

Public Involvement Overview

October 2008

	Month
Hotline Calls*	40
Comment Sense Comments/Inquiries*	65
FOIA requests	0
Speakers Bureau	64
Presentation/Events	55
Neighborhood Boards	9
TAC	0
Community Updates	0

Hotline and Comment Sense reporting includes requests for additions/changes to the project mailing list.

Neighborhood Board reporting includes both full presentations and project briefings.

**October 2008 Comments submitted to the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project
(contains submitted comments only- requests such as inclusion on the mailing list are not presented)
This month also includes comments received at Community Update meetings held during the month.**

Submission Method	Submission Date	Submission Content/Notes
Website	10/02/2008	I will start by saying that I am definitely for the rapid transit plan! ...but perhaps you could send out your informational pieces on paper, which can be recycled. Having just received my new blue can and reading the rules, I would have to put your mailing in the rubbish can. This makes no sense. Hope you will change your paper. Thanks
Website	10/03/2008	aloha, i must laugh when i saw the ad in bus no.19 from the airport to wakiki. RAIL is coming soon. ha,ha,ha. in 5 years that is soooooooooooooon? my god i ask my self, you dont have any idea going from A to B by bus. also, i like to mention the billion \$\$\$ spending and meanwhile the bus 19 rans until 2013 with a little sightseeing tour thru china town. i cant get it what you people are planing.
Telephone	10/04/2008	called to suggest that buses be allowed to run along side the rail – like on the same structures...
Website	10/09/2008	Questions: What side of the freeway will it be built on? How loud will the noise level be? What times will the work hours be? How high will the transit bus be? Will there be a dust shield put up while building the transit and will it block the breeze that comes into out house??? Will I be looking at a bus outside my bedroom window daily and will people be able to see in my house? (I live right next to the freeway by Leeward College) Will there be security on the transit? Please respond promptly.
Website	10/11/2008	Will the transit operate during off peak work hours? If so, how many people do you estimate will use the transit during off peak work hours. During holidays and summer vacation there might be a lot of ridership during off peak work hours. My mom is anti-rail and she brought up this topic and I did not have an answer for her. Please respond via my email address as soon as possible.
Website	10/11/2008	Just return from Portland, Oregon and have used their light rail on my trips (twice a year) for the last 5 years, mostly traveling between the airport and downtown Portland. Features: inexpensive to ride (currently \$2.00 for two hours either direction, used to be \$.35), timely, smooth riding, free zones, fewer stops, able to take luggage, wheelchair, bikes. I am voting YES.

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Website	10/11/2008	Ended up voting for rail not because I believe in it, but because toll roads are offensive to taxpayers. We pay for the roads and then we have to pay to use them. That said, rail system needs a route that serves ALL the citizens not just the commercial Ala Moana. Get students to UH. Get students to Punahou. Get windward commuters to work. Make it a real option for the citizens who sit in traffic day in and day out. The routes will get riders.
Website	10/11/2008	Two things. 1. In your "Honolulu on the Move," how is "passenger mile" defined in the plot you used? I have a very difficult time believing that there can be hundreds of injuries for every mile of passenger travel in the U.S. 2. I am still not convinced you show be advocating a position on the rail in this and other forums. This is the official position of our mayor, not yet of the City, and as such seems to be an inappropriate use of taxpayers money. I believe you should be presenting both sides of the position, then you can do your public relations, if necessary, after the people's decision is made. Until now, I feel you are being political and influencing a vote at the taxpayers' expense whether or not the taxpayers (who are paying for this) actually support this.
Website	10/13/2008	What is the project turn-around time for a train leaving Kapolei? 300 per train, equates to how many trips during the rush hour periods going and returning? Are we going to be starting out with three (3) trains? One on each end, and one in the middle?
Public Meeting	10/14/2008	Spoke pre-on-one. Why not sunshine the DTS committee on accessible transportation meetings PLUS the MCFPWD (mayor's committee for persons with disabilities)? Para-transit to get to the MOS rail is NOT affordable to kupuna under 30% of AMI.
Public Meeting	10/14/2008	Answered on-site. Where are we in the EIS process: What's next? When public commentary comes in?
Public Meeting	10/14/2008	Answered on-site. Why is it cheaper to maintain the steel on steel system than the rubber tire on concrete?

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Public Meeting	10/14/2008	The GET estimates assume collecting money in the year they are collected. The project estimates show "as spent \$" at \$980,000,000. If you increase the GET estimates using the... "Multiply GET increases twice"
Public Meeting	10/14/2008	Answered on-site. 1) Since this project should end at UH. If the project moved a bit closer to Waipahu would it be possible to take the rail to UH? 2) What is the reason the old railways cannot be used? 3) How long will it take before the rail goes to the airport?
Public Meeting	10/14/2008	Answered on-site. I know that the federal government has potential funds contributions to offset some of the construction costs. But why aren't the developers of all these homes contributing more to the transit projects. The problems that their growth and building have caused! Same with schools, sewage, etc. They make the profit and we pay to fix their mess.
Public Meeting	10/14/2008	Answered on-site. What is the "life" of a train/vehicle?
Public Meeting	10/14/2008	Answered on-site. 1) You say that the choice of vehicle type has already been made by "experts." So what is the point of a charter amendment on the ballot whether or not the people of Oahu want steel rail? 2) You are using huge amounts of tax payer money to sell us steel wheel rail. So why are other choices not allowed in the taxpayer information forums?
Public Meeting	10/14/2008	Answered on-site. When a steel on steel rail car breaks down on the track, how does the train keep on running? Why wasn't a project labor agreement not signed? Is it because many workers are coming from the mainland?
Telephone	10/14/2008	Wants to know the price of a rail ticket now and the price when the project is completed.
Telephone	10/14/2008	Ad in Star Bulletin @ Community Updates: Doesn't like ad because it is pro-rail and objects to using tax money.
Telephone	10/14/2008	Calling to complain re: taxpayer dollars being used for rail effort - trying to get info. Feels ad is political.

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Telephone	10/14/2008	Looking at ad in Honolulu Advertiser. Don't agree with it and believes we need a new mayor as well.
Website	10/14/2008	I have been on the Metro in Paris and the Underground in London among other rapid transit systems. The systems are great in that they connect areas with the greatest amount of people. With that said, shouldn't the first phase of the project connect Ala Moana, Waikiki, UH Manoa and the Honolulu Airport? Why would the first phase of the project connect fewer people from areas further away? It doesn't make any logical sense.
Public Meeting	10/15/2008	Besides spending \$5 billion on rail and however much is needed for annual maintenance for the rail, what specifically is planned for helping the 95 percent of commuters who will still need to use their cars to get around Oahu? (Please don't say rail - I mean road improvements, additions, etc.)
Public Meeting	10/15/2008	How will the new transit (rail) system be supported by the bus system? Will the bus system be coordinated with the rail transit? Have smaller shuttles been considered to get people to transit stations from the valleys and areas not on the route?
Public Meeting	10/15/2008	Why and how can we not afford to go below grade through our city's established neighborhoods. Elevated rail (or bus ways) scars and divides our fragile urban fabric. Isn't something worth doing is worth doing right.
Public Meeting	10/15/2008	Re: Funding from federal government on both projects steel vs. non-steel. What is the probability of the "funding amounts" to be cut or pulled completely on both steel rail vs. non-steel transit projects?
Public Meeting	10/15/2008	On the Ewa/Waipahu plains, why can't the old military access roads and railroad tracks be used?
Public Meeting	10/15/2008	Why wasn't the airport included in the first phase?

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Public Meeting	10/15/2008	Name those city projects that have been finished on time and on budget. How much money has the 1/2 percent GET generated to date and is in the bank? How did you calculate that the 1/2 percent GET would generate \$4,055 and over what period of time? If anticipated costs exceed estimates and/or funds are less than estimated, how do you propose to cover costs?
Public Meeting	10/15/2008	Will the electrical power for rail transit be accessed by an overhead wire or a third rail? If the former, what will be the design of its support? i.e., height, frequency of supports, etc.?
Public Meeting	10/15/2008	How will traffic in 2018 compare with today's UH holiday traffic? Net changes?
Public Meeting	10/15/2008	Does EIS include costs of construction-caused traffic delays? And when will the EIS come out?
Public Meeting	10/15/2008	In light of a major accident on H1, how will emergency vehicles get where they need to go? They will not be able to travel on the railroad. Where will people who are stuck in traffic go? Will they park their car and leave them on the highway?
Public Meeting	10/15/2008	How are bicycle riders accommodated in rail systems similar to the one proposed for Honolulu?
Public Meeting	10/15/2008	Address the circled items (from Stop Rail Now brochure): - City agrees that traffic congestion with rail will be far worse than it is today. - Google "Rail Fraud" - over 5,060,000 hits; Non-bid contracts worth millions awarded to Mayor's friends and contributors. - Rail Transit is not green. It uses more energy than automobiles because it will run nearly empty outside of rush hour. - 189 properties will be condemned, forcing local people to give up lifelong homes.
Public Meeting	10/15/2008	What about using Phileas Magnet-Rail SUPER EXPRESS?

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Telephone	10/15/2008	Regarding ad on Page 8 - call after 11:00 am. Very upset that project has ads paid for by City taxpayers. Doesn't want rail.
Website	10/15/2008	I just wanted to say that our Islands residents have forgotten about TheBus strike that affected many here on Oahu. I do not want to rely solely on the bus system and although I am torn about the rail we need some relief soon. I heard a gentleman on the radio talking about rail and he had me looking at things in a whole new way (a positive one). That is all. Thank you for your time.
Website	10/15/2008	stop the stupid propoganda for "rail is coming soon" that's taxpayers money for nonsense. i wish the major is not coming through with that bullshit. stop the rail now and send "mufi" in retirement up into the mormon temple.
Public Meeting	10/16/2008	What is the cost in dollars - I heard rail could be built with tax payers money only. How many thousand more homes - will be built on west end - 12 thousand more just beyond Ewa alone.
Public Meeting	10/16/2008	In one of your HOT lanes myth you claim "HOT lanes will increase congestion." Do you have any facts that back up that statement? How can you predict people's actions in the future? Please provide factual statements backing up your claim.
Public Meeting	10/16/2008	How is cost-effectiveness defined by FTA? What is capacity of planned system? Can passenger capacity/trains be increased?
Public Meeting	10/16/2008	Are train stations being designed to enable on-site renewable power generation such as photovoltaic panels to operate the station? If not, why not?
Public Meeting	10/16/2008	1) How will "No" vote affect rail? Will it stop? Hope not! 2) What will the transit station look like? How will it work getting to east/west bound? 3) How much area will the station take on adjacent property? 4) Will bikes be allowed on train?

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Public Meeting	10/16/2008	To compliment rail: Why isn't the city engaged in soliciting the \$15 billion available in interest-free bonds issued by the federal government to permit the private sector to have the capital up front to build us a reversible expressway?
Public Meeting	10/16/2008	How much will the cost be to ride the rail transit?
Public Meeting	10/16/2008	What are the positives and negatives of having this rail transit?
Public Meeting	10/16/2008	Is the rail transit eco-friendly (runs on gas or energy)? Would it pollute the air?
Public Meeting	10/16/2008	All the discussion thus far on funding to build the proposed rail system. What funds have been appropriated to maintain the system after it is built? How much is the cost of maintenance and repair?
Website	10/16/2008	Aloha, Will the rail transit system run 24 hours a day? Please expand on the parking situation and locations. There is never enough. How are pedestrians to get transportation once they arrive at their rail transit location downtown? What can we expect then? Suggestion: Another option to be considered, in addition to the rail system and can be enacted sooner the later, is suggesting to employers, " hire employees that live in the general area of the location of the business. In other words if you live in Kapolei, work in Kapolei. If you live in Honolulu, work in Honolulu. This is reasonable whenever possible. However, it needs to be addressed to employers. Mahalo for listening.
Website	10/16/2008	Please can you inform me of where you are at in the EIS process I would like to comment. There is the potential for invasive species to moved to Hawaii with construction materials and equipment imported from overseas.
Website	10/16/2008	How big will the Rail Transit stations be? What will they look like? With the many stops from Kapolei to downtown, who planned that it would take only 40 minutes to run the route?

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Website	10/17/2008	I want to know the structural design of the stations. (How much space they need, structure for it, etc.)
Website	10/17/2008	<p>Why aren't there more park & ride areas? Unfortunately, we've become accustomed to convenience and if there's not enough park & ride areas, then it's not going to be convenient to use the rail system & it could actually deter people from using it. Fewer park & ride areas will also have an impact on neighboring communities where the parking is already limited and in some areas, scarce to non-existent. The City should look into the parking situation & make plans to have sufficient park & ride areas in place prior to finalizing any mass transit system. I agree that something needs to be done about the growing traffic problems & I think a rail system is a good idea but, if you're just putting this system in place without making it attractive & convenient to use, it could become Honolulu's folly. I'm currently on the fence as to whether I'll be voting yes or no in the upcoming election so please get back to me soon. I</p>
Website	10/17/2008	<p>Hello, I emailed you last week asking a question about a graph in your recent newsletter and asking you to help me understand how you can use public money to advocate a pro-rail position which is highly political when the public has not yet inputted in its favor. I needed to reconcile this against my feelings that your newsletter should be informational regarding system options, not biased. I believe I also questioned why the system is being developed moving toward the city interior rather than away from it so ridership can be better accommodated as the system is being built. Lastly, I noted that I would like a reply. Your newsletter suggested you were open to comments and questions. You also have a response box, below. I am again asking you to reply so I won't think this is another political shibai promoting a political position at taxpayer's expense. In my mind such an activity speaks very poorly of the administration's ethics. I hope to hear a viable response from someone.</p>

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Website	10/17/2008	<p>Hello. I'm concerned that the so-called EZ-way proposal may sway voters to vote no to the Honolulu rail project. I've been actively following the project for about 3 years and feel gratified to learn that public support has grown during this time; from only 35% to about 60% in support. That's real momentum sure to help it win in November. I got involved because there were two important regards I felt were missing from the public discourse: 1) How rail affects land-use and development, and 2) Bus-rail integration. Both these issues make a convincing argument against the EZ-way. I feel the public relations campaign 'must' present this argument to the public immediately. And it's important to make this argument to those elected officials who can make the most authoritative case against the EZ-way and for the rail project. I wrote Honolulu Transit early in my efforts and was happy to see the issues I list receive mention in newspaper articles. I was happy you came to Portland to view our rail system, learn about our land-use policy and experience the development patterns that have made Portland a national model. I lived on Oahu for a year in the 1970's and of course love Hawaii dearly. I'm pushing 60 now, and would like to live nearer the ocean. I would move to Oahu to work on the Honolulu light rail project and further my career in urban planning and transit system design. If I can help move the project forward in November, I would be just doing my job. And how rail station areas develop will be an ongoing project, years in length. I'd love to help Oahu become even more beautiful.</p>
Telephone	10/19/2008	<p>Comparison of Honolulu with other cities - you cannot compare with Atlanta. Just wanted to make a comment.</p>

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Website	10/19/2008	<p>I read the brochure... I find the argument for "why the tracks will be elevated" weak. In the same way that opponents feel we just need more roads (maybe even pay as you go roads) a poor argument. I think Honolulu needs to make a dedication to making a switch in our thinking about transportation over the next 25 years. I would contend that we need to envision the island of O'ahu having an efficient (far better than what we have) transportation system that includes mass transit but not individual transit mechanism. I still contend that that first rail system be put straight down the HOV lane (on the H1). Hike the gas tax to fund expansion of a rail system throughout the entire state on existing major thoroughfares. Side roads and residential roads could then be fixed with cable car systems and expanded well planned pedestrian friendly roads. I think we need to look beyond the car. We need to see that the era of the car is over. This of course will have to be a gradual effect is that it is phased in over the next 25 years. The only room I see for individual vehicles would be that of commercial transport systems (requiring energy efficiency). Allowing a system that includes both cars and rail transit is like telling everyone to own both a computer and typewriter. We need even greater vision that what I have seen from any of our leaders (or prospective leaders).</p>
Website	10/19/2008	<p>I have never heard anything about the estimated cost to ride the rail. I am very interested to know what this amount will be and if there will be rider passes etc. Also, being that I work at Radford High School, can you please tell me how many feet away from the actual rail car will the closest building be. I am aware that the current plan is to take 10 feet of our property away next to our 60s wing for a support beam I am wondering about the distance from our classrooms the cars will run. Thank you very much. Carol</p>
Telephone	10/20/2008	<p>Wants call returned regarding question in pamphlet - how much does it cost to operate the number of ridership of 90,000/day.</p>
Website	10/20/2008	<p>I am still undecided how to vote. What bothers me is there is no guarantee that Property Taxes will NOT be increased to help pay for the rail and future maintenance. Can you give me such a guarantee?</p>

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Website	10/20/2008	Heads up: On the "overview" page, the info on VTA should be under a California heading, not Los Angeles. The VTA's service area is Southern San Francisco bay (Santa Clara Co.), nowhere near Los Angeles.
Personal Contact	10/21/2008	Answered during meeting. We know that the actual final cost will be over \$15 million. So, without any federal funds, how will we pay for the real cost of \$15 million?
Public Meeting	10/21/2008	Answered during meeting. What is delaying the results of the EIS?
Public Meeting	10/21/2008	Answered during meeting. What adjustment to the budget do you make to account for the recession and drop in tax revenues? How much longer will it take to pay for the rail system (total pay off).
Public Meeting	10/21/2008	Answered during meeting. Why has federal funding not been approved? Please respond tonight.
Public Meeting	10/21/2008	Answered during meeting. How will federal budget cuts impact any possible federal funding?
Public Meeting	10/21/2008	Answered during meeting. Why is federal funding for the rail system not even on list for possible approval?
Public Meeting	10/21/2008	I might have been willing to consider this project, however the unethical manner in which this was "put upon" the tax payers, the native Hawaiians, and property owners is very disturbing. Isn't it true that Mufi has already benefited financially - Lyons Assoc. - \$5K, Friends/fam. of Parsons B. - \$6.5K, RM Towill - \$4K, Transit Contractors - \$91,207? This does not include landowners, developers, labor unions and other beneficiaries of rail. RM Towill has been awarded a \$4.9 million contract. While our city landfill is overflowing, rising sewer fees, aging infrastructure, growing homelessness. The mayor has the audacity to spend nearly \$2 million of our tax money to promote this project. The list of examples of his abuse of power clearly places his credibility and character in question. That being said, why should I believe all these posters?

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Public Meeting	10/21/2008	Is it true that some of the people that are advocating in favor of the rail system are being paid \$150 per hour? Where is this money coming from?
Public Meeting	10/21/2008	Why are rail expenditures favored over education of our most valuable resource - our children?
Public Meeting	10/21/2008	1) What happens when a train breaks down on the track - what about the others on track - do they wait or bypass 2) Does this billion cost include the trains
Public Meeting	10/21/2008	Can you explain the advantage of the train over the HOT lanes that are being discussed.
Public Meeting	10/21/2008	Please describe the tentative phasing of construction.
Public Meeting	10/21/2008	1) The Alternatives Analysis says that rail will carry 1.3% of commuters. If the construction cost of the rail are \$3.8 billion then the construction cost will be at least \$320,000 per rail rider. Don't you think that's wasteful spending? 2) There is no rail system in US which uses less energy per mile than a \$20,000 Toyota Prius. Why don't we give instead of the rail 190,000 Priuses to people?
Public Meeting	10/21/2008	Do you like anything at all about Kobayashi's EZ way? Why/why not?
Public Meeting	10/21/2008	The funding source of rail project is under FTA whereas HOTS - Manage lanes is under FHWA. Mixing apples and oranges. Can you tell us the positive impact to our economy - economic development and creating jobs of rail project (quality of life).
Public Meeting	10/21/2008	EIS - where are we in the process? Cost - where are we in the process of obtaining any fed funds that have been "promised" by our mayor? Metro in DC needs \$11.5 billion just to update, this after 35 years of service. How does our island fair with all the exposure to salt H2O etc?

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Public Meeting	10/21/2008	1) How will this system affect the infrastructure of utilities especially electricity. We do not need more rolling blackouts. 2) What is your estimated fare cost per person?
Public Meeting	10/21/2008	Answered during meeting. How can you assure me that corruption will not be a problem with so much money involved.
Public Meeting	10/21/2008	Answered during meeting. How high (top height) will the train/structure be at Ala Moana Center?
Public Meeting	10/21/2008	Answered during meeting. 1) Which of the cities, including metropolitan area, listed in the Q&A brochure, have a population less than that of Oahu? 2) What percentage increase in property tax will be required to subsidize the operation of the rail system.
Public Meeting	10/21/2008	Answered during meeting. You state by 2030 up to 90,000 passengers/riders - how do you arrive at those estimates?
Public Meeting	10/21/2008	Answered during meeting. I heard Mufi say on the 5 pm news - during LCC debate today - that Obama has "gone on the record" as supporting rail - when did he make that endorsement?
Public Meeting	10/21/2008	Answered during meeting. Is there gonna be restrooms at the stations? If the answer is yes, would city workers be responsible for servicing the restrooms? Will the train operator be a certified first aid person qualified to use and operate a defibrillator? Or will there be a person to deal with a situation like heart attack victims.
Public Meeting	10/21/2008	Answered during meeting. If the rail transit project is not built, what will the City do to the private properties they purchased for right-of-way. Turn them into public projects - such as parks, senior/affordable housing - or sold to private developers for their own commercial projects?
Public Meeting	10/21/2008	Answered during meeting. Why are you waiting until after the November election to notify ALL property owners affected by rail?

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Public Meeting	10/21/2008	Answered during meeting. How will you deal with property owners facing land condemnation?
Public Meeting	10/21/2008	Answered during meeting. How will you reimburse business owners for lost customers or lost business? Those whose businesses are impacted by road construction.
Public Meeting	10/21/2008	Answered during meeting. Why has the mayor used my tax money to promote only his view and his "deals" with no equal support for other views?
Public Meeting	10/21/2008	Answered during meeting. If this rail project is a City government project, that hasn't been voted on yet, why can't other avenues of reducing traffic be discussed? Don't we live in a democracy?
Public Meeting	10/21/2008	Answered during meeting. If these presentations are meant to educate the public, why isn't the opposition represented or given the same amount of tax payer \$ to make their case.
Telephone	10/21/2008	Unhappy with expensive rail flyers.
Telephone	10/21/2008	Would like to learn more about the project. Why doesn't it go to Hawaii Kai? Why no park-and-ride downtown? Worried people will move out of Hawaii due to economy so no one will ride it. Should pay for the project with bonds. Old people have no money.
Website	10/21/2008	The schedule indicates that the Draft EIS was going to be completed during the first half of 2008. I have checked the OEQC notices, and didn't see it listed. When is the DEIS scheduled to be released for public comment?
Personal Contact	10/22/2008	Why isn't UH added in the original planning rather than as an extension since the UH traffic is a large component to the traffic congestion?
Public Meeting	10/22/2008	How will the extensions be financed? Will property taxes be raised?

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Public Meeting	10/22/2008	Why hasn't an active civic public been educated, been allowed to debate, to deliberate, to dialogue, to respond to this process?
Public Meeting	10/22/2008	Will protective screen doors be installed to prevent passengers from falling from the platform to the track? RF fare cards so no need to purchase a monthly card? What type of rolling stock will be used? Capacity per car? How many cars? Advertising be allowed in station?
Public Meeting	10/22/2008	(about slides) The detailed table of costs 2006---Inflated are all in Billions How come subsequent tables only said Millions?
Telephone	10/22/2008	Trying to figure out where transit is running. Please call on her cell phone. Wanted to know where rail was by Ala Moana.
Telephone	10/22/2008	Regarding the brochure in paper. What council people approved mailing the brochure pertaining to FTA regulations?
Telephone	10/22/2008	Concerned about individuals to vote for transit safety measures. Makakilo - safety of sign wavers.
Website	10/22/2008	Will the rail transit system be handicapped (specifically power wheelchair) accessible? I am blind and simply could not find the answer with my screen reader. This will be the deciding factor for me and most of my disabled friends as to whether or not we will support this measure. Thank you, A.M. Johnson

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Website	10/22/2008	I have lived in Hawaii since 2005 and spent over 20 years in and around New York City. I was a mass transit commuter for 20 years (via rail, bus, ferry). With of the information out there on the Honolulu rail project, I see nothing mentioned about parking at the stations. This is a CRITICAL issue that must be addressed in order for the project to be effective. In Connecticut, New Jersey and the outskirts of New York City, while not all stops have extensive parking, at least every other stop can accommodate 100's of vehicles. Some parking wait lists are 10 years but metered parking is sometimes available to those who arrive early. When people commute, they want to be able to drive to the stations and have commuter parking available. Is there any information available on what is being done at the stations for parking?
Personal Contact	10/23/2008	So what happens when a train malfunctions and needs to be fixed. What is the proposed action? Would it not cause severe delay for its passengers?
Personal Contact	10/23/2008	Yesterday, the Hawaii Business Roundtable concluded that the 1/2% transit tax, now scheduled to expire in 2022, may need to be extended til 2027. Does the funding plan need to be updated given the reduced tax collection?
Public Meeting	10/23/2008	What is the \$ amount of the federal subsidy - what % of the total cost is it - if disapproved, will it stop the train?
Public Meeting	10/23/2008	Submitted on behalf of someone who couldn't stay: our population will continue to grow. People will continue to buy and drive cars. Why shouldn't we build more highways?
Public Meeting	10/23/2008	When do you think a spur to Central Oahu can be built?
Public Meeting	10/23/2008	1400 parking places at Pearl Highlands seems insufficient. Mililani people are going to want to drive to the stations at Pearl Highlands or Leeward. Driving to Ka Uka to get a bus; then transfer to rail is inconvenient and time consuming. Why not a larger park and ride in close proximity to rail station.

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Public Meeting	10/23/2008	- Is there a parking fee for individuals who choose to park at parking lots in close proximity to transit station? - Is there a time limit? - Will it be possible for individuals to carry or bring in their bikes on the train? - How will the seating arrangement be on the train?
Public Meeting	10/23/2008	What is the bus ridership from Leeward and Central to Ala Moana Shopping Center.
Public Meeting	10/23/2008	What will the transit's monthly electric bill be?
Public Meeting	10/23/2008	1) Did not the Honolulu City Council finally decide 8-0 to have a ballot issue so that "We the People" (voters and taxpayers) would be the "deciders" as to whether we would have steel wheel rail? 2) If so, that "steel wheel" rail is an official ballot issue according to Campaign Spending Law, why is the mayor's sales team using taxpayer money to present a biased story, without giving equal time to the alternatives available?
Public Meeting	10/23/2008	I'm for it, just want to make sure there is no scandal. 1) Given the Ewa village move scandal, what are the cost and accounting control plan for ensuring transparency, accountability and efficient use of funds? 2) What will be done to ensure access reliability to elevated stations for mobility challenged people? (Washington DC problems with elevators/escalators.)
Public Meeting	10/23/2008	The analyses indicated that overall mass transit ridership is expected to be 7.4% of total transit trips in 2030 -- 6.1% if rail is not built. That leaves 92.6% of transit trips made by other than mass transit. How is this going to help us in Mililani?
Public Meeting	10/23/2008	Traffic flows normally in east and west direction heavy in the AM east and heavy west bound. The train is going to have 2-way direction why. It is going to be empty in the west bound direction and empty in the east bound direction. One can only observe traffic on the freeway.

Submission Method	Submission Date	Submission Content/Notes
Public Meeting	10/23/2008	Rail does not benefit citizens in Mililani you would still have to catch the bus to Leeward Community College to catch the train. It is going to cost billions so why build it. Why if our law makers not using public transportation if it is such a good mode of transportation.
Public Meeting	10/23/2008	Estimated reduction in vehicular traffic 2030 - do you think this reduction (63% with rail, 57% without rail) pass the cost/benefit criteria for federal funding - will no federal subsidy stop rail??
Public Meeting	10/23/2008	How many trains will be purchased? When will the project be operational? When the project is finally completed, what will be the final cost to build with interest? Why not revamp the current bus system (similar to what the rail route would be). With main bus routes with feeders to the main route. This rail transit "informational tabloid" makes the rail see flawless - if not why aren't there any cons and is this just a bias propaganda media at the taxpayers purse.
Public Meeting	10/23/2008	I am interested in the display boards. When will an electronic source be available.
Website	10/23/2008	I went to FHS last night (Wed, October 22) for the transit meeting. There was no one at the auditorium. There were no lights on at the front parking lot and several folks were waiting. Was there an announcement made prior to the transit meeting on the change of venue?
Website	10/23/2008	Instead of trying to develop the rail system from Kapolei, build one from terminal end such as Waikiki and UH Manoa or build one from the Ala Moana Center to the Aloha Stadium. So that people can start using the rail system before it is totally completed. In Tokyo, any rail system started at the downtown area and expanded out ward toward the country side. Are you sure you can run the train 3 min. apart? What happen to the idea of 9,000 people per hour during the rush hours in 2018? People in Aiea/ Salt Lake Area won't use the trail if it is a standing room only during the rush hours.

Submission Method	Submission Date	Submission Content/Notes
Website	10/23/2008	I have just finished reading the pro-rail insert included in this week's Midweek newspaper. Since I am one of the city taxpayers who paid for that publication, I would like to request a copy of the document (or the relevant portions thereof) that spells out the Federal Transportation Administration's requirements for the "public information program" to which the publication refers. If you cannot provide such a document, I would like an explanation concerning why that is not possible.
Website	10/23/2008	I'm excited about the Honolulu rail transit system and a staunch supporter. Good job Mayor Hanneman! My question: "How many passenger trains will be running for the transit system to be in full operation.?"
Website	10/23/2008	I received a Q&A piece in the mail and I imagine at the taxpayers expense, and have a question that is not answered in it. "What benefit does this rail give to the residents or East Honolulu or Windward side of the Island, besides raising our taxes?" also, "Why isn't the East Honolulu, or more specifically Hawaii Kai, included in the plan?"
Telephone	10/24/2008	Brochure - upset that tax dollars sent out about a project she disapproves of. It should have pros and cons.

Submission Method	Submission Date	Submission Content/Notes
Website	10/24/2008	<p>Thank you for the Mahalo reply a few weeks back. Since then, the recent poll that shows voters favor the mayor's reelection can be taken to mean voters also favor the rail project. Whew. Take a breather! I used the word 'immediately' in my earlier letter to suggest 'urgency and importance' of informing voters on the related issues of land-use and development and bus/rail integration. An understanding of these issues helps to picture a future where cars do not dominate the existing and future built environment, and more to the point, that clearer picture helps voters to justify their support. If my use of the word 'immediately' was a bit brazen, I meant it in this sense. I took a look at the new maps, the more detailed ones with landmarks, buildings etc. Very good! These help make the clearer picture. Now that they're in the public realm, voters want and need prospective development layout and images showing before and after. This is the kind of work I'd like to do on the project, maybe with Parson's Brinkerhoff, maybe with the UH. My forte is bus/rail integration specific to short-line "circulators" (bus/rail integration) which can lower the cost and impacts (physical space requirements) of bus transit centers. This is academic material that can be practical when applied to the project. Imagine that! Anyway, please reply again regarding the opportunity for work on the project. I would like to take my girlfriend with me to Oahu. We have lived in Hawai'i and would like to return. Where I live is constricted by my need to work in this particular field. Thank you.</p>
Website	10/24/2008	<p>The current development idea of the rail system is to build from Map 1 to map 4. Instead of that reverse the development from the map 4 to map 1 so that as you develop map 4 you can start operating the train at that section and extend to map 3 and so on to map 1. By the time you complete the system by 2018, you are operating the completed section and letting the passengers enjoy the system. Check out the system in Tokyo, Japan.</p>

Submission Method	Submission Date	Submission Content/Notes
Website	10/25/2008	<p>Aloha, After reading the ad of Honolulu Rail Transit, I personally don't agree with it because there are still a lot of things before building it. There are several my opinions, I would like to say. 1. The project is a huge expense which is paid by city taxpayers.2. To finish the project which requires a lot of years.3. It won't really make more convenient or reduce the traffic to people of Oahu. To solve the problem more economical and efficient way is to use the boat instead of train. If we use the boat that is similar size like Superferry, it can carry almost the same amount of people as train does. It can also load passengers' vehicles on board and not worry about the traffic on the road. It doesn't require to spend a lot of money and time to finish it. It also can transport more people to more places where are Windward and Leeward. So those people can be beneficial with it, they don't need to drive their cars to the train stations instead of driving to the harbors nearby them. The only requirement is to upgrade the old harbors and build two new harbors which are one nearby airport and another one is in Ewa Beach. The old harbors are located in Aloha Tower, Barber point and boat harbor in Waianae. I think it can be done much less time and money than rail transit. These are my proposals and ideas that will help to reduce the traffic during the rush hour and cut down more budgets spending on rail transit. Thank you for your time reading it. Mahalo</p>
Website	10/25/2008	<p>I am stunned that the old technology steel on steel will be used. Who came up with this stupid idea? Did you look around the world (NOT the USA) and see how countries like Japan, China, Germany, India are planning? Its always the same here on our island. I guess its our corruption what moves this again. The only mass transit system of the future is Maglev. You are a bunch of idiots.</p>
Website	10/26/2008	<p>and here i m again writing to youuuuuuu. RE: public transportation i don't get it, rail yes or no. 30 years ago the state (government) had the opportunity to build a rail and now it takes an other 20 years to get it run. my god.ridiculous!!!! we, the public,the people, the nation want to have a solution NOW not in 20 years. so listen attentive: on any main road get a line (spur) for buses, bikes,moped and taxis and put more buses on the road. that would be the first step,if private cars violate the bus spur get them a ticket like when you violate the parking. easy! i now how lond it takes to ride the bus from A to B. our mayor doesnt have any glue. so get a solution NOW, not"the rail coming soon" ad's in the bus that's a joke!</p>

Submission Method	Submission Date	Submission Content/Notes
Email	10/27/2008	See attached - here is text from e-mail: Will the money stay in Hawaii or go out of state? According to Panos (Debate on Channel 2): "No federal money will come to Hawaii." All of the .9 billion, if we get it, will go to buy the trains and equipment from out-of-state vendors. How much money or what percent of the \$5 or \$6 billion will actually be paid to residents in Hawaii. She's afraid the money will go out of state. Can you dissuade me from my strong impression that most people want OTHER people to take mass transit so THEY can drive their cars?
Telephone	10/27/2008	Wants people to vote but lives in Ewa Beach but transit doesn't come. Please call and say why should vote for.
Telephone	10/28/2008	has a draft EIS been released yet - where can she get it.
Website	10/29/2008	Where could we obtain a map of the proposed route? Is there a photographic map with the route overlaid on it?
Website	10/29/2008	I would like to see the draft EIS released yesterday? Will it be posted on this website?
Website	10/30/2008	I am interested especially interested in getting a copy of the environmental impact statement. I am willing to pick it up.
Website	10/30/2008	Hello, Would you be so kind an mail me a hard copy of the Draft EIS statement? I would be most obliged. Many thanks, Monica
Website	10/30/2008	What would be the position on the removal of the Power Plant at Aloha Tower and making that area the main depot for the new rail. If not, what is the position on tearing down the Power Plant and turning it into a park with a parking structure under the park?

Submission Method	Submission Date	Submission Content/Notes
Website	10/30/2008	Do you have a map that shows IN DETAIL which properties will have to be acquired for the rail transit project? I know I am not in an area that will be acquired, but I feel very sorry for those who will need to relocate. How will the city make sure that those affected will get a fair price for their properties? Will those figures be made public so that we can see how much was paid? Will the price be enough for those people affected to find another place that is similar to their current location?
Website	10/31/2008	I can not pull up the EIS executive summary from the KHNL webpage. I would certainly like to read it before I vote.
Website	10/31/2008	How often will the train run? (i.e. every 30 minutes? Will there only be one train? Are there two tracks, one going and one coming back? How many people can the train carry? Will they pack the train to maximum or will everybody have a seat? Thanks

Honolulu Rail Transit Project

Honolulu On The Move

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Community Update Meeting Mānoa Elementary School

October 15, 2008

Honolulu On The Move

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Presentation

- Overview
- Decisions Made
- Project Effects
- Project Characteristics

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Planning for the Future

O'ahu in 2030

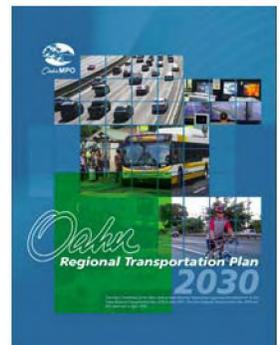
- 200,000 more residents than in 2005
- 100,000 more jobs than in 2005
- 750,000 more daily trips than in 2005

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Multi-Modal Options to Improve Mobility

- Highway Expansion
- Traffic Engineering Improvements
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Projects
- TheBoat
- Expansion of TheBus
- Fixed Guideway Project



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\$3 Billion in Highway Expansion – All Anticipated Federal Highway Funds Allocated to Specific Projects, including:

- H-1 Improvements
 - Widening, Middle Street to Vineyard Boulevard
 - Widening, Liliha Street to Pali Highway
 - Widening, Waiawa Interchange to Hālawā Interchange
 - Widening, Ward Avenue to Punahou Street
 - HOV Lanes, Makakilo Interchange to Waiawa Interchange
 - PM Zipper Lane, Ke‘ehi Interchange to Kunia Interchange
- New or Extended Roadways
 - Nimitz HOV Flyover, Ke‘ehi Interchange to Pacific Street
 - North-South Road
 - Kapolei Parkway

Rail Transit Route



How much will it cost to build?

	Millions of 2006 Dollars	Millions of Year-of-Expenditure Dollars
Estimated Construction Cost	1,805	2,390
Design / Construction Contingency	480	635
Construction Subtotal	2,285	3,025
Right-of-Way	70	95
Vehicles	230	305
Professional Services	685	885
Project Reserve	200	260
Capital Cost	3,470	4,570
Net Interest Costs	250	410
TOTAL COST	3,720	4,980

East Kapolei to Ala Moana Center

How will we pay for it?

- GET Surcharge Funds
 - \$ 2,600 – \$ 3,200 million in 2006 Dollars
 - \$ 3,500 – \$ 4,300 million in Inflated Dollars
- FTA New Starts Funds
 - \$ 500 – \$ 900 million in 2006 Dollars
 - \$ 700 – \$ 1,200 million in Inflated Dollars

FTA New Starts Ratings Process

- Among most rigorous project evaluations in government
- Unique to transit because
 - New Starts is discretionary program
 - Required by law
- Criteria include
 - Project Justification – Cost-effectiveness
 - Financial Capacity

Balancing the Budget

	Millions of 2006 Dollars	Millions of Year-of-Expenditure Dollars
Total Net GET Surcharge Revenues	3,020	4,055
FTA New Starts Funds	700	925
TOTAL REVENUE	3,720	4,980
Fixed Guideway Capital Costs	3,470	4,570
Net Interest Costs	250	410
TOTAL COST	3,720	4,980

East Kapolei to Ala Moana Center

Can we afford Operations & Maintenance?

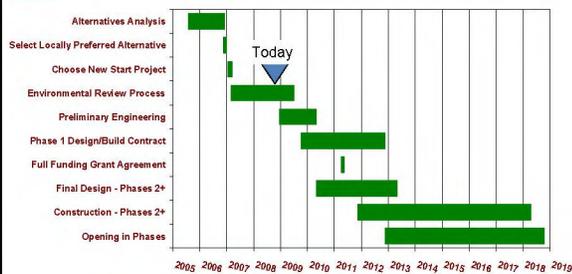
- Rail operating & maintenance cost, after fares, will be ~\$40 million a year
- 2-3% of the City's annual operating budget

A bus+rail system costs less than the cost of carrying the same number of riders on a bus-only system

Presentation

- Overview
- **Decisions Made**

Project Schedule



Decisions Made

- Choice of Mode
 - Fixed Guideway in Exclusive Right-of-Way
- Choice of Alignment
 - Initially – East Kapolei to Ala Moana Center
 - Next – Airport Spur
 - Ultimately – Kapolei to UH Mānoa and Waikīkī
- Choice of Vehicle Technology
 - Steel Wheel on Steel Rail

City Council Selection December 22, 2006

- By a vote of 7 to 2 the City Council selected Fixed Guideway

COUNCIL	12/22/06	OR-508 ADOPTED. BILL 79, CD2, FURTHER AMENDED ON THE COUNCIL FLOOR TO CD2, FD1, HOWEVER, BILL 79, CD2, FD1, FURTHER AMENDED TO BILL 79, CD2, FD2 (FINAL #2), AND SUBSEQUENTLY PASSED THIRD READING, AS AMENDED (BILL 79, CD2, FD2 (FINAL #2)).
		(NOTE: BILL 79 (2006), PROPOSED CD2, FD1 (NORTH-SOUTH BRANCH, NOW LEA COMMITMENT) WAS ALSO CONSIDERED AND SUBSEQUENTLY WITHDRAWN.)
	APO Y	CACHOLA Y DELA CRUZ Y DJOU N GARCIA Y
	KOBAYASHI Y	MARSHALL N OKINO Y TAM Y

Four Alternatives

- No Build
 - No Transit Improvements
- Transportation System Management
 - Expanded Bus Service
- Managed Lane
 - Buses on Managed Lanes
- Fixed Guideway

Why Not Expanded Bus Service?

- Traffic congestion slows buses and increases operating costs – bus operating costs per passenger mile are 2/3 more than for rail
- Traffic congestion hurts schedule reliability
- Bus system is currently approaching capacity
- Attracts fewer riders than bus+rail system

Why Not Buses on Managed Lanes?

- Results in only minor increase in transit usage – only 22% as many new riders as bus+rail system
- Higher O&M cost per passenger served than bus+rail system
- Doesn't meet FTA cost-effectiveness threshold
- Managed lanes are not financially feasible – Neither Federal transit funds nor GET surcharge revenues can pay for highway lanes

Rail vs. the Alternatives



Modern Rail Technology

- Multiple Suppliers
- Widely Used
- Lowest Life Cycle Costs



Rubber Tire Technology

- Proprietary Suppliers
- Uncertain Future Availability
- Higher Life Cycle Costs



Maglev Technology

- Sole Source Supplier
- Higher Life Cycle Costs
- Highest Energy Use

New Starts Projects Technology Choices

- 90% were steel wheel on steel rail transit = **56** rail transit projects

62 projects have received Full Funding Grant Agreements from FTA since 1992

Rail Systems in North America

Exclusive Right-of-Way

Atlanta	Los Angeles	San Francisco
Baltimore	Miami	San Juan
Boston	Monterrey	Toronto
Chicago	New York	Vancouver
Cleveland	Philadelphia	Washington

Light-Rail

Baltimore	Edmonton	Portland
Boston	Guadalajara	Sacramento
Buffalo	Houston	St. Louis
Calgary	Los Angeles	Salt Lake City
Charlotte	Minneapolis	San Diego
Cleveland	Northern New Jersey	San Francisco
Dallas	Philadelphia	San Jose
Denver	Pittsburgh	

Presentation

- Overview
- Decisions Made
- **Project Effects**

New Jobs from Constructing the Project

- Direct Employment
 - 4,700 construction jobs per year
 - 37,700 person-years of employment
- Total Direct plus Indirect Employment
 - 11,300 jobs per year
 - **90,400 person-years of employment**

Honolulu On The Move 

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Effect on Mobility



- System capacity equivalent to six freeway lanes of cars
- Reliable travel times on an exclusive facility
- Provides mobility to those who don't drive
- Reduces future traffic congestion by 11%

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Effects on the Environment

- Less energy use
- Fewer emissions
- Rail vehicles are quieter than buses

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Transit-Oriented Development

- Livable, walkable communities which take advantage of transit access
- Community-based planning
- Publicly enabled, privately invested



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Private Investment Near Rail

- Washington Metro – \$15 Billion since 1976
- Dallas DART – \$4.3 Billion since 1996
- Portland MAX – \$3 Billion since late 1970s
- St. Louis MetroLink – \$1 Billion since 1993

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Presentation

- Overview
- Decisions Made
- Project Effects
- **Project Characteristics**

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What are the operating details?

- **When will it run?**
 - From 4 a.m. to midnight, every 3 to 10 minutes
- **How fast will it be?**
 - 55+ mph top speed; 30 mph average with stops
- **How do I get to it?**
 - Integrated with TheBus, bike and walking paths, and park-and-ride at some stations
- **How much will a ride cost?**
 - Same as TheBus and TheBoat, can use a transfer from one to the other

Honolulu On The Move 

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What are the physical characteristics?

- **Where is the guideway located?**
 - Elevated, with columns in existing roadway medians
 - One track in each direction on a single column
- **How wide is the guideway?**
 - Less than 30 feet between stations
 - At stations about 50 feet
- **How many stations?**
 - 19 stations in 20 miles
- **How long are the stations?**
 - About 250 to 300 feet

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What will it look like?



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Community Update Meetings

- October 14, 6:00 p.m. Holomua Elementary School
- October 15, 6:00 p.m. Mānoa Elementary School
- October 16, 6:00 p.m. Waipahu Middle School
- October 21, 6:00 p.m. Neal Blaisdell Center
- October 22, 6:00 p.m. Farrington High School
- October 23, 6:00 p.m. Mililani Waena Elementary School

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Stay Informed

- Sign up for the newsletter
- Watch Channel 54, Mondays at 6:30pm
- Visit www.honolulutransit.org
- Call the project hotline: 566-2299
- Stay informed with *accurate* information

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Mahalo!

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Honolulu Rail Transit Project

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Planning for the Future

O'ahu in 2030

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 - Rail

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Why Not Expanded Bus Service?

- Traffic congestion slows buses and increases operating costs
- Traffic congestion hurts schedule reliability
- Bus system is currently approaching capacity

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Why Not Buses on Managed Lanes?

- Managed lanes will increase traffic and increase congestion
- Results in only minor increase in transit usage
- Managed lanes are not financially feasible
- Managed lanes add to the cost of travel
- Managed lanes do not support sustainability

Rail Transit Route



Rail vs. the Alternatives



Modern Rail Technology



Rubber Tire Technology



Maglev Technology

- Multiple Suppliers
- Widely Used
- Noise Easily Mitigated
- Lowest Life Cycle Costs
- Proprietary Suppliers
- Uncertain Future Availability
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What are the Goals?

