTED: 11:40 a.m. HST, Oct 16, 2009

A truck damaged the underside of the Gulick Avenue overpass of the H-1 freeway forcing lane closures and a traffic backlog.

The two left lanes in the Koko Head-bound direction under the overpass are closed because of concrete debris.

Koko Head-bound traffic on the freeway is backed up for miles. The incident happened about 11:15 a.m., said state transportation director Brennan Morioka.

Morioka said the truck was apparently carrying a crane and the boom was not fully retracted.

Transportation Department spokeswoman Tammy Mori said the truck is owned by Jensen Precast and she said the state would hold the company liable for the damage. She said construction rebar is exposed on the underside of the overpass.

She said a preliminary check of the company's records shows it has never had any problems.

Motorists are advised to avoid the area until the freeway is cleared, Morioka said.

**Find this article at:**

<http://www.starbulletin.com/news/breaking/64595077.html>



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

October 16, 2009

## Letters to the Editor

### Elevated system will let residents thrive rail transit

As a licensed architect in our family firm Mark Development Inc. my philosophy is to build homes where families can live, grow and thrive with their community.

I want the same for all neighborhoods and communities on O'ahu. We can do that today by supporting and building the Honolulu rail-transit system as the currently planned system. The primary purpose of an elevated system is to efficiently move large numbers of commuters quickly, reliably and safely from destination to destination.

Putting any segment of the system at ground level will defeat this primary purpose and subject the system to traffic congestion. As an architect, I'm alarmed by the potential negative impacts safety issues an at-grade system would impose.

In taking this stand, I am distancing myself from some of my fellow architects and our professional association. I've read their reasons for wanting rail to be built at-grade, and I simply can't agree.

Elevated rail will allow our families, neighborhoods and communities to thrive, and I encourage my fellow architects to rethink their support for street-level transit.

Paul watase, AIA | Mark Development Inc.



October 17, 2009

## City preparing to fight expected lawsuits over Honolulu rail

### \$300,000 sought to pay private firms to defend against possible action

*By Sean Hao  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

Honolulu city officials are asking for \$300,000 to fight off potential legal challenges to a planned \$5.5 billion elevated commuter rail.

Most of that money — \$250,000 — would go to local law firm Carlsmith Ball LLP to defend an anticipated lawsuit challenging whether project officials complied with environmental laws, according to a resolution passed during an executive session of this month's City Council Executive Matters Committee meeting.

That resolution, along with another seeking \$50,000 to pay for the services of the Kobayashi, Sugita & Goda law firm, were made public recently. Kobayashi, Sugita & Goda would be hired to fight any potential legal challenges to rail-related contract awards.

The proposals to hire outside attorneys are expected to come before the council at its Oct. 27 meeting.

City spokesman Bill Brennan was unavailable to answer questions about the proposals.

City Council chairman Todd Apo said the pre-emptive arrangements with law firms could save the city money while preventing delays.

"It's going to save us money because I think there's a high expectation, a high probability of lawsuits on those two issues," he said. "If you're able to prepare for that as opposed to trying to rush on that last minute, you're going to be able to better represent the city and you're going to save the city money."

The city plans to start construction on the 20-mile East Kapolei to Ala Moana train in December. That timetable is contingent on the project receiving federal approval of an environmental impact statement. That approval could trigger a lawsuit questioning whether the city adequately explored alternatives such as an at-grade train system, or managed, elevated highway lanes.

Arrangements for outside legal representation are premature, said councilman Charles Djou.

"There is no plaintiff, there is no lawsuit," he said. "I can't remember a time when we've retained outside counsel for a potential lawsuit."

"This begs the question, — how confident are you that you did your (environmental impact statement) correctly and that you did the procurement for the rail system correctly?"

According to the proposed resolutions, lawyers representing the city won't be paid more than \$295 an hour.

It's unclear who will file a lawsuit against the rail project; however, potential parties include

environmental/cultural groups, private landowners or other special interests.

Rail opponent Cliff Slater would not comment on whether he would be involved in such a challenge.

Slater and his group the Alliance for Traffic Improvement filed a suit against the city's previous mass-transit plan, a Bus Rapid Transit system. They argued that the service would violate federal environmental laws and add extensively to traffic congestion on Kalākaua Avenue in Waikīkī.

Plans to launch the so-called BRT were called off because of a change in political will and the loss of federal funds.

Slater said he wasn't surprised the city already is preparing to fight legal challenges.

"It shows how really deficient they believe the (environmental impact statement) will be," he said. "They've got plenty to be worried about."

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October 17, 2009

## Crane rams overpass, causes gridlock on H-1

*Advertiser Staff*

The two left-most lanes of the east-bound H-1 Freeway in Kalihi were closed for about two hours yesterday morning after a mobile construction crane rammed into the Gulick Avenue overpass.

The incident, which was reported at 10:49 a.m., resulted in a miles-long traffic backup, with near-gridlock conditions extending as far back as the airport.

The two lanes were reopened at 12:36 p.m., police said.

Tammy Mori, spokeswoman for the state Department of Transportation, said engineers examined the overpass bridge before it was reopened for signs of structural damage but found none. The department planned to send a contractor to re-examine the bridge to see what kind of repairs are needed, Mori said.

She said the impact from the crane knocked some concrete loose and exposed a section of reinforcing steel.

Debris that fell to the pavement and several chunks of concrete that were left dangling from the collision had to be removed before the lanes could be reopened, Mori said.

She said the crane was not in the fully lowered position when the crash occurred .

The company that was moving the crane will face a fine for operating a vehicle that exceeded the height limit on the freeway and will be billed for repairs to the bridge, Mori said.

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## **KITV.com**

### **City Gears Up For Legal Battles On Rail**

#### ***Honolulu Mulls Hiring Lawyers To Keep Transit Project On Track***

POSTED: 4:25 am HST October 18, 2009

UPDATED: 4:33 am HST October 18, 2009

**HONOLULU** -- The city of Honolulu is gearing up for possible lawsuits generated by the planned \$5.5 billion rail transit system.

Honolulu Council members at their Oct. 27 meeting are expected to consider the city's request for \$300,000 to hire outside counsel.

About \$250,000 of that money would go to the law firm of Carlsmith Ball to deal with any suit that might challenge the city's environmental impact statement for the project.

The other \$50,000 would be used to pay for the services of the law firm Kobayashi, Sugita and Goda to handle other rail-related challenges.

"I think it is a very prudent move on our part. Any time you have a large project of any magnitude we have seen, you have the potential for lawsuits, so this is a proactive step on our part to be prepared," Mayor Mufi Hannemann said.

The mayor said he is not saying there will be lawsuits over the transit project, but if there are legal challenges he doesn't want progress on the project to be slowed.

City officials expect to start construction in December on the 20-mile train route from East Kapolei to Ala Moana.

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## Letters to the Editor

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 18, 2009

### **Mayor's rail plan a costly eyesore**

The Kamehameha Schools' proposed rail plan is both more financially sound — i.e., \$1.7 billion less — than the mayor's inflation-adjusted \$5.5 billion rail plan. Aesthetically, it is also the better choice for Hawaii.

Honolulu residents can ill afford the costs of the mayor's rail plan, especially in view of the loss of revenue from increasing unemployment, impending layoffs, senior citizens and retirees.

Already, building structures block the pristine beauty of the Koolau Mountains. The people of Hawaii do not need another blight on the landscape for which the multitude of tourists from around the world come to admire and enjoy. Let us remember: Tourism is critical to the economy of Hawaii.

Maile Nicholas  
Honolulu



October 20, 2009

## Burial council won't sign rail pact

*By Sean Hao  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

A government panel charged with protecting Native Hawaiian burials is opposing plans to run Honolulu's \$5.5 billion rail line through Kakaako via Halekauwila Street.

The Oahu Island Burial Council has decided not to join other parties — including the National Parks Service and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation — in signing an agreement on mitigating the rail project's impacts on historical, cultural and archaeological resources. The organizations are scheduled to sign the agreement tomorrow.

The burial council decision is largely symbolic and isn't expected to stop or delay the 20-mile elevated commuter train project, scheduled to break ground in December. But it does indicate the concern Native Hawaiians and others have that the rail project's current route will encounter problems with old burial sites.

"When it comes to the issue that we're concerned with, you picked one of the worst possible alignments," burial council member Kehau Abad told transit officials during a meeting last week.

Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann wrote to the burial council on Oct. 13 urging the group to concur with the agreement. The city worked with the council for months to address concerns about the project's potential impact on traditional Hawaiian burials, which are generally unmarked graves.

However, the administration was unwilling to alter the route from going through an area that sits on a band of sandy deposits that's expected to contain high concentrations of burials, according to the council. That route was chosen by the Honolulu City Council in early 2007 based on a study of various transit alternatives conducted a year earlier.

Some federal officials also have opposed a Halekauwila Street route, which passes the Prince Kuhio Federal Building, because of security concerns.

Burial council members said they should have been consulted and an archaeological inventory survey should have been conducted before selection of a route through Kakaako. The current route will almost certainly encounter buried human remains, which could delay the project and drive up costs, Abad said during last Wednesday's meeting.

"What we're concerned about is the public is going to turn around and point to us as the cause of those increases in costs (and) as the cause of delays," she said. "Beyond just us, they're going to turn to the whole Hawaiian community and say it's those Hawaiians who are increasing the costs of this project for everyone. It is the Hawaiians who are holding up progress .

"We're going to get blamed for something that we knew well in advance would have been coming, but nobody asked us," Abad said.

## mauka route urged

The burial council is appointed by the governor and works to protect Hawaiian burial sites. The

council maintains that a more mauka route for the rail line, along King or Beretania streets, would avoid subsurface sandy deposits likely to contain burials.

City officials said they considered but discounted alternatives because other routes wouldn't generate enough ridership or would have greater impacts on adjoining properties.

The issue of how to deal with the discovery of iwi, or burial remains, arose at the Kakaako Walmart and Ward Villages projects and likely could recur if the city proceeds with plans to build a 20-mile rapid transit system linking East Kapolei to Ala Moana.

According to the city's 2006 study, there is a high potential of encountering Native Hawaiian burials and other archaeological artifacts once construction enters urban Honolulu. Other portions of the route along Farrington and Kamehameha highways and the airport have a medium potential of encountering such sites.

In an effort to alleviate council concerns, the city agreed to conduct an archaeological inventory survey in the Kakaako area about two years earlier than planned, said Lawrence Spurgeon, supervising environmental engineer for New York-based project manager Parsons Brinckerhoff.

Such a survey is currently being conducted at the ewa side of the route, which will be built first, and includes tests at about 80 sites. So far no burials have been found.

## survey set next year

The current plan is to conduct an archaeological survey for the Middle Street to Ala Moana Center segment next year, Spurgeon told the burial council last week. That will be before a final design is completed for that portion of the route, he said.

"If we have any substantial finds that will really require a redesign or anything of that type, we'll have a fair amount of time to look at what those options are," he said.

The city would consider moving train guideway footings and altering utility relocation plans to avoid iwi. However, it's unlikely that the discovery of human remains in Kakaako will cause the city to alter the route, Spurgeon said.

"From our point of view it's going to be a fairly high threshold to the point where the proposed alternative is essentially abandoned in favor of coming up with another alternative," he said. "The city would go through every design option first to be able to avoid those resources.

"Changing the entire project alignment in some area is a last resort."

The city also maintains that an elevated train will have less impact on human burials than an at-grade train.

"To the extent there are specific locations where you are likely to run into iwi, hopefully you can in fact engineer around it to avoid the situation" with an elevated train, said City Council Chairman Todd Apo.

## inadvertent discoveries

According to a study commissioned by Kamehameha Schools and released earlier this year, at-grade and elevated train alternatives affect burials in different ways.

"Although at-grade construction results in a continuous disturbance to the ground beneath, throughout the length of the guideway, fortunately disruption can be limited to the first few feet of ground," according to the report by IBI Group in Irvine, Calif. "The aerial guideway design option will avoid constant disturbance along the transit alignment, limiting the disruption to the column foundation areas only."

The city said it is committed to working with the burial council even though the group won't sign the agreement.

"We need to ensure that any of those disturbances are eliminated or at a minimum minimized," Apo said.

Despite those reassurances, several burial council members said it would be better for the city to avoid an area that's likely to encounter burials. Recent inadvertent discoveries of human remains in Kakaako include:

- About 42 sets of remains were found at the Keeaumoku Walmart site after construction began in late 2002.
- Separately, about 60 sets of remains were discovered at the site of General Growth's Ward Villages development, mauka of Ward Centre.
- Workers dug up 69 human remains at Kawaiahao Church during construction of a multipurpose center.

In each case building plans were delayed and human burials were removed.

"The council is absolutely right that you should expect to find burials on Halekauwila Street," said Thomas Dye, president for T.S. Dye & Colleagues Archaeologists. "There are burials all over Kakaako. If you go further mauka, you get off the sand, which is a good thing if you're trying to miss burials."

## 'something's got to give'

If the transit project encounters additional burials, there will be considerable pressure to move human remains rather than alter the train's route, burial council member Abad said.

"There's a critical difference between avoidance and mitigation," Abad said. "It's hard for me to wrap my mind around the solution that's going to allow for us to have our kupuna handled in a way that maintains the integrity of their sacred burial spots and for this project to go forward — all in that same corridor.

"Something's got to give. What we all know is ... that which gives is our concerns, our values (and) what we hold dear. That's what everybody asks us to give," Abad said.

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## Letters to the editor

For Tuesday, October 20, 2009

### Let's move on about rail issue

Now I hear the city may have to spend taxpayers' money on a possible lawsuit from rail opponents. This is a shame and unnecessary. The people have spoken and voted to build rail back in November. This is the democratic process and whether you agree with rail or not, the decision is made and we should all accept it. We need to move on.

Living in Kaneohe, I remember the lengthy legal challenges and delays to building H-3 across the Koolaus. In the end, it only increased the cost of the freeway and it cost the taxpayers more money.

Dianna Lee  
Kaneohe



October 21, 2009

## Iwi present a challenge for rail project

Like other large construction projects in Hawaii, the city's rail-transit system is expected to uncover ancestral iwi, or Native Hawaiian remains, in the course of building the track pillars and supporting infrastructure.

Proper handling of iwi — respecting the cultural sensitivities of Hawaiians — has been a point of dispute that has caused costly delays in building projects statewide, including the Ward Villages development.

This calls for advance planning for the city's rail transit project to ensure that iwi uncovered are handled appropriately and with sensitivity to avoid such costly delays. The city is planning on conducting archaeological surveys prior to construction. Those surveys should be as thorough as possible, and proper protocols should be followed upon the discovery of iwi, whether identified prior to construction or inadvertently.

This will be especially important in the project's Downtown and Kakaako segments, where the sandy substrates are expected to contain higher than normal numbers of burial remains.

It's encouraging to see that the city has already taken important steps to plan ahead. It has included recommendations of key stakeholders, such as the Oahu Island Burial Council, in developing a federally mandated agreement to mitigate the impacts on iwi and other historical, cultural and archaeological resources.

