

Public Involvement Overview

March 2009

	Month
Hotline Calls*	15
Comment Sense Submissions/Inquiries**	45
FOIA requests	0
Speakers Bureau	13
Presentation/Events	7
Neighborhood Boards	6
TAC	0
Community meetings	0

*Calls directly to the hotline 808.566.2299

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

March 2008 Comments received through project website*

Submission Date	Submission Content/Notes
03/30/2009	just a concerned citizen and would like to be included in community meeting in waipahu or other neighborhood meeting concerning this issue
03/30/2009	I own a property located at 2628 Waiwai Loop, which is adjacent to Keehi Lagoon Park. The airport route seems to abutt my property. Will the railway cut through my property? How can I get information regarding the specific route the rail will have? Thank you. Bryan Li 591-1228
03/30/2009	I saw in today's paper about the rail and would like to know if a commuter entry station will be in front of the Marco Polo Condominium. How high would the entry for such an entry station be. I am wondering if my view will be obstructed. Will the Marco Polo need to have the auto entry changed? Or will the Marco Polo be one of the buildings knocked down for construction of the rail system?
03/27/2009	Angry that Judge Gillmor wants to move route to Queen Street. It is unfair to the senior center.
03/26/2009	How much lead time will you give the renters who are in the path of the rail to find another place to live that is affordable? Due to the economy I already lost 2 part-time jobs and only have my one job. Have to take the bus to save \$\$.
03/26/2009	Yes, I would like to know about the construction schedule of Rapid Transit Project. Thanks Giri Taksali Vice President STV Incorporated
03/25/2009	Thanks for the email about the show this weekend. I will not be able to come and see the exhibit. I do want you to know that I continue to support rail transit. Two years ago I move to Kailua from Oregon. I lived in Portland during all the construction of the MAX lightrail system and its continuing expansion. It is a wonderful system and makes it so easy to get around Portland. Just for fun I rode all of the lines and found it so easy. I have been surprised that none of your stories that I have seen have shown the MAX system as it has been successful beyond expectations. Claudia L. Webster
03/23/2009	I see nothing here but political propaganda and I hope that taxpayer dollars are not being spent trying to convince the educated that this is a wise use of funds. I notice that your rose colored brochure says nothing negative about spending \$6B dollars on this hideous 3 story guideway. Like the Superferry fiasco, the City's EIS does not take into account the noise level this train will surely produce and the blight that it will create while running overhead day and night. Let the truth be heard and provide we the people with a venue to express our concerns and the cons that you now hide. We should have equal treatment under the law and especially if you are burning even more tax dollars to try and convince the majority that this project should go forward. You can only fool the uneducated for so long, eventually they too will not be swayed a facade and demand accountability from politicians who's ambition are only for personal profit and fame. Let's stop the foolishness now before it becomes the next media headline to make Hawaii look like the backward little island we are. Try paving the roads we already have, that would be a promising start!
03/22/2009	what type electrification is currently planned? DC? AC? MagLev? ??? has a general engineering consultant been selected yet? who? has a decision been made yet on project delivery process? design-build? design-bid-build? ??? my company provides corrosion control services. what is the process for my company to participate in the design team? who do we contact?

Submission Date	Submission Content/Notes
03/21/2009	Aloha, The very fact that the rail only goes 24-28MPH is reason enough not to spend that much money dev.it. Our buses go 50-60MPH in the car pool ln. on the freeway with no traffic! Passengers will loose 90 mins. aday on the rail. If it's not broke, don't fix it! Spend it on the newly homeless families with 5 kids living in there car. Mahalo.
03/12/2009	I have a current listing for sale on the 1901 Dillingham Blvd. (makai side) and would like to find out the impact of the rail project on this particular property and the neighboring areas.
03/11/2009	Who is handling the construction mangement and cost estimating services for this project? Will this be handled by the City & County or sent out to a private company.
03/10/2009	How do I go about getting a copy of the Real Estate Acquisition Management Plan (RTD 2008q) prepared by the DTC Rapid Transit Division. Thank you.
03/10/2009	I would like to know about the design/layout of the rail. Like the interior of the train, the stations, how it would look, etc. I would also like to know where the stations would be.
03/09/2009	What is the status and timetable for getting the rail system implemented thanks
03/08/2009	Will the planned rail system have any affect on our location? We are right next to the Food Bank and Good Will.
03/05/2009	Aloha, I am currently working on a feature about steel for an upcoming issue of Building Industry magazine and would like to request some graphics for use in the story. Specifically, I'd like a map, preferably just showing the first segment that will be built, or the latest overall map. I'd also like a photo of an example of a steel-on-steel rail system. Thank you, Judith
03/05/2009	Would like info on your Transit system. Public Bus System. Hours of operations, fare cost to ride, map of Hub. Thanks for your help.
03/04/2009	We are a local company that distributes and install industrial wash systems. We would like to be part of the help and support of the rail system. We are able to help assit on the cleaning equipment for the trains. Please let us know who we should present our systems to. Thank You, Burt
03/03/2009	Hello, Please be so kind and tell me if the original Draft EIS contains all of the information on the Airport Route or will it need to be modified? If it needs to be modified, will there be an additional public comment period? Thank you, Monica
03/02/2009	About how far away, we can not hear the noise of the rail? Thanks.

*does not include questions regarding procurement, employment, request for speakers, or mailing list requests.

Letters to the Editor

For Sunday, March 1, 2009

Public improvements will heal economy

The list of five major shopping centers that have halted construction is a grim reminder that our economy isn't just cooling, it's becoming ice-cold ("Economy slows retail development," Star-Bulletin, Feb. 27). While I am a free-market capitalist, I recognize that in this recession, the private sector lacks the horsepower to create a significant number of new jobs.