- Improved Mobility
- Reliability
- Protecting our Environment
- Improving the Economy
- Sustainable Growth

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Travel Times



PROJECTED RAIL TRAVEL TIMES

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Napoali to Ala Moana Center	Waipahu to Downtown	Pearl Highlands to Downtown	Pearlridge to Downtown	Alpha Stadium to Downtown	Kalihi to Ala Moana Center	Downtown to Ala Moana Center
40 minutes	28 minutes	23 minutes	19 minutes	16 minutes	10 minutes	5 minutes

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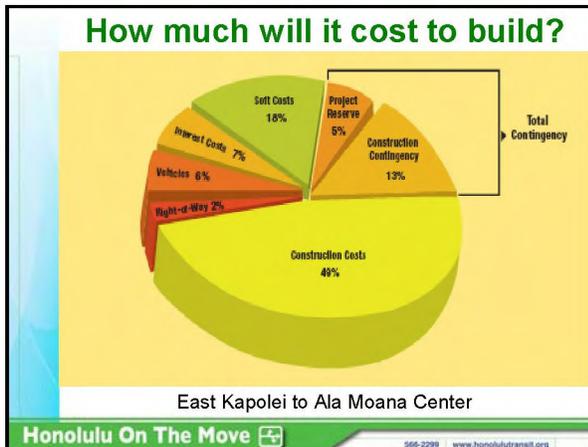
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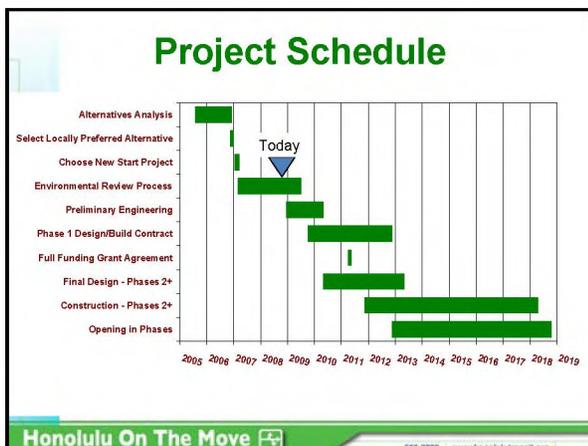
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East Kapolei to Ala Moana Center

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Travel Times

Route	Auto Travel Time Today	Future Rail & Bus Travel Time
Waipahu to Waikiki	69 minutes	52 minutes
Pearl Ridge to Downtown	35 minutes	30 minutes
Kapolei to Downtown	89 minutes	53 minutes
Mililani Mauka to Downtown	84 minutes	55 minutes

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- ### Why Not At-Grade?
- Traffic conflicts
 - Slower operation
 - Two lanes for tracks & Four lanes for stations
 - Horns at crossing
 - Grades 5%
 - 12' climb in 800' + 600' = 1,400'
 - Historic sites
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- ### Types of Rail
- **Heavy Rail**
 - 75 ft. cars
 - 10 cars to a train
 - **Light Rail**
 - 75 ft. cars
 - Capable of operating by itself
 - **Light Metro Rail**
 - 60 ft. cars
 - 2 – 5 cars to a train
- Honolulu On The Move  566-2299 | www.honolulutransit.org

October 1, 2008

Kobayashi turns against train transit plan for Honolulu

'We can't afford it' in slowing economy, says mayoral candidate

BY PETER BOYLAN

Advertiser Staff Writer

City councilwoman and mayoral candidate Ann Kobayashi yesterday abandoned her long-standing support for a rubber-tire-on-concrete mass-transit system and vowed to educate the public about cost-effective alternatives to the proposed \$3.7 billion rail-transit system.

While accepting the endorsement of University of Hawai'i engineering professor and former mayoral candidate Panos Prevedouros, Kobayashi said current economic conditions will not support a steel-wheel-on-steel-rail transit system or any other train system. "We can't afford it," she said.

Kobayashi is running against incumbent Mufi Hannemann in the Nov. 4 mayoral election.

She named Prevedouros her campaign's senior infrastructure adviser and said her campaign will unveil a comprehensive transportation plan that uses alternatives to relieve traffic congestion while considering the depressed state economy.

Kobayashi and Prevedouros appeared together yesterday with Cliff Slater, a retired businessman and leader of the group Stop Rail Now, in front of the news media and supporters at her campaign headquarters.

Prevedouros and Slater said they will work with Kobayashi's campaign to persuade people to vote "no" on the Nov. 4 ballot question asking voters whether the city should build a steel-rail system.

Prevedouros, who previously said he could not support Kobayashi because she favored a form of rail transit, said three meetings with her and her advisers convinced her that rubber tires on concrete is not the answer.

"She saw rubber tire on concrete and realized it was akin to a rail system and that it would cost more to maintain," he said after the news conference. "She was willing to support a more flexible system. Ann listens. We're not going to do a train with rubber tires."

Prevedouros and Kobayashi declined to discuss their transportation plan yesterday, saying it will be released to the public in the next week. But she said rail will not be part of it.

"No to a train going through our beautiful city. We can't afford it," Kobayashi said.

"I don't think there has been enough said about the alternatives. There are many ways we can handle this traffic problem and there are ways we can fix it without going into debt."

Prevedouros on team

Prevedouros, a first-time candidate, took 17.7 percent of the vote in Sept. 20's primary election and Kobayashi took 30.2 percent. Hannemann got 49.4 percent. The race is going to a runoff because no candidate got more than half the vote.

Kobayashi lauded Prevedouros' expertise on transit and his experience as a civil engineer specializing in traffic control and other infrastructure issues. She said they will work to refine strategies for repairing sewers and roads, and for maintaining the city's overall infrastructure.

"I've always respected Dr. Prevedouros. He brings so much to the table with information and documentation. We make a great team," Kobayashi said.

Prevedouros and Slater will help form so-called Kobayashi Truth Units to counter what they characterize as misinformation from city hall.

Hannemann, who is attending a meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors in Miami, said in a statement that it would be "very presumptuous to assume that Prevedouros supporters would now flock to Kobayashi simply because both had campaigned against an incumbent mayor."

"Panos did well in his first attempt at public office, and we welcome his supporters to review our record of leadership and accomplishments. We welcome Panos' supporters and all voters to consider these and other critical issues, including public safety, the economy and environmental protection, and we respectfully ask for their support on Nov. 4," he said.

"As we face growing economic challenges, Honolulu requires a proven leader with a solid track record of experience making tough decisions, tackling problems and creating jobs. Panos and Ann have very different views about solving O'ahu's transportation problems and other issues, and their supporters tend to come from very different backgrounds."

Political analysis

Neal Milner, a political scientist and the University of Hawai'i's ombudsman, said the endorsement from Prevedouros will help Kobayashi clearly define her traffic policy but that she still faces an uphill climb to beat the incumbent Hannemann.

Milner said Kobayashi had failed to do a good job of distinguishing her positions from Hannemann's.

"I think what she's trying to do is come up with a clear counterproposal to what Mufi proposes all the time ... and that's one way to get the Panos supporters," Milner said.

However, he said Prevedouros' support is "nice to have but it doesn't bring on a whole lot of resources."

"It's not like you can add on his votes to hers and say they are going to come over (to her side). I think she is trying to pick up pointers from Panos about what a comprehensive transportation policy looks like. It gets her kick-started but I think she still has to overcome the challenge of taking on an incumbent mayor who is reasonably popular."

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Kobayashi wins support

She and former rival Prevedouros reach a compromise on transit

[By Laurie Au](#)

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

Mayoral candidate Ann Kobayashi plans to unveil a new mass-transit plan next week - a compromise she reached to receive the endorsement yesterday of former opponent Panos Prevedouros.

Kobayashi declined repeatedly yesterday to provide more details on her new transit plan, saying only that it is a hybrid of her preference of enhanced buses, or "a rubber-tire system on concrete," and Prevedouros' plan of building more dedicated highway lanes and tolls.

The endorsement was expected and can give Kobayashi a boost in her race against incumbent Mayor Mufi Hannemann.

Prevedouros and Kobayashi have remained friendly - almost supportive - on the campaign trail by appearing at most of the same community events and even sign-waving at the same spot the day before the Sept. 20 primary election.

"I wholeheartedly endorse Ann Kobayashi for mayor," Prevedouros said yesterday afternoon at a news conference in Kobayashi's campaign headquarters in Manoa. "Why am I doing this? Because we will work together to make Honolulu a better place. Ann and I both understand that there is cost-effective solutions for traffic."

After his primary-election loss with 17 percent of the vote, Prevedouros said he did not have any plans on endorsing Kobayashi because of their drastic differences on mass transit.

He said he changed his mind after meeting with Kobayashi during the past week to come up with a new transit plan.

Kobayashi has also named Prevedouros her "chief adviser for infrastructure" for her campaign. She declined to say whether she'd offer Prevedouros a job with the city if elected mayor.

"I've always been against any system that requires rail in our roads," Kobayashi said.

Hannemann, who is in Miami for a conference, also hopes to capture some of Prevedouros' supporters and the nearly 29,000 votes he garnered in the primary election.

"Panos did well in his first attempt at public office and we welcome his supporters to review our record of leadership and accomplishments," Hannemann said in a statement.

Hannemann criticized Kobayashi's plans for mass transit. Kobayashi supported the crucial 2006 bill approving construction of an elevated system, but differed from Hannemann's selection of a steel-rail system.

"Ann has said she supports public transportation, but she has not provided any details to substantiate the dubious cost estimates and other questionable claims about the elevated bus system she recklessly touts," Hannemann said.

Kobayashi has only a few more weeks to tout her new plan before the Nov. 4 general election, which has a ballot question to determine the fate of Hannemann's proposed \$4 billion rail transit system.

Kobayashi said if voters approve the City Charter amendment question on the rail system, she would throw her support behind building a rail system.

"I listen to the voters," she said.

Find this article at:

http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20081001_Kobayashi_wins_support.html

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MidWeek

If You Don't Vote, Don't Grumble

October 01, 2008

By Rick Hamada

The 37 percent voter turnout for the primary election was embarrassing. I would be lying, however, if I said it was surprising. I mean, when is the last time you heard anybody talk about politics?

OK, fine. Barack Obama is our favorite son and only three distant relatives of Cindy McCain will vote for her husband in Hawaii.

Blah, blah and more blah. This election is more than just the coronation of a Punahou grad to the White House. We are facing unprecedented decisions and conditions in our own city and state that are ultimately the responsibility of locally elected leaders.

Before all you Obamaniacs get all hot and bothered, let's put this whole election thing into perspective. The debate and discussion as to who is best to lead our nation is obviously an important exercise. Whether you are a fan of Sen. Obama or Sen. McCain, the important thing is you are energized and participating. Unfortunately, that same passion is missing at the local level.

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Sure, the next president will decide our future foreign policies, wrestle with the War on Terror, shepherd our economic recovery and throw out the first pitch at the Nationals' home opener. But neither Obama nor McCain will fix Hawaii's roads, improve our public education or stimulate our tourism industry. So, why don't we decide who makes the decisions that affect us at home?

Here are a couple of reasons: cynicism and boredom. There is an overwhelming sense that politics means nothing in our everyday lives. This, however, couldn't be further from the truth. Take this test. Name one thing in your life that is not affected by politics. You wake up in the morning to an alarm clock. The price is affected by the GET, a pyramiding tax that is the equivalent to a 12 percent to 14 percent sales tax.

Wanna take a shower? The cost of the water is dependent on the Board of Water Supply, a semi-autonomous governmental agency. How about breakfast? Not only is the GET a factor, but the cost of shipping the ingredients is affected by the Public Utilities Commission granting surcharge increases.

Every step you take in your daily life is impacted by politics and consequently the government we create. Why would you want the minority to make the decisions for the majority?

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I know it is more exciting to talk about Paris Hilton or Oprah Winfrey. I understand you would probably prefer having root canal while listening to Clay Aiken show tunes rather than listen to a conversation about public policy.

Fine. I get it.

But do you let other people regularly make decisions for you? Nobody tells you what to wear, what car to drive, what soda to drink or what to name your children, right? So why would you let someone tell you how much take-home pay you can keep, how much a gallon of gas will cost or how much your home will cost?

That's what happens when you don't vote. You give up your voice. You abdicate your responsibility and you lose the right to complain.

Oct. 6 is the deadline to register for the Nov. 4 general election. I am certain the turnout will be greater than the primary, but don't get lulled into inaction. Whether it's the presidential race, the mayoral contest or a vote for/against rail, I implore you to get registered and vote.

Find this article at: http://www.midweek.com/content/columns/ace_article/if_you_dont_vote_dont_grumble/

MidWeek

Why So Many People Don't Vote

October 01, 2008

By Dan Boylan

Much hand-wringing followed Hawaii's Sept. 20 primary election. A record low 37 percent of the state's registered voters went to the polls. So state officials, sitting politicians and we of the chattering class all bemoaned the miserable turnout.

But what did we expect? There were virtually no contests. Save in a handful (really a mere pinch) of open legislative districts, few seats were contested in either of Hawaii's two major parties.

Thus most voters saw no one holding signs at busy intersections, found no candidates on their doorsteps, received no campaign literature through the mail, saw few television or newspaper advertisements and went unsolicited for campaign contributions. Had there been no multi-candidate, non-partisan mayoral contests on Oahu, Hawaii and Kauai, the voter turnout might have reached a single digit.

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So why the disinterest in running for state and county offices? And why the small turn-out to vote for those with gumption enough to do so?

First, the presidential campaigns of 2007-2008 sucked all the air out of the political atmosphere. The Barack Obama-Hillary Clinton primary and caucus contests focused every Democrats' and many Independents' attention from late last fall until early this past summer. City Council seats? Legislative offices? They could-n't possibly compete. No legislative session in my memory received so little attention as the session past. Every incumbent, with the exception of a couple who were cited for driving under the influence (one of whom lost his primary re-election bid) got a free ride this past session.

Second, the continued decline of Hawaii's Republican Party has made a Republican candidacy for almost any office, in almost any district, anywhere in the state, an exercise in futility. The Republicans' first governor in 40 years - despite her personal popularity - has proven powerless in her efforts to help elect others of her party to state office. And this year, any Republican aspirant considering a run faced the more daunting possibility of being drowned in the expected tidal wave generated by Hawaii-born Barack Obama. No one, after all, likes the prospect of losing.

Third, confusion depresses turnout. For many Hawaii residents of voting age, a presidential election year with its state primaries and party

caucuses leaves them scratching their heads. "What's a primary election?" a voter asks. "It's an election in which we choose between members of our party to run for a specific office," the civics teacher replies. "Didn't I do that last February when I joined 37,000 other Democrats in voting for either Obama or Clinton?" the voter asks. "Well, no. That was a party-run caucus to choose a presidential candidate of the party." "Oh ..."

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Fourth, there's the added confusion of the non-partisan contests, i.e., the hotly contested mayoral races on Oahu, Hawaii and Kauai. What are they doing on an election ballot designed to choose candidates from a party? Simply - and cynically - put, because good government types have rewritten charters to take the partisanship out of county government. They argue that there's no ideology in sewers or buses or landfills. There most certainly is, and there's no particular "good" in pretending otherwise.

Fifth, the Hawaii primary elections take place on a Saturday. On September Saturdays Hawaii's stressed residents go to the beach, watch college football, shop, or - horror of horrors - go to their second job: the one that allows them to get braces for the daughter or pay tuition for junior. They don't want to be bothered by elections in which there are few contested races if any at all. For years, former Honolulu Mayor Frank Fasi mightily complained about the Saturday primary, arguing that his working class supporters had far more important things to do on that day than vote. Now it's not just the working class that has better things to do.

Finally, there's the age-old argument of those who stay at home that "My vote doesn't matter." Civics teachers decry such an attitude, but - in fact - most votes don't matter. The incumbent will almost always win whether any particular one of us votes or not. And the candidate who has the most money to spend on his or her campaign (usually the incumbent) will almost always win whether any particular one of us votes or not.

Find this article at: http://www.midweek.com/content/columns/mostlypolitics_article/why_so_many_people_dont_vote/

September 1, 2008

Letters to the Editor

mass transit

Commuters can't wait for relief of rail system

Since so many people signed the "stop rail transit" petition, please post their names — it should be interesting if it is stopped when their children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren do research and come across their relative's name.

I'm sure they would be so disappointed because they will be stuck in traffic, which only will get worse. I'd also like to see if some of my own relatives have signed the petition.

Living in Central O'ahu, I surely don't want double-decker highways and freeways, since it will cause more of a traffic jam while building, along with not getting vehicles off the road.

We can't wait for the rail to be built and running. I sure would love to be able to ride it in my lifetime, and knowing that our future here on O'ahu, the Gathering Place, won't be known only as one with terrible traffic jams filled with cars, vans, trucks, buses and taxis, and no traffic-free rail system.

Please wake up, "stop rail transit" folks!

Julie Lee | Mililani

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Letters

For Thursday, October 2, 200

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 02, 2008

No GET, federal funds for non-rail transit

I read with amusement the article about the "new" transit plan that Ann Kobayashi and Panos Prevedouros say they will unveil soon ([Star-Bulletin, Oct. 1](#)).

Here's my prediction: After insisting for the past two years that the Dutch bus system she favors is not merely a bus system but a "rubber on concrete" train, Kobayashi will now insist that it is a bus system.

Prevedouros, leader of the Hawaii Highway Users Alliance (a group of taxi and tour bus companies and other special interests that lobby for more highways), will say the Dutch buses can operate on the toll road he has long proposed.

They will both neglect to mention that the general excise tax surcharge approved by the Legislature cannot be used to fund a toll road. And, of course, none of this would qualify for the federal funding that's waiting for a modern steel-on-steel rail system.

This whole thing has become so ridiculous. It's time to start asking Kobayashi some real questions.

Susan Lum
Mililani



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According to Joe

Transit funds pilikia

[By Joe Gedan](#)

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

In two years Mufi going split

For try for Hawaii's governorship.

He going leave us with one bitter pill.

The billions of dollars transit bill.

Our federal economy is all jam up.

With all kine spending to be cut.

Federal transit funds, not going get.

Mass transit now is a losing bet.

Daily headlines inspire the poet Joe Gedan, a retired U.S. magistrate judge who lives in Honolulu. His observations appear on Sundays and Fridays. He can be reached at gedan@hawaii.rr.com

Find this article at:

http://www.starbulletin.com/editorials/20081003_According_to_Joe.html

Pacific Business News (Honolulu) - October 3, 2008

<http://pacific.bizjournals.com/pacific/stories/2008/09/29/daily60.html>

PACIFIC BUSINESS NEWS

Friday, October 3, 2008 - 8:57 AM HAST | Modified: Friday, October 3, 2008 - 9:50 AM

Hawaii gas down 7 cents this week, some stations below \$4

Pacific Business News (Honolulu)

Hawaii's statewide average price for regular unleaded gasoline fell 7 cents this week to \$4.20 and some stations on Oahu were selling regular for less than \$4.

A month ago, the average price was \$4.35 while a year ago it was \$3.22, according to the AAA's daily fuel gauge report.

Gas prices in Hawaii are the second-highest in the United States, just slightly behind Alaska, where the average prices is \$4.23. Gas is cheapest in Oklahoma at \$3.26 a gallon.

The price for a gallon of diesel in Hawaii, meantime, dipped 22 cents from a month ago to \$5.05 a gallon, the highest rate in the country.

Gas prices for Hawaii metro areas were as follows:

- in Honolulu, a gallon of regular unleaded averaged \$4.08, down from \$4.26 a month ago, while a gallon of diesel listed for \$5.02, down 17 cents from \$5.21 a month ago;
- in Hilo on the Big Island, unleaded sold for \$4.24 a gallon, down 17 cents from a month ago, while diesel was \$5.15 a gallon, down 23 cents from a month ago; and
- in Wailuku, Maui, a gallon of unleaded listed for \$4.51, down 16 cents from a month ago, while the price of diesel dropped 29 cents from \$5.41 a month ago to \$5.12.

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Letters

For Friday, October 3, 2008

Railroad to nowhere keeps chugging along

The courts have ruled that the public may not have a vote on whether to build a new railroad on Oahu. The City Council unanimously approved language for a November ballot question that will allow the voters to decide only whether the new railroad will be "steel-on-steel" or take some other form.

The mayor has already been spending our tax dollars to convince the public to support his preference, the "steel-on-steel" railroad. The city clerk says it is too late to change the language on printed ballots.

Money is already being committed to buy the property needed to build the railroad to nowhere as well as the stations along the way.

It has already been decided who will get rich from the estimated \$6 billion in taxpayers' money that will be used to build the railroad, even though there are no studies to show that the proposed railroad will take any cars off the freeway, streets and highways.

No one has talked about how we'll support a new railroad that will lose money. Surveys show that even those who support building the new railroad to nowhere, say that they don't plan to use it.

One question remains: What color will we paint our new white elephant?

Keith Haugen
Nuuanu

Letters

For Friday, October 3, 2008

Train is best solution for Honolulu traffic

Financial markets rebound, but our traffic woes over decades have progressively gotten worse and will never recover the same way.

Dire situations require drastic methods of change, and Ann Kobayashi's flip-flop assertion that we simply cannot afford to build a mass rail transit at this time, is ludicrous. We simply can't afford not to build it.

Commuters have to learn to change their habits going to and from work, and fall out of love with their gas-guzzling vehicles that are literally jamming up the highways. And adding more buses to the melee will result in deadlock thrombosis.

Trains on whatever wheels work, worldwide, and people have to have the common sense to get on them.

John L. Werrill
Honolulu

October 4, 2008

Stop Rail brings the noise

*By Suzanne Roig
Advertiser Staff Writer*

Few heads turned yesterday during a demonstration by Stop Rail Now in Chinatown aimed at replicating the noise level of the city's planned rail transit system.

The group pumped sound through two large stereo speakers mounted atop a pickup truck bed and drove up and down the streets of Chinatown. The sound was a recording of Vancouver, British Columbia's mass transit system so Honolulu residents could hear what it might be like when the city completes the 20-mile elevated commuter line from Kapolei to Ala Moana.

"I didn't notice anything," said Holly Lacy, a North Shore resident in town to attend the monthly First Friday art tour in Chinatown. "I only heard the buses and they were loud."

Every first Friday of the month, art galleries, restaurants and stores remain open from 5 to 9 p.m. in Downtown and Chinatown to feature exhibits and free entertainment.

As people walked and talked and buses traveled up and down the street, Stop Rail Now volunteers passed out fliers.

Volunteer Lois Zygowicz said about 100 fliers were passed out last night.

"I saw the truck pass me twice, but I didn't see anyone stop and notice," Zygowicz said. "There was a lot of music and noise. It was a little disappointing.

"I expected to hear a roar. Maybe when it's quieter."

Stop Rail Now is trying to build public opposition to a proposed Honolulu charter amendment on the Nov. 4 ballot. Voters will be asked to vote on the question, "Shall the powers, duties and functions of the city, through its director of transportation services, include establishment of a steel wheel on steel rail transit system?"

The group's own proposed ordinance to ban rail transit was rejected. The group has criticized the City Council's charter amendment question, saying it doesn't prohibit the city from proceeding with rail transit regardless of the vote outcome.

During yesterday's demonstration, Stop Rail Now said it played the Vancouver train sounds at a level equivalent to actually being there.

"Because it's First Friday, we thought we'd get a good crowd there," said Cliff Slater, a retired businessman and leader of Stop Rail Now. "The city keeps talking about how quiet it is. Our sound engineers tell us it's not quiet at all."

Wayne Yoshioka, city Department of Transportation Services director, said noise is a nonissue because when the city's plans go before federal transportation officials for review and projected noise levels are too high, mitigation measures will be required.

"We don't think the noise level portrayed is accurate," Yoshioka said. "If it comes out that the rail system is so loud, then we'll

have to mitigate the noise with barriers or other measures.

"The bottom line is we'll comply."

Mayor Mufi Hannemann hopes to start construction on the rail project in late 2009 or early 2010. The project is expected to cost an inflation-adjusted \$5 billion and take nearly a decade to complete all phases.

It will be the largest public works project in state history and will have major environmental, social and economic impacts.

Also yesterday, the pro-rail group Go Rail Go opened its campaign headquarters at 1144 Bethel St., which is under Marks Garage.

October 4, 2008

Letters to the Editor

mayoral race

Rail project will bring jobs, money to Hawai'i

Now flip-flopping Ann Kobayashi says we can't afford rail because we're in a recession. Truth is that mounting job losses make the train vital for us.

The rail project will employ 3,700 construction workers, starting next year, and also 11,000 local suppliers, engineers, architects, and other professionals and hard-working residents. Moreover, no construction project a fifth as large is on the horizon.

In addition, this project will bring \$900 million in federal dollars; more money than 700,000 tourists each staying a week. Thus while we're keeping locals working, we're making up for the tourism drop. Plus, we'll save nearly \$300 million a year in future transportation costs, including lost time in traffic.

So rail is no "make-work" project, but something we need now. On the other hand, pull the plug on rail and Hawai'i may crash faster than you can say Herbert Hoover. If you own a business, or work for one, vote yes for rail and Mayor Mufi Hannemann on Nov. 4.

Hannah Miyamoto | Manoa

October 5, 2008

Mayoral candidate details city vision

By Jeanne Mariani-Belding

Each week Editorial and Opinion Editor Jeanne Mariani-Belding hosts The Hot Seat, our opinion-page blog that brings in elected leaders and people in the news and lets you ask the questions during a live online chat.

Both mayoral candidates will be appearing on the Hot Seat. First up, and on The Hot Seat last week was City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi.

Here is an excerpt from that Hot Seat session. To see the full conversation, go to The Hot Seat blog at www.honoluluadvertiser.com/opinion and click on "The Hot Seat." (Names of questioners are screen names given during our online chat.)

Chris Ogata Nakamatsu: Your ads in The Honolulu Advertiser say that you take credit for saving Waimea Valley. William McCorriston, the attorney for the owner of the property, says that Mayor (Mufi) Hannemann is responsible for providing the leadership that saved Waimea Valley. Please explain why your statements are so different from McCorriston's statements?

Ann Kobayashi: It is irresponsible to claim that I would take credit for Waimea Valley. In fact, the City Council voted against Mufi's plan to develop Waimea Valley.

Forward 808: How will you make Honolulu more sustainable?

Kobayashi: The key to sustainability is:

- a) Preserving our agricultural industry,
- b) Never developing on conservation land, and
- c) Implementing sensible energy conservation practices.

Do you work for Phileas: I keep hearing that you are very close to the Phileas bus company from the Netherlands and are supporting their efforts to replace Honolulu's rail transit plan with one based on their buses. You have also continuously pushed for a "rubber tire" system. I did a Google search and saw that you invited this Phileas company to give a presentation to the City Council not too long ago. It seems very strange and even unethical for a sitting councilperson to advocate on behalf of a specific vendor. How can you possibly explain this relationship?

Kobayashi: All transit companies were invited to make presentations to the Honolulu City Council. My position from the beginning was to listen to all options. We want to listen to any company that can provide solutions that fit our pocketbook and our city.

Kchen: What is your plan to solve the affordable housing crisis?

Kobayashi: I will implement the affordable housing package I co-introduced with Councilman Donovan Dela Cruz. The city must take a new approach to creating incentives for developers to build more affordable housing; that is why I support density bonuses, reduced parking requirements and waiving of building permit fees for affordable housing.

Karen from Nu'uano: The rail funds from the GET tax increase cannot be used for other projects. How do you intend to fund your alternatives? What is the new transit plan you and Panos Prevedouros have developed?

Kobayashi: I'm disappointed to see how Mufi has again been irresponsible and continues to mislead the public to believe that our GET tax increase can only fund a rail system when that is clearly not the case. My plan will involve a fixed-guideway mass transit system that qualifies for FTA funds and the GET tax surcharge.

We are working through a very exciting transportation plan that will be announced next week that will reduce significantly more congestion for far less cost than Mufi's heavy rail system. And unlike his train, our plan will substantially reduce travel times in town as well as from West O'ahu for all commuters including those that take the bus as well as the folks that must drive.

The plan can be set in motion immediately in 2009 and does not have to wait until 2011, which is the earliest that the FTA will release monies for Honolulu's fixed guideway project.

What about the landfill: Councilwoman, why did you vote in 2004 to keep the Waimanalo Gulch landfill where it is now and expand it, if you were going to turn around and criticize Mufi for it after he was elected? That makes absolutely no sense and seems very hypocritical.

What's your solution? Please be specific. No pie in the sky.

Kobayashi: The vote in 2004 was only a two-year plan. My criticism is because of Mufi's broken promise to the community.

We will honor the promise made to the Leeward community. It is irresponsible and short-term thinking for this administration to have ignored the city's law and not develop a 25-year Municipal Solid Waste Plan as required. The Waste Plan must include a sensible approach that incorporates renewable energy, new and innovative technology and a component on shipping of solid waste.

Practically zero-landfill technological solutions exist and are in use in other nations. They need to be evaluated and installed. Old tires, discarded glass and demolition concrete and stones can be re-used in construction projects.

Mark: How will Honolulu pay for the proposed rail project, since the collections from the 0.5 percent GET increase are currently below expectations? Second question: What is the current status of the rail EIS (environmental impact statement), and will taxpayers get to see it before Nov. 4?

Kobayashi: We can't pay for the heavy rail project. That has been my concern since day one. We haven't even applied for FTA funds.

I, like you, have been waiting for the draft EIS which was due in December 2006. I'm sure you agree with me that it is irresponsible to not deliver the draft EIS to the public far in advance of the Nov. 4 election and allow plenty of time for review and discussion.

Kenneth from Wai'anae: In the current economy, is it wise to turn away nearly a billion dollars of federal funds?

Kobayashi: First, what billion dollars are you referring to? Mufi has not even applied for the FTA funds and the FTA's Web site does NOT list Honolulu on its New Starts program as far as I know.

However, should those monies become available, our transportation plan will not disqualify federal funds. This is another irresponsible talking point that has been promoted by Mufi's campaign. The FTA clearly states that rail is not the only type of fixed guideway mass transit system that qualifies for federal funds. Our congestion relief plan is sensible, appropriate for our island city, and will fit within those parameters.

We need to build a transit system that will bring these federal funds to O'ahu. If we build steel on steel, ALL these funds may go to foreign countries to buy steel rails, rail yard equipment and trains.

Kana From China: Councilwoman, the city has so many problems with our sewer system. How will you fix the city's aging sewer system?

Kobayashi: I will work with my senior infrastructure adviser Panos Prevedouros on a long-term wastewater infrastructure repair and maintenance program for our aging sewer system.

PSSJM: What made you decide to enter the mayor's race, and why did you file so late?

Kobayashi: I gave up my un-contested City Council seat to run for mayor because I saw change was needed. I want to improve the quality of life for the residents of O'ahu. I truly believe that the current administration has been irresponsible with taxpayers' dollars, capital improvement projects and lacks sensible long-term planning for the future of our city. The only way I could have a real impact on this was to run for mayor, and I commit to serve my full term of four years.

Plasma arc pimp: Is it true that you delayed the third boiler expansion of the HPower plant because some "plasma arc" company wanted you to help them build a different kind of plant, but failed to follow through with a bid to do so?

Kobayashi: No. Plasma arc is not affordable and it would be irresponsible of me to support it. Using old, outdated technology will not solve our trash problems, especially since new, affordable technology is available. It was irresponsible for the city to pay HECO \$50,000 for an RFP for new technology and then it (got) canceled by Mufi, which leaves us stuck with the same old technology.

Jack: What do you mean when you say that, "We need a leader who is fiscally responsible"?

Kobayashi: I will be a leader who is responsible and protect the interests of the taxpayer. I will cut wasteful government spending before increasing property taxes. I will implement Bill 12 (2006), which states that the city would collect only the amount of revenue necessary to operate the city, instead of collecting revenue and then deciding how to spend the surplus. I will follow the council chair's lead and establish a separate fund for vacant funded positions. I will also ensure that we have a good handle on the transfer of funds. Finally, I will implement measures to save on energy costs within the city.

October 5, 2008

Update on Hawaii rail cost may not come in time to help voters

Cost update, impact on environment reports may miss Nov. 4 vote

By SEAN HAO

Advertiser Staff Writer

Residents soon will find out how much Honolulu's planned 20-mile elevated commuter train from East Kapolei to Ala Moana could cost to build, operate and maintain.

The question is, will they get that updated information before a Nov. 4 vote on a charter amendment authorizing the establishment of a steel wheel on steel rail transit system. An updated version of the 2006 financial plan for the train will be included in an upcoming draft environmental impact statement. That document is targeted for release late this month and will include updates on the number of potentially affected properties, noise and visual impacts, and potential impacts on archaeological sites, among other things.

According to the city's 2006 Alternatives Analysis, the first 20-mile segment is expected to cost \$3.7 billion to build. Those costs are expected to increase in the draft environmental impact statement to account for recent rises in inflation and construction costs.

However, residents may not have access to those details before a Nov. 4 vote on whether to build the train. That's because the document, which was originally scheduled to be finished in the spring, is still being vetted by the federal government.

Rounds of discussion

The Federal Transit Administration and the city of Honolulu are in the first of what could be several rounds of back-and-forth discussion over the document's contents. The city is in the process of responding to the agency's comments on the first administrative draft of the draft environmental impact statement, said Mark Scheibe, deputy project manager for Parsons Brinckerhoff.

If everything goes well, the updated environmental impact document should be released before the election, he said.

"We're trying to get our responses to them as quickly as we can," Scheibe said. "If they're happy with it, and we can turn it around, then we'll have it out later (this) month."

However, "If we have to go through another iteration of comments, this is probably not going to happen" in time for the election, he said.

FTA spokesman Paul Griffo said the agency is aware of Honolulu's Nov. 4 vote on the rail system. However, that date will not dictate the release of the project's draft environmental statement. The FTA won't know when the statement will be released until after it receives and assesses the city's first round of responses.

Often, the FTA and a local community go through several rounds of comments before releasing a draft environmental impact statement, Griffo said.

"Much of the time, there's more than just one round of comments," he said. "There's a process that needs to take place and that needs to play out regardless of local considerations."

Delays in release

Despite delays in the release of the draft environmental impact statement, city officials maintain the \$3.7 billion project is still on track to break ground in December 2009 and begin partial operations by the end of 2012. The city plans to complete the full 20-mile, 19-station elevated commuter line in about a decade. It will be the largest public works project in state history and will have major environmental, social and economic impacts.

New cost estimates

Among the most anticipated updates contained in the draft environmental impact statement are new capital and operating cost estimates.

According to the city's 2006 alternatives analysis, the train is expected to cost about \$5 billion when adjusted for inflation. That's the price for a route that passes Honolulu International Airport, but excludes spurs to West Kapolei, Waikiki and the University of Hawai'i-Manoa.

The current route now goes through the Salt Lake area with a shortened 2.1-mile, \$350 million airport spur. That spur would bypass Pearl Harbor and Hickam Air Force Base, though service to those areas could be added at a later date.

In addition to those capital costs, the train will cost an inflation-adjusted \$1 billion to operate and maintain from 2019 to 2030. What's still undisclosed is how much the train will cost to operate between 2012 and 2019.

The draft environmental impact statement will include those details as well as updated transit tax revenues forecasts. Those forecasts are expected to take into account the state's current economic slowdown.

City officials hope to raise an inflation-adjusted \$4 billion between 2007 and 2022 to pay for the 20-mile version of the system. That, coupled with \$925 million in anticipated federal funds, is expected to pay the \$5 billion in capital costs associated with rail, according to the city's financial plan. That financial plan is based on outdated tax-revenue forecasts generated in September 2006, when more robust economic growth was anticipated.

updated plan

The city and Parsons Brinckerhoff contend the draft environmental impact statement won't be radically different from information that's been previously released to the public.

"I don't think people are going to look at it, perhaps except for the costs, and feel that there's been a quantum change," Scheibe said. "It's not like the (draft environmental impact statement) will contain all of this incredibly new information. We'll have an updated financial plan. We'll have costs expressed in later-year dollars."

But, "the cost isn't going to be doubled. It's going to be what you can expect from two years of inflation," Scheibe said.

Rail project critics contend the draft environmental impact statement contains information voters should have before voting on the train. However, the city has no incentive to release that statement before Nov. 4, said outspoken rail critic Cliff Slater.

"There's no way that things are going to look better" after the draft environmental impact statement is released, Slater said. "There's fundamentally no good that can come of it from their standpoint. It'll give ammunition to us."

The city and the FTA won't rush the release of the draft environmental impact statement, Scheibe said.

The "FTA and the city, from a defensive point of view, want to make sure that the (draft environmental impact statement) is as bulletproof as it can be when it goes out," he said.

"We're not going to rush something out because the election is coming."

Meanwhile, the city will not disclose any updated information contained in the draft environmental impact statement without FTA approval.

The FTA said it discourages city government officials from prematurely disclosing details of a draft environmental impact statement.

"It wouldn't be the most prudent thing to do because it's a working document," said FTA spokesman Griffo.

October 5, 2008

Update on Hawaii rail cost may not come in time to help voters

Cost update, impact on environment reports may miss Nov. 4 vote

By SEAN HAO
Advertiser Staff Writer

POTENTIAL TOLL, IMPACT OF RAIL

Cost: \$3.7 billion in 2006 dollars for the initial 20-mile segment from East Kapolei to Ala Moana.

Noise level: The train is expected to generate no more than 75 decibels of noise at a distance of 50 feet.

Properties affected: Eighty-nine commercial locations, 87 government or utility-owned properties and 13 residential properties could be acquired whole or in part.

Archaeological impacts: There's reasonable potential the transit project will affect burials and precontact archaeology as it traverses Nimitz Highway, Halekauwila Street and Kapi'olani Boulevard. An expansion spur to Waikiki also has high potential to disrupt historical sites. Other portions of the route along Farrington and Kamehameha highways and an airport spur have a medium potential of encountering such sites.

Visual impacts: The elevated guideway is expected to have a greater visual impact in Kapolei rather than in urban Honolulu. That's because the East Kapolei area has low and open landscape. Visual impacts are expected to be moderate to low along Dillingham Boulevard, Nimitz Highway and Kuhio Avenue because of a large number of nearby high-rise structures.

Economic impact: The project could generate an average of 9,100 jobs annually during the nine years it takes to build it.

Public transit impact: When combined with TheBus, overall mass-transit ridership is expected to increase to 7.4 percent of total transit trips in 2030, up from 6.1 percent projected if the commuter rail line is not built.

Traffic impact: Even with the train system, there will be an estimated 57 percent increase in traffic on H-1 during morning rush hour in 2030 compared with 2003. If the transit system was not built but a few improvements were made to the freeway and bus system, traffic would increase by 64 percent by 2030.

Energy usage: In 2030, the train system is expected to consume an average of about 18.5 megawatt hours of electricity daily. That's enough electricity to power about 9,250 homes, or a community the size of Hawai'i Kai.

Source: City's Alternatives Analysis and supporting documents.

THE RAIL QUESTION

Voters can voice their opinion on the city's rail project on Nov. 4. The wording of the ballot issue is as follows:

"Shall the powers, duties and functions of the city, through its director of transportation services,

include establishment of a steel wheel on steel rail transit system?"

Further coverage of the train project is available at www.honoluluadvertiser.com/rail

\$3.76 BILLION

2006 estimate of rail cost

9

years to build rail

9,100

estimated number of jobs created during building

"It's not like the (draft environmental impact statement) will contain all of this incredibly new information. We'll have an updated financial plan. We'll have costs expressed in later-year dollars. (But) the cost isn't going to be doubled. It's going to be what you can expect from two years of inflation."

MARK SCHEIBE | deputy project manager for Parsons Brinckerhoff

Stop Rail Now brakes legal fight

The anti-rail group will focus on educating voters on rail transit

[By Laurie Au](#)

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

An anti-rail group announced yesterday that it will finally give up its legal battles attempting to stop the city's proposed \$4 billion rail transit system.

Earle Partington, the attorney for Stop Rail Now, said the group will be quitting its efforts in the courts, including a request to the Hawaii Supreme Court to intervene, to create a Nov. 4 ballot question asking voters to prohibit the city from continuing to build the rail system.

"We are abandoning the courts and going to the education part of our campaign," Partington said. "It's obvious that the courts aren't sympathizing with us."

Through mostly staged news events beginning in April, Stop Rail Now's efforts have garnered much attention. But its most recent brochure, which includes statements from Hawaii's public officials, angered U.S. Sen. Daniel Inouye, who issued a news release yesterday.

"I am writing to express my extreme dismay with Stop Rail Now's misleading use of a statement I made about the City and County of Honolulu's waste-water system, and then inferring that as a result, I am somehow opposed to rail transit," Inouye wrote in an Oct. 7 letter to the group.

Inouye said the group had taken his comments out of context when he talked about pending mandatory upgrades for the city's two waste-water treatment plants that would cost \$1.2 billion.

In a March 2007 letter to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Inouye wrote, which the group used as a quote, "Such an action by the EPA would bankrupt the City, and would - as a defensive posture - force the city to court."

Cliff Slater, Stop Rail Now organizer, said he has not decided if the group would abide by Inouye's request to remove his photo and statement.

"He did say \$1.2 billion spent on sewer upgrades would bankrupt the city," Slater said. "What

does he think a \$5 or \$6 billion system will do?"

The city's sewer and transit funds come from two funding sources, and Mayor Mufi Hannemann has made it a point to not dip into the funds for other reasons.

"It all comes out of taxpayers' pockets," Slater said.

The mayor's office also released yesterday a list of "misinformation" put out by Stop Rail Now, mayoral opponent City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi and former opponent Panos Prevedouros.

Among the points included many statements city officials had already publicly stated, such as that property taxes won't be raised to pay for the rail system and that anti-rail forces are using that as a "scare tactic."

Find this article at:

http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20081008_The_anti-rail_group_will_focus_on_educating_voters_on_rail_transit.html

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

October 8, 2008

Letters to the Editor

City should expedite its responses to FTA

One would think that at a time when distrust of the government is pervasive the city would expedite the responses to the Federal Transit Administration regarding the building of a rail-transit system so that voters may have a more complete understanding of the financial impact upon the citizenry.

Furthermore, the economic crisis of the nation adds a second reason for the city to release the environmental statement and financial update for Honolulu's largest project. Voters have a right to the information before voting.

Arlene G. Woo | Honolulu

October 8, 2008

Letters to the Editor

mayoral race

Kobayashi didn't favor steel transit system

Your recent article regarding Panos Prevedouros' endorsement of Ann Kobayashi's campaign ("Kobayashi turns against train transit," Oct. 1) is misleading and incorrect on several counts.

First, the headline is misleading. Ann Kobayashi was never in favor of the steel train transit plan, so it's impossible for her to have ever turned "against" it. Second, the first sentence claiming she abandoned rubber-tire-on-concrete system is incorrect as well; both Ann Kobayashi and Panos Prevedouros have proposed mass-transit systems that utilize rubber-tire-on-concrete systems. Perhaps the confusion arose in Ann's clarification in that she does not support mass-transit systems that require tracks, in other words, trains.

Unlike Mayor Mufi Hannemann's heavy rail plans, Ann Kobayashi wants a mass-transit system that will cost-effectively reduce congestion and will neither bankrupt our city nor spoil the natural beauty of our 'aina.

Heavy rail systems cannot satisfy those simple conditions in a city of our size.

Kimberly Ribellia | Friends of Ann Kobayashi

October 8, 2008

Letters to the Editor

transit

Rail will never be built within projected time

Do you believe that the rail system can be built for the \$3.7 billion the mayor has told us and will be built in the time frame given? Then you also must believe in Santa Claus, the tooth fairy and the Easter bunny. It just won't happen, folks.

Try and think of anything this big for this much being done in Hawai'i — I don't believe there has been anything. Then think how long it takes to build anything here.

There is no doubt something must be done, but I'm not sure this is the most cost-effective use of our tax dollars. Most of us will pay taxes until we die and never get to ride it.

Then there's the maintenance. We don't keep up our schools, sewers, water mains, stadium, roads, bridges, dams and buildings, so how will the rail system be maintained?

One more thing: We don't want clotheslines sticking up from yards blocking views; think what an elevated rail system will look like and the views that will be blocked.

George Margaris | Kapolei

October 9, 2008

Burial Council to tour rail path

Meeting will evaluate encounters with archaeological sites

Advertiser Staff

The O'ahu Island Burial Council will take its next public meeting on Nov. 12 on the road.

Council members yesterday agreed to accept an invitation by the city and rapid transit contractor Parsons Brinckerhoff to take a tour of the route for Honolulu's planned \$3.7 billion elevated commuter rail.

The tour is aimed at familiarizing council members with the route and areas where the construction project could encounter Native Hawaiian burials and other archaeological sites.

According to an August presentation to the council by city consultant Cultural Surveys Hawaii Inc., there is no doubt that the project will have an adverse effect on archaeological resources.

The council discussed and rejected a variety of ways to take the tour without triggering state open meeting laws. Their primary concern was the logistics of conducting a mobile meeting without knowing in advance how many people would attend.

As of yesterday morning, the council's plan was to meet at 1151 Punchbowl St., Room 132 at 8 a.m. on Nov. 12, then proceed on a tour of the 20-mile transit route from East Kapolei to Ala Moana. The council planned on having a bus available to transport council members and the public. A formal meeting agenda will be posted at least a week prior to the meeting.

October 9, 2008

Honolulu gas prices drop back under \$4

Prices still 50 cents higher here than the national average

*By Dan Nakaso
Advertiser Staff Writer*

The average price of a gallon of regular gasoline in Honolulu dropped below \$4 yesterday for the first time since May, giving O'ahu drivers a welcomed break from rising prices.

"Pretty good for a change, huh?" said Catherine Lilly of Kahala.

Lilly remembered the days just three years ago when it cost her only \$18 to fill up her 1999 Buick Century.

Like other Honolulu drivers, Lilly saw the cost for a tank of gas soar to \$53, then drop this week to \$43 at Lex Brodie's in Kaka'ako.

While drivers like Lilly can celebrate the extra cash in their wallets, they still pay more than 50 cents extra for a gallon of regular gas than the national average.