The city will also invite the council and other stakeholders to help lay the groundwork for its archaeological surveys, to be done two years ahead of breaking ground in sensitive areas.

Even so, the issue remains contentious. The burial council refused to sign the agreement, saying the city should have surveyed the area before deciding on the Downtown/Kakaako segments of the route; the council prefers to push the route further mauka along either Beretania or King streets.

That's a bad idea. While the possibility of encountering iwi may be higher along the Halekauwila Street route, the city's route selection was based on careful planning and engineering studies.

Those studies underscore the existing route will not only yield the preferred ridership but also create less impact on adjoining properties, resulting in lower land acquisition costs and traffic delays. These are critical factors in planning the \$5.5 billion public works project.

All stakeholders must work together to ensure that iwi are treated with respect — and that protocols are followed to avoid costly, unwarranted delays. Having a sensible game plan in place early on will help make that happen.

October 21, 2009

## Honolulu awards first construction contract for rail-transit project

Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann announced today that Kiewit Pacific Company was awarded the design-build contract for construction of the first segment of Honolulu's rail-transit project and that it will save the city \$90 million.

The city will seek proposals Nov. 18 for the next phase of the project, two years earlier than planned to capitalize on favorable market conditions.

The initial 6.5-mile segment of the transit route will run from Kapolei to Pearl Highlands near Leeward Community College. Kiewit's proposal was the lowest at \$480 million, the city said; the first phase was expected to cost about \$570 million.

The contract includes construction of the elevated guideway, installation of the train tracks and restoration of the road surface along the route. The train stations along the rail route are to be constructed in separate future contracts.

Separate contracts are scheduled to be awarded early next year for the train storage and maintenance facility in Waipahu and one for the manufacturing and shipment of the core systems that includes the train vehicles.

Train service for the first leg of the transit route is scheduled to begin in 2012, with full service along the entire 20-mile route from East Kapolei to Ala Moana in 2019.

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# City awards \$483 million contract for first phase of rail project

[By Craig Gima](#)

POSTED: 11:56 a.m. HST, Oct 21, 2009

The city has awarded its first major rail transit construction contract -- \$483 million for the first six miles -- to Kiewit Pacific Co., Mayor Mufi Hannemann announced late this morning.

Hannemann said the design/build contract is for construction of the elevated guideway from Kapolei to Pearl Highlands, near Leeward Community College.

The first-phase price tag is \$90 million less than the city's original estimate because of the poor economy, said Hannemann.

"There's no better fiscal stimulus project than rail," he said at a news conference at Honolulu Community College.

Groundbreaking is scheduled for December. The first train is expected to run on the initial leg of the system on 2012, and full service along the entire 20-mile route from East Kapolei to Ala Moana in 2019, city officials said.

Hannemann said all the money for the first phase comes from the increase in the general excise tax dedicated to rail transit. While no federal money is being used, Hannemann expressed confidence that the money will come for the next phases.

He said the city will also be soliciting bids next month for the second phase, the Kamehameha Highway Design Build contract, two years earlier than expected to capitalize on favorable market conditions. The second phase is a 3.9-mile segment from Pearl Highlands to just past Aloha Stadium.

The first-phase contract includes construction of the elevated guideway, installation of the train tracks and restoration of the road surface along the route, according to the city.

The train stations along the route will be constructed under separate contracts, as will the train storage and maintenance facility in Waipahu, and the manufacturing and shipment of the core systems that includes the train vehicles, according to the city.



## ON POLITICS

# Hannemann's dream could become nightmare

By [Richard Borreca](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 21, 2009

All the indications are that Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann is circling Dec. 6, 2010, as the day he becomes governor -- but he may want to keep the Wite-Out close at hand.

The last two years of a mayor's term are rarely the best or the most popular, but Hannemann is going out of his way to leave City Hall at a scary time.

In his calm, sober manner, Hannemann managed early in his first term to get either agreement or at least no rejection to raising the state's general excise tax on Oahu to build Hawaii's most ambitious construction project: the train line from Kapolei to Ala Moana.

In a state where relocating a traffic signal can become front-page news, Hannemann's handiwork -- first at the Legislature, then with the Lingle administration, then the City Council and finally the general public -- has been something of a marathon political tap dance.

That was just the beginning. Now he's promising a December groundbreaking and then full speed ahead through his campaign for governor next year. The construction schedule presumes work will go on.

Hannemann must dream of TV pictures of armies of local construction workers building a solution to Oahu's traffic nightmare.

His nightmares must be of TV crews broadcasting live reports from abandoned work sites, closed because the city ran out of money; angry native Hawaiian pickets protesting the rail plowing through burials; sobbing widows evicted as the city takes their land; and the unenviable montage of Kailua and Hawaii Kai taxpayers decrying the whole project.

If the mayor's train is a potentially risky business, it is nothing compared to the city's looming deficit, already estimated at more than \$120 million.

The city raised fees this year, but the big budget adjustment will come next year because Hannemann and the City Council already made the easy cuts.

Next up will be property tax increases.

The mayor also will be faced with furloughing city workers and perhaps laying some off.

The grim financial picture now showing at the state Capitol is about to move across the street to Honolulu Hale.

Mufi Hannemann will be on stage either as mayor or as a candidate for governor -- and the audience may not be cheering.

Richard Borreca writes on politics every Wednesday. Reach him at [rborreca@starbulletin.com](mailto:rborreca@starbulletin.com).

**Find this article at:**

[http://www.starbulletin.com/editorials/20091021\\_Hannemanns\\_dream\\_could\\_become\\_nightmare.html](http://www.starbulletin.com/editorials/20091021_Hannemanns_dream_could_become_nightmare.html)

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## **KITV.com**

### **City Chooses Contractor For Transit**

#### ***Mayor Hopes To Break Ground By Year's End***

POSTED: 11:29 am HST October 21, 2009

UPDATED: 12:43 pm HST October 21, 2009

**HONOLULU** -- Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann on Wednesday announced the city has chosen Kiewit Pacific Co. as the contractor for the first phase of Oahu's \$5.3 billion rail transit project.

Kiewit was one of five finalists, city officials said. The company had the lowest bid at \$482.924 million, the city said.

The city said it had estimated the first phase to cost about \$575 million. Officials said the downturn in the economy played a role in the major drop in the cost.

"This award shows that we have been conservative in our estimate and our financial plan is very sound," Hannemann said in a written statement. "This is why we need to get this project going now during a down economy because of the lower costs and the need to create jobs."

The first phase will stretch 6.5 miles from East Kapolei to Pearl Highlands. They city expects the project to take three years.

Kiewit Pacific Co. will design and build the first stretch.

Earlier this month, the Federal Transit Administration approved the project to enter "preliminary engineering" that will allow the city to focus on refining engineering, construction schedules financial plan and more.

That cleared the way for about \$30 million in federal funding to move the project along, officials said.

The city said it will begin accepting bids for the second phase of construction -- from Pearl City to Aloha Stadium -- starting on Nov. 18. The city estimates that it will cost about \$350 million for the 3.88-mile section.

The first two phases will be funded by Oahu's 0.5 percent general excise tax hike, city officials said.

There are still two major steps to complete: an environmental impact statement and what is called a "record of decision" by the federal government.

Hannemann said he hopes the city will not to have to deal with lawsuits, but the city is prepared to go to court.

The first trains are scheduled to begin running in 2012 with full service on the 20-mile length to run in 2019, officials said.

#### **Previous Stories:**

- October 18, 2009: [City Gears Up For Legal Battles On Rail](#)
- October 12, 2009: [Feds Approve Next Phase For Transit](#)
- August 20, 2009: [City Officials Square Off Over Transit](#)
- July 23, 2009: [Fed's Study Say Oahu Transit Project Reasonable](#)

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Pacific Business News (Honolulu) - October 21, 2009  
</pacific/stories/2009/10/19/daily32.html>

## PACIFIC BUSINESS NEWS

Wednesday, October 21, 2009, 12:50pm HAST

### Kiewit wins \$483M Oahu rail contract

Pacific Business News (Honolulu) - by [Randi Petrello](#)

Kapolei-based **Kiewit Pacific Co.** has been awarded a \$482.9 million contract for the first phase of construction for the Honolulu rail transit project.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann announced at a press conference Wednesday the design-build contract for the 6.5-mile phase covering Kapolei to Pearl Highlands.

The contract, the first of several, came in \$90 million less than estimated, Hannemann said. The city had expected the design-build contract to cost \$570 million.

“This is why we need to get this project going now during a down economy because of the lower costs and the need to create jobs,” Hannemann said in a statement. “This project will give our local economy a big boost and help get people back to work.”

The phase is expected to break ground in December.

The city didn't say how many companies bid on the work, which represents the first major piece of what will eventually be Hawaii's biggest public works project. Rail still has many vocal detractors and potential obstacles, so by selecting a local contractor, Hannemann gets the added bonus of pointing to the project as a major job-creator.

Kiewit Building Group Inc. ranks ninth on PBN's list of Hawaii general contractors, with 2008 gross billings of \$126 million. It has 75 employees.

The city also said it will start seeking proposals for the next phase, the Kamehameha Highway Design-Build contract, Nov. 18.

The contract includes construction of the elevated guideway, installation of the train tracks and restoration of the road surface along the route. The train stations will be built in separate, future contracts.

The rail transit system is expected to cost \$5 billion and is to begin service for the first leg of the route in 2012. Full service along the 20-mile route from East Kapolei to Ala Moana is expected in 2019.

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October 22, 2009

## 1st Honolulu rail contract goes to Kiewit Pacific at \$483M

*By Sean Hao  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann yesterday awarded the first construction contract for the city's planned \$5.5 billion elevated commuter rail line.

The \$482.9 million contract went to Kiewit Pacific Co. and was \$90 million less than the \$570 million the city had anticipated spending. The contract covers construction of the first 6 1/2 miles of the 20-mile project. The first phase will run from Kapolei to Pearl Highlands near Leeward Community College.

The contract award puts momentum behind the project and indicates that city officials are confident the federal government will provide the final approvals needed to allow construction to begin in December. What remains to be seen is whether potential lawsuits over the environmental impact could derail those plans.

"We're in the final phase, I believe, of the approvals that we need on a process that started in 2005," Hannemann said during a news conference at Honolulu Community College. "We've come this far, and we're ready to go in such a short time.

"I don't see any show stoppers."

The city is pushing to begin construction in December partly as a means to help stimulate economic growth. The city estimates that construction of the project will generate an average of 10,100 jobs a year for nine years starting next year, including 4,200 direct jobs primarily in the high-paying construction trades. That could help provide a boost to the local economy, which is expected to shrink through 2010.

"Because this economy is in the tank, the sooner we get these contracts out, the sooner we can get people to work (and) the sooner we can employ them and we can help the economy," Hannemann said.

However, a recent study by the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization predicts the city's rail project will generate at most half that many direct jobs — a peak of 2,000 in 2014. The UH study suggests the near-term economic impact of rail transit could be significantly less than city officials predict.

The sooner transit jobs are created the better, said Kyle Chock, executive director for the Pacific Resources Partnership, which represents construction companies and the Hawaii Carpenters Union. Roughly half of the union's carpenters aren't working right now, he said.

The train project "is going to create jobs, and it's going to help not only stabilize our economy, but in my opinion, help bring us out of this recession," Chock said. "There's no bigger economic stimulus project than the rail-transit project."

Some City Council members who support mass transit have expressed concern that the city is moving too fast on this project. That's because the city still needs several added federal approvals before beginning construction. The transit project could face a lawsuit and possible injunction from

environmental/ cultural groups, private landowners or other special interests.

The city's timetable assumes that any such legal challenge will be dispensed with quickly.

City officials also are pre-emptively seeking City Council approval to spend \$300,000 to fight off potential legal challenges to the rail project.

"They should wait until everything is in order, but I guess there is this rush to break ground before the end of the year," said Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi. "It is fast."

Council Chairman Todd Apo said he's been reassured by the Hannemann administration that the city won't be liable for the Kiewit contract if the train isn't built.

"There are provisions within the contract that should this project not get to go forward, that the city is no longer on the hook for \$480 million," he said. "There are escape hatches."

City officials previously had expressed hope that the economic slowdown could lead to lower construction costs. In an effort to take advantage of those lower costs, the city now plans to solicit bids for a \$350 million contract to build the Pearl Highlands-to-Aloha Stadium phase of the project on Nov. 18. That's two years earlier than previously planned.

Lower construction costs could save the city hundreds of millions of dollars during the life of the project, which is expected to be completed in 2019, according to city officials. That could help address an anticipated \$360 million shortfall in local tax collections needed to pay for the project. The city expects to rely on increased federal funds — including diverting federal money intended for TheBus — to help make up for the lower-than-anticipated tax revenue and higher costs, according to a financial plan released earlier this month.

Kiewit is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the privately owned Omaha, Neb.-based Kiewit Corp. It was ranked fifth in a list of the top 400 U.S. contractors in 2009 compiled by Engineering News-Record, a weekly trade magazine.

According to Kiewit's Web site, it has "completed projects from the Arctic Circle to the Gulf of Mexico." The company said it has been in business for more than 125 years. "Our goal for every project is the same — build it safely, on time, on budget and with no surprises," the company said.

According to city officials, any added unanticipated costs of the East Kapolei to Pearl Highlands phase will be paid by Kiewit.

As for the Kiewit bid coming in \$90 million below the city's expectations, rail opponent Cliff Slater said it's premature to talk about cost savings because, on average, transit projects tend to exceed anticipated costs.

"You don't get savings until the job is over and you see the results of all the change orders that will result," Slater said. "When the dust settles, you'll know what it cost."

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## City awards first rail contract

The \$483 million deal, funded by local taxes, is called a 'huge risk'

[By Craig Gima](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 22, 2009

Mayor Mufi Hannemann plans to start building the first two phases of the \$5.3 billion rail transit system with city funds collected from the 0.5 percent increase in the general excise tax on Oahu.

The mayor announced yesterday that the city awarded the first major contract to design and build 6.5 miles of raised guideways between Kapolei and Pearl Highlands near Leeward Community College.

Hannemann said the \$483 million contract with low-bidder Kiewit Pacific Co. will create jobs and stimulate the sagging economy. He also noted that by awarding the contract in a down economy, the bid came in \$90 million under the original estimate.

Because of the lower construction costs, the city will put out to bid next month the second phase of the project, a 3.9-mile leg from Pearl Highlands to Aloha Stadium, he said. The bids were originally scheduled for 2012.

"The money is there," Hannemann said. "We want to make it happen."

But rail critics said the mayor is rushing the project by starting construction without a commitment of federal funds.

"It's a huge risk," said rail opponent Cliff Slater. "It may be a risk the mayor is willing to take but it's not his money, it's ours."

City Councilman Charles Djou questioned whether politics has something to do with yesterday's announcement.

"I think the mayor needs to show he's doing things for his governor's campaign," Djou said.

Djou acknowledged that the mayor is saving money by awarding the contracts now. But, he asked, "Is it penny-wise and pound-foolish, not knowing if we're getting \$1.5 billion in federal funds? Is that really financially smart?"