Gas prices fell from an average of \$4.022 per gallon Tuesday in Honolulu to \$3.995 yesterday — the first sub-\$4 price since May 30.

But the U.S. average also dropped from \$3.480 to \$3.447 yesterday, according to AAA's Fuel Gauge Report.

"Too expensive for gas still," said Lynn Victorino, who put only \$10 of regular into her 1990 Nissan truck.

"We still pay too much," said Rio Tafai, who shelled out \$84 to fill up his 2002 Dodge Ram truck with 21.1 gallons of regular.

"It's a gas guzzler," said his passenger, Colleen Lang. "But we gotta have it for the kids."

Across the Islands, the overall statewide drop was barely noticeable — falling from an average of \$4.146 per gallon on Tuesday to \$4.126 yesterday.

Wailuku continued to have the highest measured prices for Hawai'i's metropolitan areas at \$4.518 a gallon, according to AAA.

The overall decline in Hawai'i prices coincides with the lowest world oil prices in 10 months.

Yesterday, the price of a barrel of crude oil fell to \$88.94, for delivery in November, as the U.S. government reported a bigger-than-expected gain in crude and gasoline inventories and demand has been slowed by the global economic crisis.

Just three months ago, oil prices were running at nearly \$150 per barrel.

But, as Hawai'i drivers have learned, fluctuations in worldwide oil prices do not always instantly translate into changes in Island prices as oil is refined and sold as gasoline.

Oil experts have testified before state lawmakers that Hawai'i's prices can fall behind price changes in Mainland and world markets by two or three months — and as local factors come into play, such as Hawai'i's geographic isolation, smaller volumes and lack of Mainland-style competition.

Whatever forces brought about yesterday's fall below the \$4-per-gallon threshold in Honolulu, the price change will not affect the increased number of riders who have turned to TheBus over the past several months, said Ken Hong, senior vice president/assistant general manager for Oahu Transit Services, which operates TheBus.

"It won't make a dent in our ridership," Hong said. "TheBus, at \$40 per month, is still way cheaper compared to the monthly cost of gasoline, plus parking."

The bigger issue that could directly cut bus ridership would be a larger, overall improvement in the economy, which would boost individual spending, Hong said.

"If the economy is really robust," he said, "that would have an impact on our ridership."

The same theory holds for Hawai'i's struggling new car dealers, who expect to have their worst sales year since 1998.

Falling gas prices alone cannot persuade hoards of customers to buy new cars and trucks at a time when the local and national economies are struggling, said Dave Rolf, executive director of the Hawaii Automobile Dealers Association.

So manufacturers — especially truck-makers — are offering zero interest loans and discounts totalling thousands of dollars to entice buyers. At the same time, Rolf said, showrooms have about 100 car models that get more than 30 mpg.

"The discounts, rebates, lower gas costs and a lot of products with high mileage will bring some people back into the market," Rolf said. "We have some very positive things happening and one very difficult issue: That's the credit crunch. You've got to get the credit thing settled down. Then everything will work out."

While larger, economic forces continue to evolve, drivers such as Sheila Cruz were just happy with the relief at the pump.

"It's about time," she said.

Because of high fuel costs, Cruz has been driving a Volvo wagon while parking her Chevrolet Silverado truck — the one with the thirsty, V-8 engine.

But with fuel prices falling in Honolulu, Cruz said, "now I'm going to pull out the V-8."

October 10, 2008

Hawaii voter registration spikes after low-turnout primary

Post-primary signups for general election likely a state record

BY PETER BOYLAN

Advertiser Staff Writer

Motivated by the Nov. 4 presidential election, it appears that more Hawai'i residents registered to vote after the Sept. 20 primary election than in any similar period in state history.

Registration closed Monday, but the count of newly registered voters is continuing and expected to grow substantially.

The tally as of yesterday showed 696,000 people registered for the Nov. 4 general election, compared with 667,647 for the Sept. 20 primary election, according to the state Office of Elections. That's an increase of more than 28,000.

A final report is due early next week, according to the state Office of Elections.

O'ahu already has about 470,000 registered in the general election versus 450,000 in the primary. The increase between elections is the largest ever for O'ahu.

The current record for new voters between a primary and general election was set in 1992, when 31,722 new voters registered. Interest in national politics that year was high, with Democrat Bill Clinton and independent H. Ross Perot challenging George H. W. Bush for presidency.

The expected record for new registered voters since the primary is attributed to a perfect storm of polarizing forces:

- The presidential race between Barack Obama, who was born and raised in Hawai'i, and John McCain.
- Three county mayoral races — including the Honolulu race between Mayor Mufi Hannemann and Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi.
- An O'ahu referendum on rail transit, which would be the largest public works project in state history.

"It suggests that the turnout during the general election will be significant," said Kevin Cronin, the state's chief elections officer. "There are a lot of issues that people are discussing and reading about and seeing on television that have created an awareness and increased the energy surrounding the process."

After a record low

The increase in registration follows a primary election with a turnout of only 37 percent of registered voters statewide, the lowest total in state history, according to the elections office.

Several other states have reported increases in voter registration this year, an indication that more people are interested in the

presidential campaign.

Neal Milner, a political scientist and ombudsman at the University of Hawai'i-Manoa, credited the increased excitement to Obama, a Punahou School graduate, and to voter registration efforts by Democrats and Republicans hoping to swing a tight election in their favor.

In the primary, Hannemann fell just under the threshold for re-election and was forced into a runoff with Kobayashi, who finished ahead of UH-Manoa engineering professor Panos Prevedourous.

The Hannemann campaign hopes the increase in registered voters leads to greater turnout — something it hopes will favor the incumbent. His campaign is working hard to mobilize its base while targeting new voters in part by also campaigning and fundraising for Obama, said A.J. Halagao, Hannemann's campaign co-chair.

"Barack Obama has inspired a generation of voters on the Mainland and here in Hawai'i," Halagao said. "Because Mayor Hannemann has been such a strong supporter of Obama we do feel that will help Mayor Hannemann and we welcome their support."

City Council member Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Kobayashi's campaign manager, said the increase in registered voters illustrates the public's desire for change, not only in the White House but also at Honolulu Hale.

He attributed the increase in O'ahu registered voters to a genuine belief among Hannemann's opponents that the incumbent is vulnerable and that Kobayashi is a sensible candidate who will listen to the people and respond to their needs.

"People know Ann Kobayashi has the momentum because most people who vote want a change. Now that they see change is real and change is possible they've registered to vote," Dela Cruz said.

October 10, 2008

Community meetings planned on rail transit project

Advertiser Staff

The city will hold a series of community meetings Oct. 14 through 23 to further inform residents about Honolulu's rail transit project.

The community meetings will feature information about current and future traffic conditions on Oahu; the 20-mile elevated rail route and how it will reduce future traffic congestion; rail stations and locations; the projected costs of building and maintaining the rail line; economic impact, including the 11,000 jobs that would be created during construction; steel wheel technology; and environmental factors, among the many facets of rail transit.

"Community outreach is one of the foundations of this project, and this slate of community meetings will continue to engage the public in this important project," Mayor Mufi Hannemann said. "Our goal from the beginning of this process has been to educate residents about the facts of Honolulu's future traffic congestion, inform them about the best options available and deliver results," Hannemann said in a news release issued by his office.

The community meetings will feature exhibits, displays and handouts, and project staff will be on hand to answer questions from residents, according to the news release.

All meetings are from 6 to 8 p.m.

Meetings have been scheduled for:

- Oct. 14 at Holomua Elementary School, 91-1561 Keaunui Drive in Ewa Beach
- Oct. 15 at Manoa Elementary School, 3155 Manoa Road in Manoa
- Oct. 16 at Waipahu Intermediate School, 94-455 Farrington Highway in Waipahu
- Oct. 21 at the Blaisdell Exhibition Hall, 777 Ward Avenue in Honolulu
- Oct. 22 at Farrington High School, 1564 North King Street in Kalihi
- Oct. 23 at Mililani Waena Elementary, 95-502 Kipapa Drive in Mililani

In addition, the rail transit project will staff a booth with comprehensive information on the rail project at the Food and New Product Expo at the Blaisdell Exhibition Hall from Oct. 10 to 12.

October 11, 2008

Carpenters Union backs rail with cash

7,800-member group spent \$50K last month on pro-rail advertising

By SEAN HAO

Advertiser Staff Writer

The Hawaii Carpenters Union spent more than \$50,531 last month to convince residents to vote for rail, according to filings with the Hawai'i Campaign Spending Commission. That exceeded the \$43,400 spent by Stop Rail Now and one other anti-rail group.

Most of the Carpenters money — \$42,569 — was spent on pro-rail ad production and air time for the Sept. 6 through Sept. 20 period. The Hawaii Carpenters Union, with 7,800 members, is one of seven political action committees, or PACs, that have registered with the state to advocate on a rail-related Charter amendment that's on the Nov. 4 General Election ballot.

Stop Rail Now spent \$43,295 from Sept. 6 through Sept. 20 advocating against the amendment, according to documents filed yesterday. That amount includes advertising and attorney and printing fees. Stop Rail Now was joined by another anti-rail PAC called Hope For Hawaii, which spent \$106.

Political action committees that raised or spent a minimum of \$1,000 from Sept. 6 to Sept. 20 advocating a position on the rail question were required to file a spending report with the state yesterday.

The wording of the ballot issue is as follows:

"Shall the powers, duties and functions of the city, through its director of transportation services, include establishment of a steel wheel on steel rail transit system?"

Spending by PACs excludes ads paid for by the city to promote rail and educate residents. The city spent \$1.4 million in taxpayer money from August 2005 through February 2008 on public relations and outreach efforts. In addition, the city paid about \$120,000 from March to June, primarily for radio advertisements.

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

October 11, 2008

City's rail transit briefings for public start Tuesday

Advertiser Staff

The city will hold a series of community meetings from Tuesday through Oct. 23 to further inform residents about Honolulu's rail transit project.

The community meetings will include information about current and future traffic conditions on O'ahu; the 20-mile elevated rail route and how it is expected to reduce future traffic congestion; rail stations and locations; the projected costs of building and maintaining the rail line; economic impacts, including an estimated 11,000 jobs created during construction; steel wheel technology; and environmental factors.

"Community outreach is one of the foundations of this project, and this slate of community meetings will continue to engage the public in this important project," Mayor Mufi Hannemann said in a news release. "Our goal from the beginning of this process has been to educate residents about the facts of Honolulu's future traffic congestion, inform them about the best options available and deliver results."

The community meetings will feature exhibits, displays and handouts, and project staff will be on hand to answer questions, according to the news release.

All meetings are 6 to 8 p.m.:

- Tuesday at Holomua Elementary School, 91-1561 Keaunui Drive in 'Ewa Beach.
- Wednesday at Manoa Elementary School, 3155 Manoa Road.
- Thursday at Waipahu Intermediate School, 94-455 Farrington Highway.
- Oct. 21 at the Blaisdell Exhibition Hall.
- Oct. 22 at Farrington High School, 1564 N. King St. in Kalihi.
- Oct. 23 at Mililani Waena Elementary, 95-502 Kipapa Drive.

There will also be an information booth at the Food and New Product Expo at the Blaisdell Exhibition Hall today and tomorrow.

October 12, 2008

Just the facts on Honolulu transit

Whether train system is worth building hangs on variety of issues

By SEAN HAO

Advertiser Staff Writer

Rail proponents and opponents don't agree on much when it comes to assessing the costs and benefits of Honolulu's planned elevated commuter train.

In fact, about the only thing they agree on is that the other side is misleading the public about key facets of the public transit project.

That leaves residents the task of sorting through numerous, often conflicting claims about the impacts of rail ahead of a key Nov. 4 vote that will dictate the project's future.

The basis for much of the city's evidence supporting rail comes from the November 2006 Alternatives Analysis, which was prepared by transportation engineering firm Parsons Brinckerhoff. The report determined that a train reduced traffic congestion and increased public transit ridership more than managed highway lanes. A new elevated highway also would cost more to build and operate in the long term, according to the \$10 million study.

Stop Rail Now, which has not done a comparable study, contends the city did not conduct a rigorous, good-faith analysis of the managed-lane option. Stop Rail Now contends its analysis shows that a new elevated freeway and bus rapid transit system from Waiawa to Iwilei would cost less to build and operate than a train.

There are numerous points of contention between city officials and Stop Rail Now. Their disputes surround a range of rail-related issues including costs, traffic impacts, energy efficiency, federal funding, noise and ridership.

Here's an assessment of those issues:

Issue: Traffic congestion

What the city says: Rail will reduce future traffic congestion.

What Stop Rail Now says: Traffic will be far worse in the future with rail.

The facts: Both statements are factual. That's because the project, which would link East Kapolei to Ala Moana, will help take more autos off the road, but will not prevent traffic from worsening in the future. According to the Alternatives Analysis, the initial 20-mile rail system will reduce peak-period vehicle hours of delay by 11 percent in 2030 compared with a so-called "no build" scenario.

The same study found that even with the transit system, there will be an estimated 57 percent increase in traffic on H-1 during the morning rush hour in 2030 compared with 2003. If the transit system were not built but a few improvements were made to the freeway and bus system, traffic would increase by 64 percent by 2030.

Issue: Project costs

What the city says: The initial 20-mile segment will cost \$3.7 billion — an amount that includes an added \$1 billion for contingencies. The full alignment from West Kapolei to Waikiki is estimated at about \$5 billion, according to the Alternatives Analysis. That includes a shortened \$350 million spur from the Honolulu International Airport to Middle Street, which was necessitated by a main route that now runs through Salt Lake.

Those figures, which are in 2006 dollars, were based on recent large-scale O'ahu construction projects and U.S. Navy construction cost data for Hawai'i. They will be updated in an upcoming draft environmental impact statement.

What Stop Rail Now says: The full rail project will cost \$6.4 billion. The group bases its figure on the estimated construction costs of Honolulu's failed 1992 rail project. Those costs were adjusted up for inflation and to provide a 33 percent allowance for contingencies.

The facts: No one knows for sure how much the rail system will cost. Recent events including a nationwide credit crunch and a slowing Hawai'i economy only add to the uncertainty.

If history is any indication, train projects tend to cost more than anticipated during their Alternatives Analysis phase. Recently built rail systems, on average, experienced 40 percent cost overruns, according to an April report by the Federal Transit Administration. The agency analyzed 21 federally subsidized train projects that began operations since 2000. Some of those increases were driven by changes in scope of the projects.

The city contends Honolulu's project won't go over budget because the FTA now requires cities to create more stringent cost estimates.

Issue: Energy efficiency

What the city says: Modern rail is energy efficient and environment friendly.

What Stop Rail Now says: Modern rail transit is less energy efficient than autos.

The facts: Whether rail is more energy efficient and reduces air pollution hinges on factors such as ridership and the fuel used to generate electricity.

A full train uses less energy per passenger mile than an auto with one occupant. On average, rail transit requires less energy per passenger mile than autos, according to the Department of Energy. However, because of differences in routes, train technology and other factors, the energy intensity of heavy rail systems varies substantially from city to city. In some cases rail systems are less energy efficient than the average auto, in part because trains run all day often with fewer passengers in off hours and in the opposite direction of rush-hour traffic.

Issue: Property taxes

What the city says: The initial 20-mile rail system can be subsidized without any increase in property taxes. The city's current financial plan only accounts for construction of the initial 20-mile East Kapolei to Ala Moana segment. No funds have been set aside for spurs to Waikiki, the University of Hawai'i-Manoa, the airport and West Kapolei.

What Stop Rail Now says: The city will need to raise property taxes more than 40 percent to pay for the full 28-mile rail system. The group claims the total system will cost \$7.5 billion in 2006 dollars including cost overruns.

The facts: Honolulu taxpayers are expected to bear about \$3 billion of the project's costs via a half-percentage point excise tax surcharge that expires in 2022. They could be asked to pay more, if the project is over budget or if tax collections don't meet expectations. In that case the two major potential sources for tax revenues are the city's property tax and the state excise tax.

The city may ultimately need to rely on added tax revenues if the 20-mile segment is over budget, or if the city opts to proceed with the construction of spurs to Waikiki, the UH-Manoa, the airport and West Kapolei. However, just how much added money the city will need depends on the level of future transit tax collections and the amount of cost overruns, if any. That means it's impossible to gauge how much property taxes would need to be raised in such a circumstance.

Issue: General excise taxes

What the city says: The financial plan for rail is prudent and conforms with strict federal requirements.

What Stop Rail Now says: The financial plan relies on unrealistic excise tax estimates.

The facts: Whether transit tax collections are sufficient to pay for the train depends in large part on whether the state's current downturn lasts a year or two or becomes a prolonged 1990s-style economic slowdown.

Plunging visitor arrivals and slumping real estate and construction sectors are forcing the state to reduce tax collection forecasts. City officials acknowledge that near-term transit tax collections could be lower than predicted. However, the city hopes that any near-term revenue shortfall could be offset by an economic rebound in future years. Additionally, a slower economy could result in lower labor costs.

Issue: Federal funding

What the city says: Federal Transit Administration and Congressional officials have almost guaranteed city officials that they will receive \$700 million to \$948 million (in 2006 dollars) in federal funds to help pay for the project.

What Stop Rail Now says: The federal government won't provide that money to Honolulu.

The facts: Officially, FTA officials have said it's too early to tell whether Honolulu will get federal funds or to determine how much those funds might be. However, Honolulu is in a strong position to attract

federal money because the city plans to pay the majority of the project's costs.

Still, Honolulu isn't expected to find out for sure how much federal funding it will get until 2011.

Meanwhile, the city plans to start construction on the East Kapolei to Waipahu segment in December 2009. The city has argued that a faster timetable will help reduce costs while allowing limited service to launch in late 2012. Critics contend the city's timetable is not realistic and could result in a major burden for local taxpayers, if federal funds don't come through as planned.

Issue: Noise

What the city says: Modern rail is quiet.

What Stop Rail Now says: Steel-wheel-on-steel-rail trains are an environmental blight. A Vancouver, Canada, train, which is similar to the system planned for Honolulu, generates 79 decibels of noise at a distance of 50 feet, according to the group.

The facts: Just how noisy the train will seem depends on a variety of factors including who manufactures the trains and the level of existing ambient noise in a community and the frequency of noise. Modern trains generate 72 decibels to 80 decibels of noise at a distance of 50 feet, according to the city. Generally, 75 decibels equates to the noise made by a vacuum cleaner at five feet, or a jet flying 5,000 feet overhead.

That's less noisy than a city bus, which generates a maximum of 83 decibels at 50 feet of distance, according to the city. However, trains will operate at a higher frequency than the typical bus route. Trains will operate at a frequency of about 400 times a day from 4 a.m. to midnight.

Issue: Ridership

What the city says: A train, when combined with TheBus, will increase overall mass-transit ridership to 7.4 percent of total transit trips in 2030, up from 6.1 percent projected if the commuter rail line is not built. That's a 21 percent increase.

What Stop Rail Now says: Train ridership will not meet expectations because people will continue to prefer driving their autos to work.

The facts: High gasoline prices coupled with newer, faster train systems are helping boost the popularity of public transit. However, in Honolulu, public transit ridership gains overall have not kept pace with population increases.

In addition, ridership on new federally subsidized trains, on average, is lower than anticipated, according to an April report by the FTA. The study found that 19 recently opened federally subsidized train projects are expected to carry, on average, 74.5 percent of their originally forecast ridership.

Honolulu city officials contend the FTA now is requiring cities to create more stringent ridership estimates. That means Honolulu's project should meet or exceed ridership estimates, according to the city.

October 12, 2008

'Yes' on transit signals a vote for preferred future

O'ahu voters will be asked on Nov. 4 if they are for or against Honolulu's much-debated \$3.7 billion fixed-rail project, a decision that has long-term ramifications for the island.

Quite simply, transit is an essential component of O'ahu's future.

The transit system will provide a viable alternative for commuters — part of a multi-modal solution that includes buses, ferries, shuttles and more. And it puts us on the greener path, getting people out of cars and into a more environmentally friendly alternative.

The current economic doldrums have fueled fears among all of us, and those fears have been amplified as global markets have gyrated. Voters have become understandably jittery about spending money — on their own daily expenses, as well as the excise-tax dollars siphoned off for the 20-mile rail route.

Some see this as a reason to reject Honolulu's largest public works project. It's not. It's precisely during lean times that Honolulu and the state need the economic boost infrastructure projects provide. The project will bring jobs and an influx of federal dollars into the local economy, and it will spur commerce and have a ripple effect on other businesses and tax revenues.

A city planning a project as important as this has to take the long view, which is that the rail system is an investment in a preferred future and a commitment that must be sustained through economic cycles.

That's why voters should choose "yes" on a City Charter amendment that will appear on the general election ballot.

The question: "Shall the powers, duties, and functions of the city, through its director of transportation services, include establishment of a steel wheel on steel rail transit system?"

It's critical that federal transportation authorities, who have placed the Honolulu project ahead of the pack, see a demonstration of popular support, because that will help cement the city's standing in securing more federal dollars.

There are legitimate questions on whether the economic slowdown will sap tax revenues enough to deplete the local financing for the project, which is funded by a half-percent increase to the general excise tax. A decline in GET revenues is already happening, as people spend less on goods and services.

But city planners say the tax allotment will accommodate a downturn, at least for the short term. City coffers are already ahead of where they need to be to underwrite an early start to construction.

And breaking ground in 2009 would enable the use of the \$15 million already cleared by Congress. In the pipeline is another \$20 million for the early phase, with another \$865 million expected for construction.

In general, decisions on complex public works projects need to be well-informed through technical study and should not be made by popular vote. But the City Council responded to political pressure for some way to gauge public opinion and passed the ballot initiative.

The proposal that voters will consider is not ideal, but at least it will set up jurisdiction for the project within the city government framework.

Assuming the voters flash a thumbs-up on the project, and polls suggest they will, the city should soon create an autonomous transit authority, with oversight by elected officials, to manage construction and operation efficiently.

City decision-making must keep future needs top of mind, a perspective that acknowledges population growth and a pressing need for affordable housing. The redevelopment of communities along the route, properly planned, will help to meet that need.

Rail should be part of Hono-lulu's future, and not short-circuited by immediate fiscal challenges.

With a potentially protracted recession looming, Honolulu has far more to gain by proceeding prudently with the project than by adopting the passive wait-and-see approach.

A "yes" vote on the ballot initiative will maintain the momentum toward Honolulu's critical goals.

October 12, 2008

Letters to the Editor

rail

Homeowners should vote 'no' on rail transit

Our mayor and City Council are endorsing the construction of a 20-mile, \$3.7- billion rail system from Kapolei to Ala Moana. Yet, upon completion, this newly acquired transit system will not alleviate our traffic problem.

The city subsidizes and operates a very efficient, heavily used bus system and should not procure another public transportation system. Drivers realize that whenever the University of Hawai'i and schools are in session traffic is horrendous.

Since the federal government pays for almost the entire cost of federally approved highway construction, instead of rail transit I recommend a concrete causeway from Pearl City to the university for TheBus.

With convenient on-ramp/off-ramp access provided near the university, many university students, city/state employees, Waikiki hotel workers and others working along or near the expressway may decide to leave their cars at home and catch TheBus to avoid being stuck in traffic.

Homeowners subsidize about 50 percent of the city budget. Another public transportation system will severely tax all homeowners. I advise homeowners to contact their councilperson to voice their objection to rail transit and vote "no" for rail in the general election.

Ken Mukaigawa | Honolulu

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Letters

For Sunday, October 12, 2008

Rapid transit system will really HURT

The HURT (short for Ho-nolulu Urban Rapid Transit system) has HURT everyone who lives on Oahu already by increasing out excise tax by .5 percent. It has HURT Oahu residents by diverting politicians' attention from other important matters. It will HURT what is left of our environment by building monstrous stations and ugly elevated tracks.

It will HURT future generations of taxpayers who will be stuck with the bill for an outrageously expensive capital cost that will only benefit those traveling from the Ewa plain into Honolulu/Waikiki to go to work at jobs that are probably going to disappear with the contraction of our tourist industry. It will HURT Oahu taxpayers who will be forced to subsidize operating expenses that are far greater than revenues generated.

In short, the Honolulu Urban Rapid Transit folly will turn into THE BIG HURT.

John Porter
Pupukea

October 13, 2008

Federal money for rail is uncertain, Cayetano and Stop Rail say

By *SEAN HAO*

Advertiser Staff Writer

The group Stop Rail Now and former Gov. Ben Cayetano today said Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann is misleading the public about whether the city's \$3.7 billion elevated commuter rail will qualify for federal aid.

The city is counting on \$700 million to \$948 million (in 2006 dollars) in federal money to help pay for the project, which would link East Kapolei to Ala Moana. However, Honolulu isn't expected to find out for sure how much federal funding it will get until 2011.

Meanwhile, the city plans to start construction on the East Kapolei to Waipahu segment in December 2009. Hannemann and other city officials have said they are confident Honolulu will get the money it needs based on conversations with Federal Transit Administration and Congressional officials. That includes U.S. House Transportation Committee Chairman Jim Oberstar, a Minnesota Democrat, who during a March visit, said Honolulu can count on about \$900 million in federal money to go toward the \$3.7 billion rail system.

However, officially, FTA officials have been noncommittal. Rail opponents yesterday jumped on a recent e-mail from an FTA official stating that its too early to tell whether Honolulu will get federal funds.

"It is far too early to tell whether Honolulu's proposed rail project will receive New Starts funding," wrote FTA spokesman Paul Griffo, in an Oct. 7 e-mail to someone associated with Stop Rail Now. "The project hasn't yet been accepted into the New Starts Program."

Cayetano yesterday said Hannemann has wrongly been giving residents the impression that federal funds were assured.

"That there is no guarantee of federal funding is just one of many facts about Mayor Hannemann's rail transit proposal that he has been less than truthful about," Cayetano said. "Mayor Hannemann's public relations program for his rail system has been a colossal distortion and manipulation of facts. In my 28 years in public office, I have never seen anything like it."

The city has argued that a faster timetable will help reduce costs while allowing limited service to launch in late 2012.

Cayetano Slams Rail Campaign



Written by Stacy Loe - sloe@kgmb9.com

October 13, 2008 07:05 PM

Hawaii's Former Governor had harsh words today for Honolulu's Mayor and the rail system he's pushing on Oahu.

"I am here today because I have never seen such a blatant public relations campaign that distorts the facts and manages the information as I have this one," said Ben Cayetano, Former Governor.

Cayetano points to the ads that say the city is likely to receive up to 900,000 in federal funds to pay for the 3.7 billion dollar transit system.

In an e-mail to the group stop rail now, the Federal Transit Administration says, "It's far too early to tell whether Honolulu's proposed rail project will receive New Starts funding. The project hasn't yet been accepted into the New Starts program."

That's funding for capital transit projects. According to the FTA's website, Honolulu is not yet on the list.

"The ex-governor and SRN is saying we don't have it. We don't have it. We don't have it today we don't need it today. This is not the day in the process that we are supposed to have that money," said Bill Brennan, spokesman for Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann.

The mayor's spokesman says the money won't come though until 2011, but there's no reason to believe it won't as he says there is a lot of support in Washington for it.

Cayetano, who supports Ann Kobayashi's bid for mayor, says Mayor Hannemann is rushing rail to further his own political agenda.

"He wants to start construction in 2009, that has to be one of the most irresponsible things that I've ever heard because you don't have federal approval," said Cayetano.

The city says it's not needed. There will be enough local money collected from the general excise tax to break ground.

"To characterize this as rushed or railroaded is really a mis characterization. Everything is moving along at a certain albeit ambitious

timetable to get it done because the need to relieve traffic congestion on west side is urgent, " said Brennan.



Last Updated (October 13, 2008 07:07 PM)

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Local Top Stories

Cayetano Blasts Hannemann Over Rail

By Andrew Pereira

STORY SUMMARY>>>

Former Governor Ben Cayetano and the group Stop Rail Now accused Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann on Monday of misleading the public about federal funding for the city's planned 20-mile rail transit system from East Kapolei to Ala Moana.

"To go out to the community and give people the impression that this project will receive \$900 something million dollars from the feds, that is simply false," said Cayetano.

City spokesman Bill Brennan said while it's true the rail project has not been approved by the federal government, Hannemann's administration has been working with the Federal Transit Administration every step of the way in what is considered a long process towards congressional funding.

Brennan said the city fully expects to be added to the FTA's New Starts Program by the year 2011. The administration is counting on \$700 to \$900 million in federal funding for the rail project, or about 25 to 30 percent of the total estimated cost.

"This is not the day in the process that we are supposed to have that money," said Brennan. "There's absolutely no reason to believe that any of that money would not be coming to us."

To date the city has received \$15.5 million from the federal government for the planning phase of the rail project, which is expected to cost \$4.9 billion in year of expenditure dollars. The city initially projected the cost of the rail line at \$3.7 billion in 2006 dollars.

Cayetano blasted Hannemann for pushing the project forward in the face of a shrinking economy and using taxpayer funds to pay for pro-rail advertisements and community meetings. The city hopes to break ground on the

system in late 2009, with the first segment stretching from East Kapolei to Waipahu.

"I have never seen such a blatant public relations campaign that distorts the facts and manages information as I have this one," said Cayetano. "(The mayor) wants to start construction in 2009; that has to be one of the most irresponsible things that I've ever heard because you don't have federal approval."

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

Story Updated: Oct 13, 2008 at 10:17 PM HDT

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Cayetano Attacks Rail Project, Hannemann

Former Governor Calls Latest Ads 'Misleading'

POSTED: 9:19 pm HST October 13, 2008

HONOLULU -- Critics of the Honolulu rail transit project, Stop Rail Now, brought out their most famous ally on Monday, who attacked the integrity of both Mayor Mufi Hannemann and the project.

Former Gov. Ben Cayetano said he always opposed rail. Now, he is encouraging rail opponents by using his skills to raise money against the project, and to attack its biggest proponent – Honolulu's mayor.

"It's obvious he wants to get past the election and then go forward from there," Cayetano said.

Cayetano pointed to the latest taxpayer-paid ads on rail, which estimate \$700 million to \$900 million in federal funds would subsidize the rail project.

"The information that they have their now is misleading," Cayetano said.

"This is just another cheap shot by the ex-governor and the Stop Rail Now folks to distort the truth," Hannemann said.

Related To Story



• **Video: Former Gov. Ben Cayetano Opposes Rail**

The city said that the estimate in the ad is based on information from the federal government and Congress, although the exact amount would not be known for years.

The mayor's spokesman said there is no need to use federal funds now because they have revenue from the county's 0.5 percent excise tax. The spokesman said that when the money is needed it will be available.

Cayetano said Hannemann is rushing the project, beginning from Kapolei instead of from the city center with the intent of leaving office in two years.

"Obviously those problems are going to have to be dealt with anyway by the next mayor. I think that's the way this guy operates," Cayetano said.

Hannemann has not committed to serving a full four-year term if re-elected. However, he said that is not why he is pushing the project.

"The need to relieve traffic congestion on the west side and in this corridor is urgent," Hannemann said.

Previous Stories:

- October 5, 2008: [Rail Question Easier To Pass](#)
- September 23, 2008: [Appeals Court Rejects Anti-Rail Group's Ballot Effort](#)
- September 23, 2008: [Court Blocks Commuter Rail Question On Ballot](#)
- September 23, 2008: [Judges Plan To Rule On Rail Ballot Soon](#)
- September 18, 2008: [Anti-Rail Group Heading To Appeals Court](#)

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October 13, 2008

Letters to the Editor

rail

Elevated rail system will destroy beauty

When I was a little boy I remember that they tore down the elevated subway lines in New York City. Suddenly the sun penetrated down to the street level and the streets became cleaner.

About 30 years ago, San Francisco chose to tear down a section of the elevated freeway that separated the city from the bay.

And now here we are seriously considering whether to destroy the unique beauty of our city with a noisy, elevated transit system.

One can get a preview of what it will do to the street below by visiting the intersection of Kona Street, Mahukona Street, Kaheka Street and Atkinson Drive, adjacent to the Ala Moana Center. It's a tragedy in the making.

Ed Sullam, retired architect | Honolulu

October 13, 2008

Letters to the Editor

rail

Transit tax not enough to pay for rail system

From the figures in Sean Hao's article in the Sept. 28 Advertiser, the projected revenues from the transit tax won't even come close to covering the cost of building the rail.

Right now, rail is projected to cost at least \$5 billion over the 10-year construction period as adjusted for inflation. Assuming (optimistically) that the federal government will pay \$1 billion of this, the net cost to the city will be \$4 billion. That \$4 billion divided by the 10-year project span is \$400 million per year, or \$33.3 million per month.

Per Sean's article, the most collected in any month so far is \$17 million, barely half of the total needed.

This being the case, unless I'm missing something, the transit tax is grossly inadequate even under the best-case economic scenario.

Where is the balance going to come from? Is it too much to ask our leaders to be honest at least once, and tell us how much our property taxes will be increased?

Robert Rau | Honolulu

October 14, 2008

Attacks in rail debate intensify

Sides accuse each other of misleading public on federal aid for system

By SEAN HAO
Advertiser Staff Writer

The volume of rhetoric between supporters and opponents of Honolulu's rail system is picking up in advance of a Nov. 4 vote on the issue.

Yesterday both sides claimed the other is intentionally misleading the public about whether the city's \$3.7 billion elevated commuter rail will qualify for federal aid.

The city is counting on \$700 million to \$948 million (in 2006 dollars) in federal money to help pay for the project, which would link East Kapolei to Ala Moana. However, Honolulu isn't expected to find out for sure how much federal funding it will get until 2011. Meanwhile, the city plans to start construction on the East Kapolei to Waipahu segment in December 2009.

The city has argued that a faster timetable will help reduce costs while allowing limited service to launch in late 2012. However, critics contend the city's timetable is not realistic and could result in a major burden for local taxpayers if federal funds don't come through as planned.

Yesterday, former Gov. Ben Cayetano joined the group Stop Rail Now in alleging that Hannemann has misled residents into thinking that federal funds are forthcoming.

"The city has been misrepresenting to the people that the federal government is going to provide \$925 million for the project," said Cayetano, who opposes the rail system. "They're not even on the radar screen for the Federal Transit (Administration) yet."

Cayetano pointed to a recent e-mail from a Federal Transit Administration official stating that it's still unclear whether Honolulu will get federal funds.

"It is far too early to tell whether Honolulu's proposed rail project will receive New Starts funding," FTA spokesman Paul Griffo wrote in an Oct. 7 e-mail to a Stop Rail Now supporter. "The project hasn't yet been accepted into the New Starts Program."

City spokesman Bill Brennan yesterday said Honolulu remains in a strong position to attract federal money because the city plans to pay the majority of the project's costs. In addition, congressional officials have almost guaranteed the city will get federal support. That includes U.S. House Transportation Committee Chairman Jim Oberstar, a Minnesota Democrat, who during a March visit said Honolulu can count on about \$900 million in federal money.

"There's absolutely no reason that any of that money will not be coming to us," Brennan said. "No, we don't have it today. We don't need it today. This is not the day in the process that we are supposed to have that money, but all indications point to us receiving something in that range."

Rhetoric over the proposed rail system is only likely to grow louder as each side of the debate attempts to rally support before the Nov. 4 vote on a proposed Honolulu Charter amendment that's likely to dictate the project's fate.

Cayetano yesterday said the project should be put on hold until the federal funds are approved.

"It's bad for the city to even think about construction in 2009 without approval and second, in this economic downturn we have to tread very carefully and third, I just want the people to get information that's not being managed or distorted," Cayetano said.

Brennan blamed project opponents for misleading the public.

"Desperate people say and do desperate things," he said. "This is just another cheap shot I think by the ex-governor and the Stop Rail Now folks to distort the truth of where the city's project stands with the federal government."

October 15, 2008

Kobayashi proposes elevated EzWay highway for Oahu

Proposal calls for new roads, 15-mile elevated guideway with 3 lanes

BY PETER BOYLAN

Advertiser Staff Writer

City Councilwoman Ann H. Kobayashi yesterday unveiled a \$2.5 billion plan to reduce traffic congestion by building express lanes for an expanded fleet of buses and for private vehicles with three or more occupants.

The plan calls for 40 miles of new or modified highways and roads, including a 15-mile elevated fixed guideway with three reversible lanes.

Kobayashi called her plan a cheaper alternative to the city's planned rail system and a more effective way of reducing traffic.

The elevated guideway would provide three reversible lanes starting at the H-1/H-2 merge and ending Downtown for use exclusively by buses, private vehicles with three or more occupants, and fuel-efficient cars even if they only carry the driver. There would be no tolls.

The "EzWay" would be built over Kamehameha and Nimitz highways and include a tunnel and at least two underpasses.

The plan combines Kobayashi's long-held vision of a bus-based mass-transit system with University of Hawai'i engineering professor Panos D. Prevedouros' vision of managed traffic lanes that allow continuous movement during rush hours by synchronizing traffic signals and controlling the kinds of cars that can operate in different lanes.

"This is what I've been pushing all along, rubber tire on concrete," Kobayashi said. "Panos has been talking about managed lanes. It's the best of both worlds.

"There are many people you're never going to get out of their cars and we know that. This way we're accommodating those who drive, those who carpool and those who ride the bus."

Rail's high price cited

Because of the fixed guideway, the project qualifies for money the city has been collecting from general excise tax and for federal funding from the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration, Kobayashi said.

The plan is a financially prudent and environmentally friendly alternative to Mayor Mufi Hannemann's proposed \$3.7 billion steel-on-steel train system, she said.

Prevedouros, Kobayashi's senior infrastructure adviser, said the plan can be implemented immediately in pieces as funding permits. Each section will relieve congestion as soon as it is put together, Prevedouros said.

"The rail has a high price tag and very low economic and traffic relief," he said. "Right now economic times are poor. You

cannot start (building) the rail."

Kobayashi said she and her campaign will work hard to educate voters about her transportation plan, but she will not try to persuade people to vote "no" on the Nov. 4 ballot question that asks whether the city should build a steel-wheel-on-steel-rail transit system.

"I always listen to the voters," Kobayashi said. "If they want steel on steel then what can I do about it?"

The Kobayashi/Prevedouros system focuses mostly on the island's most congested traffic corridor: the route drivers take in the morning heading into town from Central O'ahu, the Leeward Coast and the 'Ewa plain, and then back home in the evening. Among its proposals and planned changes:

- From Kapolei and 'Ewa Beach, buses would run to Waipahu on exclusive lanes, parts of which would be elevated to bypass regular traffic at lights.
- A new Farrington Highway on-ramp in Waipahu would allow traffic to move on and off the new elevated guideway.
- Express buses — most of them hybrids — will travel from Wai'anae and Makakilo and use upgraded H-1 shoulder lanes to get to the elevated guideway quicker. Express buses also will come from Mililani and Wahiawa. New ramps would connect the guideway to existing roads.
- The elevated guideway with three reversible lanes will run from the H-1/H-2 merge to Pier 16 with off- and on-ramps at Aloha Stadium/Pearl Harbor, Lagoon Drive and Waiakamilo Street.

The right lane of the guideway will be for buses only.

The other two lanes will allow vanpools, vehicles with three or more occupants and vehicles that get 33 miles per gallon or more, according to their EPA city mileage rating.

These rules will be strictly enforced with heavy fines, the plan said, and no trucks will be allowed on the guideway.

The plan said these lanes will move at a continuous speed of 60 miles per hour.

Other vehicles could use existing highways to get into town, but would encounter less traffic because of the EzWay, the plan said.

Other parts of the plan include:

- In Iwilei, the fixed guideway will allow buses to go to Hotel Street to connect to King and Beretania, where an improved bus service will run to and from the University of Hawai'i-Manoa.
- Where the guideway ends at Ala Moana boulevard, an underpass or tunnel with reversible lanes will start east of River Street and end at Alakea and Halekauwila Streets.

Kobayashi pledged to build and implement her plan using the local labor force and the expertise of local companies.

'Nothing new here'

Hannemann's campaign and rail proponents reacted sharply to Kobayashi's plan, labeling it a repackaging of old proposals.

A.J. Halagao, Hannemann's campaign coordinator, said the plan was "too little, too late."

"This so-called blueprint is one of the worst and least well thought out ideas to come down the pike in a long time," said Halagao, in a statement. "It's BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) all over again, something Councilmember Kobayashi has heretofore strenuously opposed, and with good reason. It's hard to believe that she has changed her position once again.

"The plan will not qualify to use the GET, and with no local funding mechanism, it will also fail to qualify for FTA funds. More buses are not the answer. An integrated rail-bus system is the superior option for Honolulu."

Rep. Kirk Caldwell, who has long favored a rail-transit system, spoke at the pro-rail group Go Rail Go's Bethel Street headquarters yesterday after the release of the Kobayashi plan. Caldwell, an attorney, said that as one of the architects of the general excise tax increase designed to pay for a transit system, he does not believe that the Kobayashi plan qualifies.

"In looking over this thing, there is nothing new here. It's a repackaging of old ideas," Caldwell said.

"It was done in the 11th hour. ... The people of the City and County of Honolulu wanted the chance to vote on the technology and they are going to get that. People should be educating themselves on (the ballot question)."

\$2.5B estimate for Kobayashi's mass-transit plan

Mayor Hannemann's campaign criticizes it as badly thought-out

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

Mayoral candidate Ann Kobayashi released details yesterday of her new mass-transit plan, saying it would be cheaper and more effective at reducing traffic congestion than Mayor Mufi Hannemann's proposed rail transit system.

Her project, which she said would cost \$2.5 billion, would include an elevated highway, dedicated bus lanes and underground tunnels downtown.

Beginning from West Oahu to East Oahu, her plan calls for:

- » Bus-only lanes on expanded shoulder lanes on H-1 freeway, Farrington Highway and Fort Weaver Road in Ewa Beach.
- » A 15-mile elevated, three-lane "fixed guideway" highway from Waipio to downtown Honolulu.
- » Mini-tunnels underground on Alakea and Halekauwila streets in downtown Honolulu.
- » An elevated "Bus Rapid Transit" system for buses along King and Beretania streets to the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

[By Laurie Au](#)

.....

FULL STORY >>

[By Laurie Au](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 15, 2008

Mayoral candidate Ann Kobayashi unveiled her new mass-transit plan yesterday to build elevated three-lane highways for zipper lanes and buses that she says would be 62.5 percent of the cost of Mayor Mufi Hannemann's proposed rail transit system.

 [Kobayashi Unveils Transit Plan](#)



Kobayashi has been working with Panos Prevedouros and says their project costs 60 percent less than the mayors steel on steel plan.

[[Watch](#)]



Her plan would cost \$2.5 billion, as opposed to Hannemann's projected cost of \$4 billion, to build a 15-mile elevated highway beginning at the H-1 and H-2 freeway merge in Waipio to downtown Honolulu.

"It's realistic, it's practical, it's sensible," Kobayashi said. "There's no irresponsible spending."

She said construction could start right away if she is elected, but had no estimate of a completion date.

Kobayashi's proposal comes three weeks before the Nov. 4 general election in a mayoral race that has focused primarily on Hannemann's planned rail transit system from Kapolei to Ala Moana.

Kobayashi clashed primarily with Hannemann on the technology of the system, with him favoring a "steel wheel on steel rail" system while she pushed for "rubber-tire bus on concrete" - basically, a sleeker-looking express bus.

Kobayashi pushed for the bus technology but came up with this plan after receiving the

endorsement of former mayoral candidate Panos Prevedouros two weeks ago. She rejected claims yesterday that this was political maneuvering to capture Prevedouros' supporters, though many of them did attend her news conference yesterday.

The major part of Kobayashi's elevated "guideway" would have two zipper lanes for carpoolers and one lane for buses, which would be reversible depending on the traffic flow. Her plan also calls for:

- » Bus-only lanes for expanded shoulders into Ewa Beach.
- » "Bus Rapid Transit" system for buses to run on King and Beretania streets to the University of Hawaii at Manoa.
- » Downtown "underpasses," or mini-tunnels, on Alakea and Halekauwila streets in downtown Honolulu for buses.

The only way for Kobayashi's plan to be implemented is if she wins as mayor and if Oahu voters reject a proposed City Charter amendment to build Hannemann's system on the November ballot.

"We have three weeks," said Kobayashi's campaign manager, City Councilman Donovan Dela Cruz. "We want to make sure that the voters know the alternatives."

Kobayashi boasted that this system would alleviate traffic congestion and cut drive times significantly. For example, she estimated that a drive from Ewa Beach to Honolulu would take 33 minutes and from Mililani to Honolulu would take 26 minutes during rush hour. Typically during rush hour, those drives can take more than 90 minutes and 60 minutes, respectively.

Hannemann's campaign was quick to criticize Kobayashi's proposal, calling it unrealistic. Pro-rail advocates, including Hannemann ally state Rep. Kirk Caldwell, called it an "11th-hour, half-baked" idea and a "flip-flop," part of her "inconsistent" voting record.

"This so-called blueprint is one of the worst and least well-thought-out ideas to come down the pike in a long time," Hannemann campaign manager A.J. Halagao said in a statement. "It's BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) all over again, something Councilmember Kobayashi strenuously opposed and with good reason. It's hard to believe that she changed her position once again."

The campaign is referring to a 2004 proposal by then-Mayor Jeremy Harris for a 12.8-mile Bus Rapid Transit system that would have used existing lanes for hybrid buses. Kobayashi rejected the plan, which was later scrapped completely, but said her new proposal is nothing like Harris' project.

"The reason I voted against BRT previously is that it would have gone along Dillingham (Boulevard) and Kapiolani (Boulevard)," she said. "In this plan, it uses the parking lanes of King and Beretania during rush hour and that's all. This is elevated. The other wasn't. There's a big difference."

Kobayashi has repeatedly criticized Hannemann for his confidence in receiving up to \$900 million in federal funding for his project, as promised by ranking U.S. Rep. Jim Oberstar last year. She said because of the declining economy, the federal government wouldn't have those kinds of funds to disperse.

With her plan, however, she said there is more likelihood of receiving nonlocal funding because it is eligible for money from the Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Highway Administration. Kobayashi said she hopes to receive up to \$1.2 billion from each agency.

The Hannemann campaign viewed it differently, questioning whether the plan would be eligible to receive local funding from a half-percent increase in the state general excise tax that says the money can't be used to build or fix highways.

"The plan will not qualify to use the GET, and with no local funding mechanism, it will also fail to qualify for FTA funds," Halagao said.

Find this article at:

http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20081015_25B_estimate_for_Kobayashis_mass-transit_plan.html

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Letters

For Wednesday, October 15, 2008

We need to build rail to boost economy

I work in retail and I am for rail. I have been seeing fewer and fewer customers because the economy is hurting. With tourism way down, we need to pump up the economy and building rail will do that. I remember how hard times were in the 1990s when no one pumped up the economy during the recession. Haven't our leaders learned anything since then?

The sooner we vote for rail and start building the rail system, the better off our economy will be.

Matt Choy
Honolulu

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http://www.starbulletin.com/editorials/20081015_Letters.html

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MidWeek

Rail: Economic Stimulus We Need

October 15, 2008

By Dan Boylan

During last week's second presidential debate, Barack Obama linked his plan to spend \$15 billion per year to develop alternative energy to the nation's economic crisis. The investment in energy, he promised, would create "5 million new jobs."

I always wonder during these debates how the candidates can speak so confidently of such large numbers. That said, two things are clear: 1) that our state and the nation must develop alternative energy in order, as both Obama and John McCain assert, "to end our dependency on Middle Eastern oil"; and 2) we in Hawaii and the nation face increased joblessness.

Those two things are either clear, or a lot of people - namely, Obama, McCain, majorities in both houses of Congress, President Bush, Secretary of the Treasury Paulson, Federal Reserve Chief Bernanke and many others - are lying to us. All have talked of the recent Wall Street investment house failures as precipitating "the greatest financial crisis the nation has faced since the Great Depression."

{embed="elements/box_ad"}

Now there's reason to be skeptical of such an assertion. Many of these same folk gave us a six-years-and-counting war because of nonexistent "weapons of mass destruction." Still, falling markets worldwide seem to indicate the credibility of the "Great Depression" comparison.

So what do we do? Obama says invest in developing alternative energy sources and fix our roads and bridges - in short, he offers the 1930s New Deal solution of public works. Franklin Roosevelt built roads, bridges, post offices and other public buildings across the nation. Those projects put people to work, food on the tables of millions of American families and improved the infrastructure of the country. States built, too. In Louisiana, a scoundrel governor named Huey Long built roads, hospitals, schools and a university - all in the name of employing the jobless and improving the state for all.

Did those public works end the Great Depression? No, but they improved the nation in the long run and they provided folks with hope.

All of which should give Island folks pause. Hawaii's home-building boom is over. Rising airfares are causing tourist numbers to fall. Another business seems to announce layoffs - or lock its doors - every week. We've at least entered a recession; and it may not be hyperbole that we're

on the verge of another great depression.

When private credit dries up, public dollars must fill the void - and not just in the name of vulgarly rich investment bankers. If they don't, we stagnate at best; at worst many will suffer.

That brings me to the mayoral contest between Ann Kobayashi and Mufi Hannemann and the ballot proposal that would end the mayor's railroad from Kapolei to town.

{embed="elements/google_ad336x280"}

I've stated before that I respect anyone's position on this issue. It's complicated one that involves aesthetics, cost, route, technology and future development. But it also involves jobs - lots of them over a long period of time: five, 10, perhaps 15 or 20 years. They're good jobs - union jobs that will put money in the pockets of local families, bread on their tables and hope in the hearts of working-class folks.

And it's a matter of fairness. This is a country that will spend \$720 billion to bail out bankers, \$10 billion a month (and an estimated 2 trillion *in toto*) to wage an unnecessary war in Iraq - but here at home we hesitate to invest in transit for West Oahu, where two-thirds of the county's population now resides. We hesitate to launch construction project that will bring almost a billion federal dollars to Oahu.

The unions who support the mayor's rail system understand this. The construction of a rail transit system will do more than provide a long-term transportation alternative. It also will provide an economic stimulus that could help sustain us in these difficult times.

Find this article at: http://www.midweek.com/content/columns/mostlypolitics_article/rail_economic_stimulus_we_need/

October 15, 2008

Letters to the Editor

rail

People should ask if O'ahu can afford rail

I truly hope people are not being swayed by the TV commercials about rail (steel on steel) creating jobs.

No matter what mass transit system is built, it will create jobs.

The big questions people should ask themselves are:

- Can we afford it?
- If not, where is the money going to come from (property tax increases and how much)?
- How much is it going to cost to run and maintain?

Remember, our children, grandchildren and probably our great-grandchildren will end up paying for this steel-on-steel rail.

Kenneth Ikenaga | Pearl City

October 16, 2008

Funding uncertain for Kobayashi's \$2.5B Oahu highway plan

Money, politics key; mayor calls rival's plan a 'half-baked manapua'

By SEAN HAO

Advertiser Staff Writer

A new highway plan introduced by mayoral candidate Ann Kobayashi promises to be cheaper than rail, but faces several major financial and political hurdles.

So far, both the state Legislature and Hawaii's congressional delegation have supported building a rail system in Honolulu. Whether those lawmakers would back Kobayashi's bus plan was not clear yesterday.

Their support could be key to pulling together the \$2.5 billion Kobayashi says is needed to build the elevated highway and bus-rapid-transit system she proposed on Tuesday.

The funding hinges on whether the city can use tax revenue currently being collected to fund the rail system on a bus network operating on a non-exclusive, elevated road. The plan also relies on securing federal "earmark" funding, which would have to be championed by Hawaii's congressional delegation.

That means financing for the bus plan is much more uncertain than the city's current rail project, said Mayor Mufi Hannemann, who will face Kobayashi in a runoff for the mayor's job on Nov. 4.

Hannemann called Kobayashi's plan a "half-baked manapua" compared with the city's plan. At a news conference yesterday, Hannemann said her plan would take longer and cost more to build than the city's planned \$3.7 billion elevated commuter rail.

"If the people of Honolulu were to accept the plan that Ann is putting out, we have to go back to square one," he said. "Our (train) project is good to go."

Hannemann also said, "You don't put together a plan that's going to spend over \$3 billion in three weeks. This plan of ours was put together and has been vetted, scrutinized and debated for over three years."

Debate over who has the better transit plan is reaching a high-pitch with just three weeks to go before the mayoral election and a separate referendum on rail.

As it stands, most local politicians seem to favor rail, but that could change if residents reject rail at the polls on Nov. 4. On the other hand, Kobayashi has said she would abandon her bus plan if voters approve the rail option.

The Kobayashi plan was assembled in recent weeks in consultation with former mayoral candidate and University of Hawaii's transportation engineering professor Panos Prevedouros. The plan calls for building a three-lane, reversible elevated guideway starting at the H-1/H-2 merge and ending Downtown. The proposed "EzWay" no-toll road would include one bus lane and two lanes for private vehicles with three or more occupants or one-occupant fuel-efficient cars.

Hannemann said Kobayashi's plan would require a change in state law to ensure that transit taxes could be spent on buses. In

contrast, Honolulu's rail project is much more likely to get nearly \$1 billion in federal funds, he said. Kobayashi and Prevedouros contend there's no guarantee those funds will come through for rail. They contend the EzWay can qualify for state transit taxes and federal funds.

Prevedouros and others who oppose rail argue the train will cost far more than \$3.7 billion and won't provide enough traffic relief.

Abercrombie weighs in

The basis for the rail project comes from the November 2006 Alternatives Analysis, which was prepared by transportation engineering firm Parsons Brinckerhoff. The report determined that a train reduced traffic congestion and increased public transit ridership more than managed highway lanes. A new elevated highway also would cost more to build and operate in the long term, according to the \$10 million study.

U.S. Rep. Neil Abercrombie yesterday reiterated his support for rail and questioned whether the EzWay could qualify for federal funds.

"I have worked hard in the House of Representatives to secure the commitment of my colleagues for at least \$900 million in funds for the rail transit project on O'ahu," he said in an e-mail. "The federal money is there, it's only being lost in political rhetoric."

State House Speaker Calvin Say, D-20th (St. Louis Heights, Palolo Valley, Wilhelmina Rise), said it's unclear if the tax revenue being collected by the state for use on the rail project could be spent instead on a new bus/highway system.

If Kobayashi is elected mayor and voters reject the rail plan on Nov. 4, she will need to lobby state and congressional lawmakers to win support for her bus plan.

October 16, 2008

Mayoral forum turns a bit testy

Audience questions focus on transit plans and federal funding

BY PETER BOYLAN

Advertiser Staff Writer

With less than three weeks until the election, Mayor Mufi Hannemann and City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi faced off yesterday over issues ranging from transportation to the fate of the Waimanalo Gulch landfill.

Speaking at an "Eye on Hawaii" forum sponsored by The Honolulu Advertiser at the Plaza Club, the candidates sparred over whether Kobayashi's recently released \$2.5 billion EzWay transit plan will qualify for funding under the increased general excise tax or federal sources.

After brief opening statements, the candidates took questions from the audience.

The majority of the questions focused on Hannemann's proposed \$3.7 billion rail transit project and Kobayashi's mix of managed lanes and specialized bus routes.

Business leaders and local residents asked the extent to which each project would receive federal funding.

Hannemann said he has received numerous guarantees from the state's congressional delegation that federal funds will be available once the city starts moving forward and breaks ground on the rail transit project.

Kobayashi criticized the Hannemann plan as too expensive and said the fact that her plan utilizes fixed guideways for the bus systems would qualify it for federal funding and state surcharge funds.

Hannemann argued that language in the legislation approving the general excise tax increase prevents the city from using the money for highways or to support existing transit technology such as the bus.

On Tuesday, Kobayashi detailed a \$2.5 billion plan to reduce traffic congestion by building express lanes for an expanded fleet of buses and for private vehicles with three or more occupants.

Kobayashi's plan, developed as a mix of her transportation plan and that of former mayoral candidate and University of Hawai'i civil engineering professor Panos D. Prevedouros, calls for 40 miles of new or modified highways and roads, including a 15-mile elevated fixed guideway with three reversible lanes.

The elevated guideway would provide three reversible lanes starting at the H-1/H-2 merge and ending Downtown for use exclusively by buses, private vehicles with three or more occupants, and fuel-efficient cars even if they carry only the driver. There would be no tolls.

transit options

The EzWay would be built over Kamehameha and Nimitz highways and include a tunnel and at least two underpasses.

"It's a very comprehensive plan, it takes care of the drivers and it really frees up the congestion on H-1," Kobayashi said. "It's also a very great economic stimulus package. All the jobs will be local. We have really great, qualified companies here who can build the highway. You don't have to have an elaborate train system."

Hannemann blasted the plan, calling it nothing more than a slogan thrown together at the 11th hour.

He said her plan lacks the required environmental impact statements and alternative analysis, and does not qualify for funding on the federal or state level.

"As CEOs you don't entertain a \$3 billion proposal after three weeks. We've been working on our plan for three years. If we lose this opportunity we don't know when the next one will come," said Hannemann. "Not only is Ms. Kobayashi's plan problematic but the prospect for transit funds is practically nil; the federal highway fund is shrinking. In our plan that provides numerous viable options, we're not saying just ride the car or the bus, it's the train, it's the bus, it's the boat, it's transit-oriented development. Expanding buses is not the way to go."

The candidates were also asked by a member of the Kobayashi campaign whether they could commit to stay in office for four years.

Hannemann asked the questioner who he worked for and nodded and smiled after learning he was employed by the Kobayashi campaign.

"I'm open, honest and transparent. I know what it is and I know what I'm running for. If there are opportunities that may arise in 2010 I would at least like to consider them. I may say no and stay the course," said Hannemann. "If you think I'm doing a good job, the people of Honolulu will let it be known."

Kobayashi said she would commit to a full four-year term.

"I'm not using this as a stepping stone to higher office. I'm not building a legacy," said Kobayashi. "Yes, I commit to four years."

landfill problems

Herb M. Lee, executive director of the Pacific American Foundation, asked both candidates about the need to maintain the landfill and how best to handle the waste generated by O'ahu residents.

"Do you think we'll ever be able to live without the landfill?" asked Lee.

Kobayashi said promises were made by the administration of Mayor Jeremy Harris to close the Waimanalo Gulch landfill and accused Hannemann's administration of ignoring an ordinance requiring the creation of a 25-year solid waste management master plan.

"That landfill problem has been around a long time and I know that promises were made. There are other technologies that we can use. We do not have to keep dumping 30 tons of ash into our landfill each day," said Kobayashi.

Hannemann pointed out of the last three landfill votes, including one earlier this year, Kobayashi voted to keep the gulch open. He said Disney executives who will discuss a large resort project in Ko Olina today have never raised the landfill's proximity to the project as a concern.

Hannemann said he is working to expand the city's waste-to-energy conversion capacity, ship trash to the Mainland and implement islandwide curbside recycling.

"After much due diligence we learned we had to keep it there. A new landfill site would be close to where people live in Nanakuli. Yes in the short term we're going to need a landfill," said Hannemann. "We are in a better place today than when I came into office."

The forum became testy at times.

accusations made

City information officer Johnny Brannon, who said he was attending the forum on his own time, challenged Kobayashi on the landfill issue.

Kobayashi said in 2004 she wanted to put the landfill on a 23-acre city site next to the city's H-Power facility.

Brannon, a former City Hall reporter for The Advertiser, said he covered the landfill vote in 2004 and recalls Kobayashi proposing the alternate landfill site at the last minute as a means to avoid making a critical decision.

"How can you stand there with a straight face and lie?" said Brannon, speaking during the forum.

Kobayashi asked Brannon to back his assertion with proof. She said she made the proposal based on a promise from the city administration. The administration promised if she voted to keep the Waimanalo Gulch landfill open, the city would work toward expanding waste-to-energy conversion and eventually close the landfill.

"I did not lie and say I voted against the expansion of Waimanalo Gulch. I was given a promise that if I voted for it, in two years we would look somewhere else, but that promise was not kept," said Kobayashi. "If you're going to call me a liar please give me the proof."

Both candidates agreed that a Constitutional Convention would be a waste of time and taxpayer money and that the city's homeless problem is a community issue that needs to be addressed by the state, county and social service organizations.

Asked by a member of the audience why voters should trust either candidate, Kobayashi and Hannemann went back to their stump speeches.

"I've never made a promise I cannot keep. I've never gone back on my word," said Kobayashi. "This is the first election I've been in where an opponent has thrown things at me saying things I've said are not true."

Hannemann touted his record as a businessman and as mayor as the reasons he deserves to return to Honolulu Hale.

"It's all about who is ready from day one to be mayor of one of the largest cities in America," said Hannemann. "Who has the ability to bring people together from Hawai'i Kai to Wai'anae? I contend it's me and my very hard-working team. This is not time for on-the-job training."

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Kobayashi's last-minute bus-system plan is unrealistic

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 16, 2008

THE ISSUE

Mayoral candidate Ann Kobayashi has proposed a new version of a bus system instead of the city's planned rail transit system.

IN a home-stretch desperation move in Honolulu's mayoral race, candidate Ann Kobayashi is proposing a system she calls "rubber tire on concrete," a euphemism for buses and cars traveling on a new set of roads. The proposal is intended to block Mayor Mufi Hannemann's plans for a rail system with little chance that a different system would receive federal support.

In the mayoral preliminary election last month, City Councilwoman Kobayashi proposed a bus-based system while candidate Panos D. Prevedouros, a University of Hawaii engineering professor, proposed managed traffic lanes. Kobayashi's new proposal is a hybrid of the two visions.

The proposal is aimed at drawing in the November runoff a coalition of supporters in the preliminary election of both Kobayashi and Prevedouros, the lone dissenter in an expert panel that opted for rail. Together, they gained enough votes in the September election to come within striking distance of Hannemann's vote total.

Kobayashi proposes a partly elevated, reversible "guideway" stretching 15 miles from the H-1 and H-2 merger in Waipio to downtown Honolulu, with "underpasses," or mini-tunnels, on Alakea and Halekauwila streets downtown. Access would be restricted to buses and vehicles

with at least three occupants.

Rep. Jim Oberstar, D-Minn., said earlier this year that Honolulu's planned rail system "stands well ahead" of any other public transportation being considered by the House Transportation Committee, of which he is chairman. Hannemann is confident of \$900 million in federal funding for the system, estimated to cost \$4 billion.

A radical change at this point would undoubtedly jeopardize federal funding, especially during the nation's current economic meltdown. Not only is Kobayashi wrong in assuming that revenue from the general excise tax surcharge could be spent on her plan, her hope for \$2.4 billion in federal funding to foot nearly the entire bill is preposterous.

Kobayashi has criticized the rail system, saying it would take a commuter 26 stops and an hour of traveling time to go from Kapolei to downtown. However, the rail plan's engineers say it will take only 39 minutes to travel the entire line from Kapolei to Ala Moana, which will include 19 stops.

The November ballot includes a proposed City Charter amendment that would give the city transportation director the authority to go ahead with the "steel-wheel-on-steel-rail transit system" plans that have been proceeding with broad public support. Polls show that 60 percent of registered voters favor the rail system.

If voters reject the amendment, Kobayashi will have an opportunity to more fully explain her latest proposal but with nearly impossible prospects for its acceptance. Federal officials who have reviewed one Honolulu transit proposal after another for two decades will undoubtedly say money is unavailable for yet another version.

Mayoral rivals spar on mass transit

[By Laurie Au](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 16, 2008

Mayor Mufi Hannemann and City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi debated for nearly an hour yesterday, with each criticizing the other's mass transit plan.

 [Mayoral Candidates Respond To Transit Plans](#)



Mayoral candidates share words about their opponents chosen transit plan.

[[Watch](#)]



The rivals confronted each other more aggressively than before, attacking each other's record, in a mayoral race that has been mostly quiet.

At one point, one of Hannemann's spokesmen, Johnny Brannon, who noted that he was not there on paid city time, accused Kobayashi of lying about her record regarding the Waimanalo Gulch Landfill.

Brannon was a Honolulu Advertiser City Hall reporter in 2004, when Kobayashi, on the City Council, voted to keep the landfill on the Leeward Coast open.

"When you say you supported putting the landfill on the 23-acre site next to HPOWER, I recall that was never on the list of landfill sites that were studied," he said. "How can you tell me with a straight face and essentially lie to everyone in this room about what was true at that time?"

Kobayashi responded forcefully.

"I did not lie," she said. "I was given a promise that if I voted for it, in two years, we would look at the issue again. If you're going to call me a liar ... you know that you need documentation. You can't just throw things out like that. That's irresponsible."

Aside from the landfill and the declining economy, much of the discussion focused on mass transit.

Kobayashi defended her mass transit plan, unveiled on Tuesday, while Hannemann attacked its credibility.

"Our plan is a very comprehensive one because we know there are people who don't want to get out of their vehicles," Kobayashi said to a small group of business community members at the morning forum hosted by the Advertiser. "Ours is not only realistic for our city; it's realistic for our pocketbooks."

Kobayashi's plan, with an estimated cost of \$2.5 billion, calls for a 15-mile three-lane highway for two zipper lanes and a "rubber-tire-on-concrete" system with dedicated bus lanes to Ewa Beach and Manoa.

"This is a very problematic solution," Hannemann said. "It's not a plan; it's a slogan. You don't entertain a \$3 billion proposal after only three weeks of putting it together."

After the forum, Hannemann called a news conference with public union officials and several state lawmakers and accused Kobayashi of flip-flopping on transit to capture the votes of former supporters of candidate Panos Prevedouros.

"She's definitely pandering to Panos voters," Hannemann said.

U.S. Rep. Neil Abercrombie, who has long supported mass transit, said the federal government needs to determine whether Kobayashi's plan could receive federal funding.

The biggest disagreement over Kobayashi's plan is whether it would be eligible to receive funding from the state's general excise tax surcharge. According to the 2005 law, the tax collected "shall not be used to build or repair public roads or highways."

Hannemann asserts that Kobayashi's plan cannot receive local funding because it is essentially a highway and just enhances the city's bus system. Kobayashi said the law provides funding for a "locally preferred alternative," which requires approval from the City Council, that could include her plan.

State lawmakers who played a role in creating the law remain split on this issue.

State Sen. Kalani English (D, East Maui-Lanai-Molokai) said he believes Kobayashi's plan could be funded as long as the Honolulu City Council eventually approves it through an ordinance.

Mayor Bashes Kobayashi's Transit Plan

Campaign Calls Forward Local Leaders To Refute Councilwoman's Plan

POSTED: 6:07 pm HST October 15, 2008

UPDATED: 9:17 am HST October 16, 2008

HONOLULU -- Mayor Mufi Hannemann called on his transit team Wednesday to attack the transit plan unveiled by his opponent on Tuesday.

He said Anne Kobayashi's plan was a "half-baked manapua" meant to attract votes, not reduce traffic.

Kobayashi rejected the city's fixed guideway rail transit plan in favor of dedicated lanes and double-decked roads for cars and buses.

"It's highly irresponsible to say 'I have the plan. I have the answer and I only did it in three weeks,'" Hannemann said.

The mayor pulled a panel of panel of transit supporters together to attack Kobayashi's E-Z Way plan saying its not as easy as she said to get her plans approved and engineered and built.

"It's absolutely impossible, and I think it's irresponsible to mislead the public to say that's a possibility," the carpenter's union leader Ron Taketa said.

Related To Story



Video: Mayoral Candidates Respond To Transit Plans

Former state lawmaker Kirk Caldwell said she is dramatically underestimating the costs of raised highways tunnels and operating costs and said her promise of federal and state money, "is a falsehood and misleading to the public."

Hannemann's team said his biggest flaw in Kobayashi's plan is that all the buses and cars will join the surface streets and won't add any more capacity to the roads than there already is.

"I just think this is a quickly put together sketch plan that fails in a lot of ways," Oahu Transit Services President Roger Morton said.

"No matter what they say, we think our plan is great," Kobayashi said.

Kobayashi stands by all her promises and said her plan is getting great response.

"What we wanted to solve first was congestion relief for the people who really needed it so that's what we did," Kobayashi said.

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Rail support sidetracked at meeting

Some say a public forum led them to change their position

[By Robert Shikina](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 17, 2008

Some people said they were so bothered by the city's third community meeting about Honolulu's rail transit that they decided to change their positions and oppose the project.

One man called the session a "snow job."

Transit officials faced other criticism and encountered repeated interruptions for questions by residents while trying to continue with the chosen format of providing answers to written questions.

About 35 people showed up at last night's meeting at Waipahu Intermediate School. They got these answers from officials:

- » How much is the fare? (\$2.)
- » What would happen if the city votes against the rail? (It will be very difficult to proceed.)
- » How noisy would it be? (About 75 decibels from 50 feet away, or about 5 decibels less than a bus.)
- » How much will it cost to build? (About \$5 billion after inflation.)
- » Why didn't it start on the Waianae Coast? (Because the city and state have goals to focus growth in Kapolei, Ewa Beach and Honolulu while leaving the outlying areas as country.)
- » How big will it be? (About six traffic lanes wide.)

Moira Maeda-Namamike, a Waipahu resident, said she would support rail if it is done right, but after attending the information session, she decided to oppose it.

"It confirmed my decision more," she said.

She said she felt city officials skirted the questions. Her biggest concern was the noise, since she would be living along the route.

Craig Smallwood said the meeting helped turn him into an opponent of rail.

"They lost an adamant supporter," he said. "I came here pro-rail, but I got a problem with the way they're doing this information session."

But not all were against rail.

Waipahu resident Jamie Itokazu had signed the Stop Rail Now petition but removed her name after considering the environmental and economic reasons for rail.

"Rail is good," she said before the meeting.

Ewa Beach resident Jonathan Aguir, 22, said the meeting turned him against rail but that mayoral candidate Ann Kobayashi's plan for a fixed guideway for rubber-tired vehicles is no better. He said he believes Kobayashi is just pandering to opponents of the city's proposed transit project.



Counting down to Honolulu's rail ballot initiative

Posted: Oct 17, 2008 06:33 PM

Updated: Oct 17, 2008 07:37 PM

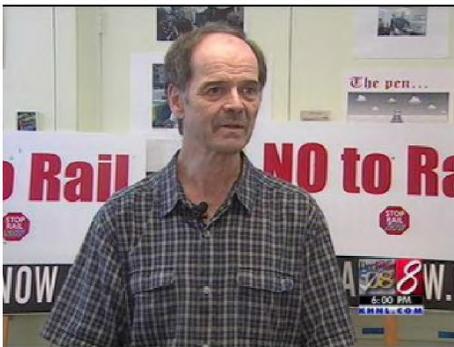


By Leland Kim - [bio](#) | [email](#)

HONOLULU (KHNL) - Just 18 days and counting until Election Day. There are races that will pick the next president of the United States to the mayor of Honolulu.

And one of the hot bed issues on Oahu is rail. Friday night, a key question and some answers before you head to the polls.

Honolulu City Councilmember Todd Apo



Dennis Callan

The big question on Oahu is, will Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann be able to go forward with his mass transit plan for the city?

It's in the voters' hands. A ballot initiative asks voters if they want to support the mayor's "steel on steel" plan. Another question: can the mayor push ahead if the voters disagree with him?

It's pretty straight forward as far as the ballot initiative goes. A yes vote means the mayor can continue with his plan. A no vote means, it would be a major road block.

If voters vote no, it would be tough for the mayor to continue, but his supporters are confident he has the majority's support.

The city's proposed \$6 billion light rail project is trying to get off the ground, but it first has to get the green light from Oahu voters.

A ballot initiative poses the question, "Should the city continue building Mayor Mufi Hannemann's proposed steel wheel on steel rail technology?"

"If the vote is yes, then it's the only project that really can be done," said Todd Apo, a Honolulu City Councilmember. "I think the mayor and the council will be required to follow the voice of the voters and do a steel rail project.."

But if the majority of voters says no?



"The mayor could ignore the will of the people and try and proceed anyway, but let's face it, that's very unlikely," said Dennis Callan, co-chair of "Stop Rail Now."

"There's potentially ways down the road to restructure the project," said Apo. "The reality is if the voters vote no, this project is not going to happen, mainly because the FTA (Federal Transportation Administration) at the federal level is not going to support us doing this type of mass transit project if we don't have the public support for it. So a no vote really means the end of this project."



The mayor has been adamant about steel on steel in the past. But if the voters vote no, the mayor has no veto power because it becomes a charter amendment.

"And neither the mayor or the council can do anything or even enact anything that is counter to what the charter is," said Apo. "The only way to change that is to take the question back to the

voters and the soonest you can do that is in two years."

Whether you support steel on steel

"For my constituents representing West Oahu, there's very strong support for this project," said Apo.

... or oppose it,

"Almost everybody is against the train that we speak to anyway," said Callan.

They have less than three weeks to convince voters that their way is the right way for the future of Oahu.

Obviously a lot is at stake. If voters vote yes, it will be the biggest public works project in state history.



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Local Top Stories

City's Rail Outreach Tops \$2.5 million

By Andrew Pereira

STORY SUMMARY>>>

The city's effort to educate the public about the benefits of its proposed 20-mile rail transit system has cost taxpayers more than \$2.5 million.

Khon2 obtained a financial breakdown of the city's Public Involvement Costs after filing a request with the state's Office of Information Practices.

The one page document provided to Khon2 includes spending by the city for things like radio ads, neighborhood board updates and the development and maintenance of a website.

In all \$2,568,000 in taxpayer funds were spent on the following:

- Community Outreach (Scooping meetings, Speaker's Bureau, Neighborhood Board Updates) - \$1,501,100
- Alternative Analysis Dissemination (DVD Production, Airtime for DVD Broadcast) - \$116,400
- Workshops and Symposia (Preparation and Staffing) - \$265,100
- Website (Development and Maintenance) - \$100,750
- Olelo (Public TC Access) - \$89,550
- Commercial Radio Spots (Airtime, Production, Honolulu on the Move) - \$165,200
- Other (Newsletter, clipping service, multi-language fliers, etc.) - \$329,900

Rail opponent and Honolulu mayoral candidate Ann Kobayashi characterized the city's effort to educate the public as a "waste of taxpayers' money."

She said the informational campaign has gone far beyond providing information about the proposed rail system, projected to cost \$4.9 billion in year of expenditure dollars.

Kobayashi said radio and newspapers ads in particular are unfair in light of the charter amendment question that will appear on the general election ballot. Voters are being asked whether the city's transportation director should establish a steel wheel on steel rail transit system.

"It just touts one side of a charter amendment question," said Kobayashi about the city's informational campaign. "I heard nothing about alternatives or what the down side is of rail. That's what education is all about - you present both sides of an issue and then let the public decide."

Hannemann maintains the city's public outreach is required by the Federal Transit Administration in order for the Honolulu project to qualify for federal transit dollars.

"That's what the FTA has said to us. That if you're going to be eligible for federal funds we need to know that you're having an educational effort."

The mayor told Khon2 the city's educational campaign may not have been as broad if rail opponents had not been spreading what he labeled "falsehoods" about the controversial project.

"There's a lot of misinformation (and) misrepresentation of the facts and there seems to be a lot more media coverage of the anti-rail position than there is of those who support it."

Cliff Slater of Stop Rail Now said the mayor's claims are "totally outrageous". While it has been an uphill battle for the group to compete with the city's multi-million dollar informational campaign, Slater believes voters are getting vital information about the downside of a train.

"Yes it's tough but I think we're getting through to the public," he said. "There are going to be cost overruns, (the mayor's) not going to get the federal money to the extent that he would like it and biggest thing, traffic congestion is going to be far worst with rail."

Hannemann's administration will suspend all TV and radio ads next Wednesday in light of the upcoming charter amendment question. However the city's rail transit website will remain online and officials will continue to conduct public outreach meetings when they are requested.

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

Story Updated: Oct 17, 2008 at 6:55 PM HDT

October 17, 2008

Letters to the Editor

transit

Rail will be good for future of the Islands

I was on the fence about the rail issue until I read the story comparing the city's claims and Stop Rail Now's claims.

It seems the anti-rail group's arguments are built largely on guesswork with a large dose of spin — they say traffic congestion will be worse with rail in the future. According to the article, congestion will be worse in the future no matter what is done. Rail will make it less worse, a reasonable claim.

And I was very surprised to read that Stop Rail Now doubts the ability of our congressional delegation to get federal funding. Time and again, our congressional representatives have delivered billions of dollars in federal money that means jobs for our economy. I will vote for rail on election day.

Matt Choy | Manoa

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Letters

For Friday, October 17, 2008

Kobayashi knew landfill couldn't move

So City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi wants proof of my assertion that she "essentially lied" during the Oct. 15 mayoral candidates' forum when she stated that Oahu's landfill could have been moved to a small site in Campbell Industrial Park as she proposed in 2004 (Star-Bulletin, Oct. 16).

Well here's the proof: it was absolutely clear in 2004 that this site was totally unfit for use as a landfill, and that it had never even been on the extensive list of sites that were evaluated by professionals and ranked by a special task force after public meetings.

When Kobayashi orchestrated a surprise proposal for that site shortly before the final vote, it was thoroughly debunked by environmentalists and responsible public officials who declared it utterly unrealistic and said the secrecy that surrounded it was unconscionable. The Star-Bulletin reported that there is even a deed restriction that specifically prohibits placing a landfill there.

At the forum, Kobayashi made some rambling statements about hoping some nebulous "new technology" that disposes of waste and leaves no residue would have made a landfill unnecessary. Even if somehow possible, that's not what was before the Council for a vote.

Kobayashi voted on Dec. 1, 2004, to keep the landfill at Waimanalo Gulch. For her to say with a straight face that the landfill could have been moved to the other site is simply dishonest and disgraceful.

Johnny Brannon
Honolulu

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Letters

For Friday, October 17, 2008

Kobayashi's ideas are all over the place

I am surprised and disappointed in mayoral candidate Ann Kobayashi. She just released her new transit plan for Honolulu. It's a bus rapid transit plan that won't qualify for local money collected by the general excise tax, and it wouldn't be eligible for federal transit funds because there would be no local match. It's also questionable whether any federal highway money would be available for this.

What it sounds like to me is deja vu again when City Councilwoman Rene Mansho switched her vote on rail in 1992 and Honolulu lost millions of dollars in federal transit money.

Kobayashi opposed bus rapid transit when it was originally proposed in 2003. She later voted for the general excise tax hike for rail in 2005 and supported "fixed guideway" for mass transit in 2006. She then proposed that the rail line go all the way to Ko Olina, saying the Leeward people need it the most. She later switched to support to a rubber tire technology over steel wheel. And now, she has completely changed her position on transit to get votes from former foe Panos Prevedouros, saying he convinced her otherwise.

And this woman wants to lead our city?

John Nakagawa
Honolulu

October 18, 2008

Rail foes' strategies running on flat tires

By David Shapiro

The 2008 election season is limping to a close as we plant tongue in cheek and "FLASHback" on the week's news that amused and confused:

- Mayoral candidate Ann Kobayashi rolled out her new EzWay plan for mass transit. In a nutshell, she wants to replace the Train to Nowhere with the Highway to Oblivion.
- Rail opponents are driving a van around town blaring train sounds to show how noisy the system will be, but they can't get attention. Nobody can hear their loudspeakers above all the transit name-calling.
- In a bizarre moment at a candidates forum, Kobayashi was accused of lying by a former newspaper reporter who now works for Mayor Mufi Hannemann. This job switch raised the average intellect of both the political and journalistic professions.
- Gov. Linda Lingle hit the road again to campaign for John McCain and Sarah Palin in Colorado, Nevada and Ohio. Lingle promised to finish her term as governor, but she didn't say from what state.
- Next month, Lingle goes to Asia to drum up visitors for Hawai'i. Maybe someday she'll visit us herself.
- A Washington, D.C., watchdog group singled out Sen. Daniel Inouye as one of Congress's "most prolific porkers." They should have seen him in his prime.
- Top Democrats in the Legislature say we can't afford a ConCon because of the state budget deficit, but lawmakers still plan to collect 36 percent pay raises next year. In Hawai'i politics, there's no shame in no shame.
- Scientists say the supply of bottom-feeding fish in the Hawaiian Islands may not be as depleted as was feared. They just moved onto land and ran for the Legislature.
- Two Honolulu police officers were put on desk duty for using their Tasers to zap a naked guy who lunged at them on the street. Poor choice of weapons. The fellow obviously was hoping for a rubber hose.
- Philadelphia Phillies star Shane Victorino is taking grief from animal rights activists for listing Spam musubi as his favorite food. What, eating cheesesteaks would be more humane?

And the quote of the week ... from Gov. Linda Lingle on Barack Obama's Hawai'i ties: "I'm the governor of Hawai'i, and Senator Obama likes to say he's from Hawai'i, but, the truth is, I've never met him in my life. He's never called me."

I was going to say hell hath no fury like a woman left waiting by the phone, but I'd be accused of sexist

punchlines.

So let's just say as much as Lingle roams, Obama would need a satellite phone to find her.



Letters to the Editor

For Saturday, October 18, 2008

'EZway' isn't a viable rail alternative

Today I will return my "Ann Kobayashi For Mayor" yard sign. I had hoped she would stand for a meaningful alternative to steel rail.

Ann, you told me at a campaign appearance that you would not let a "no" vote on rail transit turn the project into just another highway-widening project, yet that is exactly what you are proposing with EZway.

By building three new lanes of traffic into town you will bring thousands more vehicles into the crowded streets of downtown, Waikiki and Manoa. Your plan does not address what will happen to all of these additional cars in town.

Rather than promote energy efficiency and better land use, your plan will just encourage more drivers to bring their cars into town and encourage developers to convert more precious land into parking lots. The plan's so-called restrictions, on numbers of riders per vehicle and miles per gallon, are meaningless and unenforceable. It's just another elevated freeway.

Neal Lebsack

Kaneohe

October 19, 2008

Projects along Hawaii rail route stay the course despite economy

Poor economy could change development plans in station areas

By SEAN HAO
Advertiser Staff Writer

The slowing national economy and real estate downturn have raised concern that developments planned near train stations along Honolulu's proposed \$3.7 billion elevated commuter rail line could be delayed or canceled.

Texas-based Hunt Development Group recently opted out of a tentative agreement to develop 300 acres near a planned train station at the new University of Hawai'i-West O'ahu campus.

Several other developers involved in potential projects near rail stations say they are moving forward with their plans.

Still, the souring economy and credit crunch could affect their timing.

City planners hope to break ground on the Kapolei-to-Ala Moana commuter rail line late next year, and expect many of the 19 stations will attract residential and retail development.

Michael Schneider, managing partner of InfraConsult LLC, which provides management support on the train project, said transit-oriented developments could be delayed by an economic slowdown. However, it's more a question of when, not if, developers respond to opportunities near train stations, he said.

"(In) the midyears between 2010 and 2020 who knows what's going to happen," Schneider said. "Historically since the 1850s, the development of railroads has spurred the development of communities.

"That's been proven in almost every community where a fixed system ... that developers can rely on, has resulted in development activity."

Proponents of the 20-mile rail line envision stations, especially those in East Kapolei, becoming hubs for development. They see the stations growing into new high-density population centers that will slow the suburban sprawl that has covered much of West O'ahu.

Transit-oriented development is especially key for three planned stops between Kapolei and Leeward Community College, which are in the middle of what are now primarily empty fields.

The plan is for those fields to turn into communities by the time the train makes its first stop four years from now. If things don't go according to plan, there could be little reason for trains to stop at those stations when the line first opens.

That could be politically embarrassing for city officials who decided to start construction of the train in

undeveloped West O'ahu rather than in urban Ho-nolulu. It also could mean fewer riders than anticipated, at least initially. That would mean lower fare collections, which could require greater subsidies to finance train operations.

But the timing of transit-oriented development is largely out of the hands of city officials. Private companies will determine the pace of development.

300-acre deal

Hunt Development Group was in line to buy 300 acres near a train station close to UH-West O'ahu for about \$100 million. Hunt sought to renegotiate because the original terms of the deal weren't in line with current financial and real estate markets.

The university, which was relying on the sale to help fund a new campus, still plans to break ground in January and open a scaled-down campus by fall 2010. UH-West O'ahu spokesman Ryan Mielke said the university now is focused on rezoning and selling a separate 50-acre parcel that could raise about \$40 million.

"There are developers that are looking at it. We have had interest," Mielke said.

Even if that smaller campus opens as scheduled, it's unclear what will happen with the 100 acres Hunt had planned to purchase. Hunt had planned to build 2,340 residential units coupled with commercial developments that could have provided an economic boost for the area.

Despite the economic turbulence that led to Hunt's decision to pull out, other developments along the train route are moving forward.

Fort Worth, Texas-based homebuilder D.R. Horton is developing East Kapolei's massive Ho'opili planned community. The company's shares are down 49 percent this year; it slashed its quarterly dividend in half; and recently posted its fifth straight quarterly loss.

Still Mike Jones, president of D.R. Horton's Schuler Division, said the recent economic troubles will not affect the timing or scale of development planned for two Ho'opili train stations. Current plans include beginning construction in 2011 or 2012. Completing the project could take another 20 to 30 years and involve the building of 10,000 to 15,000 homes, plus schools and parks.

The company wants to have commercial or residential development near at least one of two nearby stations in 2012, Jones said.

"It depends on when permits and zoning happen, but that's kind of the target date at this point in time," he said. "We're moving along. Obviously, it's a long-term project."

At Chicago-based General Growth Properties Inc., which owns Ala Moana Center and the planned Ward Neighborhood project, shares of the real-estate investment trust have plunged 85 percent this year amid concerns the company may be unable to make payments on its more than \$27 billion in debts.

Analysts speculate the company may need to merge or sell assets to keep current on its debt payments.

Jan Yokota, General Growth's local vice president of development, said the company is committed to its

Ward Neighborhood plan, which eventually would replace everything that exists on its Ward land today — including Ward Warehouse, Ward Centre, Ward Entertainment Center and the IBM Building — with medium- to high-density housing, retail and open space, all within walking distance of a transit station.

The train station near Ward Avenue would not open until sometime near 2018, which is when the system is scheduled to begin full operations.

"It's a long-term plan and we're committed to that vision," Yokota said. "Overall, it will span at least 20 years."

future kroc center

Other developments at the Kapolei end of the transit system also are proceeding. That includes construction of the Salvation Army's \$103 million Ray and Joan Kroc Corps Community Center. The community center will have an aquatic facility, a multipurpose gym, a large fitness center, and a worship and performing arts theater, among other facilities, and is expected to open in early to mid-2010.

The train's first stop will be next to the Kroc Center. The second stop will be near UH-West O'ahu and Ho'opili, while the third stop will be in the heart of Ho'opili.

Next to the Kroc Center are several Department of Hawaiian Home Lands developments, including two housing projects. That includes East Kapolei I, where construction of about 103 homes is expected to begin early next year. A total of 403 homes are planned. Construction on the first phase of East Kapolei II is expected to begin sometime in 2010. About 1,000 homes are planned for the development.

On the makai side of the planned UH-West Oahu campus, Tampa, Fla.-based Hawai'i DeBartolo LLC plans to build Ka Makana Ali'i, which will be a 1.6 million-square-foot regional shopping center on DHHL lands. DeBartolo also plans to put up to 300 hotel rooms in two towers. A DeBartolo spokeswoman said the company is going forward with the project, but could not comment on when the mall would open for business.

DHHL, which opened a new 50,000-square-foot headquarters in Kapolei earlier this year, said its projects are going forward as planned.

"There is talk about money being tight and the big guys are going to feel it in terms of being able to borrow," said DHHL spokesman Lloyd Yonenaka. "I don't know how it's going to play out, but right now there aren't any changes.

"The stuff that we are touching we feel pretty confident about now."

'Ewa end critical

Continuing to move forward on the 'Ewa developments along the train line is more crucial because the city plans to start service at that end, and many of the planned stops are now in the middle of empty fields.

City officials decided to start building the train at the 'Ewa end in part because they prefer placing the train's maintenance yard between Leeward Community College and Waipahu High School. Building

toward 'Ewa, rather than toward town, also requires less displacement of existing homes, businesses and utility lines.

"The construction phasing plan to begin at the maintenance and storage facility site and proceed westward takes advantage of the fact that construction along Farrington Highway and in West O'ahu will not require significant utility relocations and thus can begin quickly," said Mark Scheibe, deputy project manager for city contractor Parsons Brinckerhoff in an e-mail.

However, that strategy also carries with it the risk that the first train stations could have few nearby developments, at least initially. It could pay dividends in the long term if developers succeed in building transit-oriented developments along the train's route, said Peter Flachsbart, who teaches urban and regional planning at the University of Hawai'i.

The undeveloped East Kapolei area is ripe for the development of moderate- to high-density, mixed-use, walkable communities that can generate greater train ridership, he said.

"There's a short-term risk that there won't be any passengers around those stations, but it's a good risk," Flachsbart said. "If you do the (transit-oriented development) right, so that you have built-in ridership for those stations, in the long-term that will pay off."

In contrast, areas already packed with commercial buildings, such as Salt Lake, have less opportunity to design new developments around train stations, according to a February 2007 report by Parsons Brinckerhoff. Salt Lake, which would have two stations, is already built out, or contains land controlled by the military.

The scope and timing of projects near transit stations hinge not only on the economy, but on the availability of favorable zoning rules and landowner incentives such as property tax breaks, revenue bonds, and tax increment financing, said UH's Flachsbart. The level of tax subsidies the city could provide land owners and developers also could be hampered by a slowing economy.

"I guess the subsidies would have to be greater in a down market, but that's going to be harder for the city because their property tax revenues might be down, too," Flachsbart said.

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Gathering Place

Transit allows communities to control future growth

By Dean Uchida

POSTED: 01:40 a.m. HST, Oct 19, 2008

It is frightening to watch the debate on the proposed rail transit system as it appears to be moving in a direction that divides the community in different ways: West Oahu versus East Honolulu-Windward Oahu; those willing to pay versus those who are not; advocates of building more roads, buses and cars versus those who want to invest in a fixed-guideway system.

Regardless of your point of view, it might benefit all of us to see how successful transit projects have been created in other areas. Much of the recent public discussion on Honolulu's transit system has been focused on "transportation alternatives" to address traffic and congestion problems. In comparison, three cities with successful transit systems (Vancouver, Portland and Denver) approached the implementation of rail transit not as a transportation alternative, but as a tool for "growth management." The underlying issue is growth, not traffic.

Each of the cities started with a clear vision of the future based on "quality of life" measurements that were embraced by the residents. Growth management was critical in planning for their quality-of-life goals. Each of the cities developed defined limits on physically growing "out," and thus developed strategies to grow "up." Transit was then used as a tool to implement their various growth management techniques by focusing new growth and increasing density in areas identified for growth.

This community vision of the future provided areas not serviced by rail, with quality-of-life benefits such as open space, agricultural use and low-density uses. This would be similar to Honolulu's "Keep the Country, Country" by preserving the less dense, more green and open areas and using transit to focus where growth should occur. Thus, in

theory, everyone benefits from the enhanced quality of life and everyone pays for it.

The common thread that linked these three cities is the "transit culture" that each city embraces. This transit culture is reflected in how the individual citizens view rail, pedestrians, bikes, buses and cars as alternative modes of transportation. It is also reflected in their willingness to pay for these services through taxes and fees, as well as through an overall acceptance of living in a dense, urban environment.

This is not to say that decisions are not controversial; however, the underlying transit culture seems to keep the focus on improving the quality of life for future generations.

Transit essentially serves as a growth management tool to focus density. Transit was never thought of as simply a means to move people. Each of the cities' underlying philosophy regarding quality of life and economic development is based on compacting development and density into areas that are serviced by transit.

All of the cities took a very long-term view of their systems. A 30- to 50-year planning horizon is the general outlook for these systems. And each city had different measurements of success that they would use to gauge progress. In Vancouver, a measurement of success was that a person's commute 20 years from now would not take any longer than the time it takes today.

Finally, perhaps we should consider what our future will be like without transit. As oil prices rise, what reasonable alternatives are we providing the future residents of Honolulu if we don't proceed with transit today? Will we be able to grow to accommodate the needs of our future generations, or will we simply preserve what we have and let the next generations fend for themselves?

It is interesting to note that as we engage in our emotional debate about whether or not we should proceed with transit, other cities with no plans for transit are having to resort to various measures to relieve the economic burden on their residents of commuting by car every day. These include a four-day work week and forcing people to ride an unreliable public bus system. It is questionable whether these alternatives are sustainable as oil prices rise.