Hannemann said the project has the support of key federal and congressional officials, including U.S. Sen. Daniel Inouye, and starting the project with city funds shows commitment to mass transit.

Earlier this month, the Federal Transit Administration gave the city approval to begin preliminary engineering. No project that has reached that stage has been denied federal funding, Hannemann said.

The mayor still hopes to break ground in December on the rail system. Construction would take three years and the first phase of the project would begin operating in three years with the entire 20-mile route finished 10 years from now.

"This is a major economic stimulus. We cannot afford not to do this," Hannemann said.

The contract awarded yesterday includes construction of the guideways, installation of train tracks and restoration of road surfaces along the route. Separate contracts are to be awarded next year for a storage and maintenance facility and for the train vehicles and core system. Other contracts will be awarded to build the train stations.

Before construction can begin in December, the city must get federal and state approval of its final environmental impact statement, which is expected to be released later this month.

Slater and Djou said it's not clear if the federal and state governments will move fast enough to approve the EIS in time for a groundbreaking by the end of the year.

Court challenges to the EIS could also hold up construction.

Djou and Slater also questioned the need to start the project in Kapolei when many of the homes along the proposed rail route have not yet been built and D.R. Horton's nearly 12,000-home Ho'opili development proposal is having problems getting a zoning change.

"Is it really smart to start in a dirt field?" Djou asked. "The risk is you build a white elephant that no one can use."

Hannemann said naysayers need to come up with a better alternative to build transit and create jobs.

"It's easier to grumble, grumble, grumble, to complain, complain, complain, monku, monku, monku," he said.

**Find this article at:**

[http://www.starbulletin.com/news/hawaii/news/20091022\\_city\\_awards\\_first\\_rail\\_contract.html](http://www.starbulletin.com/news/hawaii/news/20091022_city_awards_first_rail_contract.html)

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

October 22, 2009

## Letters to the Editor

### Lawsuit will be a taxpayer burden

It's a shame that the city may have to spend taxpayers' money on a possible lawsuit from rail opponents. This is unnecessary. The people have spoken and voted to build rail. This is the democratic process and whether you agree with rail or not, the decision is made. Living in Kāneohe, I remember the lengthy legal challenges and delays to building H-3 across the Koolau. In the end, it only increased the cost of the highway and it cost the taxpayers more money.

DIANNA LEE | Kāneohe

October 22, 2009

## Letters to the Editor

### Opponents should not drain tax dollars

It is really tragic that the city is forced to spend much-needed funds to prepare for the same kind of mindless foes of rail that killed our Superferry. Have these naysayers tried to drive anywhere lately? Have they tried the "freeway" at crunch time? There are just too many cars (most with one person) for this small island.

These foes of progress are costing us needed funds and hopefully not another advance in transportation. Why don't they do an environmental impact study of having thousands of cars producing gridlock?

NANCY BEY LITTLE | Makiki

## Letters to the editor

For Thursday, October 22, 2009

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 22, 2009

### **Train will get us back to work**

As a construction worker who is on the bench, I was very happy to read that that the feds have given the stamp of approval to the Honolulu rail system. The sooner construction begins, the sooner I and thousands of other construction workers can get back on the job, earning paychecks and feeding our families.

Aaron Yamasaki  
Kalihi

High Speed Rail

The Rail Professionals' Information Source

**Project Update** 10/23/2009

## Honolulu awards light-rail system design-build contract to Kiewit Pacific

On Wednesday, the city of Honolulu announced it awarded a design-build contract for the first phase of the [Honolulu Rail Transit](#) light-rail project to Kiewit Pacific Co. The company's bid of \$482.9 million came in \$90 million below the city's estimate.

Kiewit Pacific will design and construct an initial 6.5-mile segment between Kapolei and Pearl Highlands near Leeward Community College. The design-build contract includes construction of an elevated guideway, installation of tracks and restoration of road surfaces. Stations along the route will be bid and constructed under separate contracts.

On Nov. 18, the city plans to begin seeking bids for the project's next phase: the design and construction of the Kamehameha Highway portion, which calls for building a 3.9-mile segment of guideway between Pearl Highlands and Aloha Stadium. The city will accept proposals two years earlier than expected to take advantage of "favorable market conditions," said Mayor Mufi Hannemann in a prepared statement.

Early next year, the city also plans to bid and award contracts for a train storage and maintenance facility in Waipahu, and train vehicle manufacturing and shipment of core systems.

The city expects to launch light-rail service on the first leg of the route in 2012 and open the entire 20-mile line between East Kapolei and Ala Moana in 2019.

### Comments

[Add a comment](#)

[Contact Progressive Railroading editorial staff.](#)



October 23, 2009

## Agreement on reducing rail's impact not ready

*By Sean Hao  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

State and federal agencies this week failed to finalize an agreement on how to mitigate the impact of a planned elevated commuter rail project on Honolulu historical resources. A delay in completing the agreement could jeopardize plans to start construction of the \$5.5 billion project in December.

The city planned to finalize the agreement Wednesday, then hold back-to-back City Council meetings next week. At both meetings, council members were expected to pass a resolution authorizing the city to execute a "programmatic agreement" with the Federal Transit Administration, Hawaii State Historic Preservation Division, National Park Service and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

However, on Wednesday the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation said it wasn't ready to sign the agreement, which is required under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. That act requires federal agencies to take into account the impacts of their projects on historic properties.

Advisory council spokesman Bruce Milhans said Wednesday's meeting was never meant to produce a final agreement.

"There's no agreement that's ready for finalization," he said. "It seems like there is kind of a misunderstanding at a fundamental level about what the nature of the get-together was to be.

"Everything is proceeding forward, and at some point in, we will have an agreement ready to be considered, but apparently that is not yet in existence."

Once the agreement is finalized, the parties involved then decide whether to sign.

The city needs the City Council to approve the agreement before the FTA will release the final environmental impact statement for the rail project. If all goes as planned, the city expects to begin construction about five weeks later.

As of yesterday, the council planned to consider passing a resolution authorizing the city to execute the agreement in its current, unfinished form at a special Transportation Committee meeting Monday. The resolution also is on the agenda for a City Council meeting on Tuesday.

Council Chairman Todd Apo said Monday's meeting will provide a forum for city transportation officials to update the council on the status of the agreement.

"If there are still material issues left out there, it's probably not going to be approved by the council next week," Apo said.

The next opportunity for the council to pass the resolution would be Nov. 16. That would leave the city with just seven weeks to gain all other approvals needed to begin construction by year's end.

If that happens, "the opportunity is still there for (a 2009 groundbreaking) to happen," Apo said.

If the city can stick to its schedule, the first phase of service between Kapolei and Waipahu would begin in December 2012, and the full service to Ala Moana Center in March 2019.

City Transportation Director Wayne Yoshioka could not be reached for comment.

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## KITV.com

### Oahu Bus Ridership Slips Slightly

## Officials Keep Bus Schedule Same On Furlough Days

POSTED: 4:39 pm HST October 22, 2009

UPDATED: 9:12 am HST October 23, 2009

**HONOLULU** -- Oahu's bus ridership has fallen slightly since officials raised prices this summer. That could fall even further when state worker furloughs begin on Friday.

Every week more than 250,000 people ride the bus, city officials said. With public schools and state government offices shutting their doors on furlough Fridays, regular riders are wondering if bus services will be trimmed to adjust for fewer people.

"If they cut out some of the buses that's going to be harder on everybody," bus rider Charleen Milner said.

Bus rider Althea Hawkins was debating about whether to adjust her schedule on Friday.

"I don't like to go late. So, what I do is get there early, so if (a bus) breaks down, I will still be there on time," Hawkins said.

Transportation officials wanted to reassure the public that the bus will run as scheduled.

"We know the furloughs will have some impact, but we are trying to keep it stable so our loyal riders aren't impacted right away," city Transportation Director Wayne Yoshioka said.

Any drop with furlough Fridays comes at a time when ridership is already low because of higher fares.

"If you compare it to last year, its a decline of about 2.5 percent," Yoshioka said.

The city hiked the daily fare by 25 cents. For people watching every penny it is tough.

"It's kind of hard, you know, because if you come and go it's \$4.50 one way," Yoshioka said.

The city's transit director said that about 30 percent of the cost of running the bus has to be generated by the fares and that drives the decision whether or not to raise the rates. Yoshioka said the city's bus pass is still the best deal around.

On an added positive note, he said overall revenues are up 6 percent over past year and the emerging trend over the last five years shows ridership is up.

Yoshioka said that if a decision is made to adjust the bus runs on furlough Fridays, it probably will not happen until January.

Related To Story



**Video: Local Bus Ridership May See Dip Due To Furloughs**

## Letters to the editor

For Saturday, October 24, 2009

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 24, 2009

### **Questioning bids in the rail plan**

Contractors bid low because the low bid usually gets the job, and such is the case with the first phase of the multibillion-dollar Oahu rail transit project.

The city's estimated cost for this first phase was \$575 million, and the bid came in at \$482.92 million. To put this low bid into perspective, maybe our local news media can offer some historical context which might or might not reassure taxpayers.

When the city or the state accepts low bids on projects totaling multimillions or hundreds of millions of dollars, how often are the projects completed under bid, at bid or over bid? And how much under, at or over can taxpayers expect?

Kenneth L. Barker  
Honolulu

## Letters to the editor

For Saturday, October 24, 2009

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 24, 2009

### **Road accident closure too long**

The Honolulu Police Department owes the public an explanation of why it closed Kalaniana'ole Highway at Makapuu for nearly six hours last Saturday.

A one-car accident that was actually *off* the highway would not seem to justify a total closure of a main thoroughfare for six hours.

This is just the latest in a long series of lengthy road closures that HPD imposes, almost casually, while it "investigates." It doesn't seem to care a whit about causing untold disruption.

The Star-Bulletin has previously reported that the California Highway Patrol manages to clear and investigate even major multicar fatal accidents in an average of two hours.

If California can do it in two hours, HPD can do it in two hours.

Unless, of course, HPD people are not as competent as CHP people.

Tom Macdonald  
Kaneohe



October 25, 2009

## City faces difficult decisions on budget

Donna: What are your plans regarding property tax rates? Will homeowners see reductions?

Council Chairman Todd Apo: The city budget is going to be interesting and tough next year. Obviously, we would like to keep taxes down, but we do need to continue our core services. So, at this point, I can't make any promises. My goal is to focus on reducing spending and to focus on our core. That will minimize the total taxes we need to collect. The budget bills will come out in March.

Cathy: Why did the council pass a bill that increases our property taxes at a time when we can least afford it? I understand government revenue is down, but you should have cut programs, rather than expect taxpayers to fund the same level of services.

Apo: We raised the rates from \$3.29 to \$3.42. Unfortunately, the city needed the money to operate. We did cut certain programs and budgets. However, we are also faced with certain costs that are outside of our control, based on contracts, agreements, etc. You will see more cuts come next year. If you have ideas on what city services we can cut and people can live without, we need to hear about it from all of you. Please know that we understand and consider, as well as we can, everyone's fiscal constraints .

Don M.: The first rail contract has been awarded, which will likely generate a lot of jobs next year. Do you expect rail construction to make a dent in the recession?

Apo: I do expect it to help our workers and economy. The Senate put together a task force to look at these issues, and they listed the rail project as a top priority to help create jobs and infuse money into our economy

The fact that much of this will be federal money — taxes paid not only by Hawaii residents, but from all other states — is a big benefit. The remaining question is how big of a dent will it make.

Richard Ubersax: The recently revised Financial Plan for the Rail Project reveals that expected Federal New Starts funding has been increased to \$1.55 billion (from \$1.4 billion in the DEIS) and \$300 million has been taken from the Federal Section 5307 Formula fund (historically used for bus improvements) to balance the construction budget. The combination of GET surcharge revenues and total federal funding still appears to be very optimistic. I have two questions: Do you agree with taking Section 5307 funds to fund the rail project? What contingencies will you recommend to close any gap resulting from further funding shortfalls or cost overruns, and how will this affect Honolulu taxpayers?

Apo: I am still trying to learn more about these 5307 funds. I hadn't heard of them until this recent financial report. I am not in favor of using those funds, if those funds are meant for our bus system. TheBus will remain an important part of our transportation system. However, someone told me that the federal government might be able to give us more 5307 funds that can be used for rail. I'll have to keep investigating.

As to closing the gap, I think we will find some significant cost savings just based on the economy and construction costs. Both public and private construction projects are seeing 20 to 30 percent lower costs than estimates from a year or two ago. The project already has over a billion-dollar contingency built in. We need to find the answers within the project itself. I don't want the city to seek other-purpose funds or taxes for the project. In 2006, the council passed a law that the project must be funded by the GET, federal money and private-partnership money. We need to stick to that.

Linton Lee: How can you proceed with construction of rail without the assurance that we will have the \$1.5 billion from the federal government? Isn't that risky?

Apo: While we don't have the final agreement and appropriation from D.C., we have significant agreements and commitments to the funding of our project. So, yes, there are some risks. But I don't believe there will ever be a better opportunity for us to receive these kinds of federal dollars. I have met with FTA, and they have told me that they believe we have a very good project. Obviously, the position of Sen. (Daniel) Inouye and the strong support of our entire congressional team positions us for the funding. We have to proceed with the work locally, to show those in D.C. that we are committed to doing the project, so they don't think we will back out as we have done in the past.

Jack Diesslin: Why all the discord on the rail project as it pertains to the City Council? The project has been debated, voted on and it passed. Why is the majority who voted "yes" not being listened to?

Apo: There's a few facets to this. You are right the issues have been debated and decided, from the 2005 vote to implement the GET, to the route and technology selection, to the vote last November. We are listening and moving forward. As I mentioned earlier, we still have a level of oversight to make sure things are done right. We will exercise that oversight, but must work to avoid rehashing old issues.

Tom: Any ideas why more City Council members don't support the rail system?

Apo: Good question. Some of it is probably politics — perhaps a lot of it. We all need to jump on board, help do the project right and stop fighting against it.

Mary: There are many families who live in residential-zoned neighborhoods who don't want to live next to a B&B hotel or vacation rental for various reasons. If the B&B hotel Bill 7 passes, what do you say to the neighbors and their children who may be forced to live next to these businesses?

Apo: B&Bs have been a part of many communities for many years. While we are looking at a possible expansion, it will be limited and it will come with a new set of rules that must be followed. It must also come with a commitment for the administration that enforcement will occur.

Many have said that living next to a B&B is enjoyable and sometimes preferable. There can be bad apples. But there can also be bad apples with a permanent neighbor or renter. There's no way to control who will be your neighbor. We are trying to find a balanced solution.

Virginia: None of the proposed B&B bills have additional money for enforcement. How do you see enforcement of any new law that is passed without increased funding to the Department of Planning & Permitting for personnel and inspectors?

Apo: There are two proposals for fees to pay for enforcement. One is a charter provision that is currently in committee. The other is a new version of Bill 7 that I just saw yesterday afternoon. You are right, if we are passing Bill 7, we need to have provisions and funding for enforcement. I have also talked with the DPP director about how we can build in additional moneys for enforcement in the next budget.