Perhaps the real question is: Can we afford not to invest in transit now if we want to preserve any hope of improving the quality of life for our future generations?

Dean Uchida is vice president of Ho'opili D.R. Horton -- Schuler Division.

Letters to the Editor

For Sunday, October 19, 2008

POSTED: 01:45 a.m. HST, Oct 19, 2008

Lower GET would help more than rail

In this time of economic uncertainty, the city administration should help everyone by doing away with the general excise tax increase. The state should seriously consider reducing the general excise tax a half-percent. This could kick-start our economy.

As for construction projects and federal aid, the city is under a federal mandate to upgrade the Sand Island and Honouliuli sewage facilities. They probably stand a better chance to get federal funds for these projects than for a fixed rail. The problem of traffic on the Leeward side could be alleviated by having a Superferry transport cars from Barbers Point to Honolulu Harbor. For a fraction of the cost of the fixed rail, the city could buy and operate a Superferry, providing jobs, income and incredible gas savings for the people of the Leeward coast.

Gloria Kaneshiro
Honolulu

Letters to the Editor

For Sunday, October 19, 2008

POSTED: 01:45 a.m. HST, Oct 19, 2008

More lanes would mean more concrete, toxins

Tires on concrete? More toxic tire dust particles to inhale? More concrete roads to suffocate our gentle little island?

Ms. Kobayashi, please reveal to the voters more about your plans for mass transit before election night. So far it's all Greek to me!

I'm still hoping for a little train with just a couple of steel tracks to take us around the island -- eventually! What's wrong with steel? It's solid enough to cook with. It's solid, no contamination, no pollution, no toxic tire dust.

Rosemarie H. Tucker
Honolulu

October 20, 2008

Honolulu mayoral candidate cites fiscal prudence as a top priority

Mayoral candidate shares thoughts on city issues beyond transit

BY PETER BOYLAN

Advertiser Staff Writer

In 15 days, voters will decide whether to give Mayor Mufi Hannemann a second term or elevate City Council member Ann Kobayashi to the city's top post.

Hannemann's plan to build a \$3.7 billion commuter rail system, and Kobayashi's alternative plan for elevated bus lanes, have dominated the campaign so far. But improving the city's transportation system is just one of many challenges the city will face over the next four years.

The Advertiser sat down with both candidates last week to collect their thoughts on the non-transit issues facing Honolulu residents. Today we report on Kobayashi's responses and tomorrow will be Hannemann's turn.

Up until a week before the July deadline to file to run for elected office, Kobayashi was sure she wasn't going to run for mayor.

The 25-year veteran lawmaker, who has worked as state senator and as a city council member, was not up for re-election and wanted to serve out her term tending to the needs of her constituents in her council district.

But in the seven days leading up to the July 22 deadline, Kobayashi said she began to feel a sense of obligation spurred by a desire to offer the voters another option.

Kobayashi decided to enter the race the night before the filing deadline, following a late-night meeting with Democratic party leaders, including former Gov. Ben Cayetano and state Senate President Colleen Hanabusa.

After capturing slightly more than 30 percent of the votes in the Sept. 20 primary, Kobayashi will now square off with Hannemann during the Nov. 4 general election.

Kobayashi, a former friend and Hannemann ally who campaigned for him in 2004, said she felt the city was headed in the wrong direction and that spending practices did not match the tough economic times.

She has campaigned as the candidate who would control government spending and bring transparency and accountability back to City Hall.

ECONOMY

Kobayashi preaches fiscal prudence and is constantly looking for ways to cut spending while lowering city taxes and fees assessed to residents.

The former chairwoman of the Senate Ways and Means Committee and the City Council's Budget Committee, Kobayashi said

she wants to offer economic relief to residents.

As a council member, Kobayashi voted against the city's current \$1.9 billion operating budget and made it known she believed the administration could have trimmed more and offered greater relief to taxpayers.

"The economy is in very bad shape, not only here but nationally and globally. We've been spending but are we spending in an efficient manner? Have we been fiscally responsible?" Kobayashi asked.

"We have to tighten our belts in some areas and ensure our rainy-day funds and other accounts where we put our money aside are not tapped."

Kobayashi said she and her staff are developing a four-year economic plan for the city. As part of that plan, she wants to pursue an idea developed by City Council chairwoman Barbara Marshall that would allow the city to draw from money set aside for vacant funded positions. Currently, the money covers overtime and contract hires, but Kobayashi would like to take money from the fund and use it to shore up services.

Additionally, she would like to revise the property tax collection to limit it to what the city needs to operate efficiently.

"The less we spend on running government, the less property tax we have to collect. I think relief is needed especially now — people are losing their jobs. People are paying more for goods, paying more for childcare; we should try and allow our taxpayers to keep their money in their pockets," she said.

INFRASTRUCTURE

In discussing the state of O'ahu's infrastructure, Kobayashi cited the administration of former Mayor Frank Fasi, crediting him with repaving more than 200 lane miles of roads a year. She said keeping to a set schedule of road, sewer and other repairs and using quality materials in the process will help negate the need for costly repair projects.

"The best shape the city was ever in was when Frank Fasi was mayor," Kobayashi said. "We have to have sensible planning for our infrastructure and sensible policies. Here and there we have these little wasteful pockets of spending."

Kobayashi said she wants to revise city procurement practices and focus infrastructure repairs and maintenance on the oldest areas of Honolulu.

Low-income areas of Waipahu, 'Ewa Beach, Nanakuli, Wai'anae, Waimanalo, Kalihi and others should be repaired and beautified, to give residents a sense of pride in their community, she said.

"Sometimes I worry that we may be developing too much. Are we going to have enough water?" Kobayashi said. "If we're going to save money and resources, the urban areas should be developed and this is where density should occur."

WASTE MANAGEMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

Kobayashi, as her Web site touts, supports the "three Rs": reduce, reuse and recycle.

She wants to close the Waimanalo Gulch landfill and identify new, affordable technology to convert the majority of O'ahu's solid waste to energy.

Kobayashi did vote to keep the landfill open during the most recent City Council vote this year, but said there were no viable

alternatives.

"H-power is really ancient technology and the facility is old. There are other technologies that are just as good but less expensive," Kobayashi said. "This company that talked about converting waste to energy and ethanol would build the plant with their own money. We have to look closely at what system fits our city."

Promoting recycling is a big part of her position on the environment and Kobayashi said she wants to put more bins in public places to make the practice a habit for all.

She also wants to encourage companies to create goods, like park benches and tables, from recycled materials. Government should do what it can to promote businesses that deal in recycled goods.

"It's always been a frustration for me that recycling has really not started islandwide," said Kobayashi. "We should do more to encourage people to recycle."

Decreasing the city's energy consumption is vital to the welfare of businesses, consumers, and government, Kobayashi said.

The more the city saves on energy, the more the city reduces expenses in the city's operating budget. Kobayashi said the savings help offset the pressure to raise taxes and also reduces the impact on the environment.

October 20, 2008

City's rail tax gives us competitive edge

By Nestor Garcia

After reading about recent remarks made by Stop Rail Now and former Gov. Ben Cayetano regarding the Honolulu transit project, it is unfortunate that transit opponents either don't or won't understand the federal funding process.

As the city has said when we started this journey in 2005, the Federal Transit Administration's New Starts program is a competitively based funding program in which we compete with other cities for transit funding. The collection of the half-percent general excise tax surcharge is a factor that gives Honolulu a significant competitive advantage over other cities. It gives us a fighting chance, but more than that, I am confident it will lead to our acceptance into the New Starts funding program.

The Oct. 7 e-mail from an FTA official only says that nothing's been decided yet. While they have been in constant consultation with the city from the start of our alternative analysis planning process, it is too early to tell if any applicants, Honolulu and its competitors, will be accepted in the New Starts program. To use that innocuous e-mail statement as argument for people to reject transit is disingenuous and uncharacteristic of the spirit of our local people, who have the utmost faith in one another to overcome all obstacles.

What if the 2007 University of Hawai'i football team or our Little League teams from 'Ewa and Waipi'o had adopted this "no can" attitude because naysayers told them there's no guarantee they would win? We wouldn't have a Western Athletic Conference football championship, a Sugar Bowl appearance, and two Little League World Series titles in four years, that's for sure.

I'm curious as to why a renowned fighter like Cayetano would toss in the white towel so quickly. He is known for taking unpopular stances because he believed they were the right thing to do.

When I served in the state House of Representatives, then-Gov. Cayetano came to the Legislature with a request for \$1 billion in capital improvements. This was needed, he argued, to help Hawai'i stave off the economic crisis triggered by the tragic events of 9/11.

After the Legislature pared his request down to \$100 million, he told the Honolulu Star-Bulletin (Nov. 4, 2001), "I really feel there are too many of them that don't understand the gravity of the situation. I'm from the school that you prime the pump instead of watch an economic meltdown, and that is what is going to happen."

Ironically, Honolulu's elevated, fixed guideway project that he speaks against would accomplish exactly what he argued so strongly for back then. It will:

- Create jobs for both the short and long term;
- Spur investment in Hawai'i and attract much needed federal dollars; and

- Help cushion the state against this financial crisis.

If government spending to lessen the impact of a financial crisis was a good idea back then, why isn't it a good idea now?

I'm also amazed at my colleague's "EzWay" BRT plan. From 2003 until 2007, Ann Kobayashi was a member of the City Council's transportation committee as well as the O'ahu Metropolitan Planning Organization's policy committee. When the council implemented the half-percent GET surcharge in August 2005 and the OMPO policy committee adopted the O'ahu Regional Transportation Plan 2030 Update in April 2006, on both occasions Councilmember Kobayashi voted in support.

Had her advisers kept up to date on this issue, they would have known that the state Department of Transportation's presentation at the Aug. 20 OMPO Citizen's Advisory Committee meeting stated that the cost of building a 15-mile, two-lane flyover "is closer to \$2 billion to \$4 billion, rather than the often quoted \$900 million," based on the department's own construction cost estimate of \$225 million per mile.

The proposed "EzWay" plan goes against her prior votes and is outside the approved funding schedule for the Federal Highway and Federal Transit Administrations as depicted in the 2030 Update. It also does not meet the requirement for being considered "fixed guideway" as single-occupant vehicles do not meet the strict requirements for Transit funding, nor does the plan meet the state and county approved language for acceptable use of the collected GET funds.

Nestor Garcia is floor leader of the Honolulu City Council and chairman of the Committee on Transportation & Public Works. He wrote this commentary for The Advertiser.

Contrast rules mayor's race

In style and substance, Mufi Hannemann and Ann Kobayashi differ in their political ways

[By Laurie Au](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 20, 2008

For Mayor Mufi Hannemann, think caffeine.

For challenger Ann Kobayashi, think milk and sugar.

Few events better illustrate the difference in leadership styles between Hannemann and Kobayashi than campaign coffee hours.

These intimate klatches, long critical to political campaigns, take place in private houses or maybe a high school cafeteria and are meant to give potential voters face time with candidates.

Hannemann, typically more aggressive, spends most of his time talking into a microphone, touting his accomplishments. The mayor, clearly determined to raise voter turnout after a poorer-than-expected showing in the primary, exhorts supporters to vote and to encourage their friends to do the same.

Kobayashi, much quieter, typically speaks for just a few minutes, thanking her supporters, and then lets others press for contributions.

At his Dole Cannery headquarters, Hannemann recently talked about the issues facing the city and took questions from nearly 50 leaders of Hawaii's school athletics departments.

"It seems to me that you, in many ways, hold the key to shaping the youth who will be the leaders of our community," Hannemann said.

Nguyen Le, 39, of Diamond Head, said he follows local politics closely but was undecided about the mayor's race until after he attended Hannemann's coffee hour.

"He said all the right things," Le said. "He demonstrated an understanding of the community. It was the first time I heard him speak and I was pleasantly surprised. He's really forward-looking,

especially with the rail transit system."

Sheila Watumull, a former Hannemann supporter, hosted a small coffee hour for Kobayashi during the first week of October in her stylish Diamond Head home for about 30 friends. It wasn't an entirely typical coffee hour because some widely known politicians attended, including Senate President Colleen Hanabusa and Sen. Sam Slom (R, Diamond Head-Hawaii Kai).

Kobayashi shmoozed, shaking hands, eating only after she had said hello to everyone.

Most of her speech was spent criticizing Hannemann's \$4 billion rail transit plan and his record as mayor. At that time, Kobayashi had not yet unveiled her own mass transit plan.

One of the speakers was Al Masini, an Aina Haina resident and the creator of "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous" and other television shows.

"I'm a resident here, and I'm very concerned about Honolulu," said Masini. "This is the most critical time we're going to face. The more I watch Mufi, the more concerned I am that we would be on a disastrous track for all of us. I didn't think we had an alternative, so I'm very glad we have Ann."

The attendees included some supporters of former candidate Panos Prevedouros, who opposes Hannemann's rail system,

"In a perfect world, we would be co-mayors," Kobayashi said, standing next to Prevedouros, her campaign's adviser for infrastructure. "We'll be standing together a lot, solving the problems of the city."

But while there was a lot of talking, there wasn't a lot of substance.

"I'm not sure what the objective of tonight was," remarked Leon Williams, 42, of Kailua, but he added: "I think it's always nice that someone opens up their home to promote interaction."

Find this article at:

http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20081020_contrast_rules_mayors_race.html

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Star-Bulletin Endorsements

Give OK to rail transit

POSTED: 06:39 a.m. HST, Oct 20, 2008

HAWAII residents indicated in recent polls that they approve of the city's plan for rail transit between Kapolei and Ala Moana, a goal that has been proposed for the past three decades. Voters should end the continuing debate by approving a ballot item that will end the debate and authorize the city to go ahead with the important project.

The proposed amendment to the City Charter would give the city transportation director the authority to proceed with the "steel-wheel-on-steel-rail transit system." Rejection of the amendment would greatly jeopardize the city's attempt to meet the growing need for an adequate transportation system between downtown Honolulu and the island's Second City.

The amendment's placement on the ballot followed a failed attempt by an anti-rail group to block work on the 20-mile elevated steel-rail system. In response to the opposition, the City Council agreed in August to put the question on the ballot. Mayor Mufi Hannemann hopes to begin construction on the system, beginning in Kapolei, late next year or in early 2010 and complete it by 2018.

Blocking the plan at this point would greatly jeopardize federal funds in the future for any major transit project in Honolulu, where the lineal nature of the island's leeward population is ideal for a single-line transit.

Group Upset about Taxpayers' Money Spent on Ads



Written by KGMB9 News - news@kgmb9.com
October 20, 2008 04:52 PM

The City will voluntarily stop running its transit ads later this week.

A transit spokesman says the city-sponsored campaign will go "dark" because it doesn't want its message to be taken out of context and it doesn't want to overload voters so close to the election.

Meanwhile, Stop Rail Now delivered a letter to Mayor Mufi Hannemann Monday, angry that he has spent \$2.5 million on the transit campaign.

Members say it's unethical and dishonest to use taxpayer money to promote only one side of a ballot issue.

"The City claims it's doing an educational outreach, that its required by the FTA," said Dennis Callan of Stop Rail Now. "The FTA has an even higher standard. They want public involvement and there has been very little chance for true public involvement. It's been a one-sided propaganda barrage."

The City's transit spokesperson says their ads are meant to inform the public and they are not telling people how to vote on Nov. 4th.



Last Updated (October 20, 2008 06:21 PM)

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Letters to the Editor

Hard look at EzWay reveals deep flaws

There are two big reasons why mayoral candidate Ann Kobayashi's "EzWay" plan won't work. First, Kobayashi would funnel carpools, buses and drivers in cars with over 32 mpg efficiency into two special lanes at the H1-H2 junction. The 2006 Alternatives Analysis on traffic between Ewa and Honolulu predicted that by 2003, 3,457 carpools and 93 buses would use a two-lane reversible HOV lane in the peak hour, or 93 percent of capacity. Therefore, even if no driver-only cars are permitted, average speeds will be 30-45 mph at that point, and prone to breaking down to stop-and-go. Her "effortless 60 mph" trips are fantasy.

Although Kobayashi plans to run Ewa Beach and Kapolei service in an exclusive third lane, and require carpools to have three persons per vehicle instead of two, if anyone in an economy car can use these special lanes, the EzWay will be more congested than H-1 now. The exact level cannot be predicted without data Kobayashi has not released.

Second, Kobayashi plans to load and unload perhaps 100 more buses an hour on Hotel Street than now. The sidewalks on Hotel Street cannot accommodate 10,000 more people an hour, in addition to riders on current routes.

Rail is a serious answer for real problems. Vote "yes" for rail Nov. 4.

Hannah Miyamoto
UH-Manoa graduate student

Letters to the Editor

Rail bidding process could have been better

We have had 7.5 years of federal no-bid crony contracts with Cheney's Halliburton, Kellogg-Brown & Root, and a plethora of other born-again neoconservative corporations who footed the campaign bills to get Bush-Cheney elected in 2000 and 2004. It ill behooves Mufi Hannemann and Co. to allow "even the appearance of conflicts of interest" if he wants to retain the confidence of the electorate.

That would be difficult enough with former Parsons Brinckerhoff employee Wayne Yoshioka as the city transportation services director, without permitting the bidding process to be limited to two bids. It would not have been untoward for the city to either extend the duration for bidding, or to be more active in pushing the RFBs (request for bids) to other possible sources, if for no other reason than to avoid "even the appearance of conflicts of interest." I say this from my experience as a retired contracting officer with a \$10 million warrant at the Defense Contracting Command-Washington at the Pentagon for 16 years.

T. J. Davies Jr.
Honolulu

October 21, 2008

City ending rail transit advertising campaign

By SEAN HAO

Advertiser Staff Writer

The city on Thursday will suspend its controversial ad campaign for its planned \$3.7 billion rail transit system.

The city spent nearly \$2.6 million from August 2005 through June 30, 2008, on a rapid-transit public information campaign that includes pro-rail advertising, community meetings and speakers bureau presentations, a monthly newsletter and a project Web site and hot line.

More than \$1 million of that money was spent since February 2008. That figure excludes about \$176,000, which was spent on a new brochure that was inserted into last weekend's Honolulu newspapers.

Some of those public outreach efforts are mandated by the federal government, which is expected to pay for a portion of the mass transit system. However, citizens group Stop Rail Now contends the city is using taxpayer money to sway public opinion in favor of rail in advance of a Nov. 4 vote that's key to the project's future.

City attorneys maintain the pro-rail ad effort is legal so long as the ads don't explicitly tell residents to vote for rail, or exaggerate the impacts of a vote for or against the project. However, that public relations effort has drawn the ire of rail opponents who have only a fraction of the resources to counter a city-sponsored campaign.

Yesterday, Stop Rail Now sent a letter to Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann requesting the city give anti-rail groups equal time and space to provide the public with information against rail.

"We're not claiming it's illegal," said Stop Rail Now co-founder Dennis Callan. "We're claiming it's unethical and dishonest and a misuse of taxpayer money.

"The bottom line is there should be balanced information particularly with the ballot issue."

Groups for and against the rail project are focusing on winning public opinion on the rail transit issue prior to the Nov. 4 vote on a City Charter amendment authorizing the construction of a train. The city contends the amount of money spent on public information represents about 2 percent of the total value of transit project contracts given to date. Funding for the contracts is included in the City Council-approved budgets, according to an e-mail from city spokesman Bill Brennan.

Brennan said he had not seen the Stop Rail Now letter. However, he said the city has no plans to buy ads after Thursday, which is the last scheduled community meeting for the rail project prior to the Nov. 4 vote.

Hannemann hopes to break ground on the commuter rail late next year, with the first East Kapolei to Leeward Community College segment opening in 2012. The transit system is expected to reduce urban sprawl while giving commuters an alternative to increasingly congested highways.

Critics contend the project is too costly and won't prevent traffic from worsening along the busy H-1 Freeway.

Among those in favor of rail are labor unions, land developers, the city, Hannemann and groups such as www.gorailgo.org. On the other side are grassroots groups such as Stop Rail Now, www.honolulutraffic.com and www.therailscam.com.

So far, pro-rail groups are outspending anti-rail groups.

The Hawaii Carpenters Union, which has 5,900 members, spent more than \$50,531 last month to convince residents to vote for rail, according to filings with the Hawai'i Campaign Spending Commission. That exceeded the \$43,400 spent by Stop Rail Now and one other anti-rail group. Stop Rail Now backer Cliff Slater yesterday said the group hopes to spend about \$100,000 advocating against rail prior to the November vote.

The Hawaii Carpenters Union yesterday said it will increase the frequency of its pro-rail ads in the remaining two weeks before the rail vote. The group would not disclose how much it is spending on the ads.

The Hawaii Carpenters Union is joined by the Pacific Resource Partnership, which also is purchasing pro-rail radio ads. The partnership is a joint program of the Hawaii Carpenters Union, Local 745, and its 220 signatory contractors across the state.

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

October 21, 2008

Hannemann says his business experience helpful in running city

BY PETER BOYLAN

Advertiser Staff Writer

The debate over a planned commuter rail system has dominated much of the conversation in this year's mayoral campaign to the exclusion of other major issues that deserve voters' attention.

While Mayor Mufi Hannemann is closely associated with the plan to build a 20-mile elevated commuter line from East Kapolei to Ala Moana, he has also been active on many other fronts.

Yesterday, The Advertiser reported on the views of Hannemann's opponent, City Council member Ann Kobayashi, on issues other than rail. Today we take a look at Hannemann's stance on improving city roads and sewers, waste management, the economy and the environment.

the local ECONOMY

Hannemann, a former executive with C. Brewer and Co. Ltd. and head of the state Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism during the administration of Gov. John Waihee, touts his business experience as reason why he is capable of ushering the city through turbulent economic times.

Hannemann said he understands that the trouble on Wall Street affects the retirement plans and equities portfolios of many O'ahu residents, but said his administration needs to focus on keeping the local economy moving by promoting transit-oriented development, supporting tourism, and forging public-private partnerships.

Seeing the decline in tax revenue, Hannemann ordered city departments in June to tighten their belts and operate as if 3 percent of the city's \$1.9 billion operating budget for fiscal year 2009 had been cut.

"I am a mayor who understands business," said Hannemann. "I have the background, the qualifications and the experience to oversee 10,000 employees and an operating budget of \$1.9 billion. That's why I've received the endorsement of every major labor organization in the state."

Under his watch, the city received an upgrade from Standard & Poor's bond rating service from AA- to AA and twice received a "clean" audit report from independent auditors, earning a "low-risk auditee" designation for the first time in 10 years.

Developments such as the Disney resort at Ko Olina, the Trump Tower in Waikiki, and the Makaiwa Hills housing development illustrate the city administration's efforts to partner with private firms, Hannemann said.

By getting companies to foot the bill for infrastructure and other development, the city expedites permitting processes, he said.

Hannemann said maintaining infrastructure and city mechanisms that support tourism is key to maintaining a healthy economy.

"If people don't feel safe coming to Honolulu, and if our infrastructure can't support the visitor community, we're not going to be

successful," he said.

He cited his work with the tourism arm of the U.S. Conference of Mayors and their support of Sen. Daniel K. Inouye's national tourism initiative that would funnel federal money to municipalities seeking to bolster visitor programs as continued evidence that he is actively marketing Honolulu.

A major piece of his economic program will be the rail project, he said. Construction of the \$3.7 billion commuter rail project coupled with the development that grows around it will create jobs and infuse money into the local market, he said.

"We're going to prime the pump the way FDR did — by putting workers to work on jobs we need to have," Hannemann said. "We cannot worry about what happens on Wall Street, because we in Honolulu cannot significantly impact that. We need to focus on Main Street Honolulu."

city INFRASTRUCTURE

Hannemann said the infrastructure situation he inherited from former Mayor Jeremy Harris was abysmal and forced him to raise sewer fees and attend to basic services after years of neglect.

"Infrastructure work is a 'need to have.' You cannot have a sound business environment, you cannot ask visitors to come here, you cannot ask people to purchase new homes if infrastructure is not sound and safe," said Hannemann. "In the instances where we are going to be challenged in terms of funding critical infrastructure, developers front-end the money. In return, I save more money because I am going to expedite the permitting process. We've reduced their time to complete their project."

In his term, Hannemann said, the city has filled more than 176,000 potholes, resurfaced more than 111 lane miles while spending \$124 million on road rehabilitation since 2005.

Over this fiscal year, \$77 million is pledged to road repairs.

Hannemann's administration has invested more than \$1 billion in sewer infrastructure, more than the previous administration spent in 10 years. The city will spend up to \$1.5 billion more on sewers over the next six years, Hannemann said.

"We're fixing more lane miles of roads, we're fixing more potholes. Yeah, we're not satisfied, but you have to take into consideration where we were when we came into office, and where we will be going into the future."

Hannemann has raised sewer fees to help pay the added costs.

WASTE MANAGEMENT & the ENVIRONMENT

Hannemann says Honolulu will always need a landfill in the short term, but that his administration is working toward making environmentally conscious practices the norm rather than the exception. He pointed toward efforts to coordinate energy-saving practices across departments and detailed aspects of his 25-year solid-waste management master plan that is being drafted.

"We're going to continue to push preserving and maintaining our environment and continue to honor our host culture. We will push green buildings and restore productive agriculture," Hannemann said.

Since taking office in 2004, Hannemann's administration has made bulky-item curbside pickup service available islandwide while instituting "greencycling" — automated curbside pickup of green waste from 50,000 homes.

He has implemented curbside recycling in Hawai'i Kai and Mililani, and plans to make it islandwide.

When he took office, the City Council had voted to keep the Waimanalo Gulch landfill open. After conducting research, Hannemann determined that the landfill would need to remain open because closing it meant moving it to another site closer to homes in Nanakuli.

He said city officials worked to ensure that the landfill's management brought the site under compliance with state Department of Health regulations and paid all past-due fines.

A contentious landfill extension debate earlier this year pitted Hannemann against state Senate President Colleen Hanabusa, but in the end, the state Land Use Commission approved keeping the site open until November 2009.

Hannemann said he hopes that after purchasing H-Power and scheduling to process an additional 300,000 tons of waste, shipping more than 100,000 of trash to the Mainland each year and expanding recycling, the city can get closer to a day when a landfill is no longer needed.

"We're going to have curbside recycling islandwide after years of talk talk, talk," Hannemann said. "People have to recognize these things are not going to happen overnight."

Pro-rail union uses Inouye in TV ad

[By Laurie Au](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 21, 2008

With two weeks left until a crucial vote on the city's proposed \$4 billion rail transit system, pro- and anti-rail forces are stepping up their advertising efforts that even have U.S. Sen. Daniel Inouye weighing in.

Inouye appeared in television commercials that began airing over the weekend, pushing Oahu voters to approve the city's plans and telling viewers that this might be the "last chance" to build a rail transit system with federal financing.

"We felt there was a need to counter some of the misinformation put out by the anti-rail people, as well as to show there are very responsible, credible people who are supporting the project," said Ron Taketa, financial secretary and business manager for the Hawaii Carpenters Union, which paid for the TV commercial featuring Inouye.

State campaign finance reports show that the Hawaii Carpenters Union, one of the state's largest unions, has spent at least \$93,000 in advertisements supporting rail since June. Inouye also spoke in radio spots paid by the Pacific Resource Partnership, an organization that includes the Hawaii Carpenters Union.

On Nov. 4, Oahu voters will vote on Mayor Mufi Hannemann's planned elevated steel rail system - a decision that will determine whether the city will continue its goal of a groundbreaking in late 2009.

In recent weeks the city has launched several community meetings and advertisements on its system, while the most vocal anti-rail group, Stop Rail Now, continues to call press conferences denouncing the system.

"They're rolling out the big guns, which suggest to us that the other side is scared right now," said Dennis Callan, co-chairman of Stop Rail Now. "There is no real commitment from the federal government for the senator to claim that the money is there."

U.S. Rep. Jim Oberstar, D-Minn., a ranking congressman, told Hawaii leaders that the system could receive up to \$900 million in federal funds. However, that money would not come to the

state until 2011 at the earliest.

Inouye, who has been a staunch supporter of rail and has successfully lobbied for federal funds, said yesterday it would be difficult for Hawaii to receive federal support should voters reject the system this year.

"I won't say it's impossible, but if you miss this opportunity, you're not going to get it five years from now," Inouye said.

The rail transit system has been the most visible issue for the mayor's race with Hannemann pushing for his proposed system. His opponent, City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi, presented last week a new proposal to build a three-lane elevated highway for zipper lanes and to implement a new "rubber-tire bus on concrete system" - a sleeker-looking express bus.

Inouye declined to endorse either candidate because they are both Democrats in the city's nonpartisan race, and said only that he supports rail transit.



Leeward students have traffic on their minds at mayoral forum

Posted: Oct 21, 2008 06:53 PM

Updated: Oct 21, 2008 07:43 PM



By Leland Kim - [bio](#) | [email](#)

PEARL CITY (KHNL) - Leeward Community College students get a real life lesson in politics Tuesday. Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann and his challenger, City Councilmember Ann Kobayashi, sat down to answer questions posed by students. Not surprisingly, the big topic was the future of Honolulu mass transit.

Many of the students live on the leeward coast: Kapolei, Makakilo, and Waianae. They deal with traffic to and from town on a regular basis, and Tuesday, that's mostly what was on their minds.

Students pack this room at Leeward Community College for a chance to hear candidates Hannemann and Kobayashi.

Traffic has plagued the leeward coast for years. Naturally, students want to hear who has the best plan to fix this growing problem.

"It's not for more buses, it's not for fixed guide way system that will facilitate buses on a fixed guide way or go on the road," said Hannemann. "It's for a modern rail, steel on steel system."

"With track, you're stuck with it forever," said Kobayashi. "And you'll be paying for it forever. The maintenance has to come out of property tax."

Amanda Simpson says the forum helped make up her mind.

"At first I wasn't going to vote but listening to both of them, I'm going to go for Mufi," said the 21-year-old sophomore who lives in Kapolei. "Just the way he goes about doing things and he's already in the system and he's already there."

Simpson comes from a place that has a light rail system.



Ann Kobayashi



Amanda Simpson

"I think the rail issue is a good thing to do because living in Washington state and Seattle, riding on it, it did good for college students and for those people that didn't have a car," she said.

Some minds were already made up before the candidates even took the stage.

"I went into this forum pretty much ready to vote for Hannemann and vote in favor of transit," said Trevor Nagamine, a 19-year-old college student from Mililani. "And there really wasn't anything Kobayashi said to change my mind on either of those things."



Between now and the year 2030, population in the Ewa area alone is projected to more than double, from 84,000 to 186,000, according to the Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization. That's why these students are concerned about traffic as they get older and start having families.

Both Hannemann and Kobayashi say they are committed to fixing Oahu's traffic problems. They just differ in their approach and the type of system to use.



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Local Top Stories

Transit Tops At LCC Mayoral Forum

By Andrew Pereira

STORY SUMMARY>>>

With just two weeks until Honolulu chooses its next mayor, candidates Ann Kobayashi and Mufi Hannemann tried to appeal to young voters during a forum Tuesday at Leeward Community College.

Hannemann and Kobayashi did not appear together but were asked the same questions. As expected, much of the forum was dedicated to mass transit.

Kobayashi, introduced first, was asked what she would do to relieve Oahu's traffic congestion.

The councilwoman highlighted the mass transit plan she introduced last week, called the EzWay.

Kobayashi's \$2.5 billion proposal features elevated zipper lanes on a fixed guideway, express buses serving Ewa beach, Kapolei, Mililani and the University of Hawaii, and the construction of underpasses and at least one tunnel to reduce traffic congestion through downtown Honolulu.

"It'll bring you in to town much faster because there are no stops," Kobayashi told the audience. "It qualifies for the same FTA (Federal Transit Administration) funds as for the train."

Hannemann disputed Kobayashi's claim that her plan would qualify for FTA funding and said an elevated train from East Kapolei to Ala Moana would service more people along Oahu's most populated corridor.

"The rail route will run along 60% of Oahu's population but most importantly we're going to build it here first," said Hannemann.

The first segment of the proposed steel wheel on steel rail system would be built from East Kapolei to Waipahu, with service to LCC. The project is expected to cost \$4.9 billion in year of expenditure dollars.

Hannemann said the rail project would bring as many as 11,000 jobs during the construction phase, which he said could help offset the current economic downturn.

However Kobayashi warned the proposed rail system is too costly for a county the size of Honolulu, with just 900,000 people. She said her less expensive EzWay plan would be the better option during economic malaise.

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

Story Updated: Oct 21, 2008 at 6:23 PM HDT

Find this article at:

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October 21, 2008

Letters to the Editor

transportation

What will convert you to bicycle commuting?

There is a lot of talk about viable alternative transportation in the form of light rail, but there's another less expensive, quick to construct and viable form of transportation that is not being widely discussed and that's bicycling.

Honolulu has the most incredible opportunity to be a cycling society, but it continues to elude us. How do we convert motorists to cyclists? Why do we build bicycle facilities but see little increase in ridership? We have limited space but we're building a light rail system; why not a complete bicycle system? What's the one idea that will transform Honolulu into a bicycle-friendly city?

If we want fundamental change, the answer has to be simple, convenient and super safe or we will never reach critical mass.

The key is short-distance commuters connecting our bedroom communities to work places with one "super safe" route from Hawai'i Kai to 'Aiea via downtown Honolulu.

Light rail is projected to relieve 11 percent of traffic for \$3.7 billion. Would you be willing to spend \$100 million for a "super safe" bicycle route for 2 to 3 percent less congestion?

Only when cyclists are equal to other forms of transportation will we ever gain critical mass and Honolulu will become a bicycle-friendly city.

The City and County of Honolulu is updating the O'ahu Bike Plan. Go to www.oahubikeplan.org and let the city know what would convert you into a bicycle commuter.

Chris Dacus | Chairman, Mayor's Advisory Committee on Bicycling

October 22, 2008

Mayor candidates address issues, not each other, at forum

BY PETER BOYLAN

Advertiser Staff Writer

With the general election fast approaching, Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann and City Councilmember Ann H. Kobayashi spent the lunch hour yesterday stumping to students, faculty and staff at Leeward Community College.

Hannemann and Kobayashi did not square off in a debate, but took turns on stage in the student lounge.

After each was introduced, they were asked to answer three questions about their transportation plans, their economic policies and the future of the Waimanalo Gulch Landfill.

They did not speak to one another during the forum and following a brief greeting, Kobayashi left before Hannemann took the stage.

More than 100 students, supporters, faculty and staff attended, and a few asked questions.

Kobayashi opened by touting her EzWay transit plan, a mix of fixed guideways for buses and managed lanes. She said that with a price tag of \$2.5 billion, it is an affordable solution to the traffic gridlock plaguing commuters going between West or Central O'ahu and town.

She said the hybrid buses used in her plan are even with the curb with doors that open in the middle. In Europe, this new-technology bus "is classified as a train."

"We do have a very bad transportation problem. ... The traffic is just horrendous," said Kobayashi. But she said the ailing economy cannot support Hannemann's \$3.7 billion steel wheel on steel rail commuter project.

"The state of our nation is not great and we're feeling that here in Hawai'i. We're working at pulling together and making sure we're not spending money we don't have," Kobayashi said.

She maintained that there is no guaranteed money to fund Hannemann's project.

Hannemann countered by saying that the Hawai'i congressional delegation is firmly behind the city's rail plan and that the law allowing for the general excise tax increase specifically states that it cannot be used to pay for Kobayashi's plan but can be used to pay for rail.

"It (rail) can be built with federal dollars. U.S. Sen. (Daniel) Inouye is on TV and radio right now saying it's now or never" to apply for and receive federal funding, Hannemann said. "It's not for buses, it's for a modern rail steel-on-steel system. It's ready to go and will be part of a multi-modal system."

Kobayashi stuck to her position that the Waimanalo Gulch Landfill can be closed and that new technology can convert most of O'ahu's trash into energy while recycling the rest.

Hannemann said islandwide curbside recycling is imminent. That and an expansion of the city's waste-to-energy furnace, plus plans to ship some trash to the Mainland, mean a landfill may not be needed in the future, he said.

Kobayashi said she will bring added scrutiny to the way the city spends money and taxes property owners. Hannemann insisted his experience as an executive with C. Brewer & Co. Ltd. and as the director of the state Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism makes him capable of guiding the city through tough economic times.

Both supported the state's planned West O'ahu campus for the University of Hawai'i.

Hannemann told the audience that he has always been attentive to the plight of Leeward O'ahu residents who must deal with traffic, the landfill and other projects that other O'ahu neighborhoods don't want in their backyards.

Kobayashi also played off Hannemann's refusal to commit to a full four-year term by promising to remain in office for the entire term if elected Nov. 4.

"I commit to four years of open and honest government," said Kobayashi. "I look forward to working with all of you. I believe in listening to people, partnering and collaborating."

Hannemann said he hopes voters will consider his experience as a legislator and as a businessman when voting.

"Who has the experience to hit the ground running? I trust you will recognize that me and my team have been on the job, 24-7 at times, working to make this place a better place to work and to live and to raise our families."

Audience members were divided on the candidates, some saying they knew who they would support while others were undecided.

Spencer Im, an 18-year-old LCC student and Waipi'o resident, said he did not know who he would vote for.

"I like everything Mufi says but I don't support Barack Obama and he does," Im said.

Michael Donato, a 20-year-old student from Newtown Estates in 'Aiea, said his support is firmly behind Hannemann.

"Looking past the rail issue, he's contributed a lot of stuff to Hawai'i," Donato said.

Candidates pitch transit solutions

[By Laurie Au](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 22, 2008

Two weeks before the Nov. 4 general election, Mayor Mufi Hannemann and City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi appeared separately at a forum yesterday, with the candidates painting their multibillion-dollar mass transit plans as the best option during the nation's economic crisis.

 [Hannemann, Kobayashi Talk Transit Plans](#)



The mayor candidates were at the H1 H2 merge and Leeward College, where their competing transit plans were of huge interest.

[[Watch](#)]



Stressing their business management backgrounds, the candidates both emphasized the nation's grim economy and the potential negative trickle-down effect on Oahu.

"That's why we worry about committing ourselves to a \$6.5 billion project," said Kobayashi, referring to Hannemann's proposed rail transit system, which his administration estimates will cost \$3.7 billion. "Why spend that much money when we can accomplish the same thing for \$2.5 billion? It's quite a difference and we don't want to be committing to spending money we don't have."

Kobayashi's \$2.5 billion mass transit plan, unveiled last week, would be a 40-mile line that includes a 15-mile elevated three-lane highway with zipper lanes and a hybrid express bus. Hannemann's plan is a 20-mile elevated steel rail line from Kapolei to Ala Moana.

"We're not working on a plan, as my opponent is. We're already implementing a plan," Hannemann said. "Whatever happens on Wall Street, we must be concerned about Main Street Honolulu. The rail transit system will pump out a lot of work."

The 90-minute forum was hosted by Leeward Community College in Pearl City and drew more than 150 students, faculty and supporters. Each candidate was asked the same three questions on mass transit, the economy and the island's only landfill, followed by questions from the audience.

The format didn't allow the candidates to interact with each other - with Kobayashi appearing first - and instead was more like a town hall meeting.

"I wasn't going to vote," said Amanda Simpson, 21, of Kapolei. "But after seeing both of them today, I decided to go with Mayor Hannemann. He's already in that position, he's doing a good job, and I think the whole rail system is a good idea."

Most students interviewed after the forum said their opinion on the rail transit system was the single biggest deciding factor in the race for mayor.

Orlino Caraang Jr., president of the Associated Students of University of Hawaii at Leeward Community College, said he supported former mayoral opponent Panos Prevedouros, who has since endorsed Kobayashi and was an integral part of her new mass transit plan.

"Both mass transit projects are going to create more jobs," Caraang said. "But if Ann Kobayashi's is less costly ... I support her."

October 23, 2008

Hannemann shows hefty lead in Honolulu mayor's race poll

58% say they support Hannemann, while 33% are backing Kobayashi

BY PETER BOYLAN

Advertiser Staff Writer

With less than two weeks before O'ahu voters go to the polls, Mayor Mufi Hannemann holds a commanding lead over City Council member Ann Kobayashi in the race for mayor, according to the latest Hawai'i Poll conducted by Ward Research and sponsored by The Honolulu Advertiser and KGMB 9.

Of those polled, 58 percent said they will vote for Hannemann or are leaning toward supporting him, while 33 percent said they were backing Kobayashi.

The poll queried 402 likely voters between Friday and Tuesday with a 4.9 percent margin of error.

The results suggest Hannemann's call for a new rail system to address the city's transportation and development needs is winning support from a majority of voters.

"I'm backing the mayor because he is obviously for alternative transit opportunities," said Lauren Hall, a 21-year-old student living in Hawai'i Kai. "I feel there are a lot of people going against rail, but they are not coming up with any alternatives."

Hall said she recently lived in Washington, D.C., and used the city's transit system. "I loved it. If people in Hawai'i had the experience, I think they would be behind it, too," she said.

Rebecca Ward, president of Ward Research, said it will be tough for Kobayashi to overtake Hannemann when she is this far behind this late in the campaign.

"He's showing a lead that would be hard for any candidate to narrow," Ward said. "It is difficult to see how the Kobayashi campaign could overcome his lead at this point."

Leads in all categories

Kobayashi has campaigned on bringing fiscal prudence and transparency to City Hall. She has long been opposed to the rail project and has offered a \$2.5 billion mix of fixed guideways for buses and managed traffic lanes as a cheaper alternative to Hannemann's plan.

She also has promised to serve the full four-year term if elected while Hannemann says he may consider other options. In 2010, the governor's spot will open up when Gov. Linda Lingle reaches the end of her second term.

Henry Cohen, a 67-year-old 'Ewa Beach resident, said that's one reason he is supporting Kobayashi.

"Frankly, I am voting against Mufi Hannemann and that's why I am supporting her. Plus, I don't think he is going to stick around for four years," Cohen said.

"I am in favor of the rail, but I didn't like the way he spent taxpayer money on the campaign. In an effort to show my displeasure, I am voting against him."

Hannemann led Kobayashi by a sizeable margin in all categories measured by the poll, most notably among voters younger than 35, where he enjoyed a 68-29 advantage.

"We've all talked for months about the extent to which new voters and young voters will turnout," Ward said. "With young voter turnout, Hannemann benefits even further."

Wide spending margin

Hannemann was up 66-29 among those earning between \$50,000 and \$99,000 a year and held a 64-24 lead with likely Filipino voters.

Those polled were asked, "If the election for mayor of the City and County of Honolulu were today, and the candidates were Mufi Hannemann and Ann Kobayashi, who would you vote for?"

If the individual being polled said he or she was undecided, the follow-up question was, "Toward which candidate are you leaning?"

"The only strength that (Kobayashi) shows is among voters 55 and over, but even among that group, Hannemann holds the lead," Ward said.

Hannemann has outspent Kobayashi by a wide margin, with more than \$1 million of his campaign funds being used in 2008 to combat her campaign.

Hannemann said he was pleased with the poll results.

"We're very humbled and grateful for the support the people of Honolulu have for me and my team at City Hall. We're going to work hard each and every day through Nov. 4 because ultimately the only poll that counts is Election Day. We're not going to sit on our laurels," he said.

Kobayashi, who decided to enter the mayor's race the night before the July 22 filing deadline, questioned the validity of the Hawai'i Poll. She said recent polls she has reviewed from labor unions and other sources indicate a much closer race.

"I question the poll, because we've seen different polls taken by unions and the results seem so different. I think the polls we have seen reflect why the mayor is putting so much money into more advertising and his increased attacks," she said. "We're going to continue what we're doing because it's been very successful."

'real uphill fight'

Those who indicated their support for Kobayashi expressed dissatisfaction with the rail system and Hannemann's handling of public money.

Holly Dickinson, a 51-year-old Kaka'ako resident, said she is voting for Kobayashi and against rail.

"Her plans sound better. I don't believe in steel-on-steel (transit) and I don't think it's good for the island," Dickinson said. "I don't believe they should be spending money the way they do, giving themselves raises while everyone else is suffering."

Some of those supporting Hannemann said they did not like the way Kobayashi jumped in at the last minute and left Duke Bainum to run for her City Council seat unopposed.

Neal Milner, a political scientist and ombudsman at the University of Hawai'i, said Kobayashi may not have the money needed to close the gap with Hannemann.

"She's got a real uphill fight and whether she has the kind of resources to overcome that is part of the issue here," Milner said. "Can she blanket with advertising? Does she have a number of people on the ground who can blanket?"

"Mufi has been really good about not making this a referendum on mass transit. What this does suggest is that he may have a much easier time mobilizing a group of people who may be leaning in his direction."

October 23, 2008

Business group supports rail

Roundtable comprised of CEOs finds project's cost estimates fair

By SEAN HAO

Advertiser Staff Writer

The Hawaii Business Roundtable yesterday threw its weight behind Honolulu's planned \$3.7 billion rail system.

The group, which is comprised of the chief executives of 50 major local companies, is urging a "yes" vote on a rail-related question in the general election. That position was taken following an internal financial assessment that showed the project's estimated price tag is reasonable, the group said.

However, the group raised concerns that tax revenue collections to build the train will be lower than anticipated. That may necessitate extending the half-percentage-point transit tax — now scheduled to expire in 2022 — until 2027.

The announcement comes at an opportune time for supporters of the city's plan to build a 20-mile elevated commuter rail from East Kapolei to Ala Moana. However, the concerns raised by the group of business leaders could provide fodder for anti-rail groups that contend the train is too expensive.

Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann welcomed the endorsement.

"It's very significant that a leading group of CEOs in our community are saying that this is something that we should do," he said. "Like all good business leaders, they have some concerns, but it's nothing that is insurmountable."

Among the Roundtable's findings:

- The project cost estimates for construction, contingencies and inflation are reasonable.
- Maintenance and operational cost estimates were determined to be understated by approximately 15 percent, or just under \$10 million annually in 2019 dollars.
- An anticipated worsening economic climate warrants a more conservative transit tax revenues estimate than what's being used by the city. That means the tax may need to be extended from 2022 to 2027.

The group also supported the concept of creating a transit authority to oversee construction and operation of the train system.

Hannemann said it's too soon to consider extending the transit tax. In addition, the project's estimated cost includes nearly \$1 billion to cover contingencies, which could mitigate the impact of any tax

revenue shortfalls.