Cathy: Why don't you allow B&B hotels in mixed-use zoning and not residential? That would be a better fit and solve the issues residents are concerned with.

Apo: That's another way we could go. The issue there is that we would have to go through all residential areas and decide what should be zoned to mixed use. That itself would take a long time and be, probably, just as contentious. Also, if we did that, it would be more difficult to enforce certain rules, as the land would be mixed-use. As residential zoning, we can put stricter rules on the properties. As we zone new areas, we will be able to look at uses as mixed use.

Nanakuli Bill: Dump trucks constantly going in and out of Nānākuli to the landfill are adding to traffic congestion that's going from bad to worse.

Are there any future plans to correct this? Like fixing up the old railroad tracks that are just lying useless?

Junior: We heard that you want to close Waimānalo Gulch. What will happen with the municipal solid waste? Can you guarantee that no municipal solid waste will go into Nānākuli, Māili, Waianae, Mākua area and PVT landfill? What do you propose to do with the municipal solid waste if it takes seven years to open a new landfill?

Apo: We have about 350,000 tons of municipal solid waste going into Waimānalo Gulch per year. H-Power expansion is supposed to be completed by the end of 2011; it will take an additional 300,000 tons. We have started exporting waste, somewhere between 100,000 and 200,000 tons per year. So, with the H-power expansion and exportation, we don't need the landfill and we will never consider a new site along the Leeward coast. PVT can't take municipal solid waste, it's not permitted or lined for that. My answer is: Don't open a new landfill. Finish the H-power expansion and find new waste to energy technologies.

Steve: Can you address suggestions by the Lingle administration that county governments take on some of the responsibilities now handled by the state, in an effort to help balance the state budget? What duties could county governments take over, if any?

Apo: There may be some functions where consolidation makes sense. But it is sort of like a company telling one division to take the work of another division. Yes, the city and state are different, but we are just a subset of the state. City taxpayers are state taxpayers. So we need to find what makes sense from an operational sense. If any functions are moved, the funding source for those must move also. As for specifics, I think parts of transportation departments may be consolidated.

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UNDER THE SUN

## Grumbling about rail isn't going to go away

[By Cynthia Oi](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 25, 2009

If colorful language were the standard for a successful election, Mufi Hannemann would stand taller than Neil Abercrombie as figuratively as he does literally in the race for governor.

Abercrombie, no slouch in the mouth department himself, was upstaged by Hannemann this week when the mayor, once again, had to defend his signature rail project against the tag-team opposition of City Councilman Charles Djou and eternal mass transit dissident Cliff Slater.

"It's easier to grumble, grumble, grumble, to complain, complain, complain, monku, monku, monku," Hannemann said, summoning the word that many kids of Japanese ancestry probably heard when they whined about one thing or another, and that has been appropriated by local pidgin tongues.

If he's not already used to monku, Hannemann had best prepare for more.

City folks are champions when it comes to raising stink. Just about anything will get them going -- garbage can placement, tree-trimming, bounce toys, the discomfoting sight of homeless people. Monku, monku, monku.

Trivial as some of this fussing may be, people have a right, if not a duty, to complain and question what government leaders are doing.

Rail transit is too big a venture to let slide. It's not just the initial cost, now pegged at \$5 billion, give or take a few hundred million, but the price tag that will persist through decades of operating and maintaining a system.

If some citizens see homeless people as unlovely, they might consider how unattractive miles of sweeping concrete palisades several stories overhead will appear on the island landscape.

There are myriad other issues: noise, pollutants, energy efficiency, flexibility and potential for integration of new technology, levels of use and displacement of homes and businesses, iwi and historic structures, to name a few.

Hannemann is well aware that these and the host of other problems, predictable and unforeseen, could interfere with his timeline for getting the first leg of rail going within the next three years. Anticipating monku in the form of legal challenges, the administration has asked Council approval of \$300,000 to

pay lawyers should there be a lawsuit on the city's environmental impact statement.

The mayor has been largely successful in fending off complaints by saying he has put out lots of information about the project, conducted dozens of town meetings, distributed thousands of color brochures and newsletters.

Even so, he can't simply say "We told you already," and demand that if opponents have a better idea for lessening Oahu traffic congestion, they should bring it.

It's safe to say support for the project is there. It's also safe to say people still have legitimate concerns, even if they are echoed by anti-rail factions.

Regardless of who is voicing them, leadership means working hard so the community is assured that the project will be done right.

To guard against lawsuits, the mayor should have all his ducks lined up properly, his EIS properly vetted, his outreach to interest groups snugly wrapped.

Hannemann needs to alleviate fears that rail won't end up being a 6.5-mile run of high-and-dry track with good mauka-makai views not through one-upsmanship or denying them but by resolution. Muting monku isn't the answer.

Cynthia Oi can be reached at [coi@starbulletin.com](mailto:coi@starbulletin.com).

**Find this article at:**

[http://www.starbulletin.com/editorials/20091025\\_Grumbling\\_about\\_rail\\_isnt\\_going\\_to\\_go\\_away.html](http://www.starbulletin.com/editorials/20091025_Grumbling_about_rail_isnt_going_to_go_away.html)

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

October 25, 2009

## Letters to the Editor

### rail transit

### Savings shows the time to build is now

Reading about the \$90 million savings on the new rail construction contract brought a smile to my face. It shows that the time to build rail is now. We can reap major savings on rail construction while taking a giant step forward in improving our traffic congestion.

If this is any indication, we will see similar savings with the construction contract from Pearl Highlands to Aloha Stadium. I hope the savings from these two contracts will be enough to start building the UH-Mānoa extension earlier.

Daniel K. Aanderson | Kailua

## Letters to the Editor

For Sunday, October 25, 2009

### **Rail is only stimulus program we have**

It's about time the city started awarding construction contracts for the rail system. Our recession-wracked economy needs the jobs that rail construction will generate. Let's face it, rail is the only bright spot in this dismal economy. Tourism, our golden goose, has stopped laying the golden eggs that deliver paychecks and spending cash to families. As a result, we're all hurting whether you have been furloughed or not.

We need new jobs and new revenue to stop this slide. Rail construction is the only worthwhile economic stimulus program we have.

**Mike Chang**

Honolulu



October 26, 2009

## Drivers continue to ignore phone ban

*Advertiser Staff*

Honolulu police officers continue to issue tickets to drivers caught using hand-held cell phones on Oahu, with close to 500 citations issued between late September and Oct. 17.

That's in addition to the nearly 1,200 tickets handed out between July 1, when a new law banning cell phone use while driving went into effect, and Sept. 27, when police began a new campaign aimed at drivers who continued to use the devices.

The law calls for a fine of \$67 for the first offense and up to \$500 for repeated offenses.

Maj. Thomas Nitta, who heads the Honolulu Police Department's Traffic Division, has said police officers would prefer not to hand out tickets to drivers caught using hand-held cell phones.

Police felt a second increased enforcement effort to tag offending drivers was needed based on the number of drivers who were spotted using cell phones even after the ban had been in effect for more than two months.

Nitta said that in other cities where cell phone bans were enacted, a large percentage of drivers complied initially, only to have a small portion of drivers resume using hand-held phones a couple of weeks later.

During the initial enforcement effort to ticket violators, the bulk of the citations were issued in the central Honolulu area, probably because of the greater concentration of traffic there and a higher number of officers to spot violators, police said.

The increased enforcement effort will continue "as needed," police said.

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## ISLAND COMMENTARY

# Hannemann administration not neglecting road repairs

By Sharon Ann Thom

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 26, 2009

As we move closer to breaking ground on Honolulu's rail transit project, we're also continuing to aggressively repair and improve long-neglected roads and other vital infrastructure. For example, crews will begin rehabilitating a major section of Ala Wai Boulevard, from Kanekapolei Street to Kalakaua Avenue, very soon.

In fact, road work worth nearly \$150 million is scheduled islandwide over the next 18 months -- approximately 250 lane miles in areas such as Kailua, Waipahu, Wahiawa, Aiea, Pearl City, Nuuanu, Kaimuki, downtown, Diamond Head, Kapahulu, Makiki, Manoa and Kahala.

An additional \$675 million in sewer system repairs and upgrades is planned over the next two years, and work on a \$45 million sewer replacement project in Waimalu is already underway. This is just one of more than 100 ongoing projects to improve Oahu's wastewater treatment plants, pump stations and sewage collection system.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann convened a special Road Work Symposium at the Neal Blaisdell Center on Sept. 29, bringing public officials together with hundreds of contractors, consultants, suppliers and other industry professionals. This effort helped improve communications, anticipate and remedy potential obstacles, and familiarize everyone with the city's expectations for quality and efficiency.

Teamwork and thoughtful planning are the keys to prudently expediting public works projects, and that's what this symposium was all about. At the symposium, the mayor explained that one of the administration's top priorities is to improve Oahu's infrastructure.

"Our streets and roads, in particular, link our island community and support our economy, and we are committed to ensuring that they continue to provide a safe and efficient foundation for our transportation network," he said.

This administration understands its responsibility to make sure it leaves the island's infrastructure in better condition than it inherited. We also know it is vital to invest in our community during times of economic hardship, to boost employment and keep dollars circulating while making improvements that benefit everyone.

The Waimalu sewer replacement project mentioned above has received \$7.4 million through the federal

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and is the first major public works project in Hawaii to put federal stimulus funds to use. The project will include replacement of 5,820 linear feet of defective sewer lines, most of them more than 50 years old and damaged or threatened by soil settlement. Another 630 feet of new lines will also be added.

Honolulu is slated to receive a total of \$94 million in federal stimulus funds, and we're ready to expedite a wide range of infrastructure initiatives ranging from public transportation upgrades to energy conservation projects.

We'll continue to work closely with the private sector and other branches of government to ensure close collaboration, efficiency, and results we can all be proud of. Our goal is to not only get the job done, but to get the job done right.

*Sharon Ann Thom is deputy director of Honolulu's Department of Transportation Services.*

**Find this article at:**

[http://www.starbulletin.com/editorials/20091026\\_hannemann\\_administration\\_not\\_neglecting\\_road\\_repairs.html](http://www.starbulletin.com/editorials/20091026_hannemann_administration_not_neglecting_road_repairs.html)

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



## EDITORIAL

# Keep moving on rail

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 26, 2009

Longtime critics of a rail transit system for Honolulu are warning Mayor Mufi Hannemann to go slow in building it, but prompt action is warranted to help Hawaii's economy and keep costs down. The mayor indicates that steps have been taken to keep punctual progress from backfiring on taxpayers.

Hannemann announced that the city has awarded the first rail construction contract to Omaha-based Kiewit Pacific Co. at \$483 million. The company's low bid was \$90 million lower than the original estimate because of the dismal economy.

By breaking ground before the end of this year on the 6.9-mile beginning leg from the eastern, yet-to-be developed part of Kapolei to the Leeward Community College area, the city will provide an economic stimulus. Bids will be invited next month -- more than a year earlier than originally scheduled -- for the 3.9-mile stretch from Leeward college to Aloha Stadium.

The Federal Transit Administration earlier this month gave the go-ahead for the city to begin preliminary engineering of the 20-mile transit system between Kapolei and Ala Moana. Hannemann noted that no project that has reached that step in the process has been denied subsequent federal funding.

The rail system was not conceived with the primary motive of putting jobs into the state's economy, but the timing lends itself to that benefit.

"This is why we need to get this project going now during a down economy because of the lower costs for the project," Hannemann said in a prepared statement. "The project will give our local economy a big boost and help get people back to work."

Other aspects of the transit project also have come at the right time. In August, the city awarded more than \$40 million in federal stimulus funds for transportation projects, including the preliminary engineering work.

The city also is going forward on TheBus facilities that will become an integral part of the rail system. Ground was broken in September for a Middle Street Intermodal Center with a pedestrian bridge connecting to the adjacent rail line. It will include a 1,000-stall parking structure.

Longtime rail naysayers are skeptical about the speed with which the Hannemann administration is going to build the transit system. The reliability of future federal funds is backed by U.S. Sen. Daniel Inouye's chairmanship of the Senate Appropriations Committee. It would be foolish not to capitalize on

the circumstances at the very time stimulus is needed.

**Find this article at:**

[http://www.starbulletin.com/editorials/20091026\\_keep\\_moving\\_on\\_rail.html](http://www.starbulletin.com/editorials/20091026_keep_moving_on_rail.html)

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

## Letters to the Editor

For Monday, October 26, 2009

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 26, 2009

### **Mandating rail akin to tyranny**

Is modern Oahu like ancient Greece?

Full of tyrants and myths? At least when it comes to rail, yes.

Only a tyrant would tax people for a rail project years before the proposal has been found to be environmentally acceptable and federally funded.

Only a tyrant would award contracts unlawfully for a project that has neither state nor federal environmental and other approvals.

Only a tyrant would manipulate the process in order to ignore superior and lower-cost alternatives such as bus rapid transit and true light rail.

It is a myth that heavy rail is useful, green, can be built with current taxes or will ease congestion.

Fact is that this train will be least useful to families with kids, schoolchildren, the elderly and the handicapped. It will serve fewer than 3 percent of the trips conducted daily on Oahu.

There are fewer than five miles of elevated freeways in urban Oahu. The rail will be a 36-mile continuously elevated superstructure. And it will destroy what's left of prime agricultural land.

Zeus would be proud of Oahu's tyrants and their myths. Fact is that Zeus never existed. This train should not exist, either.

Panos D. Prevedouros  
Honolulu



October 27, 2009

## Honolulu audit urges rail contract openness

But report urges more bidding competition, better documentation

*By Sean Hao  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

The city needs to improve the way it documents commuter rail contract awards to improve transparency and public confidence in the project, according to a study by city auditor Les Tanaka.

The audit, released yesterday, found that the award of two train project contracts to Parsons Brinckerhoff and a third to a firm founded by former Parsons employees complied with procurement laws.

However, Tanaka had several suggestions on how to improve the process for awarding contracts as the city prepares to begin building the \$5.5 billion train in December.

Tanaka recommended the city consider whether it adequately solicits competition for transit projects. That's because fewer than three bids were received for all three contracts awarded before the audit.

Parsons Brinckerhoff was awarded two train-related contracts worth \$96.2 million. InfraConsult LLC, which was formed in 2006 by three former Parsons Brinckerhoff executives, was awarded a third contract worth \$11.5 million.

Parsons Brinckerhoff is a New York-based engineering firm that has been active in Hawaii since the 1960s. It had a major role in designing H-3 Freeway.

Though Tanaka's audit found that the contracts awarded to Parsons Brinckerhoff and the firm formed by its former employees complied with procurement laws, it said it found some flaws in the process.

"However, we also found lapses in the time allotted for needed reviews, enforcement of some contract terms, and vulnerabilities within the contracts themselves that could lead to increases in contract costs," the audit said.

The audit also raised questions about whether the city's push to begin construction in December could reduce transparency and accountability over the project.

City officials, in a response contained in the audit, said that concern was speculative and unfair. They also said the city already has implemented some audit recommendations, including providing more detailed documentation within contract files and expanding efforts to encourage competition.

Last week, Mayor Mufi Hannemann awarded the first construction contract for the rail line. The \$482.9 million contract went to Kiewit Pacific Co. and was \$90 million less than the \$570 million the city had anticipated spending. The contract covers construction of the first 6 1/2 miles of the 20-mile project. The first phase will run from Kapolei to Pearl Highlands near Leeward Community College.

The Kiewit Pacific contract was not part of the audit released yesterday.

## favoritism denied

According to the audit, two unidentified contractors said they were reluctant to bid on projects because of the city's relationship with Parsons Brinckerhoff.

"Perceptions of contractor favoritism persist among the public and for some within the engineering industry, due to the award of two contracts to PB Americas, a firm that has been awarded city projects for several decades," the audit said.

"This perception was further reinforced by the project management support consultant award to former PB Americas employees who comprise InfraConsult."

The city, in its response , said that it met all legal requirements when soliciting bidders for the three contracts.

"The lack of more offers is ... a reflection of the reluctance of potential offerers to participate in the city's procurement process because of a lack of resources or personal bias," the city said.

The city also rejected any allegations or perceptions that Parsons Brinckerhoff has received preferential treatment.

"The suggestion that one firm and its employees, both current and former, are given preferential treatment in competitive procurement is incorrect," the city said.

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October 27, 2009

## Honolulu rail faces key vote

### A 'yes' would let city sign deal on historical impacts

*By Sean Hao  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

The City Council today is scheduled to vote on whether to allow the city administration to sign an agreement creating a framework to address the impacts of the rail project on historical resources.

Today's hearing will be the second of back-to-back council votes requested by the city as it races to start construction on the \$5.5 billion elevated commuter rail line by year's end.

Yesterday, the council Transportation Committee voted 3-2 to pass a resolution authorizing the city to enter into a "programmatic agreement" with the Federal Transit Administration, Hawaii State Historic Preservation Division, National Park Service and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

The agreement would address the rail project's impacts on a variety of historical resources, including the USS Arizona Memorial and human burials.

Committee members Romy Cachola and Charles Djou voted against the resolution, saying they were concerned that the details of the proposed agreement have yet to be settled. At least four consulting parties to the proposed agreement — the Oahu Island Burial Council, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Historic Hawaii Foundation and the American Institute of Architects — are pushing for changes to the current language of the agreement.

Additionally, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation last week said no formal agreement had been reached.

The programmatic agreement is required under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which requires federal agencies to take into account the impacts of their projects on historic properties.

City Transportation Director Wayne Yoshioka said the agreement is mostly complete.

"Basically the key items that have been discussed over a period of time are where they ought to be and that's what we're going to move forward with," he said.

The council needs to pass the resolution so the city can send it to potential signatories.

The agreement needs to be completed and signed before the FTA will release the final environmental impact statement for the rail project.

If all goes as planned, the city expects to begin construction about five weeks later. The first phase of service between Kapolei and Waipahu would begin in December 2012, and the full service to Ala Moana Center in March 2019.

So far, the Oahu burial council has expressed the most vocal objection to the agreement. The council, which is charged with protecting Native Hawaiian burials, is opposed to plans to run the rail line through Kakaako via Halekauwila Street. That route will almost certainly encounter buried human

remains, which could result in pressure to move the remains, delaying the project and driving up costs, according to the council.

The burial council recently decided not to sign the agreement. Because the burial council is only a consulting party, their decision isn't expected to stop or delay the commuter train project.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann's administration has said it will be sensitive to the issue of Native Hawaiian burials, but won't alter the route from going through the area, which sits on a band of sandy deposits that are believed to contain many human remains. That route was chosen by the City Council in late 2006 based on a study of various transit alternatives conducted a year earlier.

Council members Nestor Garcia, Rod Tam and Gary Okino voted to pass yesterday's resolution. The city has followed all required procedures in drafting the agreement, Okino said.

"There are prescriptions (in it) to make sure none of our historic resources are undermined or compromised," he said. "I think we've done a more than adequate job of going through this process."

City officials said they are confident that all major parties, including the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, will sign the current version of the agreement, possibly with some slight changes.

The city would need to seek City Council approval of any major changes to the agreement.

Councilman Romy Cachola said groups such as the burial council and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation should be allowed more time to provide input on the agreement. Until then, the agreement is not complete, Cachola said.

"I can't support something that is not complete," he said.

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## More transparency needed with rail contracts, audit finds

By [B.J. Reyes](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 27, 2009

Three contracts to hire consultants for the city's rail transit project were in compliance with all applicable laws, but the city needs to provide more documentation and oversight to ensure transparency and public confidence as the project advances, according to an auditor's report.

Lack of proper documentation behind how contract decisions were made reinforces perceptions that "the city's procurement decisions are predetermined" and that there is "favoritism among potential bidders," the audit stated.

The report, released yesterday by City Auditor Leslie Tanaka, listed nine recommendations for the city's procurement process.

In response to the audit, city Transportation Director Wayne Yoshioka said his

department and its Rapid Transit Division are in compliance with all federal and state contracting requirements, and noted that some of the concerns already have been addressed.

Auditors studied one contract relating to the alternatives analysis and draft environment impact statement and two contracts relating to the preliminary engineering and final environmental impact statement.

Among its suggestions, the report recommended continued vigilance regarding existing laws, providing more documentation of sources of information for contract cost estimates, providing timely and complete submissions to outside agencies to allow for proper review, considering more diverse media for advertising of bids, and improving documentation of reasons for contract negotiations and awards.

Other recommendations suggested areas that the city could address to try to maintain costs, such as specifying terms under which future "Allowance for Extra Work" would be established. The city argued that on a project of such size, there is no reasonable way to "predetermine unforeseen needs arising during the project development."

"Your recommendations are generally to continue our practice and, in parts, to expand procurement activities including more detailed documentation in the contract files, both noble goals to which we will aspire," Yoshioka wrote in his



**Wayne Yoshioka:**  
*The city's transportation director said the audit generally recommends that the department continue its current practices with*

response.

In a news release, Mayor Mufi Hannemann said he was pleased with the audit and noted that the report listed areas for improvements that the rail transit project already has addressed, adding that issues raised were to point out potential areas to address in the process rather actual problems found.

"The audit shows that the oversight and management of the project have been sound," Hannemann said.

The Federal Transportation Administration has approved the rail transit project to enter into the preliminary engineering phase. The city awarded the first construction contract last week.

**On the net:**

» The audit and the city's response can be found at [www.honolulu.gov/council/auditor](http://www.honolulu.gov/council/auditor).

**Find this article at:**

[http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20091027\\_More\\_transparency\\_needed\\_with\\_rail\\_contracts\\_audit\\_finds.html](http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20091027_More_transparency_needed_with_rail_contracts_audit_finds.html)

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

## Honolulu City Council addresses rail's impact on historic sites

*Posted Oct 27, 2009 6:30 PM*

By Brooks Baehr

HONOLULU (HAWAII NEWS NOW) - The Honolulu City Council voted Tuesday to allow the city administration to enter into an agreement to address the impact Honolulu's rail transit project will have on historic sites.

The Oahu Island Burial Council expressed opposition to the agreement fearing it does not do enough to safeguard against the desecration of ancient burial sites along the route, especially in Kakaako.

"The burial sites themselves are the physical manifestation of our spiritual connectivity as modern day Hawaiians. To remove them without cause and concern diminishes who we are as Hawaiians. It disrespects who they were as a people ... as a person," said Kawika McKeague, chair of the Oahu Island Burial Council.

City Transportation Director Wayne Yoshioka did not promise humane remains will not be moved to make way for rail, but in testimony before the council he said the city is sensitive to the concerns of native Hawaiians.

"We realize how important the iwi issue is. We want to make sure the iwi are respected and treated in the proper manner," Yoshioka said.

The city hopes to begin construction on the rail project in December. The project could have been delayed had the council voted against the agreement on historic sites.

The "historic sites" agreement still needs to be approved by the Federal Transit Administration, the Hawaii State Historic Preservation Division, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation before construction on the rail line can begin.

## KITV.com

### Burial Council Criticizes Transit Plan

#### ***Critics Say Agreement Does Not Do Enough To Protect Burial Sites***

POSTED: 5:05 pm HST October 27, 2009

**HONOLULU** -- Honolulu City Council members on Tuesday approved a measure to allow the city to sign on to an agreement that outlines how it will protect historic properties and ancient burials along the planned rail transit route.

The city hopes to break ground for the \$5.5 billion rail system by the end of the year.

One step is signing an agreement with the U.S. Transportation Department and other federal and state agencies to protect historic sites on the route.

The Oahu Island Burial Council and other critics said the plan is inadequate to protect ancient burials, particularly in the Kakaako area.

"When it comes to burials we expect a great number of iwi kupuna (ancient remains) to be found in section four of this corridor that they have planned," Oahu Island Burial Council Vice-Chairman Hinaleimoana Falemei said.

"We feel that there is a critical error in the way they are doing which is usually standard by state law," Oahu Island Burial Council Chairman Kawika McKeague said.

The burial specialists are pushing for a complete archaeological inventory of the rail route before construction begins.

City officials said the protections in the plan are adequate.

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## Letters to the Editor

For Tuesday, October 27, 2009

### **Rail is best hope to fight traffic**

It's sure looking like 2010 will be the Year of Rail. We now have a key piece of federal approval with preliminary engineering. Once the city publishes the final environmental review and gets approval from the feds and state, we can start building our long-overdue rail system. In less than 12 weeks we will launch the biggest infrastructure project in Oahu's history and our best hope for fighting traffic congestion and suburban sprawl. I can't wait for the rail groundbreaking.

**Suzy Coleman**

Kahala

## Letters to the Editor

For Tuesday, October 27, 2009

### Turn rail funds over to schools

I am a longtime resident and voter of this great state of Hawaii. I am very concerned about the poor education that we have here in the islands.

Mr. Mayor, why do we need the rail system now?

We all know that our governor is cutting the budget for education.

Why not turn over funds from the rail to education?

Mr. Mayor, do the right thing. Use your common sense.

**Chriselda Lopes**  
Kaneohe



October 28, 2009

## Council OKs rail resolutions

Votes address historical resources, potential legal action by mayor's office

*By Sean Hao  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

The City Council yesterday passed three resolutions the city needs if it's going to begin construction on a planned \$5.5 billion rail transit project in December.

The most divisive decision was a 5-4 vote to allow the city to sign an agreement with several federal agencies creating a plan to address the rail project's impact on historical resources.

The council also passed two resolutions authorizing Mayor Mufi Hannemann's administration to spend \$300,000 to fight off potential legal challenges to the planned 20-mile rail from Kapolei to Ala Moana.

The votes show that the council continues to narrowly support the project despite a potential lawsuit and concerns that the current route could encounter Native Hawaiian burials .

Consistently pro-rail council members Todd Apo, Rod Tam, Nestor Garcia and Gary Okino were joined by relative newcomer Ikaika Anderson in voting for a resolution authorizing the city to enter into a "programmatic agreement" with the Federal Transit Administration, Hawaii State Historic Preservation Division, National Park Service and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

Several groups — including the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, the Oahu Island Burial Council, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Historic Hawaii Foundation and the American Institute of Architects — are pushing for changes to the current language of the agreement.

The key issue is whether the city should have conducted an archaeological inventory survey before selecting a route through Kakaako. The concern is that the current route will almost certainly encounter buried human remains.

The city maintains that its research shows that the likelihood of encountering burials along the planned route is no greater than alternative routes nearby. Additionally, groups arguing for an alternative route should have expressed their concerns earlier, Garcia said.

If all goes as planned, the city expects to begin construction in December. The first phase of service between Kapolei and Waipahu would begin in December 2012, and the full service to Ala Moana Center in March 2019.

Council members Ann Kobayashi , Romy Cachola and Donovan Dela Cruz asked the city to delay the agreement for a month in an effort to allay concerns expressed by OHA and others. They were joined by councilman Charles Djou in voting against the resolution relating to the agreement.

Kobayashi said the city's rush to break ground in December could jeopardize the project's long-term future, especially if there's a legal challenge.

"We all want the project to get finished as soon as possible, but look what happened to Superferry and the Whole Foods project," she said. "They got all these delays, in fact Superferry is no longer

here because of the rushing to avoid the proper procedures."

The Superferry — a 350-foot, high-speed interisland catamaran with capacity to carry 836 passengers and 230 cars — initially sidestepped the required environmental impact study and was halted by the courts. The discovery of burials delayed construction on the Whole Foods Kakaako store. That issue has been resolved, but construction of the store was halted for other reasons.

In other train-related business, the council voted 6-3 in favor of two resolutions authorizing the city to hire two outside law firms to fight potential rail-related lawsuits. Council members Djou, Kobayashi and Cachola voted against the resolutions. Apo, Anderson, Dela Cruz, Garcia, Okino and Tam voted for the resolutions.

Any lawsuit against the train project would be "frivolous" because the city has followed all proper procedures, said city Transportation Director Wayne Yoshioka .

"The biggest difference between this and some of the others is that the others have tried to avoid doing the studies and this is not true of this project," he said.

"This project has done all the studies that are required by all the steps along the way."

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October 28, 2009

## Starting rail work critical for mayor

*By Jerry Burris*

Well the train, as they say, has apparently left the station.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann is well aware that a successful launch of his proposed rail transit project is key to his dream of being elected governor. If the project falters and blame cannot be clearly placed somewhere else, Hannemann will have a difficult time explaining why he should quit being mayor and instead take over the governor's office.

To be sure, Hannemann already has a talking point on why it makes sense for him to move on. It takes, he likes to say, a mayor to start a project this big. It takes a governor to finish it.

What this means is that once the project is under way, it is critical to have a governor on board to watch over financing, lobby Washington for continued support and so forth.

All this helps explain why the city is pushing ahead to break ground on the project, even as various constituency groups (environmentalists, the city auditor, some local architects, the Kamehameha Schools, even the federal courts) are raising questions. And fair enough: If the city waited until everyone was happy, the project would never be built.

So even as the complaints and doubts persist, the Hannemann administration pushes forward. Remarkably, it was able to announce the granting of the first construction contract: \$482.9 million to Kiewit Pacific Co. for the first 6.5 miles of the line, ahead of schedule and \$90 million under the proposed budget.

This looks good, although the start will be almost entirely symbolic. The first section would run between Kapolei and a station near — but not at — Leeward Community College. You can bet there aren't that many people making that commute today who would love to switch to rail.

Truth is, if there is one place on Oahu one can drive to and expect to find parking, it is Leeward Community College, which boasts a vast open parking space.

The real point of rushing this first segment forward is to set things in motion so there can be no turning back. Even people opposed to the project are likely to agree that once nearly half a billion has been committed, there is no other course but to go ahead and finish the thing.

The day will come when it is obvious that Honolulu — crammed into a narrow urbanized corridor between sea and mountains — will need a system of mass transit. The best argument for building now is that the effort will never be cheaper.

The worst argument for building now is that we are doing it out of political necessity. The system will be long built before we know which argument makes the most sense.