Roundtable member and Starwood Hotels & Resorts Senior Vice President Keith Vieira said it was time for the Roundtable to take a stand on rail.

"It was important that a group with leadership of CEOs from various companies make a stand either supporting or against it to get that word out," he said. "At the end of the day, people recognize that we need to support rail.

"Having said that, there're obviously concerns that everybody has that people want to address (including) costs (and) how are we going to pay for it, especially with what's going on with the current economy."

October 23, 2008

Honolulu traffic congestion worst in nation despite drop in driving

Driving reduced across U.S.; L.A. rated as 2nd most congested city

By SEAN HAO

Advertiser Staff Writer

High gasoline prices and a slowing economy mean less traffic in Honolulu and across the nation, according to a traffic congestion study released yesterday.

However, Honolulu's traffic congestion remained the worst in the country, according to the annual report by INRIX, with Los Angeles in second place.

Honolulu's travel time index, which is a ratio of peak period travel time to free flow travel time, dropped from 1.47 in 2007 to 1.36 this year, according to the report. That means, for example, that a trip that took 29.4 minutes last year now takes 27.2 minutes.

INRIX, a company based in Kirkland, Wash., compiles traffic information nationwide. Its National Traffic Scorecard is based on an analysis of traffic patterns during the first half of 2008 and survey of 2,000 consumers in October.

Survey respondents of all income levels said they've reduced their driving. However, those making less than \$35,000 were most likely to have decreased their driving.

Two-thirds of consumers surveyed said they took fewer driving trips, took shorter trips, carpoled or used public transportation more because of higher gas prices.

The reductions came amid rapidly rising gasoline prices. The average price for self-serve regular gasoline in Honolulu rose from a little more than \$3 a gallon in November to nearly \$4.40 this summer, according to the AAA Daily Fuel Gauge Report. Prices have since backed off to about \$3.63 a gallon for regular yesterday.

That spike in prices should have a lasting impact on driving behavior, said Bryan Mistele, INRIX founder and chief executive.

"Although we can't predict the future price of fuel, we can predict the potential impacts to traffic congestion," he said in a news release. "As a whole, the population appears to have made lasting changes to their behavior, which we expect to persist at some level even if gas prices revert to pre-2007 levels."

Nationwide, the INRIX survey said, U.S. commuters will spend an estimated 6.5 fewer hours driving to work this year because of reduced congestion.

"It's the biggest drop in traffic congestion since the oil crisis in the 1970s," said Scott Sedlik, INRIX's vice

president of product marketing.

U.S. motorists drove less in July for a ninth consecutive month, the Federal Highway Administration said on Sept. 30. The annual total may fall for the first time since 1980.

Mayor deflects criticism

Hannemann impugns Kobayashi after she says that he will not commit to a full term

[By Laurie Au](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 23, 2008

Mayor Mufi Hannemann reiterated criticism that his opponent Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi entered the race in a back-room deal, as he tried to deflect her attacks that he would not serve a full term if re-elected.

Hannemann has repeatedly raised his suspicions that a deal was cut between Kobayashi and his 2004 mayoral opponent, Duke Bainum, in which she entered the mayor's race and dropped out of her City Council re-election race at the last minute, thus allowing Bainum to run for her seat uncontested.

His comments came after Kobayashi again criticized him for not ruling out a run for higher office halfway through a second term.

"If I in fact do leave, there will be a lot of notification, not like Ann, with back-room deals," Hannemann said yesterday. "She said she wanted to run to give people a choice. She should look at the mirror and look at herself and ask, Did she give her people a choice?"

Kobayashi responded by saying Hannemann "always expresses his opinion" and that "he should just pick up the phone and call Duke Bainum himself."

Hannemann has declined to commit to serving out a four-year term if re-elected, while Kobayashi emphasizes to voters that she would be mayor for the full term.

"I commit to four years of open and honest government," Kobayashi said Tuesday at a mayoral forum at Leeward Community College. "We are working on a four-year plan."

Meanwhile, with less than two weeks left until the Nov. 4 general election, both candidates are aggressively pushing their own mass transit plan while criticizing their opponent's plan.

Hannemann's campaign launched a newspaper advertisement yesterday calling Kobayashi's

transit plan a "half-baked manapua," and has frequently referred to it as a "slogan."

"You don't put together a plan to spend \$3 billion in three weeks," Hannemann said. "Our plan has been around for four years. Ann's vision, slogan, will take us back to day one."

Both candidates have been loose with the estimated figures for their opponent's transit plans. In speeches and public comments, Hannemann says Kobayashi's "EZWay" transit plan, a 40-mile line that includes an elevated three-lane highway, would cost \$3 billion, although her campaign estimates it to be \$2.5 billion. Those figures have not been scrutinized by state or federal transportation agencies.

Kobayashi has said Hannemann's rail transit system will cost \$6.5 billion, but the city estimates it at \$3.7 billion, or \$5 billion after inflation.

Kobayashi notes that these figures are for an initial planned 20-mile segment, but a future expansion to Manoa and the airport adds up to more.

"I don't talk about slogans because this is a serious matter," Kobayashi said. "We stand by our EZWay plan. We're standing by those numbers, and I'd like to know the actual numbers for his numbers for his plan. I think the citizens deserve to know before they vote on Nov. 4th."



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Honolulu Traffic Worst in Entire Country



Written by KGMB9 News - news@kgmb9.com
October 23, 2008 06:48 PM

A new national study said Honolulu drivers have the worst commute in the entire country with Los Angeles coming in second.

Conducted by a company called Inrix, the scorecard reveals that traffic along the H-1 keeps drivers idling, burning fuel and watching their blood pressure rise on roadways choked with traffic.

The study said it takes 88 percent more time to get where you're going than if there was no congestion.

However, the average travel time is 2 minutes shorter this year, compared to last year because of fewer vehicles on the road.



Last Updated (October 23, 2008 06:48 PM)

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Rail Ruckus; Allegations Get Ugly



Written by Jim Mendoza - jmendoza@kgmb9.com
October 23, 2008 06:18 PM

Dennis Callan, the outspoken critic of the city's rail transit plan, accuses a rail supporter of getting physical.

"There I was trying to make a brief statement at a public meeting, at a city meeting, and this guy comes up to me and physically grabs me by the shoulders, spins me around, tells me to shut up and get out of there. That's ridiculous," he said.

The man Callan is accusing is Joe Magaldi, chairman of the Honolulu Transportation Committee.

The meeting was Tuesday night at the Blaisdell. Magaldi said Callan had his say but then wanted more time.

"He was up there yelling at all the people in the audience. So I walked over to him and said, 'Dennis, have a little ethics.' And he just kept going," he said.

Magaldi said he didn't touch Callan.

Leona Pereza and her husband, Arnold, were there.

"We all stood up and said I can't believe this is happening. Here we came to get two sides of the story. What's wrong?" she said.

Unrelated to Callan's complaint is Carolyn Golojuch's sign-waving story. The rail supporter accuses an anti-rail person of invading her space, blocking her sign, and denying her free speech.

"He was facing away from me so I was looking at the back of his neck. I mean, he was that close," she said.

Golojuch said when she asked him to move he abused her verbally.

"He came up from behind me. I wasn't expecting it. And he yelled, "Gringo!" in my ear so loud that my ear started ringing," she said.

Golojuch has filed a police report. Callan's contemplating pressing charges.

"I think his allegations are just that because nothing really happened,"
Magaldi said.



Last Updated (October 23, 2008 06:56 PM)

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Local Top Stories

Rail Debate Wrap

By Gina Mangieri

On November 4th voters on Oahu will also decide whether to go ahead with a proposed steel rail transit plan.

A lively hour-long debate on the issue aired here on channel 2 tonight.

Panelists included rail supporters lawmaker leader Kirk Caldwell and former city transportation director Cheryl Soon. Opponents former Governor Ben Cayetano and former mayoral candidate Panos Prevedouros both of them backing mayoral candidate Ann Kobayashi and her ez way plan.

The majority of questions came from viewers, especially on the economy like this one -- is rail transit or EZ-way affordable given the current economic crisis? Is federal funding for rail transit an absolute certainty, or is it still up in the air?

They debated which plan -- Rail or EZ way -- would be better for the greatest number of people.

The dialog heated up throughout the debate especially when it came to looks of each project.

On this rail question, it's important to remember that blank votes are **not** counted, meaning, there will not be default "no" votes on the rail measure, nor default "yes" votes. It is important all Oahu voters mark their preference yes or no for the vote to be an accurate reflection of city residents' wishes.

Story Updated: Oct 23, 2008 at 10:53 PM HDT

Friday, October 24, 2008

It's not perfect, but vote 'yes' on rail

Pacific Business News (Honolulu)

Last May, we said rail may not be the only mass transit solution for Oahu, but it's significantly more viable than other options. After 40 years of talk, we said it was time to do something.

Now, after even more talk and debate, including a redecorated version of the "elevated highway," we've not seen any compelling new alternatives. The main argument against rail remains the same — it will cost too much.

We still think doing nothing will be more expensive in the long run, so we urge Honolulu voters to say "yes" to rail on Nov. 4.

For the record, PBN does not endorse candidates and comments only when we believe a ballot issue significantly impacts the business community. We're convinced that's the case with rail.

As ballot issues have a way of doing in Hawaii, the debate over rail has become personal and divisive.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann, up for re-election, is stridently pro-rail. His opponent, Ann Kobayashi, was for a mass transit system that used rubber tires but now is pushing something called EZWay, an elevated highway for cars and buses.

This sounds a lot like the "pig in lipstick" we heard so much about in the presidential campaign. You can dress up roads any way you like, but the concept of expanding highways still will bring more cars downtown.

Downtown Honolulu is at the limit — probably beyond it — in terms of accommodating more cars.

We aren't convinced that rail transit is the perfect answer. We hope Hannemann's optimism that the federal government will pay for most of the system is justified.

But we have seen rail work in other cities and we believe it remains the most viable solution to deal with the traffic gridlock on Oahu.

Wording of rail question on ballot

“Shall the powers, duties, and functions of the city, through its director of transportation services, include establishment of a steel wheel on steel rail transit system?”

October 23, 2008

Letters to the Editor

rail

EzWay plan is not a meaningful alternative

Today I will return my Ann Kobayashi For Mayor yard sign. I had hopes she would stand for a meaningful alternative to steel rail.

Ann, you told me at a campaign appearance that you would not let a "no" vote on rail transit turn the project into just another highway widening project, yet that is exactly what you are proposing with EzWay.

By building three new lanes of traffic into town you will bring thousands more vehicles into the crowded streets of Downtown, Waikiki and Manoa. Your plan does not address what will happen to all of these additional cars in town.

Rather than promote energy efficiency and better land use, your plan will just encourage more drivers to bring their cars into town and encourage developers to convert more precious land into parking lots. The plan's so-called restrictions, on numbers of riders per vehicle and miles per gallon, are meaningless and unenforceable. It's just another elevated freeway.

Neal Lebsack | Kahalu'u

October 24, 2008

City Charter questions not limited to rail transit issue

BY PETER BOYLAN

Advertiser Staff Writer

The big City Charter question on the general election ballot deals with the city's proposed rail transit system, but voters are being asked to decide three other questions, including which city officials may be fined for ethics violations and giving state circuit courts jurisdiction over impeachment proceedings against county officials.

Also on the ballot is a city charter amendment allowing the office of the city prosecutor to campaign for crime issues.

The charter question to expand the prosecutor's powers would essentially allow City Prosecutor Peter Carlisle to use his office to broadcast his opinion about how people should vote on a crime issue put on the ballot.

The Hawai'i Supreme Court ruled that Carlisle did not have the authority to spend city money to urge voters to adopt a 2002 constitutional amendment proposal, but the high court did not rule that the prosecutor violated the federal or state constitutions.

The high court ruling over the use of public funds in the 2002 election stemmed from a lawsuit against Carlisle by the late journalist and political commentator Robert Rees.

A Circuit Court ruling dismissed the suit, but the high court reversed that decision.

Carlisle yesterday denounced the ACLU's attempts to file a lawsuit preventing him from using his office to advocate for crime issues facing voters.

"All this charter amendment does is allow me in my office using my office phone or sending out on office stationery my opinion as prosecuting attorney how someone should vote regarding a particular crime issue," Carlisle said. "It gives me a statute to do what the AG (attorney general) can do. The ACLU likes free speech unless it's free speech they don't agree with."

A message left for Vanessa Chong, director of the ACLU in Hawai'i, was not immediately returned yesterday.

The charter amendment was introduced by City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi.

Another question before the voters is whether to allot the City Ethics Commission the authority to levy civil fines against a wider range of city officials for violations of the city ethics code. The commission has the power to fine elected officials; the charter amendment would allow fines against appointed officials and others.

"It makes little sense to have an ethics commission if we don't give them the power to enforce ethics violations," said City Councilman Charles Djou, the measure's author. "Federal and state ethics regulators currently may issue a fine for an ethics violation against anyone who violates their respective ethics code under their jurisdiction."

Big Island and Kaua'i voters will decide their counties' proposed charter amendments. And voters statewide are facing one proposed amendment to the state Constitution, on whether to lower the minimum age to run for governor from 30 to 25 years old.

Charter questions

O'ahu voters will be asked to vote "yes" or "no" on four proposed changes to the City Charter:

1. Prosecutor's duties

"Shall the prosecuting attorney be allowed to initiate, develop, and perform or coordinate programs, projects and activities, as determined by the prosecuting attorney, on the subject of crime, including but not limited to crime research, prevention and education?"

2. Ethics Commission fines

"Shall the Revised City Charter be amended to authorize the city Ethics Commission to impose civil fines established by ordinance for violations of the standards of conduct committed by appointed officers and employees of the city who have significant discretionary or fiscal power?"

3. Impeachment jurisdiction

"Shall the Revised Charter of the City and County of Honolulu 1973 be amended to conform to state law by specifying that the circuit courts of the state have jurisdiction of impeachment proceedings against elected county officers?"

4. Establish rail transit

"Shall the powers, duties, and functions of the city, through its director of transportation services, include establishment of a steel wheel on steel rail transit system?"

October 24, 2008

City rail campaign unfair, feds told

By SEAN HAO

Advertiser Staff Writer

Stop Rail Now yesterday said it has sent the Federal Transit Administration a letter of complaint concerning Honolulu's \$2.6 million public information campaign for rail. The letter also criticizes what it calls city efforts to suppress public participation at city-sponsored information briefings.

The city spent nearly \$2.6 million from August 2005 through June 30, 2008, on a rapid-transit public information campaign that includes pro-rail advertising, community meetings and speakers bureau presentations, a monthly newsletter and a project Web site and hot line.

The city maintains those public outreach efforts are required by the federal government, which is expected to pay for a portion of the mass-transit system. However, citizens group Stop Rail Now contends the city is using taxpayer money to sway public opinion in favor of rail in advance of a Nov. 4 vote that's key to the project's future.

Stop Rail Now has attended recent project briefings requesting equal time to present alternatives to the city's \$3.7 billion elevated commuter rail to audience members. On Tuesday night, that effort culminated in yelling and a shove between a rail proponent and a member of Stop Rail Now, according to the letter.

"These kind of bullying, intimidating tactics have no place in civilized discourse about critical, controversial issues like Honolulu's transit future," the group's letter to the FTA states.

City rapid transit project spokeswoman Elisa Yadao acknowledged that Tuesday night's meeting at the Blaisdell Exhibition Hall "got pretty chaotic," but she blamed Stop Rail Now for trying to take over the meeting. The city allotted the anti-rail group three minutes to talk to audience members, but would not provide Stop Rail Now equal time, Yadao said.

"Our job is to present the official project and to answer questions, and for them to ask for the kind of standing they're asking for, I think, is inappropriate," she said.

Ugly, expensive rail won't fix traffic problems

An open letter to my business colleagues:

Many of you will find some of the statements made below somewhat surprising if not downright unbelievable. However, for the sources of all the information we give below, go to www.honolulutraffic.com/pbn1.pdf.

In a few days, you are going into the voting booth and on your ballot will be the following question:

Shall the powers, duties, and functions of the city, through its director of transportation services, include establishment of a steel wheel on steel rail transit system?

Let us explain why we believe you should vote no.

First, this rail transit project is way too expensive for a city our size; we do not have sufficient taxpayers to support such a large system. Here are two indicators of that:

- It will be one of the most expensive rail lines ever built in the United States even though we are only the 56th largest metro area and most cities larger than Honolulu do not have rail lines.

- The cost per head of population will be seven times that of the next most expensive rail line in the United States.

Second, even the city has to admit (but only when pressed) that their own forecasts show that traffic congestion on the H-1 Freeway will be far worse in the future, even with rail, than it is today.

The city has not put that into words themselves, but table 3-12 from the city's Alternatives Analysis spells it out numerically and



CLIFF SLATER
IN MY
OPINION

clearly. Such a conclusion also makes common sense since the city expects 45,000 homes will be built on the Ewa Plain without widening H-1. And if you are in any doubt, ask your councilmember.

Third, this will be the ugliest rail line in the United States since they tore down New York's 3rd Avenue El. Imagine in Honolulu, this concrete

rail bed 30 feet wide and 35 to 40 feet above ground supported by pillars that are six feet in diameter (pace that out on your kitchen floor!) spaced at 150-foot intervals.

Now imagine that going down Halekai Street at the fourth-floor level in front of the federal building at 72 to 80 decibels every 1 1/2 minutes.

Fourth, we are being sold on the fact that rail is energy efficient. It is not. It only shows to be efficient when calculated as a weighted average of all rail lines with New York City's very efficient subways included.

Take those subways out of the average and all the modern rail lines turn out to be 20 percent less efficient than the average auto that contains 1.1 occupants. This is because modern rail lines typically run into town from the suburbs fairly full during rush hours but empty on the way back and then run all day long fairly empty other than during the rush hours.

Fifth, let's talk about money. According to the federal government's latest study, the average rail line runs over 40 percent higher in costs than what was predicted for it.

We have taken the 1992 Honolulu rail construction cost forecasts and increased them using the same construction cost inflation tables the city uses and we show that the present complete rail line is nearly \$2 billion understated.

We have also taken the 1992 operating costs and increased them for inflation and the longer length of the current plan and it shows that we are short by another \$20 million annually.

Not only that, the city's current financial plan calls for a federal contribution of \$1.2 billion. Even the city no longer believes that.

And nobody believes that we will receive the general excise tax revenues they are planning on because of the current economic downturn.

Add up all the likely cost overruns, the shortfalls in predicted funding and we have a problem. Our calculations — open for anyone to see — show that completing the rail project will result in a 40 percent increase in everyone's property taxes.

There are many more reasons why you should vote no on rail to save Honolulu and you can find them at www.honolulutraffic.com and www.stoprailnow.com.

CLIFF SLATER is chairman of honolulutraffic.com and co-chairman of Stop Rail Now.

Rail will help Oahu's economy get back on track

In Hawaii, across the country and around the world, we're facing economic calamity.

Here in Hawaii, unemployment rates are climbing. Energy prices remain stratospheric. Tourism numbers are collapsing. Retirement portfolios and homes are losing value. Economists and leaders tell us that we're facing the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression.

It's no wonder that people are asking whether we can still afford a mass transit system even with its promise to improve our quality of life.

I feel we can't afford not to invest in rail. And I'm not alone.

Sen. Daniel Inouye said rail transit "is a sound investment for Hawaii's future. My only regret is that we did not proceed with rail transit in 1993 when it was first before the people of Honolulu ... We should not let this opportunity pass us by, again."

In tough economic times, large-scale public works projects such as those created by President Roosevelt's New Deal have been relied upon to stimulate an ailing economy. The New Deal put people to work building dams and creating national parks. It resulted in unprecedented investments in the infrastructure of our country, investments from which we still reap the benefits today.

Hawaii needs a New Deal. Rail is our



KYLE CHOCK
IN MY
OPINION

ticket to stimulating our local economy out of the doldrums, just as President Roosevelt's New Deal stimulated our economy out of the Great Depression.

We need this train to pull us through these tough economic times to a better economy, better environment and a better quality of life. Can rail do all this? Yes!

For starters, rail will infuse nearly \$1 billion in federal funds into our economy. We need that kind of investment now more than ever.

What does that kind of investment buy us? It helps put 11,300 people to work each year over the course of the construction designing and building the system and providing related support services. That's 11,300 people earning wages rather than unemployment, sending their kids to school, buying a home, shopping in local stores and otherwise contributing to our economy.

And that's 11,300 people who will be building a brighter future for thousands more. Investing in rail will pay off with short-term and long-term dividends for all of Oahu.

Even before the current economic crisis, Hawaii struggled with a "brain drain." More and more young people are leaving

the islands to seek a better quality of life.

We can't build a sustainable society if our young people can't afford to stay here and raise their families. Investment in rail can help by connecting attainable housing in West Oahu to economic opportunities downtown. With rail, young people can afford to stay in Hawaii to raise their families, and spend more time with their families thanks to reliable transit.

The benefits of rail go even further: Studies show that people who live in rail-accessible neighborhoods need fewer cars, drive less, walk more and are less likely to experience or contribute to traffic congestion.

The prospect of livable healthy communities surrounding safe, reliable transit attracted the support of the Hawaii chapter of AARP, which believes that Hawaii's rail system will help seniors live more independently.

An investment in rail is an investment in affordable communities and affordable lifestyles for Hawaii. It's an investment in our economy, in our environment, and in the promise of a brighter tomorrow. As an investment that pays so many dividends, rail is the real deal for Hawaii.

That's why I'm voting yes for rail on Nov. 4.

KYLE CHOCK is executive director of the Pacific Resource Partnership, an organization representing the Hawaii Carpenters Union Local 745 and unionized contractors.

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KYLE CHOCK is executive director of the Pacific Resource Partnership, an organization representing the Hawaii Carpenters Union Local 745 and unionized contractors.

Letters to the Editor

For Saturday, October 25, 2008

Rail more than offsets traffic from UH

Complain, lie and misrepresent. That's all the anti-rail whiners seem to do.

Fact: When the University of Hawaii and public and private schools break for summer, the freeway opens up and traffic congestion is significantly eased.

Fact: The amount of traffic generated by the UH and school commuters is less than the 11 percent reduction in vehicles that rail will provide.

Don't swallow the Kool-Aid the opposition keeps offering — rail will offer real traffic relief. Taking 25,000 cars off the roads is nothing to sneeze at.

I'm voting "yes" for rail, and I hope you do to.

Kristi Peterson
Kalaeloa

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Letters to the Editor

For Saturday, October 25, 2008

With EzWay, rail just doesn't make sense

It just doesn't make any sense why anybody would not choose Ann Kobayashi's EzWay system when EzWay would cost billions less, would relieve traffic congestion by taking away buses, HOV and fuel-efficient cars from the H1, and would provide express service plus a faster and more convenient commute with no bus-train-bus transfer. It just doesn't make sense that anybody would choose rail, which would cost billions more than EzWay, will not relieve traffic gridlock, cannot provide express service and the commute would be slower and inconvenient because of bus-train-bus transfers.

Ruben Reyes

Waipahu

Letters to the Editor

For Saturday, October 25, 2008

Kobayashi makes unrealistic proposals

Ann Kobayashi's insincere 2004 proposal to move the landfill to a site that simply was not suitable was as laughable then as her ridiculous bus and freeway proposal is now.

There is a clear pattern here. Kobayashi will wait until the last minute, and then spout a bunch of happy talk about a miraculous alternative that has no basis in fact.

That's exactly what she did in the landfill debacle, and it's what she's doing now regarding mass transit.

We all deserve more respect than that from people we elect.

Ryan Kilborn
Honolulu

Posted on: Sunday, October 26, 2008

EzWay not the answer; rail remains best choice

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There is one thing Honolulu's mayoral candidates agree on: the need for a multibillion-dollar mass-transit system along O'ahu's traffic-congested east-west corridor.

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And in these tough economic times ensuring that money is spent wisely is crucial.

But the EzWay system proposed by Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi — a \$2.5 billion patchwork plan that includes an elevated guideway for cars and buses — simply doesn't make the grade.

It doesn't help that Kobayashi and her infrastructure adviser, Panos Prevedouros, introduced EzWay to the public only three weeks before the election. Kobayashi gave voters very little time to make a considered judgment about her plan as an option to rail — in itself a good reason for caution.

In contrast, the city's rail-transit plan has been three years in the making — with numerous venues for public and City Council review along the way. It has been successfully vetted through the complex local, state and federal regulatory processes required to responsibly advance a public works project of this size.

The EzWay plan lacks a detailed, independent analysis, particularly from state, local and federal transit experts.

And on the fundamental issues — cost, funding sources, effectiveness — EzWay raises more questions than answers.

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Here are a few things to consider:

- **Cost:** EzWay proponents say their plan saves money and that some components could be started almost immediately.

The entire project will likely require a new environmental impact statement, which typically takes years. The federal government will require a comprehensive review before issuing a dime.

Elevated highways for cars and buses are generally bigger, wider and more costly per mile than narrower fixed-rail guideways. EzWay's centerpiece is a three-lane, 15-mile elevated roadway. While shorter than the initial 20-mile rail route, available cost estimates on similar projects suggest it could cost far more than advertised.

Prevedouros suggests that construction could begin almost immediately by resurrecting the state's plan for the Nimitz flyover, a two-lane, approximately 2-mile elevated roadway that's along EzWay's planned corridor. But state transportation officials say the original environmental impact statement will have to be reviewed. Even so, the cost estimate in 2006 for the flyover was \$225 million-\$250 million per mile, which if applied to EzWay, would significantly increase its price tag to the neighborhood of more than \$3 billion. That doesn't include the rest of the EzWay plan, which has bus rapid transit connectors and road upgrades, a \$75 million underpass near Alakea and Halekauwila streets, and expensive new buses.

- **Funding:** EzWay's hybrid highway/fixed guideway plan poses serious questions about eligibility for federal funds. Despite claims that EzWay would be eligible for both transit and highway funds, it's quite possible it won't qualify for either.

A 2006 opinion from the state attorney general made clear that the current excise tax set-asides for transit can't be used for "new public roads or highways." Without the certainty of a local funding source, qualifying for federal dollars will be all but impossible.

The rail-transit project is much further along the right track; about \$35 million has been cleared for use and the draft EIS is under federal review and due shortly. The project is expected to garner roughly \$900 million in federal funding.

All four members of Hawaii's congressional delegation support the city's rail project and have promised to aggressively seek federal funding should voters approve the plan. EzWay has no such support, which is critical for the future success of such a large and expensive project.

- **Effectiveness:** Will EzWay be more effective in reducing highway congestion than rail? The best available study of the question, the city's detailed, \$10 million Alternatives Analysis, says no. It found that trains can move more people more efficiently than buses. Rail uses electric vehicles, which are more environmentally friendly than cars or buses, even fuel-efficient ones.

Make your opinion count in our daily online poll and see the results. Today, we ask readers:

Do you see the EzWay plan as a viable option for transit?

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The choice is clear: Rail transit is by far the more prudent and effective plan. As part of a multi-modal system that includes cars and buses, rail offers the best long-term solution to O'ahu's critical transit needs. On Nov. 4, voters should choose Yes on Ballot Question 4 in support of rail transit.

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Posted on: Sunday, October 26, 2008

Support for Hawaii rail transit declines

Latest poll shows support slipping to 51%, opposition rising to 43% since July

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By [Sean Hao](#)
Advertiser Staff Writer

The city's plan to build a \$3.7 billion commuter rail line appears headed for a slim victory on Nov. 4, according to a Hawai'i Poll conducted earlier this month.

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The poll indicated 51 percent would vote for the rail referendum, while 43 percent would vote against and 5 percent were undecided.

The results, while favorable for rail, remain within the poll's margin of error, and illustrate just how divisive the issue has been.

The Hawai'i Poll, conducted by Ward Research and sponsored by The Honolulu Advertiser and KGMB9, queried 402 likely voters by phone from Oct. 17 to Oct. 21. The margin of error was 4.9 percentage points.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann hopes to break ground on the 20-mile elevated rail line from West Kapolei to Ala Moana late next year.

Support for rail may have been bolstered by the city spending more than \$2.7 million on a public information campaign that included pro-rail advertising. That effort has been augmented by hundreds of thousands of dollars spent by the Hawaii Carpenters Union, Go Rail Go, the Pacific Resource Partnership and others.

support declines

Despite the spending, the results of this month's poll shows support for rail shrinking since a Hawai'i Poll in July. The earlier poll asked whether respondents supported rail in general, and found that 61 percent were in favor of moving ahead with rail, compared with about 33 percent who were opposed.

It's unclear whether current economic uncertainties are eroding support for rail, which would be the biggest public works project in state history. Plunging visitor arrivals and slumping real estate and construction sectors are forcing the city and state to reduce tax collection forecasts and reduce spending.

The slowdown is likely to have an impact on tax collections needed to build the elevated train

Some poll respondents expressed concerns about the rail project's anticipated inflation-adjusted \$5 billion price tag as well as future operating costs.

"I get worried about it," said Waikiki resident and business attorney Russel Yamashita, 55. "I'm afraid there's this huge tax burden that's coming down the pike. That means a much bigger tax burden on the property owners essentially, or worse, we're going to have to raise the excise tax."

"Adding these additional property or excise taxes is not going to be helpful to development or promoting new businesses in the state," Yamashita said.

Bill Scottsman, 43, a personal investor in Kaimuki, said he opposes rail over concerns the project's costs could escalate.

"I don't trust the government figures on the amount they'll end up spending and the amount of time that it will take," he said. "I just don't trust it."

"I'd rather see (the city) building up Kapolei and putting more out there. The government can put jobs out there" to reduce traffic into town, Scottsman said.

Earle Kealoha, 50, a government worker in Kalihi, said he's leaning toward voting for rail, but is concerned about the project's cost.

"That is probably the one thing that worries me," he said. "They always give us a price tag, and by the time it's done, it's three or four times that amount."

"But then the question remains — we gotta do something" to alleviate traffic.

still undecided

Kealoha said he may vote no in hopes the city will explore building a better bus system, which would be more flexible than a train.

"The story's not out on that one," he said. "I could end up switching on November 4th."

Kealoha seems to be among a relatively small number of residents that have yet to choose sides on the issue. Just 5 percent of poll respondents said they don't know how they'll vote on the rail charter amendment.

That points to how polarizing the rail issue has been for the community, said Rebecca Ward, president of Ward Research Inc.

The fact that there are so few undecideds means rail will likely prevail on Nov. 4, Ward said.

"Even if the 'don't knows' all went 'no,' it's not enough to sway it," she said. "The consistency of support for rail across most of the demographic groups suggests it will be very hard to turn the tide on this one."

The rail vote could be even tighter than the latest Hawai'i Poll indicates if enough older voters turn out on Nov. 4, Ward said.

"Turnout can make a difference in the numbers; whether it can sway it, I don't think that's the case," Ward said. "But the fact is that one of the only constituencies that shows stronger opposition than support is the 55 plus. That also tends to be the group that shows up at the polls."

Rail proponents, including trade unions, hope to convince voters that the rail project will provide a much needed boost to economy by creating construction jobs. They also point to the rail as an alternative to travel on congested roadways and a way to reduce urban sprawl by encouraging dense growth near train stations.

"Homes are just popping up like no tomorrow," said 'Ewa Beach resident Bill Piche, 48, who supports rail and was included in the poll. "I hope that it will help with traffic. Especially with the growth on this side of the Island. I still think we'll have some traffic issues, but we gotta do something because with the population growth on this side, it's just going to get worse."

According to the Hawai'i Poll, support for Hannemann and rail were closely correlated. More than three-quarters of rail supporters also support Hannemann's re-election. Hannemann has made construction of a new rail system a top priority for his administration. In contrast, 80 percent of those opposed to rail

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supported Hannemann rival Ann Kobayashi, who favors a rubber-tire mass-transit system.

poll breakdown

Beyond politics, support for rail differed by age and ethnicity. Caucasians and Hawaiians were more likely to oppose rail. Japanese and Filipinos were more likely to be rail supporters. Meanwhile, older voters age 55 and up were the only age demographic surveyed that opposed rail overall.

Younger residents such as Jameson Ramelb, 23, were more likely to favor rail. Ramelb, a teacher in Wahiawa, said he'll vote for rail because the elevated train could be a more reliable and efficient alternative to TheBus.

"We're looking at massive traffic gridlock and right now rail seems like a feasible alternative, but I don't necessarily agree with the current route," he said. "I really think it should go to" the University of Hawai'i-Manoa, Ramelb said. "Being a former college student, I know how lazy we are. If it doesn't stop across the street, we're not going to take it because we want it to go right to the doorsteps. And I really don't think it should go through Salt Lake."

Kobayashi, who is counting on opposition to Hannemann's rail plan to help her unseat him, said, "I'm surprised that (the rail vote) is still close since the city has spent at least \$2.6 million on ads. The city spent a lot of taxpayer's money trying to influence people to vote yes," but, "I guess people still worry about their pocketbooks."

Hannemann said he was pleased with the poll results.

"I'm happy to see that a majority of people are supporting rail transit," Hannemann said. "I am pleased that respected organizations like the AARP, the Hawaii Business Roundtable and the ethnic chambers of commerce understand how important this project is for our economy, our environment and our quality of life.

"As I've always said, the longer we delay, the more we're going to pay, and Sen. Dan Inouye has made it abundantly clear that it's 'now or never.' "

Reach Sean Hao at shao@honoluluadvertiser.com.

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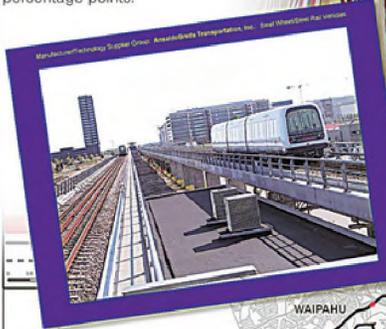
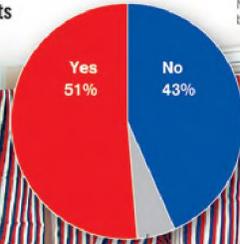
The Hawaii Poll queried 402 O'ahu residents by phone from Oct. 17 to 21. The margin of error was plus or minus 4.9 percentage points.

Q: If you were voting today, would you vote yes or no on this proposed city amendment? "Shall the powers, duties and functions of the city, through its director of transportation services, include establishment of a steel on steel rail transit system?"

Percent of total respondents

Source: Ward Research Inc.

NOTE: Total may not add to 100 percent because of rounding.



RAIL CHARTER AMENDMENT POLL BREAKDOWN

Vote yes/no regarding proposed City Charter amendment	Total	Gender		Age			Ethnicity				Household income			Length of Hawaii residency			Favor rail		
		M	F	<35	35 to 54	55+	Caucasian	Japanese	Filipino	Hawaiian	<\$50K	\$50K to \$99K	\$100K+	<10 yrs	10+	Born & raised	Hannemann	Kobayashi	Don't know
Yes	51%	53%	50%	54%	54%	45%	43%	62%	64%	46%	55%	55%	57%	43%	54%	50%	77%	18%	29%
No	43	42	44	43	40	49	52	33	29	51	38	41	40	40	41	45	19	80	54
Don't know	5	5	6	3	7	6	5	6	7	3	7	4	3	17	5	5	4	2	17

Poll was conducted Oct. 17 to 21. Ward Research of Honolulu queried 402 O'ahu residents by telephone. Numbers may not add up to 100 percent because of rounding. Source: Ward Research Inc. The Honolulu Advertiser

Posted on: Sunday, October 26, 2008

Transit system faces ultimatum on Nov. 4 ballot

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By [Sean Hao](#)

Advertiser Staff Writer

Politicians, consultants and bureaucrats have spent nearly three years developing a commuter rail system for Honolulu. Now voters get to say whether they want it.

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A "yes" vote on Nov. 4 would give the city the political authority to begin construction on the 20-mile rail project, advancing this plan further than three previous mass transit proposals that fizzled in the past three decades.

A "no" vote would all but kill the \$3.7 billion project.

"If the voters turn it down, I think that's the end of the story," said Ira Rohter, a political science professor at the University of Hawai'i. If the rail issue passes, "It's not the end of (the debate), but this inning is over."

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

Gov. Linda Lingle allowed the tax bill to become law without her signature in 2005, and for a while the rail plan took on an aura of inevitability. Most politicians supported it, and there was no plan to ask

voters for their approval.

influx of opposition

Then came Stop Rail Now, a coalition of rail opponents who launched a petition drive in April to put rail on the ballot. The group collected 49,000 signatures by mid-July.

While Stop Rail Now eventually failed to get its ordinance on the ballot, it succeeded in forcing the City Council to place a separate version of the rail question before the electorate.

The result is the following Charter amendment that will be on the Nov. 4 ballot:

"Shall the powers, duties and functions of the city, through its director of transportation services, include establishment of a steel wheel on steel rail transit system?"

The ballot question is non-binding, so even if the majority votes "no," it doesn't mean the city can't legally move forward. Also the wording, which specifies "a steel wheel on steel rail transit system," leaves open the possibility that voters could reject the amendment and the city could move ahead with another type of commuter line, such as trains propelled by magnetic levitation or that run on rubber tires.

Likewise, a "yes" vote doesn't mean the city has to build the rail system; it only authorizes the city to do so.

Despite the legal limitations, the rail vote will carry substantial weight. It will be the first time in three decades of discussing rail that voters have had a chance to register their opinions.

"If the people vote at the polls that they do not want rail, then it would be very difficult for me to go forward and that has been clear from the beginning," Hannemann said.

It would be equally tough for anti-rail groups to continue their fight if voters approve of the plan. Still, opponents have been reluctant to commit to ending their campaign if they lose the vote.

"I'm going to deal with that (losing the vote) when I come to it," said Cliff Slater of Stop Rail Now. "I just don't think we're going to be faced with that."

debate to continue

The rail question has generated fervent support and opposition, and the Nov. 4 vote is not going to end all debate.

Rail proponents argue the system will give commuters an alternative to travel on congested roadways

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The Bombardier train is an example of steel-on-steel technology; a "no" vote for rail would not rule out other fixed guideway alternatives.

Advertiser library photo

THE RAIL QUESTION

Voters can voice their opinion on the city's rail project on Nov. 4. The wording of the ballot issue is as follows:

"Shall the powers, duties and functions of the city, through its director of transportation services, include establishment of a steel wheel on steel rail transit system?"

while reducing urban sprawl. The 19 planned transit stations also are expected to foster live-work-play communities and opportunities for moderately priced, high-density housing.

A recent economic downturn locally and nationally has spurred rail proponents, including trade unions, to also argue the project will provide a much needed boost to construction sector jobs and the economy. The city expects to spend an average of about \$400 million a year on the project over a nine-year span and generate an average of 9,100 jobs during nine years of construction.

"Given the best guess as to where the economy is heading, there's a need for these kinds of projects so that we can keep our labor force going," said City Council member Todd Apo, who supports rail.

Rail opponents argue it's a mistake to saddle the city with a massively costly project during a period of great economic uncertainty.

Some oppose the project for tax reasons or cost concerns. Others argue the planned commuter rail line won't prevent traffic congestion from getting worse.

"For me, it's whether or not rail makes financial sense," said City Council member Charles Djou, who along with Council chair Barbara Marshall opposes rail for financial reasons.

"My inclination is this project is far too expensive. The numbers are significantly higher than what I think (taxpayers) can afford," Djou said.

So far, the city has taken in nearly \$250 million in transit taxes and awarded about \$108 million in contracts.

The often quoted \$3.7 billion cost of the project rises to \$5 billion when inflation is taken into account. It wouldn't surprise most observers if the cost rose even more ahead of the start of full service in 2018.

support at polls mixed

While both sides will likely continue the debate after Nov. 4, the winning side will be able to claim an electoral mandate to bolster its arguments.

The history of rail projects at the polls is mixed. Major rail projects in Seattle, Miami, Phoenix and Austin, Texas, have suffered setbacks at the polls. In contrast, rail transit projects in Houston, Denver and most recently Charlotte, N.C., survived ballot votes.

Regardless of the outcome in Honolulu, those for and against rail need to accept the results, said Apo.

"If the voters say yes, then we all need to abide by that the same way that if the voters say no, people like

details of the rail system

Fixed guideway transit system specifications:

Estimated cost: \$3.7 billion (in 2006 dollars), or \$5 billion when adjusted for inflation

Length: 20 miles

Route: East Kapolei to Ala Moana via Salt Lake

Fixed guideway width: 26 feet (50 feet at stations)

Fixed guideway height: From 20 feet to nearly 80 feet

Station stops: 19 or about one per mile

Maximum capacity: More than 6,000 passengers per hour per direction

Estimated daily passenger trips: 95,000

Hours of operation: 4 a.m. to midnight

End-to-end trip time: 40 minutes, assuming a 20-second stop at each station

Average speed: 30 mph

Maximum operating speed: 55 mph

Fare: Same as TheBus (currently \$2 including one transfer)

Noise level: Maximum of 75 decibels at station platforms, which roughly equates to the noise emitted by a leaf blower

Source: City & County of Honolulu

More News headlines

me who represent West O'ahu need to abide by that as well," he said. "That principle has to work both ways."

Michael Schneider, managing partner for InfraConsult LLC, which provides management support on the train project, said there will always be a vocal minority opposed to rail. A public vote in favor of the project could help marginalize the opposition while providing the project a boost.

"It certainly provides momentum and it provides the will of the community to move forward and it underscores the public's view that this is a step in the right direction for future life in Hono-lulu," Schneider said.

If a majority votes against building a train, the city could pursue other fixed guideway alternatives including monorail, maglev and bus rapid transit. Other potential proposals include subsidizing job creation in Kapolei to eliminate the need for some area residents to commute into urban Honolulu.

A victory for rail opponents also could provide a boost for competing proposals such as mayoral candidate Ann Kobayashi's EzWay transit plan, which involves building a fixed guideway for buses and managed lanes.

rail alternatives

"Most people think it's either steel on steel or nothing and that isn't so," Kobayashi said. "There are other forms of mass transit that will qualify as a fixed guideway system.

"There are other options, monorail, my rubber tire on concrete (proposal), maglev. There are other options as long as it's a fixed guideway system" that can qualify for local and federal funds, Kobayashi added.

A defeat of the rail project also could force the city to revise development plans, which now direct growth to the 'Ewa plain. Future growth may need to be redistributed around the island if voters reject building a train, said council member Gary Okino.

However, the development of a decentralized growth policy could be a political nightmare.

"It'll be a huge battle for sure, but I don't know if we're going to have the choice," Okino said. "I don't think we can keep growing Leeward."

This current rail effort marks the fourth time in three decades the city has tried to develop a new mass-transit system for O'ahu.

Previous efforts — including two rail projects and one bus rapid transit system — failed because of cost concerns or changes in political priorities.

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The one difference is voters will be able to voice their opinions on this transit plan, unlike the previous three that were decided by politicians.

"It's never been brought to a ballot vote," said Lowell Kalapa, president of the nonprofit Tax Foundation of Hawai'i, which opposes the transit tax but has no position on rail. "It will (be) put to bed once and for all. Do the majority of people support it? If it gets killed, it gets killed. If it gets support, we should just shut up and move ahead."

Reach Sean Hao at shao@honoluluadvertiser.com.

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Rail Poll Shows More Would Vote 'Yes'



Written by Jim Mendoza - jmendoza@kgmb9.com

October 26, 2008 04:16 PM

In a poll taken by KGMB9 and The Honolulu Advertiser, 51 percent of Oahu voters said they'd vote "Yes" to rail if they were voting today. Forty-three percent said they'd vote "no."

"Surveys are showing all around that the rail question is going to be a tight one. But more often than not I've seen that there's more support for rail," Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann said.

But the head of Stop Rail Now said the results shows a solid block of people who don't think rail is the answer.

"It shows that we've been gaining some traction, making some inroads with the public even though we're being outspent by fifty to one," said Dennis Callan.

In the survey, Ward research asked 402 registered voters how they would vote on the City Charter Amendment to establish a steel on steel rail transit system. Labor unions back rail. It would create jobs.

"Government needs to take this road. It's not the only reason we should be doing this but if we have a good project that's of this size and we add on that factor, we will be able to weather the economic downturn better by doing this project," city council budget chairman Todd Apo said.

The twenty-mile elevated system would link West Kapolei to Ala Moana and cost \$4 billion to build. Anti-rail advocates said it's too expensive.

"There are alternatives that are less costly and accomplish the same thing. Gets the same federal money. Gets the same state tax money," mayoral candidate Ann Kobayashi said.

On November 4 voters will choose whether or not they want rail. Hannemann said it's now or never.

"I've said that if people give us an affirmative we can go forward as early as 2009. If they say no it will be very difficult to go forward," he said.

The rail issue will be decided in the only polling place that counts -- the voting booth.



Last Updated (October 26, 2008 08:22 PM)

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Posted on: Sunday, October 26, 2008

Letters to the Editor

CAYETANO DOESN'T SEE FULL EFFECT OF TRAFFIC

Former Gov. Ben Cayetano is ill-informed with his remarks on the rail transit issue.

Though he comes to Kapolei to golf from East O'ahu, he comes during his retirement hours and not when the thousands of us regular folks are battling the horrendous traffic congestion.

Cayetano also gives no alternative for our traffic congestion as he never did in his 30 years of government service and as governor when he had many opportunities to help us.

We still welcome the former governor into our Kapolei community, but ask that he come during peak time and feel our pain, and see how the working people live.

*Maeda Timson
Kapolei*

Letters to the Editor

For Sunday, October 26, 2008

POSTED: 10:55 a.m. HST, Oct 26, 2008

Opposition to EzWay is purely bureaucratic

I find the responses to mayoral candidate Ann Kobayashi's EzWay by those with a vested interest in rail to be extremely revealing. The best they can come up with is a weak government bureaucratic excuse: "It won't qualify for funding."

Says who? Surely not the Federal Transit Administration, whose New Starts program is chock-full of bus rapid transit programs. Local authorities like state Sen. Kalani English also believe the EzWay could be funded with local general excise tax money assuming a Council ordinance.

In a move that could only come from seasoned politicians, at one corner of their mouth, they claim we need, can afford and can maintain a \$6.4 billion train, and out of the other side they somehow can't find the money for a \$2.5 billion innovative combination of mass transit fixed guideway and zipper lanes that also qualify for federal highway funds, unlike the train.

It is irresponsible to continue ramrodding a \$6.4 billion train that serves only 3 percent of commuters and allows H1 to reach gridlock levels of congestion while rejecting a \$2.5 billion solution that reduces H-1 congestion and serves mass transit users, all because of a self-conjured bureaucratic limitation.

Karen Lani Shishido
Honolulu

October 27, 2008

Energy-related costs finally easing up

Oil's decline starting to show in electricity rates, shipping fuel surcharges

BY GREG WILES

Advertiser Staff Writer

Oil price declines showing up at gasoline pumps are also filtering into other energy-related bills, providing some much-needed relief for Hawai'i residents.

Since late September, Matson Navigation Co. has lowered its fuel surcharges three times, while Hawaiian Electric Co. rolled back O'ahu resident rates in October and expects to do so again in November. Horizon Lines, the second-largest carrier of ocean cargo to Hawai'i, also has trimmed fuel surcharges.

"Everything helps," said Pearl Imada Iboshi, state economist. It's "definitely positive for people's pocketbooks."

Surcharges were slapped on many transportation services as oil prices spiked through late last year and into the first half of this year, raising the cost of everything from airline tickets to lettuce packed in refrigerated containers on cargo ships. But oil prices have been slipping as an economic slump suppresses fuel demand.

Crude oil prices have fallen by more than half since hitting a record of \$147.27 a barrel on July 11.

On Friday, crude oil for December delivery dropped to \$64.15, or the lowest in 16 months, according to Bloomberg News.

The decline has prompted transportation companies to retrace steps taken to raise fuel surcharges, which had become pervasive as oil prices marched upward. But the surcharges haven't fallen in lock-step with the oil-price declines for the most part.

Explaining the lag

Companies said their own fuel prices don't move in the exact same fashion as crude prices and that other factors, such as how fast they use up existing fuel bought at higher prices, factor into the decisions.

For example, Hawaiian Airlines hasn't lowered its \$130 one-way fuel surcharge between Hawai'i and the Mainland. While spot jet fuel prices on the West Coast are down by half from their peak in July, Hawaiian said it has just begun to see relief from prices in recent weeks. Jet fuel is still higher than what Hawaiian paid a year ago, the company said.

"At current prices Hawaiian will pay \$130 million more for fuel this year than last year and fuel surcharges haven't come close to covering those costs," wrote Hawaiian spokesman Keoni Wagner in an e-mail.

That's no comfort to travelers, who are questioning why the airline ticket surcharges haven't come down.

Rachel Shimamoto, manager of Honolulu-based Travel Ways, said Hawaiian charged only a \$9.55 surcharge to the West

Coast in February.

But she said people are wondering why the surcharge wasn't rolled back or if they should wait for airlines to drop prices before buying tickets.

"It's hard for us to explain to people that the fuel prices went down but the fare remained the same because the airline didn't take the surcharge back," Shimamoto said.

Similarly, customer service representatives at Hawaiian Electric have been getting calls from people inquiring when they'll see further cuts in their energy bills. Hawai'i residents pay the most for electricity compared to counterparts in other states, with the rate steadily creeping up during the first eight months of the year.

In January, Hawai'i residents were charged \$23.4 cents per kilowatt hour; by August the rate was at 32.5 cents.

The first break came in September, when rates fell by 1.2 cents per kilowatt hour compared with the prior month.

"We saw a slight drop September to October and we expect it to continue to decrease over the next couple of months as well," said HECO spokesman Peter Rosegg.

The fuel adjustment reductions spool out slower than the drop in the price of crude, mostly because prices for the low-sulfur fuel oil used by HECO peaked later and because the utility must first use up a 30- to 60-day supply of fuel bought at higher prices before it can start figuring lower-cost fuel into the bills.

Young brothers delay

A similar type of delay is at work at Young Brothers Ltd., which has yet to lower a 7.01 percent surcharge on its Neighbor Island barge service. The company is allowed by the state Public Utilities Commission to modify the fee every three months and will do so for the period starting in December.

Roy Catalani, Young Brothers vice president, declined to say whether the surcharge will be clipped.

"In this market I haven't been able to predict anything so I'd rather not go there," Catalani said.

Yet others such as Matson have seen their bunker fuel costs fall and have started cutting. Matson's surcharge hit a high of 42.75 percent at the end of August. It's now at 27 percent after chopping the surcharge three times in six weeks.

"Hopefully the downward trends continue and we can continue to lower our fuel surcharge," said spokesman Jeff Hull.

Iboshi said the lowering of surcharges should factor into lower inflation for local consumers. She is projecting Honolulu's inflation rate will fall to 4.5 percent this year from the 4.9 percent rate in 2007.

Next year inflation should dip to 3.5 percent, she said.

"It's definitely positive in terms of improving people's disposable income," Iboshi said.

"Part of the reason why our inflation goes down is energy and reduction in the housing component. Over the next couple of years we expect inflation rates to be lower."



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Local Top Stories

City's Proposed Rail Draft is Soon Expected

By **Gina Mangieri**

The public vote on whether Honolulu should go ahead with a steel wheel on steel rail system is just over a week away -- but whether the public will see a key cost and environmental document before the vote remains to be seen.

The draft environmental impact statement for the city's proposed steel rail system is expected any day from the federal transit administration.

It's massive collection of pages with great detail about things voters want to know --like which parcels will need to make way.

The city says the cost chapter is one of the pending items, whereas many other draft EIS sections are essentially signed off.

According to the city's timeline for the project still posted as of monday, the draft should have been wrapping up public hearings and review by now, but the FTA says it was submitted to them later than that timeline, and they started their review in August.

Stop Rail Now began collecting signatures back in may for a vote, around when the EIS was originally scheduled to got to the FTA. An alternative council-backed question wasn't firmly on the ballot until much later.

An FTA official tells khon2 they'll likely be done with the document before the end of this week and says they are fully aware of Honolulu's public vote next week. The FTA says as soon as they hand over the document, it should be considered public and ready for review.

Officials with the city's department of transportation say they're still working out how to get the information out quickly when the FTA wraps up. but if the wrap comes any later than this week.

October 27, 2008

Letters to the Editor

transit

Leeward residents tired of being pawns

I am so glad that Neal Lebsack is returning his Ann Kobayashi For Mayor sign (Letters, Oct. 23) because he doesn't like her EzWay transit plan. I've been waiting for weeks for a Kobayashi sign. They are so popular they leave the campaign headquarters as soon as they come in.

If you don't like Ann's plan, which does a complete transit project for less than half of what Mayor Mufi Hannemann does with his steel-on-steel plan, you must also be in favor of the 40 percent increase in property taxes that will be required in perpetuity to operate and maintain the expensive trains and tracks.

As someone who has lived in 'Ewa Beach for more than 30 years and gets stuck in heavy traffic every workday on Fort Weaver Road, I know that rail will do nothing for me particularly when the closest station will be 3.7 miles away in Kapolei.

The Leeward Coast residents are tired of being used as pawns in what is really a jobs project and not a traffic relief project. Thanks for the sign, Neal.

Pam Smith | 'Ewa Beach

October 27, 2008

Letters to the Editor

transit

Rail system has many benefits over EzWay

Ann Kobayashi's transit plan to use an elevated three-lane highway is poorly conceived.

While adding three lanes to the highway system may relieve some congestion once opened, it does not fix the primary issue — too many cars.

Her endorsement of Panos Prevedouros' plan of managing traffic by synchronizing traffic lights and controlled access of the elevated highway is a limited solution with short-term benefits.

All this does is delay the inevitable. What happens a few years down the road when the H-1 and the elevated highway are both congested? What is the alternative then?

The rail system immediately reduces the amount of vehicles on the highway and effectively reduces traffic when drivers realize that the rail system would be a viable option when traffic gets worse.

The rail system will also reduce our reliance on oil as the rail system is more efficient and reducing the number of cars on the road saves even more fuel.

Kobayashi's and Prevedouros' narrow vision on our traffic problem does not bode well if they cannot see the big picture should she be elected mayor.

Jon Shimamoto | Mililani

October 27, 2008

Letters to the Editor

transit

To continue on train path is irresponsible

I find the "we'll have to start all over" excuse to reject Ann Kobayahi's EzWay plan incredibly amusing.

Here we have a well-researched plan from Panos Prevedouros that serves more people, reduces more congestion, costs less, and is markedly greener than Mufi Hannemann's train plan.

We haven't broken ground yet on rail, nor have we received one red cent in FTA funding, nor have we completed an EIS yet. So other than the non-stop government propaganda and Alternatives Analysis, we're practically at the beginning stage of the process anyway.

Better to take a few steps back and come out with a superior solution than to irresponsibly continue on a train path that everyone knows will cost too much and do too little.

Lee Taylor | Waikiki

Letters to the Editor

For Monday, October 27, 2008

Do you want traffic to move? Vote Mufi

Are you stuck in the nation's worst traffic? Then vote for Mufi for mayor. If you want to stay stuck in the nation's worst traffic, then vote for Panos ... er, Ben ... er, Ann.

Van Tomokiyo

Honolulu

Letters to the Editor

For Monday, October 27, 2008

Who gains if rail system is built?

To analyze local political events recently, use the "follow the money and power" system. For example, the mayor gains power and campaign money if he wins. But he loses no personal wealth if he's unsuccessful. He even gets to keep campaign donations if he's not re-elected!

Contrast that with Stop Rail Now's Cliff Slater (a board member of The Grassroot Institute) who has nothing to gain in power or money and is pouring vast amounts of time and effort into stopping rail. Win or lose, he suffers personal loss, as does his family. Which one has more credibility? If Mufi would pledge \$100,000 of his retirement funds to the city if his plan fails to deliver as promised, he might be more credible.

Then there's Dale Evans of Charley's Taxi (also a Grassroot Institute board member) who devotes enormous energy and money to fighting the rail idea. Yet taxi companies would actually gain customers with rail. Using rail decreases personal flexibility. If one rides rail to work and an unexpected important meeting is called across town, a taxi will likely be called. Bad weather at the end of the workday? Call a cab! Yet Evans fights rail and gains nothing in dollars or prestige.

Is it possible that Slater and Evans are more attuned to the real desires of citizens than the mayor? You sure can't say they have any personal financial gain in their efforts.

Richard O Rowland

President Emeritus

Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

Mass transit likely to drive mayoral debate

[By Laurie Au](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 28, 2008

The question of whose mass transit solutions are better for Oahu should take center stage tonight as Mayor Mufi Hannemann and City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi confront each other in their final debate a week before the general election.

The debate, hosted by KGMB9 News at the Hawaii Theatre, will air live from 6:30 to 9 p.m. and will include mayoral candidates from Kauai and the Big Island, but most of the time will be devoted to the Honolulu race starting as early as 7:30 p.m.

Both candidates will likely offer their transit plan as a solution to help bolster the local economy while also criticizing their opponent's proposals.

Hannemann has come out strong against Kobayashi, rejecting her recently proposed mass transit plan of an elevated three-lane highway, going as far as calling it a "half-baked manapua" in newspaper advertisements.

Kobayashi, who has campaigned on her commitment to fiscal responsibility, has been a vocal critic of Hannemann's \$3.7 billion rail transit project primarily because of the high cost estimates.

His rail transit project was one of the main reasons Kobayashi decided to run for mayor, giving up her uncontested seat on the City Council.

Hannemann is determined to remind voters that Kobayashi's late entrance led to a scramble to fill her seat that ended with Hannemann's former opponent, Duke Bainum, in an uncontested race. Hannemann says he believes there was a deal struck, while Kobayashi adamantly disputes that.

Both candidates have appeared in a few forums together, but tonight's debate offers voters a

Candidates from 3 counties will face off

Here is the estimated lineup for tonight's live debate at Hawaii Theatre on three county mayor's races hosted by and to air on KGMB9 from 6:30 to 9 p.m. Times could change.

» **6:30 p.m.:** Kauai County mayoral candidates

» **7:05 p.m.:** Big Island County mayoral candidates

» **7:30 p.m.:** Honolulu mayoral candidates

better chance to see how the two interact directly.

In the last debate before the Sept. 20 primary election, Kobayashi took a more aggressive approach against Hannemann, calling him a "bully." Hannemann, who has tried to shed that image, will have to balance defending himself and criticizing Kobayashi while not coming off too strong.

"I think his aggressiveness is sometimes a distraction to what the issues are," said Kobayashi's campaign manager, Councilman Donovan Dela Cruz.

Jeff Coelho, one of Hannemann's closest advisers, who had coached him before previous debates, said it is better for the two to stick to the issues.

"My recommendation would be to stick to the truth," Coelho said. "I think the mayor is very confident in his style of leadership. ... He relies on the qualities handed down from his parents."

October 28, 2008

Letters to the Editor

rail

Basic questions on rail need to be answered

It is very easy to become confused, overwhelmed or distracted with the rail transit discourse.

The analysis is not that complicated.

The threshold question is whether the system will benefit transportation through less-congested roadways.

If the answer is in the affirmative, the second question is whether the cost justifies this result. This should be a current and reasonable estimate of the total cost for construction and maintenance.

The final question is an analysis of the fashion in which this expense will be paid, including addressing whether any other city & county projects will be postponed or canceled to undertake the rail system.

The argument that the rail system will create jobs and boost the economy is misdirected. This is a benefit of the rail or any other infrastructure project. It is not a reason for undertaking it in the first place.

Thus far, there have been too many unrelated arguments regarding the rail transit initiative.

The basic questions with respect to benefit, cost and payment need to be answered in a clear and comprehensive fashion.

Randy Harris | Honolulu

October 28, 2008

Letters to the Editor

rail

Many commuters see wisdom of using rail

What a contrast! Mayoral candidate Ann Kobayashi is now opposed to rail. At the same time, we see news accounts that rail projects in many cities are now getting a \$30 million federal boost because Americans are driving less and taking the train.

Numerous news articles have described how Americans are leaving their cars and packing the trains on the Mainland. In Washington, D.C., which has many expressways for autos, Metro is adding additional cars to trains because the trains are now packed.

Ann Kobayashi needs to catch up with the rest of the world, which sees the wisdom of getting cars off the road.

Larry Gardner | Honolulu

October 28, 2008

Letters to the Editor

rail

Rail will continue to deplete resources

David Shapiro's column, "Jobs, economy are part of rail debate" (Oct. 15), was a good assessment of the rail controversy. The closing quote by a construction worker says it all, "I care less what we build, what it's for or if it works. My concern is job security."

I wonder if the construction industry, and the Carpenters Union, which are spending thousands for pro-rail ads, realize they may be shooting themselves in the foot.

Unlike other construction projects which will continue to provide a benefit long after completion (for example, HPower), the fixed rail will continue to deplete Honolulu's finances for as long as it is in existence.

It has already increased taxes for everyone on O'ahu with the general excise tax increase and will continue to do so.

In the face of a worldwide recession, will developers be able to finance housing projects? With the general excise tax increasing the cost of everything, will anyone be able to afford to buy a house?

Gloria Kaneshiro | Honolulu

October 28, 2008

Letters to the Editor

rail

Vote 'yes' on rail for the next generation

Rail is a long term project that we need for traffic relief and planned growth, and it will benefit our city 25 or 30 years from now. Too many people are thinking short term, and it's not only about you.

Rail will benefit those who are and will be living on the Leeward side the most. But that happens to be where most of the affordable homes are planned and will be built.

So, do you punish a young family, just because they want to own a home and can't afford to buy in Manoa, Hawai'i Kai, Kailua or more expensive areas?

Our island's population will grow, and we have to plan for it. Rail is for the next generation, but we must step to the plate now so it will be a reality.

That is why I'm voting "yes" for rail.

Mathew Hasegawa | Kapolei

October 29, 2008

City seeks \$18M refund of transit tax windfall

State's administrative fee exceeds cost of collecting revenues

By SEAN HAO
Advertiser Staff Writer

City officials are hoping the state will turn over more than \$18 million being kept to cover costs associated with administering Honolulu's transit tax.

The City Council Intergovernmental Affairs Committee today is scheduled to hear a resolution asking the state to steer that windfall back to city coffers, where it can be spent on a planned \$3.7 billion elevated commuter rail. The meeting begins at at 12:30 p.m. at Honolulu Hale.

The state added a half-percentage-point surcharge to the excise tax for O'ahu residents beginning in January 2007 to pay for the new mass transit system linking East Kapolei to Ala Moana. The state collects the tax, takes a 10 percent cut for administrative costs and gives the rest to the city. The administrative costs, however, are proving to be much lower than 10 percent, according to the state Department of Taxation, and the excess is going into the state's general fund.

Council Chair Barbara Marshall and other city officials are asking for that money back.

"Basically they're taking that tax money and spending it on something, we don't know what," said Marshall, who opposes rail for financial reasons. "That does concern me.

"Once we get down the road to the point where we have no more money in the till there are going to be hard questions asked and hard answers to be given and the council, depending on who it is at the time, is going to have to do some really radical things" to pay for rail, Marshall added.

state refund unlikely

Marshall introduced the measure along with pro-rail council members Todd Apo, Nestor Garcia and Rod Tam. However, the state, which is facing an \$869 million budget deficit over the next three years, isn't likely to take the request too seriously. The state already has proposed cutbacks of between 10 percent and 20 percent to libraries, schools and other services. A refund of transit taxes to the city could prompt further cuts, said State House Speaker Calvin Say, D-20th (St. Louis Heights, Palolo Valley, Wilhelmina Rise).

"At this point I would say it's going to be a very difficult and uphill battle" for the city, Say said.

The tax surcharge raised \$285.3 million through September. By law, the state kept about \$28.5 million to cover administrative costs. However, the state's actual administrative costs amounted to about \$6 million last year, according to the state Department of Taxation. The state keeps that money to cover the tax's administrative costs. Those administrative costs, however, are proving to be much lower than expected.

The cost of administering the tax was highest in the first year, when the state was putting in place a

system to collect it. Now that the tax is in place, administrative costs were projected to drop to about \$1 million in the fiscal year, ended June 30, and \$717,944 in fiscal 2009. That excludes \$233,300 for annual hardware and software upgrades requested starting in fiscal 2009.

The tax surcharge is to be collected until 2022, and based on current estimates, the state would get \$300 million for administrative costs during the life of the levy.

Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann also has suggested the state consider giving that money back.

"They needed some money to tweak the system to accommodate additional responsibilities, but they shouldn't keep that money forever," he said.

Hannemann hopes to break ground on the elevated rail line late next year, with the first segment starting service between East Kapolei and Leeward Community College in 2012. The city plans to extend the rail line to Ala Moana Center in 2018.

The city's search for added transit tax revenues comes at a time when a slowing state economy could mean lower-than-expected tax revenues for the train. City officials hope to raise an inflation-adjusted \$4 billion between 2007 and 2022 to pay for the 20-mile system. That, along with \$925 million in anticipated federal funds, is expected to pay the \$5 billion in capital costs associated with rail, according to the city's financial plan.

tax could be extended

However, the financial plan is based on tax-revenue forecasts generated in September 2006, when more robust economic growth was anticipated.

Concerns about transit tax revenues were bolstered last week when the Hawaii Business Roundtable, which supports the project, raised concerns that tax revenue collections to build the train will be lower than anticipated. That may necessitate extending the half-percentage-point transit tax — now scheduled to expire in 2022 — until 2027, according to the group.

Asking the state to review how much transit tax it keeps could be risky, given the state's own financial needs, Say said.

"You may open up a can of worms," he said. "Instead of (the state keeping) 10 percent it may be 20 percent. Who knows."

TRANSIT TAX REVENUE

Transit tax collections rebounded in September after falling from year-ago levels in July and August.

Collections, in millions:

	2007	2008
January	\$2.79	\$10.19
February	\$2.21	\$13.03
March	\$10.41	\$16.23
April	\$9.84	\$13.38
May	\$9.86	\$13.40
June	\$15.44	\$16.54
July	\$16.6	\$11.28
August	\$14.74	\$14.17
September	\$12.70	\$16.64
Total	\$94.59	\$124.86

Note: Excludes 10 percent state administrative fee.

Source: Advertiser research

October 29, 2008

Draft EIS for rail could come before election

By SEAN HAO

Advertiser Staff Writer

The release of a much-anticipated draft environmental impact statement for Honolulu's elevated commuter rail could still come before Tuesday's rail referendum.

An official with the Federal Transit Administration yesterday said the agency and the city are working to release the document as soon as possible. FTA spokesman Paul Griffo said a potential release this week could not be ruled out. However, it's also possible the draft document won't be out before Tuesday, he said.

"The FTA has been working diligently with the city of Honolulu to bring this issue to a close and will continue to do so," Griffo said. "I just want to assure everyone that we're comfortable that the FTA has been timely in all of its responsibility."

The timing of the release of the document, which was originally scheduled to be finished in the spring, is key. That's because in the general election, O'ahu residents will vote on a proposed city charter amendment authorizing the establishment of a steel wheel on steel rail transit system. The draft environmental impact statement is expected to include the most up-to-date figures on how much Honolulu's planned commuter train from East Kapolei to Ala Moana could cost to build, operate and maintain.

A "yes" vote on Nov. 4 would give the city the political authority to begin construction on the 20-mile rail project. A "no" vote would all but kill the \$3.7 billion project in its current form.

Polls indicate that the rail ballot issue may prevail, though the outcome could be close.

According to the city's 2006 Alternatives Analysis, the first 20-mile segment is expected to cost \$3.7 billion to build, or about \$5 billion when adjusted for inflation. Those costs are expected to increase in the draft environmental impact statement to account for recent rises in inflation. The updated draft environmental impact statement also will include updates on the number of potentially affected properties, noise and visual impacts, and potential impacts on archaeological sites.

The FTA has said it's aware of Honolulu's Nov. 4 vote on the rail system. However, that date will not dictate the release of the project's draft environmental statement, which must go through a proper vetting prior to release, according to the FTA.

Despite delays in the release of the draft environmental impact statement, city officials maintain the \$3.7 billion project is still on track to break ground in December 2009 and begin partial operations by the end of 2012. The city plans to complete the full 20-mile, 19-station elevated commuter line in about a decade.

Voters can voice their opinion on the city's rail project on Nov. 4. Here is the proposed charter

amendment:

"Shall the powers, duties and functions of the city, through its director of transportation services, include establishment of a steel wheel on steel rail transit system?"

For more rail coverage, go to www.honoluluadvertiser.com/rail.

October 29, 2008

Honolulu mayoral candidates air transit differences in debate

Hannemann blasts EzWay plan; Kobayashi claims rail is too risky

By *DERRICK DePLEDGE*
Advertiser Government Writer

Mayor Mufi Hannemann defended the city's \$3.7 billion mass-transit project last night during a live televised debate while his challenger, City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi, characterized the project as too risky given the economic uncertainty facing the nation.

The debate was the final opportunity for voters to compare Hannemann and Kobayashi side-by-side before Tuesday's election.

Hannemann has a substantial lead over Kobayashi for re-election to a second four-year term, according to the Hawai'i Poll by The Advertiser and KGMB9. But a ballot question on the mass-transit project has caused some concern within the mayor's campaign.

Hannemann has been the primary advocate for the project, an elevated, 20-mile steel wheel-on-steel rail line linking East Kapolei and Ala Moana. Kobayashi released a competing \$2.5 billion EzWay proposal this month that involves a 15-mile, three-lane elevated highway for a rubber tire-on-concrete bus rapid transit system and Zipper lanes.

The ballot question is likely to have some influence on how voters break in the mayor's race and, at last night's debate, the issue of mass transit led to some of the most barbed exchanges.

Kobayashi accused Hannemann and the city of delaying the draft environmental impact statement for the rail project, creating a situation in which voters will likely not know the true financial costs and visual impact before the election.

"Why would you keep delaying this process and keep such vital information from the public?" Kobayashi asked.

"You know, Ann, you're mixing manapua and malassada here," the mayor shot back.

Hannemann said the timing of the release is up to the Federal Transit Administration, which is reviewing the draft, and insisted the city has not hidden any information about the project. He said people have had the opportunity to discuss rail at community meetings and will have the chance to vote on the project's future on Tuesday.

rare joint appearance

Hannemann asked Kobayashi whether anyone but University of Hawai'i-Manoa engineering professor Panos Prevedouros helped her with cost estimates for her EzWay proposal, which he described as

"ridiculously low."

Kobayashi said the plan was discussed by Prevedouros and his students over four years and they consulted with transit vendors on the potential amount. The mayor said he doubted that Prevedouros or his students could calculate the costs of such a proposal without relying on transportation experts in the field.

Hannemann said his rail project had been vetted by four former state transportation directors. "They've studied it since 1963 to early 2000," he said. "They keep coming back to the same conclusion."

The one-hour debate at the Hawaii Theatre, sponsored by the state Office of Hawaiian Affairs and conducted by The Advertiser and KGMB9, was one of the few chances for voters to see Hannemann and Kobayashi together since the September primary. The candidates appeared separately last week at a lunchtime forum at Leeward Community College and appeared together and answered audience questions earlier this month at an "Eye on Hawaii" forum sponsored by The Advertiser at the Plaza Club.

Hannemann, Kobayashi and Prevedouros met in one televised debate before the primary, which was at times more testy and free-flowing than last night's encounter.

The format last night involved questions from a panel of reporters, the audience and viewers via e-mail. The candidates also had the opportunity to quiz each other.

Hannemann said he has fulfilled the promises he made when he ran in 2004: restoring the city's fiscal accountability, improving city infrastructure and addressing quality of life issues such as traffic gridlock.

Kobayashi said, given the downturn in the nation's economy, the city needs someone with her background in government financial management with the courage to question city spending on projects such as rail transit.

"As mayor, I want to address issues that affect our pocketbooks," she said. "We must keep the people of O'ahu employed. We can do this by creating an environment where existing businesses can be successful. We need to treat everyone who engages with the city with respect, integrity and fairness. This takes truly working in partnership with the governor and Legislature to stimulate our economy.

"Mufi wants us to spend billions of dollars on a rail system during these uncertain times. The citizens of O'ahu are already paying increased taxes for it, yet we have absolutely no commitment from the FTA that we will get federal funding for the train."

Political Options open

Stacy Loe, a KGMB9 reporter on the panel, asked Hannemann how he could expect voters to commit to the rail project when he would not commit to serving out the full four years of a second term. Hannemann, a potential candidate for governor or Congress in 2010, has said he wanted to keep his future political options open.

"I do not want to make the mistake that others have made and make a promise that I won't keep," Hannemann said. "I've always been a person who says what he means and means what he says. And all I'm saying is that I'd like the option to at least entertain that notion. It doesn't mean that I'm going to go."

Hannemann contrasted his public deliberations with Kobayashi, who gave up re-election to her council seat and entered the mayor's race at the filing deadline in July. "I won't do what Ann Kobayashi did and wait to the last day to file and then leave residents of her district no choice. That's not right. That's not pono. And I won't do that," he said.

Kobayashi responded that she decided late after determining that "I couldn't leave the people of our city, and of my district, because I worried about continued leadership under Mufi's watch."

Under questioning from KGMB9 anchor Keahi Tucker, Hannemann and Kobayashi both said they opposed a state Constitutional Convention, which is on the ballot Tuesday. Asked to grade the performance of Gov. Linda Lingle, Kobayashi gave Lingle an "A" while Hannemann gave the governor a "B."

Kobayashi would not say whether she would run for mayor again if she loses but she promised to serve the full four years if elected. Hannemann declined to answer a question of whether he would try to avoid U.S. Rep. Neil Abercrombie, D-Hawai'i, in a hypothetical matchup for governor.

No clear winner?

Hannemann and Kobayashi clashed over the history of the Waimanalo Gulch landfill on the Leeward Coast. Kobayashi said residents were led to believe the city would close the landfill, and said she has favored waste-to-energy technology as an alternative, but Hannemann countered that Kobayashi herself has voted to keep the landfill open.

Dan Boylan, a University of Hawai'i-West O'ahu history professor and political analyst, said there was no clear winner. He said, however, that it would have been better for the candidates to have more debates so voters would have further opportunities for comparison.

City Councilman Donovan Dela Cruz, Kobayashi's campaign manager, said Kobayashi is at a fundraising disadvantage and her campaign would have to rely on personal outreach in the final days. Hannemann raised more than \$3.2 million through the primary while Kobayashi raised more than \$405,000.

"It's going to be a lot of volunteers and the campaign having to make a lot of personal phone calls, personal letters," he said. "The more personal interaction, I think, people get a better feeling about Ann and what she stands for."

Dela Cruz said the campaign would stress Kobayashi's mass-transit proposal along with issues such as improving public safety, preserving parks, and increasing government transparency. He also said the campaign would argue that Kobayashi as mayor would have a better relationship with state government. Hannemann has had an occasionally contentious relationship with Lingle.

"Ann is an honest, open leader," he said. "She can work with others collaboratively."

A.J. Halagao, Hannemann's campaign coordinator, said the emphasis during the next several days will be on encouraging voters to cast ballots through early voting and to increase voter turnout on Tuesday. Analysts believe that lower voter turnout in the primary, particularly in Central and Leeward districts where Hannemann did well, likely cost the mayor an outright victory.

"At this point, we want to make sure voters see the differences between Mayor Hannemann and Council member Kobayashi," Halagao said. "We do feel that the mayor is more experienced, more qualified, more energized and more ready for the job."

Campaign: Tough talk on familiar issues

Candidates drop courtesy for haymakers in debate

[By Laurie Au](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 29, 2008

Mayor Mufi Hannemann and opponent City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi challenged each other last night on their mass-transit solutions, political ambitions and stances on the island's only landfill in their final and most combative debate.

With a week left until the general election, Hannemann tried to discredit Kobayashi's statements, calling her "confused" several times throughout the night. Kobayashi, veering from her typically friendly demeanor, shot back angrily at times.

One of the sharpest exchanges of the night occurred during a segment that allowed the candidates to ask each other questions. Hannemann, in an expected move, brought up Kobayashi's last-minute filing for mayor that set in motion 2004 mayoral opponent Duke Bainum's uncontested run for her City Council seat.

"There was obvious communication," said Hannemann, alleging that one of Kobayashi's allies had tipped Bainum off to her candidacy for mayor.

"I don't know who that would be," Kobayashi said. "The best way is to ask him. Instead of throwing out these innuendoes and whisper campaigns, just pick up the phone and ask him."

Last night's debate at the Hawaii Theatre, hosted by KGMB9 News and the Honolulu Advertiser and sponsored by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, touched on a variety of issues, including the closing of Waimanalo Gulch Landfill, Hannemann's refusal to commit to another four years as mayor and the most visible issue, mass transit.

Hannemann said he doubted the accuracy of the cost estimates of Kobayashi's \$2.5 billion mass-transit plan developed in a couple of weeks with former opponent and University of Hawaii engineering professor Panos Prevedouros.

"That's sort of insulting to the students of the University of Hawaii," Kobayashi said in a response to a question by moderator Peter Boylan, a Honolulu Advertiser reporter, that her plan isn't "exactly cheap." Kobayashi said, "Dr. Prevedouros and his students have been working on this for about four years."

On her transit plan, a 40-mile system that includes a 15-mile elevated three-lane highway for zipper lanes and a hybrid express "rubber tire on concrete" bus, Hannemann said, "In the real world, you don't take three weeks to say you're going to spend \$3 billion."

The two also clashed over the Waimanalo Gulch Landfill. Kobayashi criticized Hannemann for failing to close the landfill after taking office, and she proposes to find better technology to the city's incinerator to reduce landfill waste.

"Once again, Ann, you're confusing the facts," Hannemann said, referring to a statement Kobayashi made that the city didn't look for newer technology. "You voted twice to keep that landfill open. Let's be honest about our facts and voting record. You cannot run from your voting record."

Find this article at:

http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20081029_Candidates_drop_courtesy_for_haymakers_in_debate.html

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Ann Kobayashi talks about her race for Honolulu mayor

Posted: Oct 29, 2008 04:17 PM

Updated: Oct 29, 2008 04:19 PM



Ann Kobayashi

HONOLULU (KHNL) - Here in Hawaii, the big ticket is the Honolulu mayoral seat. Incumbent Mufi Hannemann has a strong challenger, in Ann Kobayashi.

They both have ambitious ideas about the future of Oahu. The councilwoman gave up her seat to run for mayor.

She sat down with Kristen Uyeno on KHNL's Today show Wednesday to explain why she should lead Honolulu for the next four years.



KU: Welcome Ann Kobayashi.

AK: Thank you very much.

KU: So, you're fresh off your debate last night.

AK: Yes, it was a really challenging debate. It was very interesting. It gives the people a chance to make a decision based on information they receive so it was great.

KU: How's the campaign going?

AK: Fine, we're running on a small budget, but we have this grassroots network that keeps growing. It's really heart-warming to have people come in, wanting to volunteer and they're just so dedicated.

KU: Why do you want to be Honolulu's next mayor?

AK: I thought about this for a long time because many people have been asking me. I was just concerned about the way our city was headed and it's a very critical year because the rail project is moving along, contracts will be signed. I'm just concerned about our pocketbooks and the way not enough information is being given out about the rail project, how much it's going to cost, what's the visual impact, and the EIS that was due in December of 2006, we still have not received and it's hard to make a decision based on little information.

KU: You and Mayor Hannemann disagree on how to fix Oahu's traffic problem, you're supporting An elevated three-lane highway, can you talk more about that?

AK: Well, it's an elevated zipper lane and in the middle is a fixed guideway system it's that new technology bus that I've been talking about for a long time and having that fixed guideway bus qualifies for the same funds as for a train, it qualifies for the same GET transit fund tax plus because of the two zipper lanes on the side, we can also qualify for highway funds. So we can pay off this project a lot sooner, and then ask the legislature to repeal that half a percent tax.

KU: And you are against mayor's proposed rail transit plan.

AK: Yeah, the cities with a population of two million or less, none of them has a train going through its city, because there isn't the population to support for ridership, there isn't the population to support it financially, so you need a train to go from Los Angeles to San Francisco but why would you need a train to go from Kapolei to downtown? It's just too large, it doesn't fit our city, it doesn't fit our pocketbooks.

KU: You basically think it's just too risky during these tough economic times.

AK: We have no commitment from the Federal government that will get any money. Nationally, the economy is in a big slump and there may not be enough money to hand out to all the small cities especially ours which is less than a million so for a big rail project that is always for larger cities.

KU: After the primaries, your former opponent panos prevedourous joined your campaign, what kind of impact has he had?

AK: Well, it's been great, he is just so knowledgeable, he has been studying our city's traffic for years and his students at the university have been working on this very project and it's based on an EIS which is what the city has now that shows that the bus system is a lot better for our city than a train and that was done by PARSONS which is a company that is doing the EIS this time and they're saying the opposite so I guess it's whoever pays them but they say that a train is not good for Honolulu.

KU: Thank you, Ann Kobayashi. We All be right back to talk about the economy, taxes, environment and other issues.



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Local Top Stories

Feds Approve Rail Draft E.I.S.; City Not Releasing It Yet

By **Gina Mangieri**

With a vote on a rail transit system just 6 days away, the City and County of Honolulu has received federal approval of its draft environmental impact statement for the multibillion dollar project.

But the document is not yet being made available to the public.

The Federal Transit Administration gave KHON2 and the city indications that the approval would be coming this week, but city officials are still working out how they'll share its findings with the public.

The draft E.I.S. for rail contains information voters want to know beyond just the environment, like what properties would have to make way for the train, and any revisions to the multibillion-dollar pricetag.

"The \$3.6 billion figure was valid when the council voted on it 2006," said Honolulu City Councilmember Charles Djou. "Those numbers obviously changed."

"One of the things they do review is our cost estimates one of the things they said last time they were here is our cost estimates were high," said city transportation director Wayne Yoshioka, referring to consultants reviewing the project quarterly on the FTA's behalf.

The FTA told KHON2 that upon federal approval, the draft EIS is supposed to be considered a public document immediately. The city says it's more complex than that.

"Permission to release means that they have to pull together the various chapters and assemble the document," Yoshioka said, "make sure that the quality control is all set and

everything is ready to go."

Upon learning late Wednesday afternoon that the FTA had signaled approval before midday – at 11 a.m. – councilmember and mayoral candidate Ann Kobayashi sent the administration a written request for an immediate copy of the EIS to be provided to the city council.

The draft EIS release also came up during a council hearing on the transit tax that started at 12:30 p.m. Wednesday.

"As soon as you get it will you make it available to the city council within lets say hours, not days later?" Djou asked Yoshioka. "Eill you make every effort to release it before the election?" Djou added.

"The election has nothing to do with it," Yoshioka responded. "What determines when we release it is when I get the word from RTD [city transit officials working on the project] that the document is ready for release."

"We will make every effort to release it as soon as we can," Yoshioka added.

Rail critics say the draft EIS should have been to public hearing by now based on the city's own timeline posted at www.honolulutrainsit.org, and that having to review this close to the election puts undue onus on voters.

"The EIS was supposed to be here in the spring or summer, so we need a reasonable amount of time," said rail critic Panos Prevedorous.

Supporters say the EIS will provide more reasons to vote in favor of rail.

"I think the EIS is going to show it's a well thought out project that's going to make a huge difference for years to come," said Rep. Kirk Caldwell, a rail supporter.

Yoshioka told KHON2 he'll be meeting with his transit project officials Thursday morning to look at how to expedite sharing the massive document, though they're not yet committing to a date for release.

He says one of the options is possibly posting it onto the project's web site.

[To View It Click Here](#)

Story Updated: Oct 29, 2008 at 6:53 PM HDT

October 29, 2008

Letters to the Editor

RAIL

TAXES WILL ONLY GO UP IF RAIL IS APPROVED

If there is any thing good about the current financial mess that this nation is experiencing, it is that it happened before election day.

Given the present projections of a possible depression, no prudent person would knowingly take on extra debt and spend his own money on a project of dubious value, especially if he didn't know its true original and enduring costs.

Wake up, voters on O'ahu. Ask yourself why fixed rail is such a hard-to-sell endeavor. Will it solve traffic gridlock? Will ridership be enough to sustain it? Are we being sold out to appease the unions? You know the answers.

The viable alternatives such as increased bus service and HOT lanes have not been tried here. The environmental impact statement for the portion of the proposed HOT lane from Ke'ehi Interchange to City Mill is completed and the project could start right away. Why doesn't the mayor tell us this?

With tourism floundering, our tax base is decreasing sharply. You know taxes will skyrocket if this ridiculous rail project is enacted. Vote on Nov. 4 to save your money for worthwhile projects that enhance the whole community and actually solve problems.

*Marion Walker
Kane'ohe*

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Like drug ads, rail ads need disclamers

We all are aware of the numerous drug ads on dinnertime TV newscasts or in magazines. The format of all of these ads is a glossy description of the benefits followed by a disclaimer that provides the factual information or possible adverse effects.

The same is true with the ads by the city supporting rail ... except that the disclaimer portion is missing. Most of these ads are skewed to make the recipient believe in benefits that will never be realized or that are not based on fact. Of course the "true" information is available to the public in the city's "Alternatives Analysis" and will be available in the draft environmental impact statement, but the former is not accessed by most people and the latter won't be available until after the election.

As with the drug ads, it appears that the city's real objective is to keep us from making an informed decision on such an important issue.

Bobbie Ubersax
Waimanalo

October 30, 2008

Officials: Rail study out in a 'few days'

Kobayashi says voters deserve information before Tuesday election

By SEAN HAO

Advertiser Staff Writer

The city will release a major new study, including an updated cost estimate, on Mayor Mufi Hannemann's proposed elevated commuter rail line in "the next few days."

The Federal Transit Administration gave the city the green light yesterday to release the draft environmental impact statement for the planned \$3.7 billion transit system. The timing of the release is now up to the city.

City Council member Ann Kobayashi, who's also running against Hannemann for mayor, called on the city to immediately release the study.

"We should have it ... and we should be sharing it with the public so they can make an informed decision," Kobayashi said.

On Tuesday, voters will be asked whether they want the city to move forward with the rail plan. The city did not say if the study will be released before voters go to the polls.

The city Department of Transportation Services said in a news release yesterday, "The Rapid Transit Division of DTS will coordinate the local distribution of the (study) within the next few days after including material to address State of Hawai'i environmental laws."

City transportation director Wayne Yoshioka told the City Council's Executive Matters Committee yesterday, "We will make every effort to release it as soon as we can."

Yoshioka added, "The election has nothing to do with it (the timing of the release). What determines the release of it is when I get word from RTD that the document is ready for release."

The document originally was scheduled for completion in spring of this year.

The 20-mile train route from East Kapolei to Ala Moana is expected to cost \$3.7 billion to build, or about \$5 billion when adjusted for inflation, according to a 2006 study by the city. Those costs estimates are expected to increase in the draft environmental impact statement to account for inflation.

The updated draft environmental impact statement also will include updates on the number of potentially affected properties, noise and visual impacts, and potential impacts on archaeological sites.

Separately yesterday, the City Council's Intergovernmental Affairs Committee passed a resolution asking the state to steer a more than \$18 million transit tax windfall back to city coffers, where it can be

spent on rail.

Hannemann hopes to break ground on the train in December 2009 and begin partial operations by the end of 2012. The full 20-mile, 19-station elevated commuter line would take about a decade to build.

EIS Details Reaction; Pro and Con



Written by KGMB9 News - news@kgmb9.com

October 30, 2008 06:29 PM

Two grassroots groups were eagerly awaiting this report, one wants to get voters on board with rail. The other has been pushing to derail the project.

The Stop Rail Now group is accusing the mayor with hiding crucial details of the draft report, while the Go Rail Go group is elated with the findings.

Go Rail Go volunteers have been working hard getting the message out about rail. Thursday, the group's spokesperson says, the draft report proves correct what the group has been saying all along, that congestion will go down with the project.

"The entire opposition's campaign has just been annihilated," said Justin Fanslau, spokesperson for Go Rail Go. "They really don't have anywhere else to stand. Everything that we've been saying, that they've been accusing us of being false about, was proven correct today by the federal government."

"I think it's very interesting that the mayor is trying to hide the facts behind the EIS from the people before the election," said Stop Rail Now attorney Earle Partington. "I think he's afraid that the public will get the information and realize that this rail is not a very good idea."

Stop Rail Now says the dirt is in the details, and adds the EIS is now public record, and the city cannot legally withhold it.



Last Updated (October 30, 2008 08:21 PM)

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KGMB9

Exclusive:

Mayor Releases

Rail EIS



Written by KGMB9 News - news@kgmb9.com
October 30, 2008 10:05 AM

Without a doubt, one of the biggest issues in the upcoming local election is the proposed rail system. This is the first we are hearing details from the environmental impact statement that was just released from the federal transit administration. Joining us this morning are Honolulu mayor Mufi Hannemann, Rapid Transit Division Chief Kenneth Hamayasu and Wayne Yoshioka, director of Department of Transportation.

Part 1: Mayor Hannemann breaks down the numbers.

Part 2: Howard Dicus joins in the discussion.



Last Updated (October 30, 2008 08:43 PM)

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New Rail Report Reveals Impact



Written by Lisa Kubota - lkubota@kgmb9.com
October 30, 2008 06:57 PM

The city began releasing the new draft environmental impact statement (EIS) for Honolulu's rail transit project. The cost estimate has gone up due to inflation. The bill for the entire Salt Lake route would be \$3.9 billion in fiscal year 2008 dollars, an increase of about \$200 million. Traffic congestion, however, would go down about 22% which is twice the rate first estimated.

The study also revealed more property would have be acquired. 212 parcels, including 20 homes, 1 church, and as many as 67 businesses would be affected. 84 historic and cultural resources may also be impacted. Many were already altered by existing development. The complete details of where these places are will not be released until this weekend at the earliest. The delay has critics of the project questioning the mayor. The city got the green light from the Federal Transit Administration to release the report on Wednesday.

"This is strictly the call, as we've said all along, of the FTA. I mean, if you want to look at it politically, why would we release it three days before? It's dicey. We said we'd be open and transparent," said Honolulu mayor Mufi Hannemann.

But mayoral candidate Ann Kobayshi said the draft EIS could have been released earlier if it had been turned in to the FTA by the original 2006 deadline.

"Whether its Parsons or the administration, they did not meet the deadline, and that's why we don't have the information available to the taxpayers before they make a decision on November 4. It's very unfair," Kobayashi said.

The city plans to release the document by chapter over the weekend.

"We've gotta make some clarifications to be consistent with the state environmental impact statement requirements," explained Hannemann.

"Within 15 minutes the rest of us should have gotten a copy. I mean, you're not supposed to edit it or pull things from it," Kobayashi said.

Thousands of people have already voted before all of the information has come out.

"I don't want to see bits and pieces. We need to see the whole thing so it can be analyzed. We can't draw information from here and there. The public deserves the truth," said Kobayashi.

"We live in a litigious society. We're well aware of that but we always said we'll let the people decide and if people give us an affirmative vote, I hope those that may try to continue to fight this will look at the total good for the community," said Hannemann.



Last Updated (October 30, 2008 07:03 PM)

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Local Top Stories

Cost up, congestion down, partial reveal of EIS says

By **Gina Mangieri**

The estimated cost of the city's rail transit system has gone up, but rail would have a bigger impact on reducing traffic congestion than previously thought. The city has released just 10 out of about 450 pages of the public document.

That 10-page executive summary says the cost of the basic route has gone up several hundred million dollars to \$3.9 billion for the Salt Lake route and \$4.8 billion including the airport.

The Federal Transit Administration will consider \$1.2 billion in federal assistance, up from an initial \$900 million.

As for what rail would do to reduce traffic congestion, there's a new estimate of 21 to 23 percent. That's double the previous estimate of 11-percent, which the mayor compared to traffic relief during the UH summer break.

And on the issue of displacements, the summary says 20 homes, 1 church and nearly 70 businesses would have to move. The summary says up to 212 parcels would need to be acquired – 35 of those in-full. The specific locations and the cost of that condemnation are not clear from the cover pages.

The FTA gave the green light yesterday for the city to release the draft EIS, after signaling at the beginning of the week that approval was coming soon. With the summary of the report released today, and the mayor says the rest could come this weekend.