## Rail 'programmatic' agreement OK'd

By [B.J. Reyes](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 28, 2009

The City Council has given its approval for the city to sign an agreement with the federal Department of Transportation over how to address the discovery of burials and other cultural artifacts during the building of the \$5.3 billion rail transit project.

The "programmatic agreement" is required by federal law for such projects that might disturb cultural or historic sites.

Council members approved the resolution 5-4, with members Romy Cachola, Donovan Dela Cruz, Charles Djou and Ann Kobayashi in opposition.

Opponents cited concerns raised by the Oahu Island Burial Council -- one of four preservation groups that served as consultants to the proposed agreement -- that urged the Council to delay a vote to allow time to work out language in the proposal.

The Burial Council is concerned over the route of the rail project, saying it is likely to disturb archaeological sites.

"I believe that by passing it, when we know that this agreement is incomplete, is not doing justice -- especially to the Hawaiians," Cachola said.

But Councilman Gary Okino, Transportation Committee chairman, argued against any delay, noting that the proposed agreement is "so comprehensive it will cover any contingencies that will come up."

"What's important here is any delay will cost the project money -- it will delay the project further," Okino said. "Delaying this project is absolutely not necessary. All of the protections are there."

Mayor Mufi Hannemann aims to break ground for the first phase of the rail project in December. The signing of the programmatic agreement is required before the final environmental impact statement can be released.

### Find this article at:

[http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20091028\\_Rail\\_programmatic\\_agreement\\_OKd.html](http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20091028_Rail_programmatic_agreement_OKd.html)

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## FEATURES

### TRANSPORTATION

# On the fast track

*Did the mayor settle on elevated rail too hastily? Hawai'i's largest private landowner seems to think so.*

CURT SANBURN

OCT 28, 2009 |

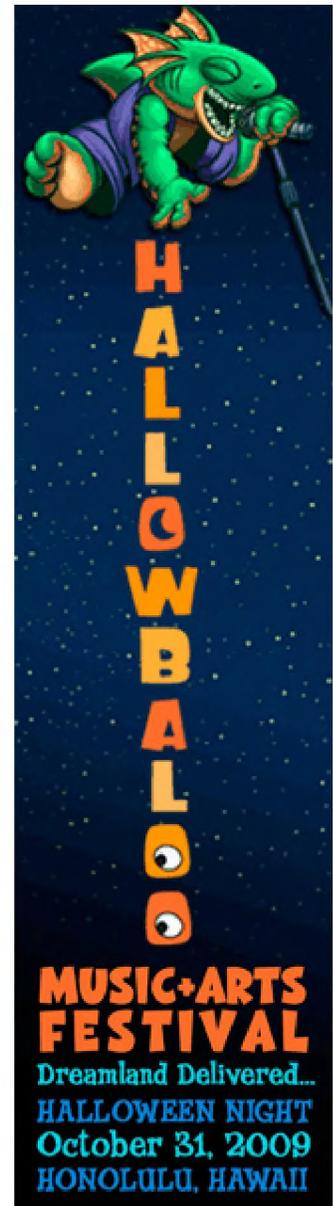


IMAGE: COURTESY OF SCOTT WILSON

**KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS RAIL OPTIONS** / An alternative rail plan for Honolulu that promises to save taxpayers an estimated \$1.7 billion in cost, shave 1.5 years off construction time—and, last but not least, promises to spare the heart of the city the monstrous effects of overhead concrete rail lines and stations—has been outlined in a July 15 report commissioned by Kamehameha Schools, owner of extensive real estate along the proposed train’s route.

The Kamehameha report proposes reconfiguring about half of Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann’s \$5.5 billion, 20-mile, all-elevated transit system to a less expensive and less intrusive “at grade” light rail system. Two major segments of the rail line would be built at ground level, or at grade: the East Kapolei to Waipahu segment and all of the downtown and central Honolulu route, from Middle Street to Ala Moana Center.

The Honolulu chapter of the American Institute of Architects supports the



Kamehameha report, according to AIA Transit Task Force Chairman Scott Wilson. Along with the Outdoor Circle and several other civic groups, the AIA chapter has been vocal in its opposition to Hannemann's elevated train.

But as tantalizing as it is, even at this late date, the report and its proposals will be taken up by the Honolulu City Council and the public later rather than sooner, according to Honolulu City Council Chair Todd Apo.

A majority of five Council members—Ikaika Anderson, Romy Cachola, Donovan Dela Cruz, Charles Djou and Ann Kobayashi—signed a letter to Apo requesting a public hearing on the Kamehameha report.

"We believe a public hearing is warranted to discuss and share the KS rail report with the public," the letter said. According to Council rules, a majority request for a hearing requires the chair to put the matter on the council agenda, subject only to a six-day notice requirement.

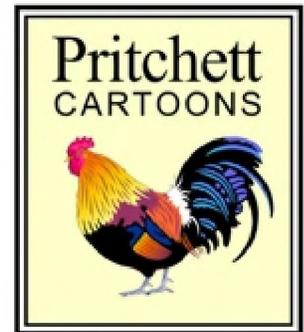
Apo's October 2 response letter predicted that such a hearing would be "lengthy" and disruptive to other matters; instead of scheduling it for the next meeting of the full Council on October 27, he promised to include the Kamehameha report on the agenda for a special hearing on the "overall Mass Transit Project," at some point after the Final Environmental Impact Study for Hannemann's train is released. Apo now predicts that such a meeting will occur in late November or early December.

**EDITOR'S NOTE: LOOK FOR MORE ON THE RAIL PROJECT FROM CURT SANBURN IN THE NOV. 18 ISSUE OF HONOLULU WEEKLY.**

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October 29, 2009

## Honolulu mayor buys \$10,000 in TV time for speech on rail transit

### Tax Foundation blasts decision to spend \$10,000 to air speech

*By Sean Hao  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann will deliver a "State of the Rail" address today to about 200 invited guests, and the city will pay \$10,000 for 30 minutes of the speech to be broadcast tonight on local TV.

The speech will be delivered at the Mission Memorial Auditorium on the civic center grounds at 1:30 p.m., and will be broadcast from 6:30 to 7 p.m. on KGMB9 and KHNL. KFVE will rebroadcast the speech on Friday from 9:30 to 10 p.m.

City spokesman Bill Brennan said the \$10,000 cost for broadcasting the speech is part of the city's public involvement effort. The total cost of the event wasn't immediately available.

The city has spent more than \$5.6 million since August 2005 on informing the public about Honolulu's planned \$5.5 billion rail project.

"The Honolulu Rail Transit Project is one of the most significant infrastructure projects in city history and will provide jobs and a boost to the state economy," Hannemann said in a statement yesterday.

"My administration is committed to keep the public informed about the project's progress, and now is an excellent time to let the public know what to expect in the coming months."

Lowell Kalapa, director of the Tax Foundation of Hawaii, said the \$10,000 expenditure was a waste of taxpayer money.

"At this point, no matter which side (of the rail debate) you're on, why do you need to tell me more by spending money?" he said. "All you have to do is hold a news conference. It's a news item in itself. It's not like all the news reporters in town have ignored him and there is no news coverage of it."

The broadcast could rile some taxpayers who would rather see the money spent on more pressing social needs, Kalapa added.

"I would like to take \$1,000 and put it in the Food Bank," he said.

Most — about \$3 million — of the city's spending on its rail-related information campaign came since June 30, 2008, and included a ramped-up effort ahead of last November's vote on the project.

Voters approved the East Kapolei to Ala Moana rail project by a 51 percent to 46 percent margin. The city plans to start construction of the 20-mile elevated rail line in December.

The city has said its information campaign is part of a federally required public involvement effort.

The federal government is expected to contribute \$1.4 billion to \$1.7 billion of the Honolulu transit

system's cost.

## Additional Facts

Watch online

See live streaming video of mayor's "State of the Rail" speech at 1:30 p.m. today at [www.HonoluluAdvertiser.com](http://www.HonoluluAdvertiser.com)

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## Rail delayed, project still needs final EIS

Posted: Oct 29, 2009 6:52 PM

Updated: Oct 29, 2009 7:24 PM

By Tim Sakahara - [bio](#) | [email](#)

HONOLULU (HawaiiNewsNow) - Groundbreaking on the Honolulu rail transit was just two months away but today Mayor Mufi Hannemann announced that's been delayed until at least late January.

The city says the federal government needed more time to go over the impacts, which a rail spokesperson says they're glad to give because they'd rather eliminate potential problems now rather than down the line.

Mayor Hannemann's goal for the rail transit is to be on time, on budget and on schedule but with groundbreaking just two months away it's already delayed.

"I'm announcing today that I'm willing to push back our groundbreaking schedule for at least another month to allow the appropriate federal, state, and community organizations to cross the T's and dot the I's," Mufi Hannemann in a speech to a crowd of more than 200 invited guests at Mission Memorial Auditorium.

The Mayor shrugged off any negative message the delay would send.

"Thirty days, given our history, we've been waiting 40 years for this so to take another 30 days is minor," said Hannemann.

Opponents say delays are a sign of things to come especially when lawsuits start rolling in.

"I would imagine somebody is going to file a lawsuit, because there are so many legal deficiencies in the document," said Cliff Slater, HonoluluTraffic.com and also with Stop Rail Now. "They've got some problems. Whether they turn out to be insurmountable problems, or just potholes we'll see."

The city still needs to publish the final environmental impact statement. Then the Governor Lingle needs to accept it or she could halt the project right there.

Then the federal government will give one last check and give the okay to start construction with what's called a Record of Decision.

"That is exactly the time that if anyone has an objection to this EIS can sue because only at that time the feds have accepted the document and you can say well I have this A,B,C,D, disagreement, and I'm suing you for that," said Panos Prevedouros, University of Hawaii Engineering Professor and former mayoral opponent of Hannemann. "The lawsuit may come with an immediate injunction, so construction could start on day one and stop on day two. It depends on what the judge prefers and which level it will be taken."

The city is already expecting a challenge. It set aside \$300,000 to fight any lawsuits. The Mayor even called out opponents in his speech.

"So I say to you out there if any group or agency is contemplating a challenge in these final hours I challenge you to offer a viable solution accompanied by a substantive funding source," said Hannemann.

Opponents say they did come with alternatives but they were all dismissed by the city which is one reason they may sue.



Mayor Mufi Hannemann



Cliff Slater



Panos Prevedouros



Artist's conception of Oahu rail system



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## Mayor Willing To Delay Rail's Groundbreaking

Reported by: Andrew Pereira

Email: [apereira@khon2.com](mailto:apereira@khon2.com)

Last Update: 10/29 10:21 pm

Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann told a television audience expected to number 75,000 that he's willing to delay groundbreaking on the city's \$5.4 billion rail transit project until January, so that state and federal agencies can complete work on a final environmental impact statement.

"Yes it's a compromise," said the mayor, "but believe it or not I've always been a compromiser."

The mayor spoke inside Mission Memorial Auditorium next to Honolulu Hale Thursday afternoon as two hundred invited guests looked on and television cameras recorded the speech dubbed "The State of the Rail."



The mayor's address was rebroadcast on two local stations at 6:30 p.m. at a cost to taxpayers of \$10,000.

After the speech the mayor said the groundbreaking delay was not related to a programmatic agreement (PA) that must be signed by several state and federal agencies before the project's final environmental impact statement can be released.

"It's just my willingness to be flexible," Hannemann insisted.

Signatories to the PA include the Hawaii State Historic Preservation Division, the National Park Service, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the Federal Transit Administration.

However the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation has expressed concern about the city's plan to protect native Hawaiian iwi along the 20 mile route.

The federal agency, charged with protecting historical resources under the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act, is seeking changes to the PA, which details how burials and other historical sites would be protected during construction of the rail line.

On Wednesday the Honolulu City Council approved a resolution that sets aside \$250,000 for possible legal challenges to the elevated train. Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi, who tried to unset Hannemann in last year's mayoral race, voted against the measure.

"What are they anticipating," asked Kobayashi. "What does the administration think; that this is not a tight project?"

Kobayashi also criticized Hannemann for spending \$10,000 to broadcast Thursday's speech and blasted the mayor for the \$5.4 million the city has spent so far in educating the public

about the rail project.

"Just think of the number of families we could help if we use that money instead of all this propaganda," said the councilwoman.

Hannemann defended the outreach campaign, saying the city had spent only a small fraction of the total cost of the project.

"According to the American Public Transportation Association one should spend one percent on public involvement education," said the mayor. "So that means \$54 million dollars. That means that we've spent five million so far. That means that's one tenth of one percent."

During his speech Hannemann stated the rail project is expected to create 10,000 jobs and promised all of them would go to local residents.

"No other project will create as many jobs or offer as much hope and opportunity for our people," said the mayor.

Hannemann also pledged he would create an advisory council to provide expertise on native Hawaiian burials and hoped voters would approve the creation of a transit authority to help manage construction and operation of the rail system.

The city expects to receive \$1.5 billion from the federal government to help fund the 20-mile system which will stretch from east Kapolei to Ala Moana. Hannemann addressed money concerns during his speech, but did not mention federal funding.

"For those still nervous about the cost," said Hannemann, "let me assure you that the federal government has been looking over our shoulder every step of the way."

Kobayashi worries what may happen if the feds give the city less than what's expected. "The greatest source of revenue for the city is property tax so you know that's where we'll have to go."

During his speech the mayor also detailed some of *his* greatest concerns about the rail project.

Hannemann said he's worried Gov. Lingle could kill the project by refusing to accept the final EIS and wonders whether state lawmakers may go after monies raised by the half percent rail surcharge

From January 2007 to September of this year the tax has netted \$468.4 million. The state keeps ten percent to cover the cost of collecting the tax.

Just last week the city awarded Kiewit Pacific a \$483 million contract to design and build the first rail segment from Kapolei to Leeward Community College.

Have a news tip? Contact Andrew Pereira at 368-7273.

## KITV.com

### Hannemann Discusses Rail Progress In Speech

#### ***Mayor Willing To Delay Groundbreaking By 1 Month***

POSTED: 5:11 pm HST October 29, 2009

**HONOLULU** -- Mayor Mufi Hannemann delivered a speech on Thursday to an invitation-only crowd of mostly pro-transit business and community leaders about the state of Oahu's rail project.

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The event was taped for broadcast on the new merger group of KHNL, KFVE and KGMB.

Courtesy invites went out to lawmakers and City Council members although only a handful attended.

The speech began with video of the mayor on a virtual ride on the transit system.

The speech outlined the genesis of rail in Honolulu over the last four decades, leading up to this point of time as the city plans for the historic groundbreaking and the work on the system that Oahu will soon see.

"Early next year, we will start relocating underground utilities and preparing of sites for our guideway columns. We will be drilling foundations and erecting concrete columns at several locations so you can follow the path of the guideway," Hannemann said.

His message was that rail is on track. However, Hannemann said while he would prefer the city break ground by the year's end he is willing to delay the groundbreaking by a month. He underscored what is at stake.

"The longer we delay the money will go away. The longer the greater the economic disarray," Hannemann said. "Another 30 days takes us into January but keep in mind our legislative session starts in January that is why I point out clearly and bluntly that there are some in the state Legislature who would love to take this money away, and there are some in the state administration who would want to take this away, but I think we have laid a clear and convincing case why the money should stay where it is to build a project, to create jobs."