The mayor says the city needs time to make changes for state purposes. The state questions that, and critics say the city is stalling with rail up for a yes or no vote in the general election.

by giving its approval, federal officials confirm the draft EIS it is now a public document but up to the city how to roll it out.

"My staff needs some time to make some clarifications to the actual study itself so it is in compliance with the requirements of the state environmental impact statement," Mayor Mufi Hannemann said.

The state Office of Environmental Quality Control takes issue, saying much of that work would have been done concurrently as the EIS was refined over the months.

The city did release a 10-page executive summary a day after federal approval. Rail critics including the mayoral challenger are asking -- where's the rest?

"We don't have the information available to the taxpayers before they make a decision on Nov. 4th. It's very unfair," said city councilmember and mayoral candidate Ann Kobayashi.

The mayor says by putting out the rest of the EIS this weekend the city would beat the vote date.

"If we really wanted to be political about this and if this were our call why wouldn't we wait until after the election to do it?" Hannemann said.

"He's dead wrong," said Earle Partington, attorney for Stop Rail Now. "He has no basis to withhold this, this idea they have to tweak something or whatever -- this is nonsense."

The FTA does not author the document -- the city does. If the city has worked on the bulk of the document so long, critics ask, why a holdup up to going public?

"It's the federal government that does the release of the EIS, we have nothing to do with that," Hannemann said.

The city submitted the draft EIS to the feds for review months after the timeline posted on the project website as of this week.

"FTA really didn't want to be politically involved with that," said Panos Prevedouros, rail opponent and former mayoral candidate now backing Kobayashi. "They could have released it earlier if they had received it earlier. So the whole thing had a scheduling manipulation by city hall."

Hawaii's congressional delegation says the summary is enough of a glimpse for voters to make a choice.

"The executive summary should more than sufficiently explain what is in there instead of going through all the technical verbiage which only a few people can understand," said Sen. Dan

Inouye.

"You're not voting on an EIS, you're voting on a concept, you're voting on a proposition," said Rep. Neil Abercrombie. "I don't see what the EIS has to do with the vote anyway. It's apples and oranges."

[Click Here for 10 Page Summary](#)

This is the same city website where the remaining 450 pages or so are expected to be posted this weekend.

Story Updated: Oct 30, 2008 at 6:27 PM HDT

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Study Shows Rail To Increase By \$180 Million

Research Predicts Increase In Ridership To 23 Percent

POSTED: 3:33 pm HST October 30, 2008

UPDATED: 4:47 pm HST October 30, 2008

HONOLULU -- The city's draft environmental impact statement for its rail transit project released on Thursday said the cost of building a line from Kapolei to Ala Moana via Salt Lake would be \$3.9 billion -- about \$200 million more than preliminary estimates.

If you adjust the cost for inflation, the cost would be nearly \$5 billion.

"It really is an alarm bell. We just can't afford this system. This is final proof," Stop Rail Now co-founder Dennis Callan said.

The report claimed rail transit would reduce traffic congestion by about 22 percent to 24 percent on Oahu. It is a figure that University of Hawaii engineering professor and former mayoral candidate Panos Prevedouros said is overly optimistic.

"No city has ever experienced anything over 10 percent reduction in traffic thanks to a rail system," Prevedouros said.

The city says it would cost \$63 million a year to operate a rail line that went through Salt Lake, but as much as \$96 million a year if the line went through both Salt Lake and by the airport.

The draft EIS said anywhere from 186 to 212 properties would have to be condemned to make way for the transit project, but most of them would lose only a part of their property. There would be 35 properties fully condemned and purchased by the city. That means home and business owners would be paid for their lots.

Hannemann's election opponent said the city has improperly delayed releasing this report until days before the election in which transit is on the ballot.

"Why are we seeing bits and pieces? I think the public deserves to see the draft EIS. We paid for it. It's public money. It's a public document. We should have gotten it yesterday," mayoral candidate Ann Kobayashi said. "I just don't know what the delay is, and it's not fair to the taxpayers and residents of our city."

Yoshioka said federal transit officials approved release of the report Wednesday and in less than 24 hours.

"We have already put out the executive summary of the draft EIS today and we're going to get an online version of the document by this weekend. We think that's pretty good time," he said.

Previous Stories:

- October 21, 2008: [Hannemann, Kobayashi Tout Transit Plans At Forum](#)
- September 23, 2008: [Judges Plan To Rule On Rail Ballot Soon](#)
- August 22, 2008: [Hannemann Says No Veto For Transit Amendment](#)
- August 20, 2008: [November Ballot To Include Transit Amendments](#)
- August 14, 2008: [Judge Orders City To Put Rail Transit Issue On Ballot](#)
- July 18, 2008: [Djou Introduces Transit Charter Amendment](#)
- July 13, 2008: [Rail Issue Meets Roadblocks](#)
- July 3, 2008: [Pro-Rail Group Wants Names Removed From Petition](#)

- June 15, 2008: [Opponents Clash Over Proposed Rail Line](#)
- June 12, 2008: [Rail Opponents Take Petition To Newspaper](#)
- May 23, 2008: [City Adds Airport Stop To Transit Project](#)
- May 7, 2008: [Council Reconsidering Transit Technology](#)
- April 21, 2008: [Group Fights Oahu Mass Transit Project](#)
- April 18, 2008: [Mayor On Oahu Transit: It's Steel Or Nothing](#)
- April 17, 2008: [Honolulu City Council Derails Transit Vote](#)
- March 26, 2008: [Mayor Says Additional Taxes Must Go To Transit](#)
- March 25, 2008: [UH Study Finds Cheaper, More Effective Traffic Solutions](#)
- March 19, 2008: [Council To Vote On Transit Technology](#)
- March 10, 2008: [Public Meetings To Promote Oahu Transit Project](#)
- February 28, 2008: [Council Members Raise Concerns About Rail Transit Choice](#)
- February 22, 2008: [Transit Panel Recommends Rail For Oahu](#)

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October 30, 2008

Letters to the Editor

rail

Long-term benefits outweigh the costs

I initially was a mass-transit skeptic, who saw this issue primarily through the main arguments of traffic reduction versus cost. The benefits of such an investment just didn't add up when compared to other lower cost alternatives.

However, a friend of mine opened my eyes to an idea that tends to get overlooked in the rhetoric on both sides of the discussion — land use.

All major metropolitan areas have a dense urban core that is serviced by a fixed transportation corridor. Honolulu lacks that core, and the result is suburban sprawl stretching east to Hawai'i Kai, west to Kapolei and north to Mililani.

If we want to preserve the remaining green spaces of our small island, we need to create that dense urban core, which will feature high-rise residential construction, retail spaces and an easy way to access them. All of this development will occur in an already heavily developed part of the island, an area that is not known for its natural beauty.

We have an opportunity to build a Honolulu for our children's future. It will require sacrifice from all O'ahu residents, but the long-term benefits far outweigh the costs.

John Cheever | Honolulu

October 30, 2008

Letters to the Editor

rail

O'ahu residents get sugar-coasted message

Mayor Mufi Hannemann said, "The fact of the matter is we are required by the Federal Transit Administration to have a public involvement and education process, that's a requirement for federal funds."

Let's make things clear:

Public involvement — The public pays for it; more than \$1.4 million of your money is involved in pro-rail propaganda whether you like it or not.

Education process — Every time you turn on the radio or turn on the TV you will be bombarded with sugar-coated stories about how wonderful rail is and how fantastic it is for other cities.

What a joke. I know when someone's trying to sell me something. It's bad enough that every time I open The Advertiser, I get to read yet another story about some other city's amazingly successful rail system. The fact of the matter is Honolulu is not Portland.

Oh, and about that funding from the federal government. Is that the same federal government that went on a \$700 billion bailout spending spree? The same federal government that has a \$59.1 trillion deficit? Good luck getting your money, Mufi.

Christine Villaflor | 'Ewa Beach

October 30, 2008

Letters to the Editor

rail

Rail project will help Hawai'i's economy

Sometimes when I read the headlines, I feel like I am in a time warp back to the economic downturn of the mid-1990s. Tourism is faltering. Consumer confidence is weak. Every week, a new round of layoffs is announced. Even public schools are feeling the economic pressure. Let's face it folks, the bad times are here again.

Which is why we need to start building the rail system. In the 1990s, building the H-3 Freeway created jobs for local families and brought money from the federal government into the state. It was a lifeline.

Today, the rail system can do the same thing, but on an even bigger scale.

We need economic projects that will breathe new life into our economy. We need rail.

Joe Lee | Hawai'i Kai

October 30, 2008

Letters to the Editor

rail

Rail will offer real relief, vote 'yes'

Complain, lie and misrepresent. That's all the anti-rail whiners seem to do.

Fact: When UH and public and private schools break for summer, the freeway opens up and traffic congestion is significantly eased.

Fact: The amount of traffic generated by the UH and school commuters is less than the 11 percent reduction in vehicles that rail will provide.

Rail will offer real traffic relief. Taking 25,000 cars off the roads is nothing to sneeze at.

I'm voting "yes" for rail, and I hope you do too.

Kristi Peterson | Kalaeloa

October 30, 2008

Letters to the Editor

rail

Rail will only bring over-development

Rail has been primarily promoted as a means of providing traffic relief to residents of the 'Ewa District, but the true purpose of the rail may be to promote an extensive continuation of development. Build rail stations and new residential communities, shopping centers and business districts will quickly fill in the surrounding empty land.

Yes, development will support the community by adding construction jobs, but what will it do for Hawai'i's main revenue generator — tourism? What will be added to the quality of life for O'ahu's residents? Are people prepared for makai to mauka development with little land left in its natural state?

What industries will drive the economy and support all of the occupants of these new homes? And what will the added demands on our fresh-water resources bring? There is no question that the developers will benefit, but at what cost to Hawai'i and her people.

Further development will happen with or without the rail, but it may be wise to let it happen at a slower and more controlled pace. Using the rail project as a catalyst for extensive and rapid over-development that cannot be reversed may not be the best use of taxpayer dollars.

Kurt Lemon | Kailua

October 30, 2008

Letters to the Editor

rail

Rubber-tire system can cut commute time

Island voters need to consider potential ridership when they vote on what type of mass transit system we approve for construction. People will want to ride a system that saves commuting time.

"Express" and full vehicles with rubber tires can bypass stops, chopping many minutes off trips to and from Honolulu.

The proposed rail system will have trains that have to stop at every station. They will travel at an average speed of less than 30 mph, with no practical way of speeding up because of all these stops.

We need a rapid transit system. Vote "no" on rail.

Jerry Mershon | Mililani

October 30, 2008

Letters to the Editor

rail

Will rail improve quality of life here?

When you buy a car, do you leave it in the garage and not drive it? When you buy a new house, do you leave it empty? When you buy new clothes, do you leave them in the closet and never wear them?

All of the politicians, unions and other proponents of rail have never stated that they would use the rail regularly or it would improve the quality of life in Hawai'i.

This should be a key issue, since all of population of O'ahu is paying for the rail. Think about it.

Garrick Kashiwa | Kane'ohe

Resents tax money spent on rail brochure

I am still seething over the glitzy rail brochure that came in the Sunday Advertiser.

Does the mayor think that bombarding us with pretty colors and glossy pages containing the same old information will impress us enough to vote for rail?

The brochure proudly proclaims that it was "paid for by city taxpayers" and is "part of the public information program required by the FTA."

I resent having my tax dollars spent on propaganda. The editorial in Monday's paper supporting one of the City Charter amendments states: "Allowing a government official to use public funds to influence the outcome of elections gives that official an unfair advantage, essentially using everyone's money to advance an election outcome favored only by some."

How does that opinion not apply to the taxpayer-funded rail brochure?

Jura Landfield

Honolulu



October 30, 2008

Letters to the Editor

Don't let transit plans get derailed again

We have debated rail for more than 35 years. Countless studies have been done, and they all come to the same conclusion. There is no doubt that we need rail and we will all be better off for it.

Mayor Frank Fasi had the vision and tried to build rail in 1979, and again in 1992. But two women, Eileen Anderson in 1980 and Rene Mansho in 1993, prevented rail from being approved and killed those projects. Since then, traffic has just gotten worse and worse. This may be our last chance. Let's not let history repeat itself with Ann Kobayashi.

Are you listening?

Mathew Hasegawa
Kapolei



October 30, 2008

Letters to the Editor

EzWay plan is neither easy nor feasible

In response to Ruben Reyes' Oct. 25 letter touting the purported benefits of Ann Kobayashi's EzWay:

Ann Kobayashi and Panos Prevedouros have misled the public about the feasibility of their proposed EzWay transit plan. It is simply not a fix-all, everything-to-everyone solution.

Reyes faults the proposed rail plan by pointing out that bus-to-rail transfers will be necessary. The EzWay will also require bus-to-bus transfers for the majority of commuters who use it. For example, the EzWay highlights the establishment of a major transfer station at Auahi Street. This will force thousands of bus commuters and tourists (who now have a direct TheBus trip) to transfer to one additional bus to complete their travel to final destinations less than a mile away, such as Ala Moana Center and Waikiki hotels.

The EzWay is highly inefficient and is not ready for prime time. Consider that the integration of private industry carriers as public transit providers depicted in the EzWay reflects Prevedouros' pandering to the Hawaii Highway Users Association, which does not support mass transit.

I urge Honolulu voters to look beyond Kobayashi's last-minute, ramshackle proposal. Please vote "yes" to support steel-on-steel rail this election day.

Jon Nouchi
Mililani



October 30, 2008

Letters to the Editor

EzWay plan surpasses rail in every way

Hannah Miyamoto's Oct. 20 letter regarding Ann Kobayashi's EzWay is filled with flawed assumptions. First, EzWay connects to Kamehameha and Farrington ramps, not just H-1 and H-2. This alone is a huge bottleneck relief that can nearly stand alone as a winner.

Second, the EzWay's two zipper lanes are for HOV3+, just like today's uncongested single lane zipper, not a congested HOV2+ as in the ill-planned Alternatives Analysis. That plus a third fixed-guideway for buses provides a true congestion-free transitway, regardless of conditions.

Third, unlike Mufi Hannemann's train, the EzWay is flexible and rules can be adjusted. The EzWay plans to allow energy-efficient hybrid or all-electric cars (not just 32+ mpg vehicles) to ride the EzWay as single-occupant vehicles. Should this become too prolific, the rules can be tuned to keep the EzWay full but not congested.

Finally, only university express buses will connect via Hotel Street at about 20 buses per hour, well within Hotel Street capacity. The other express buses will go to the proposed Auahi Street transit center via the Halekauwila underpass.

On every important metric, EzWay is far superior to Mufi's train, especially congestion relief and quality of life.

Nick Takashima
Honolulu



October 30, 2008

Letters to the Editor

Other public projects could provide jobs

Recent letter writer Hannah Miyamoto supports the rail project to bring \$900 million in federal funds to provide jobs.

To increase jobs, the mayor should fix Oahu's deteriorated infrastructure:

- 1) build 10- to 12-mile reversible high occupancy express lanes from Waikale to downtown to bypass the two bottlenecks at the H-1/H-2 merge and at the Middle Street merge - \$1 billion,
- 2) upgrade the sewer plants and sewer mains - \$1.2 billion,
- 3) close Waimanalo Gulch Landfill by building two major recycling factories - \$1 billion,
- 4) use about \$.5 billion for traffic fixes such as traffic light synchronlization, underpasses, spot lane additions and other localized bottleneck fixes,
- 5) fix parks, beaches, athletic complexes, pools and playgrounds.

Rail does not solve any of Honolulu's problems, but it steals the city's entire budget for solving the island's real problems.

Ben Ramelb
Honolulu



October 30, 2008

Letters to the Editor

Rail will keep workers, commuters moving

For a while there, I was keeping track of how many stories about layoffs I read in the paper to check how our economy was doing. But there were so many and it was so depressing that I stopped after the first 25.

Frankly, we need jobs on our island. I look around and wonder where they will come from. Then I read about the rail project - 11,000 jobs! We need them now more than ever. That's why I support rail transit.

Lei Matsuura
Honolulu

October 31, 2008

Part of Honolulu rail transit study released

Inflation has hiked price \$200M; foes demand full details

By SEAN HAO

Advertiser Staff Writer

Inflation has pushed the estimated cost of Honolulu's planned elevated commuter rail line up \$200 million in the past two years, to \$3.9 billion, according to a new city study.

The study also said the train would reduce traffic congestion by as much as 23 percent in 2030, compared with an alternative scenario that includes improvements to the freeway and bus systems.

These and other facts were included in a 10-page executive summary of the city's draft environmental impact statement.

Release of the summary — five days before voters decide on whether to proceed with the rail project — drew immediate criticism.

Rail opponents said the city should make the entire document public, not just the summary. City officials said they are taking extraordinary steps to release the full document as soon as possible even though they are not obligated to do so. They plan to release the full document this weekend.

The draft EIS is not expected to reveal any startling revelations. However, it will refocus attention on both the positive and negative impacts of the largest public works project in state history at a politically sensitive time. The report could provide information that may sway support for or against the project.

"I think it's an outrage" that the entire document was not released immediately, said Cliff Slater of the group Stop Rail Now. "The executive summary is meant for people who are too ... lazy to read the details. And the devil, as we know, is always in the details."

Among the items not released in yesterday's summary were details about the project's energy consumption, emissions, population assumptions and future traffic conditions.

The federal government authorized the city to release the draft EIS document mid-day Wednesday.

overriding interest

Wayne Yoshioka, the director of the city's Department of Transportation Services, said the city was urged by the Federal Transit Administration to make the draft EIS available because of the public's interest in the document. The city is not obligated to release the draft until it determines it is complete, but the city chose to release the summary yesterday and the full document over the weekend.

Normally, the draft would not be widely released until after the city notifies the federal Environmental

Protection Agency, for publication in the Federal Register, and the state Office of Environmental Quality Control, for publication in the Environmental Notice.

The earliest the announcement of the draft could be published in the state's Environmental Notice is Nov. 23. After that notice is published, the public would have 45 days to comment on the draft.

Still, City Council member Ann Kobayashi, who's running against incumbent Mufi Hannemann for mayor, said the entire draft EIS should have already been made available to the public. She criticized the city for selectively disclosing information from the draft EIS.

"You're not supposed to edit it, or pull things from it," Kobayashi said. "We paid for it. It's public money. It's a public document. The draft EIS should be in our hands yesterday."

Hannemann said city officials were working hard to get the document ready for public release. He also said the study provides validation for the project.

"I'm very pleased to say the information in the DEIS (draft environmental impact statement) validates the Honolulu City Council's decision to move forward with rail transit and the benefits it can bring to our island," Hannemann said in a news release.

"The project shrinks future traffic congestion by more than 20 percent, a 100 percent improvement over the amount estimated in the Alternatives Analysis (a separate rail study done in 2006). It also brings new information, such as the updated financial plan and construction costs that conclusively demonstrate that rail transit is the most cost-effective and affordable solution."

shorter commutes

According to the new study, in 2030, morning rush-hour commuters to Downtown from Kapolei would save an average of 30 minutes by using rail. From 'Ewa, morning commuters would save 25 minutes.

Those benefits are greater than estimated in the 2006 study, which predicted that peak-hour congestion would be reduced by 11 percent in 2030. However, according to the 2006 study, even with the train system, there will be an estimated 57 percent increase in traffic on H-1 during morning rush hour in 2030 compared with 2003. That's because potential gains in transit ridership are expected to be eclipsed by the added traffic that will come with rapid population growth in West O'ahu.

According to the summary released yesterday, as many as 177 parcels could be acquired, either partially or fully, to make way for the train. Previously, about 150 parcels had been identified as possibly being affected.

Separately yesterday, the city said annual operating and maintenance costs for the rail line's Salt Lake route in 2030 would be \$63 million, which was up \$2 million from an earlier estimate. The city also disclosed that ridership for the Salt Lake route is estimated at about 90,000 daily riders in 2030, which was unchanged from a prior study. Daily ridership on the airport route rises to 95,000.

The project is funded by a half-percentage-point surcharge to the excise tax for O'ahu residents that started in January 2007 and by anticipated federal funds. A slowing state economy could mean lower-than-expected tax revenues for the train. Details released yesterday show the city's estimate for transit tax collections, which was created in 2006, remains essentially unchanged at about \$4.1 billion.

However, the city, which previously had been counting on an inflation-adjusted \$925 million in federal funds, now is counting on about \$1.2 billion to finance construction of the train.

Hannemann said cost could be lower due to the economic slowdown. "Additionally, we believe that the current economic slowdown may result in lower construction costs and I remain confident that we have the funds to build this project," he said.

what happens next

Work on the draft environmental impact statement was started late last year under an \$86 million, two-year contract with New York transportation engineering firm Parsons Brinckerhoff. The statement was originally scheduled to be finished last spring. However, the city said it needed additional time to refine the impact statement.

Once the draft environmental impact statement is released, the city plans to provide at least 45 days for public comments, including at least one public hearing.

Under the project's current timetable, there's about a 12-month window between the date the draft environmental impact statement is released and a possible final approval — a so-called record of decision — from the federal government. That approval, expected in October 2009, brings the city one step closer to receiving federal money for the project.

Hannemann, who hopes to break ground on the project in December 2009, has said he will not begin construction without the record of decision.

Council member Gary Okino, who supports the rail project, agreed that voters should have access to the draft EIS. However, Okino defended the delayed release.

"It's just a logistical thing," he said. "They just wanted to get the summary out just to tell people what's in there."

Ultimately, the document will only help put the rail project in a more positive light, Okino added.

"This will just prove everything the city has been saying," about the benefits of rail, he said.

October 31, 2008

Rail will bring a better future

This is opportunity to embrace meaningful change for O'ahu

By Kyle Chock

It's the political season of change — hope — and growing uncertainty about the future of the world, our country, and the future of Hawai'i.

One of the most critical choices that we have to make on Election Day is whether to approve the city's rail-transit system. In the closing days, I'd like to offer a different perspective that deals less with the technicalities of transit and more with the future of our community and preferred quality of life questions that Hawai'i has recently struggled to address.

It's no surprise that building something from scratch is a lot tougher than doing nothing. Rail transit is a perfect example of the incredible challenges associated with game-changing types of innovative transportation and planning solutions necessary to solve the long-term needs of our state. The obstacles related to funding these types of initiatives through taxes, public and private financing, regulatory issues such as zoning, environmental impact statements, permitting, land acquisition and other related procedures present incredible barriers to accomplishing anything. The present global financial crisis will make this even tougher.

In contrast, blocking a project requires virtually no resources. Opposition groups have relied upon proven tactics to block change and have at times successfully defended the status quo. Tactics like parking a surfboard in a harbor, wearing red or green T-shirts or roving speaker systems trying to simulate the "real" sound impact of rail transit have become the norm, depending on the issue. E-lists and the blogosphere provide no-cost platforms to oppose anything.

In these debates, both sides of the issue have legitimate concerns that deserve an honest conversation and dialogue about the facts. This is an impossible conversation to have on a surfboard or via 10-second sound bites communicated through news media. Throughout "heated" debates such as these, both sides can unintentionally confuse the public, creating a frenzied approach to what should be a thoughtful dialogue.

However, these differences shouldn't divide us — they should help unite us in forging a preferred future for Hawai'i. Recently, I've heard a lot of people asking "What's in it for me?" The question and attitude behind it indicate that we might not only lose rail, but that we're losing a little bit of Hawai'i in the process. Traditionally, Hawai'i residents have shown a willingness to consider the greater good. Once our state loses Hawai'i's local style of sensibility and aloha spirit, we become just another place in the world.

The generational impacts of rail transit will positively impact our children and grandchildren. Parents will enjoy more quality time with their kids. Families will spend less monthly income on gas. Commute times will become more predictable and stress free. Needless to say, this is the greatest quality of life issue Honolulu needs to address.

Perhaps the greatest benefit of rail transit that's had the least discussion is the creation of transit-oriented development along every rail stop. As Hawai'i ranks 49th out of 50 states in homeownership and has the highest rate of intergenerational families living together under the same roof, the creation of affordable workforce housing is a key benefit of having rail transit. Smart growth and the establishment of compact mixed-use communities have immeasurable benefits: reducing our carbon footprint, increased density versus urban sprawl and more vibrant neighborhoods, to name a few.

Does an EzWay elevated freeway provide the same benefits?

Rail transit will directly benefit many people in Hawai'i. Indirectly, it will benefit us all because we came together to support a brighter future for all of Hawai'i's people.

Finally, I truly believe that Hawai'i's silent majority wants to see responsible change and solutions that address our growing community. Change isn't always easy. Yet there are few opportunities in our lifetimes to embrace meaningful real change that we can accomplish with rail transit. We lost an opportunity in 1992. Let's not make the same mistake twice.

City releases portion of rail report

A newly released city report predicts that the final cost of the rail transit plan will reach \$5 billion

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

Days before Oahu voters decide the fate of the city's proposed multibillion-dollar rail transit system, the city released yesterday a portion of a report detailing the project.

The city estimated the cost in 2006 at \$3.7 billion, but the report says the cost is \$3.9 billion in 2008 dollars. That is expected to approach \$5 billion after adjusting for inflation over the life of the project.

City transportation officials said the draft environmental impact statement validates the need for its planned 20-mile elevated rail transit system from Kapolei to Ala Moana.

But opponents of Mayor Mufi Hannemann's system, including his challenger for mayor, City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi, criticized the city for releasing only a 10-page executive summary of the report.

The city expects to release the 300-page document during the weekend.

Two members of Hawaii's congressional delegation said the report is not related to a ballot question that asks voters to approve the rail system.

The summary does not give many details on the project, such as the exact land parcels that might be condemned along the route, which is expected in the full report.

City officials say they are confident there are enough state and federal funds to pay for the system.

[By Laurie Au](#)

.....
FULL STORY >>

[By Laurie Au](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 31, 2008

The city's proposed 20-mile rail transit system will cost \$200 million more than the original price tag of \$3.7 billion and is projected to reduce traffic congestion more than earlier reports estimated, according to a draft environmental impact statement released yesterday.

But after adjusting for inflation, **The Report's Highlights Include:** the project should cost about \$5 billion, according to the report.

Costs (in 2008 dollars):

City Transportation Services Director Wayne Yoshioka said the report, expected to be released online during the weekend, validates the need for the rail transit system to alleviate the growing gridlock in Honolulu.

» \$3.9 billion for Salt Lake route; \$4.8 billion for Salt Lake and airport route

Transportation impact:

» 21 percent to 23 percent cut in traffic congestion in 2030

Land acquisition:

"(The report) doesn't say anything remarkably new," Yoshioka said. "These are things we've been saying all along. All it does is validate what we've shown in the alternatives analysis."

» 157 to 177 partial parcels could be acquired, which include land condemnations

» 34 or 35 parcels will be full acquisitions

» 20 residences, one church and 62 to 67 business could be relocated

The draft environmental impact statement, which totals about 300 pages, is required by the Federal Transit Administration for the project to move forward.

Noise:

» 18 to 23 residential buildings could have moderate noise

Source: City and County of Honolulu

On the Net:

Originally, the city projected the rail project would reduce traffic by 11 percent, but the draft report now says

media.starbulletin.com/documents/20081030_eis_executive.pdf

congestion is expected to decrease by 21 to 23 percent in 2030.

The city has long used \$3.7 billion as the cost of the system, but that number is in 2006 dollars. Adding in inflation, the system will cost \$3.9 billion in today's dollars for the chosen route running to Salt Lake. For a route going to the airport, it would cost \$4.8 billion in current dollars.

The city is also confident it will have the necessary funds to complete the system using a 0.5 percent surcharge to the general excise tax. The city expects to collect \$4.1 billion through 2022 from the tax and \$1.2 billion in federal contributions.

"Our cost estimate includes a nearly \$1 billion contingency to address these cost changes," Mayor Mufi Hannemann said in a statement. "Additionally, we believe that the current economic slowdown may result in lower construction costs and I remain confident that we have the funds to build this project."

The timing of the report's release comes days before Tuesday's general election, when Oahu voters will decide the fate of the system on the ballot.

The city received approval from federal officials to release the document on Wednesday afternoon but has not yet disseminated the full report.

"We have nothing to hide," Yoshioka said.

 Study Finds Cost Of Rail Transit Increased



Rail opponenets say this is further evedience taxpayers cannot afford a rail transit system

[[Watch](#)]



But with many voters already rushing to the polls for early voting or turning in absentee ballots, the report might have little impact on their vote on the rail transit system.

In a mayor's race that will likely be largely driven by the rail transit issue, mayoral candidate City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi used the report's release as another attack on Hannemann.

"If they got the draft EIS yesterday, within 15 minutes the rest of us should have gotten a copy,"

said Kobayashi, who introduced a mass-transit solution of elevated highways called "EZWay."
"We all deserve the truth. It's just not fair (for voters). We can't keep fooling the taxpayers."

Two of Hawaii's congressional leaders, who support rail transit, said the report should not affect the vote for the system on Tuesday.

"The EIS doesn't have anything to do with whether you are for rail transit or not," said U.S. Rep. Neil Abercrombie. "It doesn't have much to do with whether you are for rail transit or EZWay or highways."

U.S. Sen. Daniel Inouye said, "If (the city) held on to it until after the elections, that would be different. I think they are doing the right thing."

Is the Study Correct? Transit Battle



Written by KGMB9 News - news@kgmb9.com
October 31, 2008 06:21 PM

But will voters get the chance to see the full impact of the rail before election day?

Thursday, various politicians crossed party lines to say no.

Former governor Ben Cayetano, Panos Prevedouros, and State Senator Sam Slom joined Ann Kobayashi in criticizing the release date of the study, and the information in it.

"In my 28 years of public office, I have never seen a case where the information has been manipulated to mislead the public," said former Governor Ben Cayetano

"It says congestion would be reduced by up to 23%," said former mayoral candidate and UH professor Panos Prevedouros. "That's a totally fantastic figure."

"This Environmental Impact Statement that shows a drop in congestion of 22%, is an FTA approved EIS," Representative Kirk Caldwell told supporters at a Go Rail Go Rally at the State Capitol. "the FTA says these are the figures. ...

"This proposed rail plan has gone through a lot of processes. It's a little late to come and respond and say theirs will reduce traffic more."

Mayor Hannemann says the full study will be out by this weekend. When it comes in, it will be on KGMB9.com.

Click [here](#) to read more about the plans for displacements and relocation in the executive summary of the Environmental Impact Statement

Click [here](#) to see all the planned stops

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Local Top Stories

KHON2 investigates: Property Affected by Rail

By **Gina Mangieri**

KHON2 has uncovered details about parcels on the projected Honolulu rail path. Hundreds of homes, businesses and properties dot the city's planned route. Supporters of the system point out rail would help thousands more.

The Federal Transit Administration approved release of the city's draft environmental impact statement Wednesday, but among reasons the city gave for delaying complete publication until this weekend was this about property along the route:

"As much as there's a rush from the media to get this out there, there are certain steps we want to take to make sure those who are going to be affected are going to be notified," said Mayor Mufi Hannemann. "What we will do is we will notify all the property owners so that they don't read about it in the news or see it on a web site."

A letter dated last Friday and postmarked yesterday arrived to many property owners along the route today.

"What we heard is that one of the pylons goes through our restroom so that pretty much knocks us out," said letter recipient Larry Stenek of Art Nelson Sailmaker, a decades-old company on a sidestreet near Ala Moana Center. "If you earned the money to build this building literally pulling seams out of cloth for 40 or 50 years it's not dollars. You got a lot of equity invested in it and you're not going to give up."

He says he believes cost estimates for condemnation are likely too low based on the legal fight he says he and many other owners plan to put up.

"They can't just take a little bit, we need this whole property," said Howard Suite of Island Pool & Spa, a letter recipient and employer of 25 people in the Kakaako area near Ala Moana. "If we lose even a corner of it we can't operate."

Earlier, Stop Rail Now demonstrated with an 8-foot-high segment what pylons dozens of feet higher could look like

along roads or cutting through what is now private property.

"It blocks our access, the building becomes useless; we can't get around back," Bob Fram of Garden & Valley Isle Seafood said, adding his Nimitz-area property has been measured out by consultants for pylon placement in an area that may not touch the building but would render his property useless by cutting off access and parking. "Literally closing businesses to open rail is not that good of an idea."

It's not clear without seeing the full draft E.I.S. what would happen to each parcel.

"I want to say 'impacted' doesn't necessarily mean that condemnation will occur," Hannemann said. "It doesn't mean that all of it will require acquisition from the city. It just means that because where their properties are along the rail route, there's going to be some impact."

Residents and businesses that rent may not yet know -- the letters went only to owners, and the letters ask for permission for the city to contact tenants.

KHON2 lined up all rail route parcel maps from an earlier right-of-way study that formed the basis for the E.I.S., to get a glimpse of who else could be affected.

What we know from the 2006 Alternatives Analysis and the supporting parcel documents, and what we can glean from the 10-page Executive Summary released Thursday, the numbers seem to line up like this:

- * The number of residential parcels affected has grown from 7 to 20
- * The number of business properties affected, down slightly from 72 to 67
- * The overall number of properties partially or fully affected has risen from 139 to 212
- * Since the number has gone up, experts tell us it's likely that if a property was in the A.A. right-of-way, it's likely still in the draft E.I.S. along with more than the other up to 73 additional parcels added into the E.I.S.
- * The Executive Summary for the E.I.S. summary says 20 homes, 1 church and nearly 70 businesses would have to move.

Supporters say all of this pales in comparison to the number of people rail could help.

"By 2025, we expect there to be 172,000 people living in the great city of Kapolei," state Rep. Sharon Har said at a Go Rail Go rally this afternoon "And they have one way of getting into town on the H-1."

Besides wanting to contact property owners directly before releasing E.I.S. details, the mayor also said the E.I.S. couldn't go public until they made clarifications to comply with state E.I.S. law. The state Office of Environmental Quality Control told KHON2 the state "only needs to verify the accuracy of the distribution list" which doesn't affect the body of the document, and said no changes should be made to any pages in the federally accepted document.

Rail supporters say the E.I.S. issues are irrelevant to the rail vote.

"The question on the ballot next week is not the E.I.S.," U.S. Rep Neil Abercrombie said at the Go Rail Go rally. "It's do you or do you not want a transportation system worthy of the name that's going to deal with the recession and deal with the traffic jams."

The draft E.I.S. projects traffic congestion would be reduced up to 23 percent in future volume compared to future volume under a no-build scenario. The cost is estimated at \$3.9 billion for a Salt Lake alignment, and \$4.8 billion for a Salt Lake plus Airport route. The draft E.I.S. calculates \$1.2 billion in federal money needed to pay for the basic alignment. Abercrombie said at the rally he is confident the delegation can help secure \$900 million of that.

Log on to honolulutransit.org - the city site where the full E.I.S. is supposed to be posted this weekend, and where you can find the 10-page executive summary posted Thursday.

Story Updated: Oct 31, 2008 at 7:28 PM HDT

Find this article at:

<http://www.khon2.com/news/local/33680039.html>

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Part of rail project report revealed

Posted: Oct 30, 2008 09:40 PM

Updated: Oct 31, 2008 01:01 PM



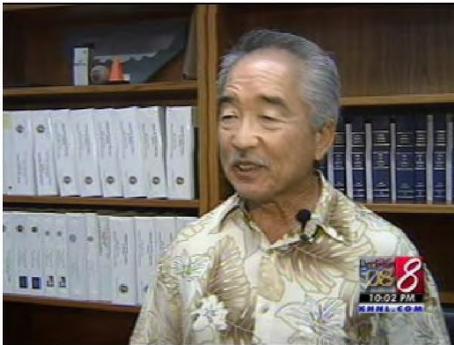
Ann Kobayashi

By Zahid Arab - [bio](#) | [email](#)

HONOLULU (KHNL) - Honolulu voters are getting their first glimpse of parts of a long awaited report that reveals the impact of the city's proposed rail transit system.

After finally getting federal approval, the city has released a summary of the project's draft environmental impact statement.

It covers the rail's economic, environmental and community impact.



Gary Okino

The EIS summary says anywhere from 186 to 212 properties may need to be taken over to make way for the transit system's path, although only about 15% of those property owners will have their entire land purchased by the city.

Findings show the rail will also force 20 homes, a church and more than 60 businesses to relocate.

As far as capital costs, the city says it would cost 3.9 billion dollars if the transit system went through Salt Lake, but would add up to close to 5 billion dollars if the line went through both the airport and Salt Lake.



Wayne Yoshioka

For candidate Ann Kobayashi, her selection for mayor is a no-brainer. But, aside from her race, she fears voters are not being informed of the proposed multi-billion dollar rail transit project's environmental impact statement.

"It's been over a year delay, what possible excuse could there be," said Mayoral Candidate Ann Kobayashi.

Originally expected out in December 2006, the report was delayed until April 2007 and finally again until this week. The city says it was waiting on the Federal Transit Administration to take action.



Ann Kobayashi

"We wanted to get this out sooner because it helps our case, we've stayed true to the course. We did what we were supposed to do, we waited for the FTA's authorization before releasing," said Transportation Services Director Wayne Yoshioka.

Concerned rail critics say the delay may give voters less time to review the findings, in turn causing some to vote yes who would have voted no.

"We're operating at warp speed to get this thing out because it makes such a favorable case for the city. It's crazy that people say we're trying to delay this," said Council Member Gary Okino.

"We need to see the whole thing so it can be analyzed. You can't draw information from here and there, the public deserves the truth."

The complete EIS report won't be available to the public until the weekend.

"I don't know whether it's enough time but it's all the time we're given," said Okino.

If you'd like to read the complete EIS, we'll post a link to the report on our website [Khnl.com](http://www.khnl.com) as soon as its available.



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October 31, 2008

Letters to the Editor

rail

O'ahu will no longer be exotic with rail

Hawai'i is a place vacationers dream of visiting some day. Building a fixed-rail system makes Honolulu just another ordinary city.

Constructing a short leg of the system is only the beginning. Further rail system extensions mean years of noise and disruption on the island.

The rail stations require toilets, concession stands, elevators and/or escalators and parking lots for users at each location. These necessities demand constant maintenance and servicing.

The whole cost of building and maintaining a fixed-rail system (including the acquisition of land) is prohibitive for our population.

We already pay an excise tax on food, sales and all services. How can we possibly subsidize a rail system? Also, tourism may suffer. Vacationers want to enjoy the tropics. They will prefer the many Caribbean.

Let us not lose our unique island flavor by building a transportation system that may not be fully used by our local residents and visitors to O'ahu.

Louise Meier | Pearl City

October 31, 2008

Letters to the Editor

rail

Rail transit may mean higher property taxes

I would like to comment on two Q&A items presented in the "Q&A Honolulu Rail Transit" brochure that was recently distributed by the city.

1. How much will operations and maintenance (O&M) cost? O&M cost for rail system is estimated to be \$60 million per year.

2. How will we pay for O&M? Passenger fares will cover approximately 30 percent of O&M.

Comment: If passenger fares subsidize 30 percent of O&M cost, the remaining O&M cost "will be paid out of the city's annual budget."

Since property tax is the city's biggest source of revenue, I fear that property owners will be burdened with a \$42 million tax bill (70 percent of \$60 million) annually. If the city is unable to collect \$18 million (30 percent of \$60 million) in fares as planned, property taxes will increase to subsidize the shortfall.

Instead of rail transit, if the planned elevated train-rail line was designed for hybrid buses, the proposed project will be millions of dollars cheaper. Also the city will be saving additional millions by not having to subsidize another public-transit system.

Homeowners have been demanding property tax relief for several years and can't afford additional increase in property taxes. Homeowners should unite and vote "no" to rail transit.

Ken Mukaigawa | Honolulu

October 31, 2008

Letters to the Editor

rail

Rail transit will get more cars off roads

I catch the bus to work. It is a straight shot, five miles through town and takes 40 to 70 minutes, depending on traffic.

I could drive. But I catch the bus for the principle. It's the environmentally and socially responsible thing to do. It's one less car.

I support rail because it will serve more people than an elevated freeway would by getting cars off the road. An elevated freeway would do little to ease traffic. There would still be bottlenecks as cars wait to get on and off that freeway. The only way to speed up commutes significantly would be to take cars off the road.

Rail will get commuters through town without dealing with traffic, making it more desirable to riders than a bus. It may not directly serve most taxpayers in the beginning, but eventually the rail can serve many communities as it grows. But it has to start somewhere, and it has to start now before we miss yet another window of opportunity.

The Oct. 26 poll in The Honolulu Advertiser worries me, as it shows that many people think an elevated freeway is a better alternative than rail. I wish more people understood the importance of having a mass transit system in town that did not contribute to traffic. Everyone will benefit in the long run if we look beyond the short term.

Jenny Hoof | Honolulu

October 31, 2008

Letters to the Editor

rail

Rail will not solve traffic congestion

What is the main reason for rail? It is intended to solve the rush-hour traffic congestion along the Leeward corridor.

The estimated 10-year, \$3.7 billion project will bring commercial development at its 19 terminals. There will be drug stores, restaurants, fast-food outlets, offices, department stores, laundries, supermarkets, mom-and-pop stores and maybe specialty stores. This will bring lots of jobs. But, it will also bring unintended consequences.

The new developments will bring more traffic from surrounding areas like Kapolei, Wahiawa, Waipahu, Kunia, Pearl City, 'Aiea, Waipi'o, Mililani and 'Ewa because of the convenience.

The question is: Will it solve the the rush-hour traffic congestion along the Leeward corridor? The answer is no; in fact, traffic will worsen.

There are alternatives that are more affordable to solve the traffic congestion problem. These alternatives will also bring lots of local jobs.

Please vote wisely on the rail question. It all boils down to: Do you want development or traffic relief?

H. Kam | Honolulu

October 31, 2008

Letters to the Editor

rail

To ease congestion, vote 'no' on rail

The city's primary objective is to relieve traffic congestion for us, not create jobs or force us out of our cars.

When the H-1 freeway is closed because of an accident, how would rail relieve that traffic congestion?

Is everyone supposed to abandon their cars on the freeway and walk to the nearest rail station to get home? EzWay would allow us to drive home on three additional vehicle lanes.

If you don't want to drive, you can ride on our world-class hybrid-electric bus system. TheBus will pick you up at your nearest bus stop and get you to your destination quicker than rail along the EzWay.

Rail will take longer to get to your destination because it will require longer walks, additional bus transfers, and multiple stops along the same route as the non-stop EzWay. This would be an even bigger burden for our disabled.

EzWay would cost taxpayers half of the \$4 billion-plus for rail. Rail will also take longer to build (14-plus years compared with five years for EzWay).

Please vote for Ann Kobayashi for EzWay and "no" on rail to truly relieve traffic congestion.

Norm Chai | Kailua

Letters to the Editor

For Friday, October 31, 2008

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 31, 2008

Keep rail option alive, vote 'yes' on Nov. 4

Voting "yes" keeps environmental impact statement for rail, and alternatives alive. Voting "no" aborts rail, and leaves Oahu with only proposals by rail opponents. They had 15 years to make proposals but only spoke up when rail was reinitiated. Their EzWay plan adds two overhead car lanes and one dedicated bus lane, shortening traffic jam length but not time, as buses and cars come together on local streets.

Free enterprise cannot save it because it is not economical to build enough parking garages. Both EzWay and more garages are visually obtrusive. EzWay has a wider stance overhead. More garages destroy downtown characteristics that attract people and businesses.

Rail enables orientation of future development around transit stations, saving farmland and countryside.

A society will be judged by how it treats those at the bottom. The only bullies in this election are trying to deprive us of rail, needed as spikes in operational costs for buses and cars continue to occur. In a time of change, we are fortunate to have an opportunity to initiate a Franklin Delano Roosevelt-type of infrastructure project to better our economy now and in the future.

Gary O'Donnell
Urban designer
Honolulu

Letters to the Editor

For Friday, October 31, 2008

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 31, 2008

Kobayashi's EzWay plan is dysfunctional

I returned my "Ann Kobayashi for Mayor" yard sign. I had hopes that she would stand for a meaningful alternative to steel rail.

Ann, you told me at a campaign appearance that you would not let a "no" vote on rail transit turn the project into just another highway-widening project, yet that is exactly what you are proposing with EzWay.

By building three new lanes of traffic into town, you will bring thousands more vehicles into the crowded streets of downtown, Waikiki and Manoa. Your plan does not address what will happen to all of these additional cars in town.

Rather than promote energy efficiency and better land use, your plan will just encourage more drivers to bring their cars into town and encourage developers to convert more precious land into parking lots. The plan's so-called restrictions, on numbers of riders per vehicle and miles per gallon, are meaningless and unenforceable. It's just another elevated freeway.

Neal Lebsack
Kaneohe

Letters to the Editor

For Friday, October 31, 2008

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 31, 2008

Kobayashi's not the one who's confused

After reading yesterday headlines in both Honolulu morning newspapers, I see now that Mufi Hannemann was wrong in his recent debate comments to Ann Kobayashi - she's not confused, I am, along with every other fiscal-minded taxpaying islander: "Economic forecast darkens for state" (from the Star-Bulletin) and "Tax revenue forecast for Hawaii grim" (from the Advertiser).

I was already having a hard time understanding how we are going to pay for this ill-conceived steel on steel boondoggle, and the triple whammy news just came with the city's draft environmental impact statement released yesterday afternoon!

"Rail system to cost more, city report says," and the city won't release the entire document until sometime this weekend, not time enough for anyone to review before the election.

"The system is expected to cost \$3.9 billion, adjusted for inflation this year. After construction though, the total comes closer to \$5 billion."

And this is only the beginning. Annual maintenance is astronomical. Have supporters of this project lost their minds?

I am confused, all right, as to why anyone would vote for rail. I won't be confused on Tuesday when I vote "no" to this madness.

MJ Culvyhouse
Kaneohe

Letters to the Editor

For Friday, October 31, 2008

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Oct 31, 2008

Rail system will have too many stops

Island voters need to consider potential ridership when they vote on what type of mass transit system we approve. People will want to ride a system that saves commuting time.

"Express" and full vehicles with rubber tires can bypass stops, chopping many minutes off trips to and from Honolulu.

The proposed rail system will have trains that stop at every station. They will have an average speed of less than 30 mph, with no practical way of speeding up because of all these stops.

Have you noticed that this 200-year-old snail rail technology is not being called rapid transit? We need a rapid transit system. Vote "no" on rail.

Jerry Mershon
Mililani