Hannemann spent about \$10,000 to produce and televise the speech. While some have questioned the necessity of the speech, he maintains it is money well spent.

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October 30, 2009

## Gospel of rail according to Mufi

*By Lee Cataluna*

Part pep rally, part Pastor Wayne Cordeiro. Mayor Mufi Hannemann sure knows how to put on a rousing show.

The "State of Rail Transit" speech yesterday was a half-hour evangelism on the reality of rail, an affirmation that this is going to happen and it's going to happen now. At least at the live event, it was a sermon to the choir because attendance was by mailed invitation only. No would-be town-hall hecklers allowed. The taped half-hour show was televised to the public last night.

As the believers filed into the auditorium, the mayor's train playlist boomed over the sound system: "Last Train to Clarksville," "Locomotion," "Midnight Train to Georgia," "The Love Train," even some UB40 and 95 South train-related tunes. C'mon ride the train, ride it. It's hard not to tap your toe to that one.

The event opened with a slick video showing a local mom trying to get everybody fed and out the door on a weekday. Eggs, toast, coffee, nice Kapolei house, the mama saying wearily that she has to get up at 4 every morning to make it into town before the traffic. That is the price her family has to pay, she says, but it is too high a price.

Somebody say "amen."

Then comes the New Age happy music signaling the future. Hannemann appears on the screen seated on the magic train. He smiles and waves to happy passengers, including a girl carrying her surfboard and an old lady with a walker. A rainbow appears above the train. "This is not a virtual dream, folks," Hannemann says on the video, and then he walks on stage, "this is our reality."

Hoo da slick.

Earlier in the day, the mayor held a rehearsal to make sure all the tricky technical elements went smoothly for the live speech. Of course it went smoothly. He's MufiHannemann. If he doesn't become governor, he can open a show in Waikiki.

But did we really need the State of the Rail show? Will any nonbelievers be converted by this? Do they need to be? Voters already registered support for rail. Isn't it OK for there to be doubters and detractors and people asking tough questions?

The take-away message of all the slick staging was that rail is way past the "I think I can" phase and firmly on track to reality, let there be no doubt, come what may. The concession of an anticipated delay was slid in there toward the end, but followed by more talk of hope and commitment.

Everybody say amen. Or else.

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October 30, 2009

## Honolulu mayor willing to delay start of rail project

*By Sean Hao  
Advertiser Staff Writer*

Mayor Mufi Hannemann's announcement yesterday that he will push back the start date for construction of the planned \$5.5 billion commuter rail line coincided with word that one federal agency and one state agency are not ready to sign off on the project.

The federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the state Historic Preservation Division said yesterday the city's plan for lessening the impact of the rail line on historical sites, including burials, needs changes.

Hannemann told an auditorium filled with legislative and business leaders, union officials and city employees, "I'm announcing today that I'm willing to push back our groundbreaking schedule for at least another month to allow the appropriate federal, state and community organizations to cross the t's and dot the i's."

Hannemann had hoped to start construction of the 20-mile elevated rail line between East Kapolei and Ala Moana in December.

Any substantive change to the historical impact plan will require approval by the City Council, which could cause delays.

That historical impact plan needs to be completed and signed before the Federal Transit Administration will give a green light to the rail project. FTA approval is crucial to the project since the city is counting on the federal government to pay for \$1.55 billion of the rail construction costs.

The federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation also warned that the city should not sign any contracts to implement the train project until the historical impact plan is finalized. Any such step could compromise the agency's ability to endorse the city's agreement, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation said.

Hannemann said on Oct. 21 that the city had awarded a contract for the first phase of construction to Kiewit Pacific Co. The contract is worth \$482.9 million and covers construction of the first 6.5 miles of elevated guideway.

That contract award and a half-hour, paid television program aired last night were part of an effort to show that the train project is about to succeed where several past attempts have failed. Yesterday's state of the rail speech by Hannemann, which was recorded earlier in the day at the Mission Memorial Auditorium, kicked off with a video of Hannemann riding a virtual representation of a train.

The mayor's message: The real thing is on the way.

"This is not a virtual dream folks," Hannemann said. "This is our reality."

However, construction cannot occur until the city receives added federal and state approvals.

"I have said the longer we delay, the more we're going to pay," Hannemann said. "But I believe we must be prudent at this critical juncture because thorough preparation will contribute to our ultimate

success."

## critics' take

Hannemann yesterday said the potential delay exemplifies his willingness to be flexible and compromise on the project.

However, project critics have long criticized the mayor for failing to meaningfully consider alternatives to rail as well as alternative rail technologies and other routes.

"He doesn't have any choice" but to delay the project, said rail opponent Cliff Slater. "He's got all these federal agencies they're not willing to sign. He's got to do whatever they feel is necessary to fulfill the requirements to protect historic sites."

The city spent \$10,000 on air time needed to broadcast the speech, which hit on several previous themes including:

- How the train is needed to stimulate the economy.
- How delays could jeopardize the availability of federal funds.
- And how delays could cause state officials to raid transit funds.

The speech also appeared to be an appeal for support for the train project and future initiatives such as the creation of a transit authority to oversee train construction and operations.

"The whole purpose of the speech from my point of view was to mobilize support from every level — grass roots all the way to business and to other elected officials," said City Councilman Donovan Dela Cruz.

Did the speech work?

"We'll find out soon enough," Dela Cruz said. "I think it provided a lot of information for people that needed that reaffirmation that rail is moving ahead."

The city also released a public opinion poll of 900 residents surveyed in September that showed 60 percent support rail and 65 percent said the project is a good investment. The survey was conducted by QMark Research and had a margin of error of plus or minus 3.27 percent.

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## 30-day rail delay a minor matter, Hannemann says

The mayor says time is needed to allow for all the necessary state and federal approvals

[By B.J. Reyes](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 30, 2009

While the expected December groundbreaking for the city's \$5.3 billion rail transit project is being pushed back by a month, Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann says he does not see it as a setback.

"Come on, 30 days? We've been waiting 40 years for this, so to take another 30 days is minor," Hannemann told reporters yesterday after delivering his first "State of the Rail" address.

Hannemann's administration spent \$10,000 on the program at the Mission Memorial Auditorium to provide an update on the progress of the rail project.

Starting with a video depicting the mayor commuting into downtown from West Oahu by train, Hannemann outlined the history of proposed rail projects dating to the administration of Neal Blaisdell.

His address comes at a critical time for the project.

The city is awaiting state and federal approval of a final environmental impact statement for the proposed 20-mile elevated rail route. Once that is complete, the city would need a federal "record of decision" before construction can begin.

 [Mufi Rail Presser](#)



[ [Watch](#) ]



"I'm prepared to basically give them a little more time," Hannemann said. "I think what's prudent is maybe another month to anyone that has to sign off in these closing minutes -- if you will -- of this project that we've come so far on in four years.

"It's just my willingness to be flexible and compromise."

A prominent rail opponent said the mayor's speech was indicative of a potential hang-up in obtaining final approval for the environmental impact statement.

"I think, obviously, they're having trouble because the mayor said at least a month," Cliff Slater, founder of Stop Rail Now. "We think it'll be more than that."

Slater noted that Hannemann boasted in his speech about how the city had completed the initial planning stages in just four years, versus five to 15 years.

"They've rushed this so fast," he said. "It is normally a slow process. They just missed some things along the way, and I think they may have to go back and do them -- fill in those holes."

Hannemann emphasized that extensive delays could cost the project money, with fierce competition at the national level for federal dollars and the potential raid of transit money by the state Legislature.

"There are some in the Legislature that would love to take this money away. There are some in the state administration that would love to take this money away," Hannemann said. "I think we've made a clear and convincing case why that money should stay where it is: to build a project that will create jobs."

The Legislature explored raiding the city's rapid transit fund, which is funded by a half-percent surcharge on the state general excise tax, last session.

State Sen. Gary Hooser (D, Niihau-Kauai), majority leader, said a raid is possible again as the state faces a growing budget deficit.

"I'm sure there are discussions that are going to go on, and every source of funding is going to be looked at closely," said Hooser.

>> [Click here for Mayor Hannemann's full speech](#)

**Find this article at:**

[http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20091030\\_30-day\\_rail\\_delay\\_a\\_minor\\_matter\\_Hannemann\\_says.html](http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20091030_30-day_rail_delay_a_minor_matter_Hannemann_says.html)

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## Letters to the Editor

For Friday, October 30, 2009

### Costs for rail will never end

Mayor Mufi Hannemann misread the meaning of Kiewit's lower-than-expected bid. It just means his experts and Kiewit's couldn't estimate 10 percent of the project's cost any closer than \$90 million.

And most money taken from Oahu gets paid to someone else's engineers, systems designers, managers, etc., and to someone else's manufacturers of goods like steel and rail cars.

And the cost never ends. The mayor's experts designed rail to run at a loss. Borrowed money is never repaid. Interest payments never stop.

And major redesign of Oahu, like Kapolei, becomes impossible. Sensible or not, Oahu's development will be dictated by unmovable train tracks.

Let's modernize our neglected, badly designed roads instead, to get faster, less expensive relief using our own engineers, architects, etc. For starters, add up-and-over ramps on Dillingham Boulevard for trucks returning to the docks from Waikiki. Remove those gas-wasting left-turn lights.

George L. Berish  
Honolulu

## Letters to the Editor

For Saturday, October 31, 2009

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 31, 2009

### **Rail project just a tool for mayor**

When someone is trying so desperately to push a project to get started, you just have to take a second look at what's going on. Yes, I'm talking about Mayor Mufi Hannemann and the rail project. I couldn't care less about his claims of federal funding and low bids. Point is, the money is not in hand, and low bids are a joke and used just to get the foot in the door.

Mayor Hannemann just wants to say, "I was the one who started the rail system" in his bid for governor, but what legacy is he going to leave the next mayor of Honolulu? Will the next mayor be the one to "furlough" the rail employees, because after all, once it's built, you still have to operate and maintain it? Where is the money going to come from then?

We are in a troubled economy, and that's a fact. People are losing their jobs and paychecks are getting smaller.

Do you really think it's wise to start a project like this now? And just how much can you realistically tax your citizens?

Daniel J. Bryant  
Mililani

# Honolulu Rail Transit Project



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  - Four park-and-rides totaling 4,100 parking spaces



# Travel Times to Ala Moana Center Station

<b>From:</b>	<b>Time:</b>
<b>East Kapolei Station</b>	<b>42 minutes</b>
<b>Waipahu Transit Center</b>	<b>31 minutes</b>
<b>Pearlridge Station</b>	<b>24 minutes</b>
<b>Airport Station</b>	<b>16 minutes</b>
<b>Kalihi Station</b>	<b>10 minutes</b>
<b>Downtown Station</b>	<b>4 minutes</b>

# Public Decisions

- December 22, 2006
- City Council selected fixed guideway in exclusive Right-of-Way
- Known as the Locally Preferred Alternative
- Established route, elevated guideway in downtown

# Public Decisions

- **Transit Mode**
  - Fixed guideway in exclusive Right-of-Way
- **Alignment**
  - Now – East Kapolei to Ala Moana Center
  - Future – Kapolei to UH Mānoa and Waikīkī
- **Vehicle Technology**
  - Steel wheel on steel rail – “Light Metro”
  - Widely used, durable, cost-effective

# Recent News

- Preliminary Engineering
- Initial review of construction proposals for first 6.5 miles lower than expected
  - Could save project hundreds of millions of dollars

# FTA New Starts Funding

- FTA has agreed to consider a funding request of \$1.55 billion

# Federal Funding

- Federal funds to date:
  - \$4M in federal stimulus funds awarded
  - \$35M appropriated by Congress
- FY2010:
  - \$30M pending in Congress

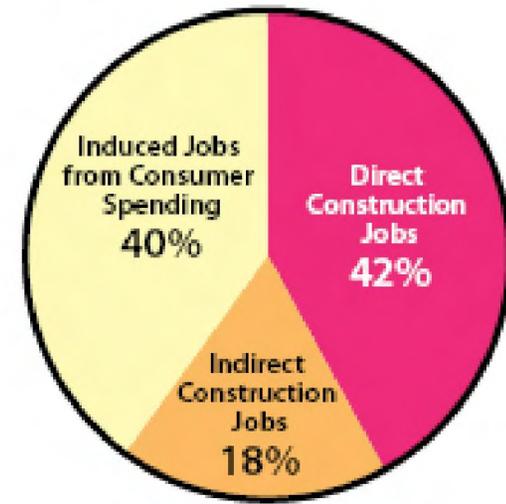
# General Excise and Use Tax

- GET surcharge spread over 16 years, sunsets in 2022.
- City's forecast: The middle ground of economic "boom & bust" cycle
- GET revenues follow the economy; when economy rises, so will GET revenues

# Economic Benefits

- Building rail will fight the recession
- Creating 10,000 jobs a year
- State's largest job creating project

Employment Created by Rail Construction\*



\*Person years of employment.

# At Grade or Street Rail

- Slower
- Stuck in traffic congestion
- Higher long-term operating costs
- Less frequent trips
- Fewer riders
- More construction and land use impacts

# Street Rail Construction in Phoenix



Trench along entire route for trackbed;  
relocate all underground utilities

Road widening and right of way  
acquisitions





Phoenix

At-grade train in Phoenix, a spacious and sprawling city



**At-grade train: a two-lane road becomes a one-way street for cars**

Houston

Houston



**At-grade train stations require wide sidewalks that downtown Honolulu lacks**

**Walkers and bikers must cross in front of an at-grade train**



# What Could Elevated Rail Look Like in Honolulu?

# What Could It Look Like?



# Kamehameha Highway at Ka'ahumanu Street



# Kamehameha Highway near Radford Drive



SIMULATION

# Crossing Nu‘uanu Stream



# Halekauwila Street at Mother Waldron Park



SIMULATION

# Rail Station Designs

# East Kapolei Station Inspiration: Makai



WORK GROUP 10 INTERIORS/ENCL, INC.

# UH West O'ahu Station Inspiration: Mauka



# West Loch Station



**Inspiration:  
Plantation Roofline &  
Sugar Cane**



# Waipahu Transit Center Station



# Leeward Community College Station



# Canopy Design for Stations



# Canopy Design for Stations



# Canopy Design for Stations

evening view



# Project Schedule

- Fall 2009: Release of Final EIS
- Fall 2009: FTA issues Record of Decision
- December 2009: Groundbreaking
- Late 2012: Service opens in phases, beginning in Waipahu
- Spring 2019: Start full service

# Milestones for next 12 weeks

- Selecting contractor for first 6.5 miles of elevated guideway
- Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS)
  - Final EIS accepted by State
- Groundbreaking

# What to expect in 2010

- Construction in East Kapolei
- Job creation
- \$330 million in new revenue in our economy from construction spending
- Economic growth in the recession

# Stay Informed

- Sign up for monthly newsletter
- Watch “Honolulu on the Move” on ‘Olelo Channel 54, Mondays at 6:30 pm
- Visit [www.honolulustransit.org](http://www.honolulustransit.org)
- Visit [youtube.com/honoluluonthemove](http://youtube.com/honoluluonthemove)
- Follow our Tweets at [Twitter.com/hnl\\_rtd](https://twitter.com/hnl_rtd)
- Find us on Facebook

*Mahalo!*



# Pearlridge

## Rail Station Community Workshop

October 15, 2009

Pearl Ridge Elementary School



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# Dan Inouye

U.S. SENATOR FROM HAWAII



Contact – Peter Boylan (808) 561-0901  
and Jennifer Sabas (808) 292-9234

## INOUYE ANNOUNCES FEDERAL PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING APPROVAL FOR HONOLULU TRANSIT

MONDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



## Honolulu Mass Transit Receives Federal Approval

PACIFIC BUSINESS NEWS

## Feds OK Honolulu rail engineering plan

Pacific Business News (Honolulu)



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**“The Business Round  
Table...found the  
overall plan to be  
sound and  
conservatively  
prepared.”**

*Don Horner,  
Chairman/CEO First Hawaiian Bank  
on the Project Financing*



- Transit Surcharge Passed - 2005**
- Alternatives Analysis - 2006**
- Locally Preferred Alternative - 2007**
- Selection of Technology - 2008**
- Draft Environmental Impact Statement - 2008**
- Airport as Preferred Alignment - 2009**
- Preliminary Engineering - 2009**
- Final Environmental Impact Statement - 2009**
- Record of Decision - 2009**
- Groundbreaking - 2009**



# Agenda

- Project Overview & Schedule
- Station Location
- Preliminary Station Design
- Community Ideas & Breakout Sessions
- Summary of Breakout Sessions
- Next Steps – Future Meetings

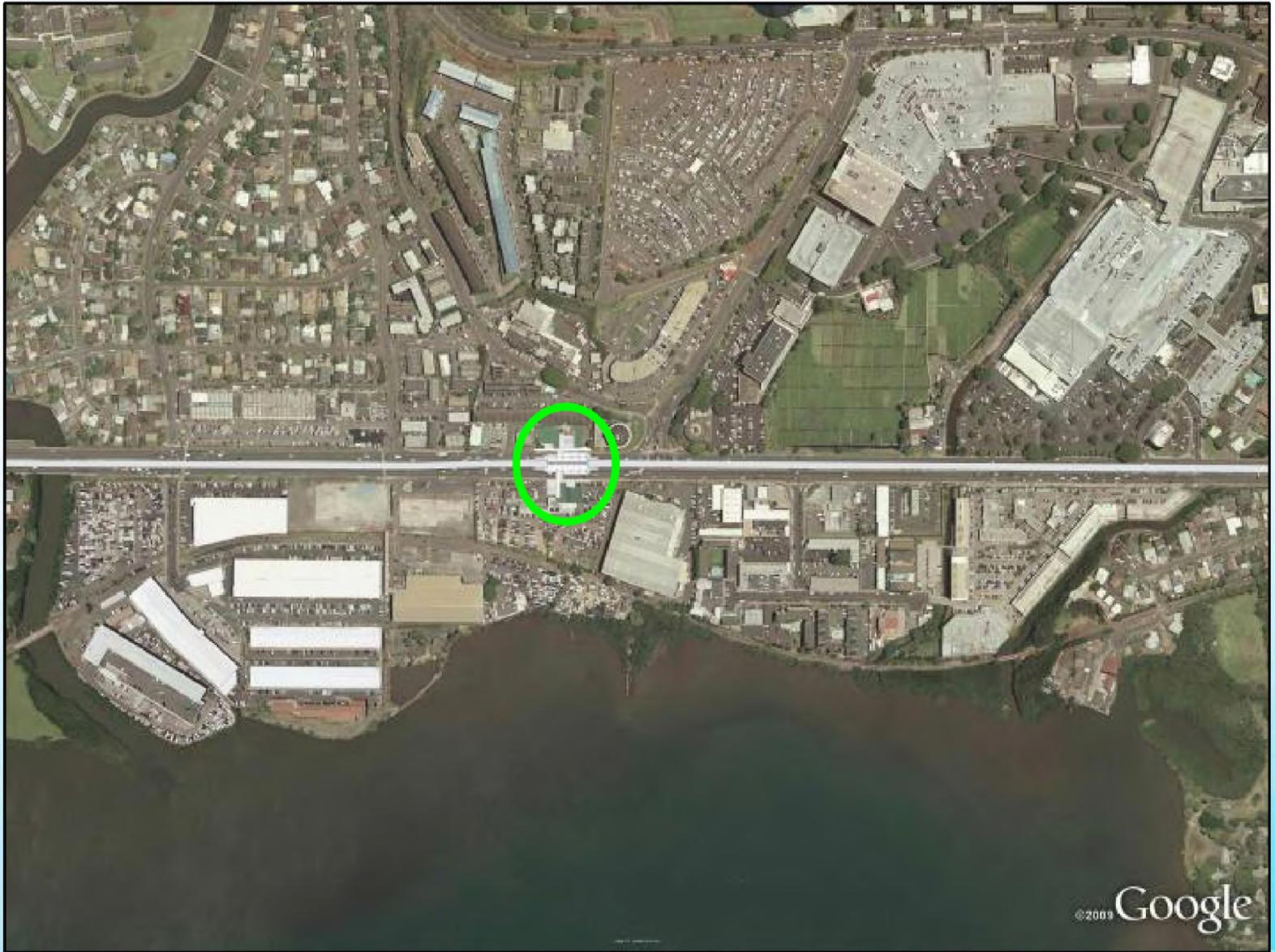


# HONOLULU RAIL TRANSIT



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# Pearlridge Station



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# Travel Times from Pearlridge

Destination	Travel Time
Kapolei	18 minutes
Leeward Community College	7 minutes
Airport	8 minutes
Downtown	20 minutes
Ala Moana Center	24 minutes



# Project Schedule

- Fall 2009: Release of Final Environmental Impact Statement
- Fall 2009: Award design/build contract for first guideway segment
- Fall 2009: Federal Transit Administration issues Record of Decision
- December 2009: Start construction of elevated guideway



# Project Schedule

- Late 2012: Initial service begins Waipahu; service expands
- Late 2013: Start construction of Pearlridge Station
- Early 2017: Service on Kamehameha Highway
- Spring 2019: Start of full service between East Kapolei and Ala Moana Center



# Elevated Guideway Simulation



Kamehameha Highway at Kaonohi Street, looking makai



# Community Ideas from Pearlridge Station Workshop #1



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# Summary of Community Ideas

- Honor area's agriculture past and present
- Sugar cane and water cress motifs
- Ample sun screens and shade
- Roof design inspired by nearby buildings



# Summary of Community Ideas

- Sheet metal roofs
- Discourage graffiti
- Open-air design
- Cost effective to maintain
- ADA accessible



# Inspirations



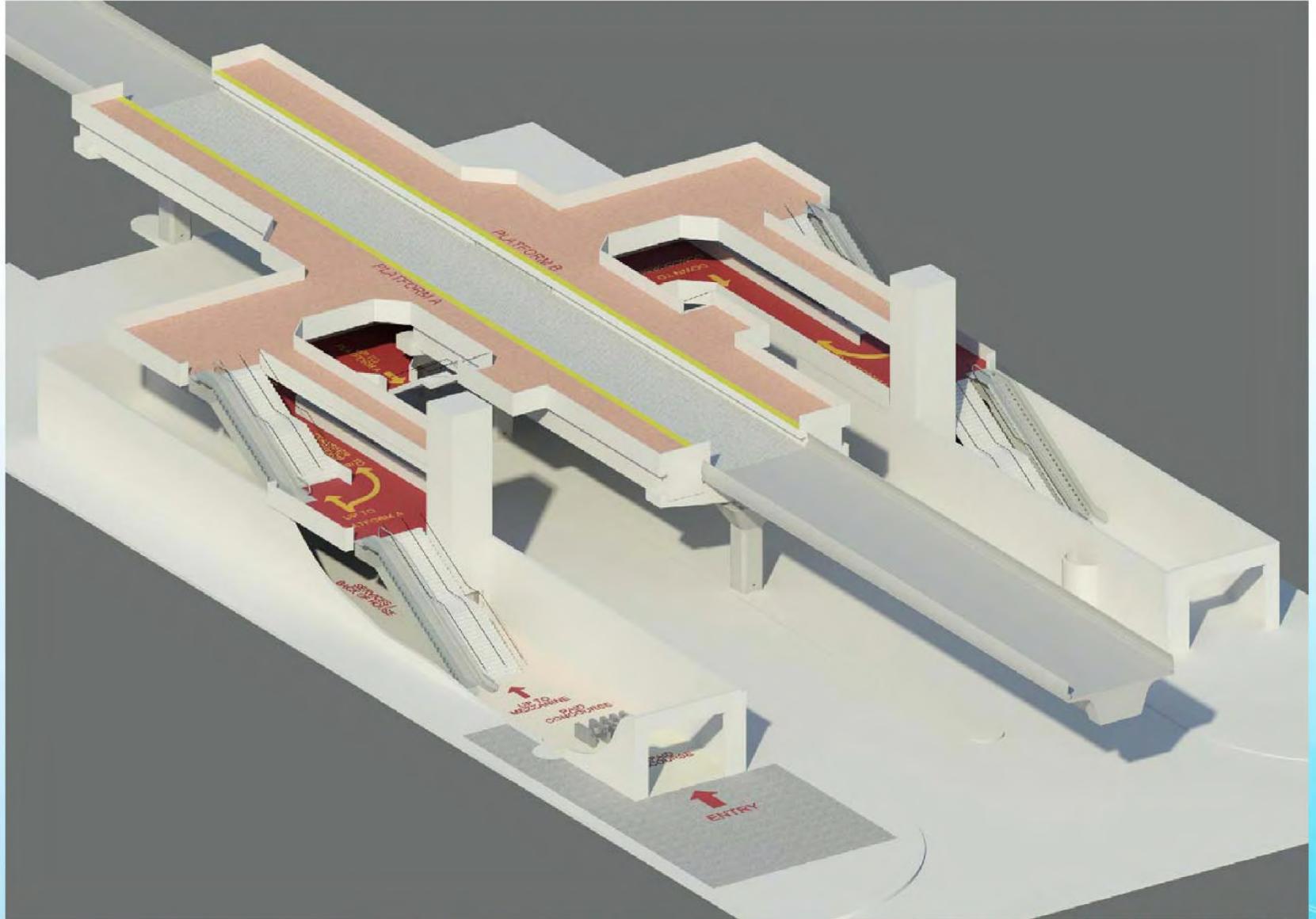
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# Inspirations



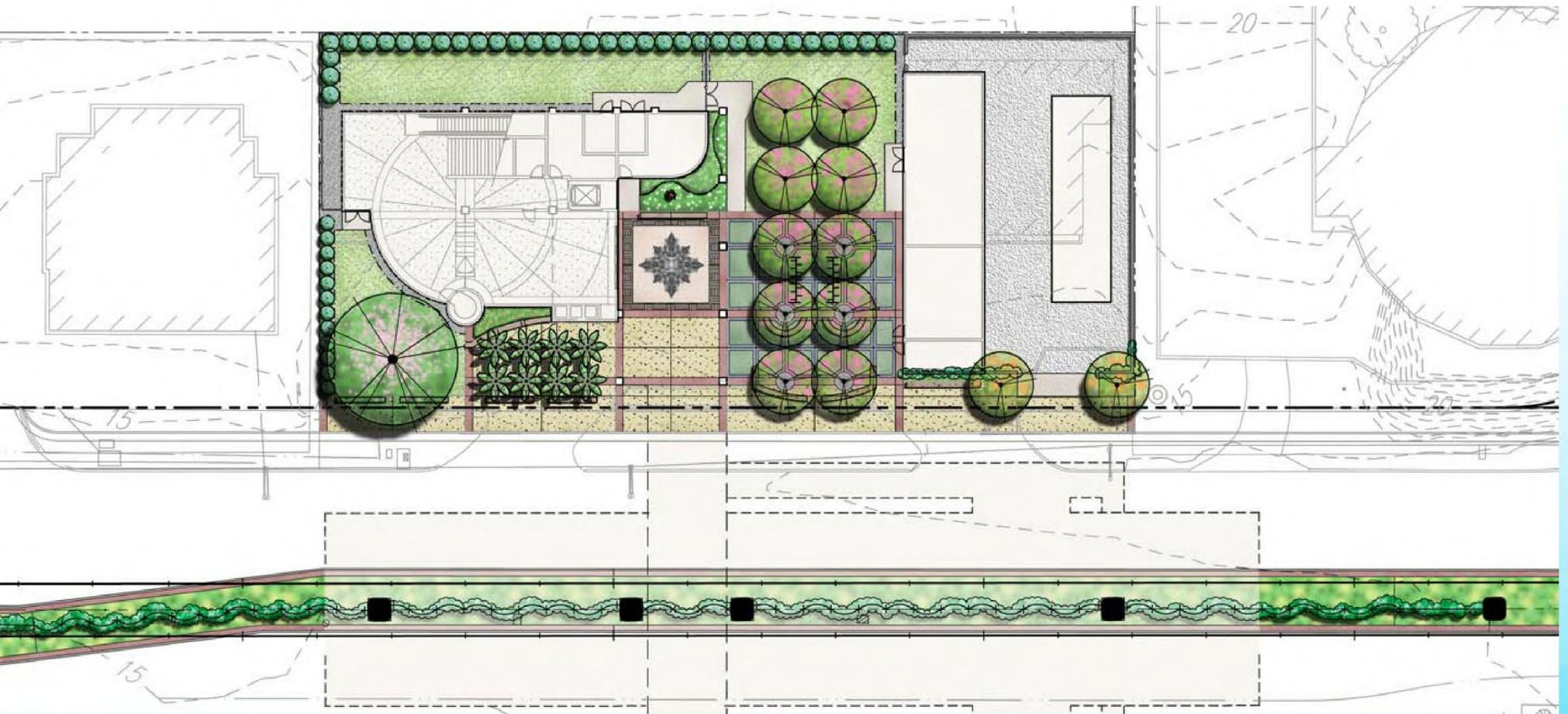
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# Typical Transit Station



R A I L S T A T I O N S C O M M U N I T Y W O R K S H O P S

# Site Plan



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# Preliminary Station Design



R A I L S T A T I O N S C O M M U N I T Y W O R K S H O P S

# Preliminary Station Design



R A I L S T A T I O N S C O M M U N I T Y W O R K S H O P S

# Preliminary Station Design



R A I L S T A T I O N S C O M M U N I T Y W O R K S H O P S

# Preliminary Station Design



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# Preliminary Station Design



R A I L S T A T I O N S C O M M U N I T Y W O R K S H O P S

# Breakout Sessions



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# Contact Us

566-2299

[www.honolulutransit.org](http://www.honolulutransit.org)

[info@honolulutransit.org](mailto:info@honolulutransit.org)



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# Breakout Summaries



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# Next Steps

## Pearl Ridge Elementary School Cafeteria

December 2, 2009

6:30 to 9 p.m.



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