It will take a long-term infrastructure investment by government to create new jobs to bring our economy back to life. On the federal level, the stimulus package is our best hope. Locally, I look to infrastructure projects like school repairs, roadwork and the building of the city's rail line as our job-creating economic engines.

Let's get them moving forward and start heating up our economy.

Jon Serikawa
Honolulu

March 2, 2009

Less cars, more users of Hawaii Zipper Lane

3-occupant rule in effect since July has eased congestion, officials say

By Michael Tsai
Advertiser Staff Writer

The number of cars that pass through the H-1 Freeway Zipper Lane each morning has dropped by more than a thousand, or about 26 percent, since the state increased the minimum occupancy requirement from two to three people in July.

State Department of Transportation director Brennan Morioka said while there are fewer cars in the Zipper Lane there are more people using it and they are arriving at their destinations about 15 minutes earlier as overall traffic in the crowded 15-mile corridor from Waikale to Downtown is down.

"There are more people in fewer cars spending less time commuting," Morioka said.

The Zipper Lane required at least three people per vehicle when it first opened in 1998. In its first year of operation, the lane was used by an estimated 2,300 cars each morning.

That minimum-occupancy requirement was lowered to two in 2005 after residents and lawmakers complained that the lane was underused.

Last July, the state increased the number of occupants required in vehicles using the Zipper Lane and the Nimitz Highway contraflow lane back to three, amid complaints that overcrowding caused traffic in the lane to move slower than in the general purpose lanes.

At the time, DOT officials said they hoped the move would relieve congestion in the special lanes by reducing the number of cars from 3,800 to 3,500 per morning.

The effect has been more dramatic. According to Morioka, an estimated 2,600 to 2,700 cars now use the lanes each morning, a figure that fluctuates significantly during summer months when schools are not in session.

However, Morioka emphasized that more people overall are benefiting from the Zipper Lane.

Morioka said the average commute in the Zipper Lane from Manager's Drive in Waikale to Pacific Street in Iwilei dropped from 32 minutes in 2007 to 17 minutes this month. In the general purpose lanes, the same commute has been shortened from 37 to 22 minutes over the last two years, he said.

"A significant part of this is that if we give people the right incentive — saving time — they will carpool," Morioka said. "By carpooling, they save 15 minutes on their commute. With more cars out of the general purpose lanes, people who drive by themselves also benefit."

That's news to Richard Oshiro, chairman of the Waipahu Neighborhood Board.

Oshiro used to take the Zipper Lane every morning, with his daughter as the second occupant in the vehicle. The lane was crowded, he said, but at least it continued moving when stalls or accidents brought the general purpose lanes to a standstill.

When the three-occupant rule took effect this summer, Oshiro, who works at The Queen's Medical Center, had to move back to the regular lanes. Now he has to make sure he and his daughter are on the road by 6 a.m. for a Waipahu-to-Downtown commute that all-too-often takes 75 minutes or more to complete.

"Initially, a lot of cars ended up coming out of (the Zipper Lane)," Oshiro said. "For the people that

remained, it was pretty fast, but now there are more cars in the other lanes."

Oshiro said he'd like to see more flexible use of the Zipper Lane.

"I think it's underutilized," he said. "Maybe in the summer they could go back to two people. It would also be good if they opened it when there's a stall or an accident, because when that happens (the freeway) is a parking lot. There's not a lot of space out there, so we should maximize whatever lanes there are."

Morioka said there are signs of increased interest in carpooling. He also said that rising gas prices over the summer, coupled with the benefits of ride sharing — quicker commutes and less stress for passengers — has resulted in a surge of interest in the state's Vanpool program.

According to Morioka, the number of Vanpool vehicles has increased from fewer than 170 to an estimated 250.

"We're running out of vehicles," he said. "It's a problem, but it's a nice problem to have."

Additional Facts

Zipper Lane Use

2 people per car

3,650 cars, 7,300 people*

3 people per car (re-instituted in July)

2,650 cars, 7,950 people*

*Based on number of cars, times number of people allowed. All numbers are averaged.

Source: *State Department of Transportation*

Council candidates emerge

Some well-known isle figures hope to follow Barbara Marshall

[By Laurie Au](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Mar 02, 2009

A week after the death of Honolulu City Councilwoman Barbara Marshall, three candidates have filed to run for her seat -- a position that could determine the power balance on the sharply divided body.



Barbara Marshall:
Three people have filed to succeed her, and more might follow

Political observers say they expect more candidates to compete for the seat in an unusual special election that will be conducted primarily through mail-in ballots.

Two candidates emerging early as front runners are Steve Holmes and John Henry Felix, former City Council members who have remained out of the political spotlight for some years.

When the City Council approved details of the special election on Wednesday, Holmes went straight to the City Clerk's Office for papers to run for his old seat representing Windward Oahu.

"I'm glad to be back and excited to see the possibility of serving the people of the City and County of Honolulu again," said Holmes, 57.

Holmes served on the Council for 12 years beginning in 1991. Barred from re-election because of term limits, he joined the administration of former Mayor Jeremy Harris as the energy and sustainability coordinator before moving to Kailua-Kona.

Holmes later moved to Washington state to spend some time with his daughter and then to Virginia to work for Loudon County.

In a 2006 interview, Holmes told the Star-Bulletin his time in politics was over. But after Marshall died on Feb. 22 of colon cancer, Holmes flew to Honolulu and rented a home in Kailua.

He said he plans on selling his condo in Kona.

Holmes emphasized his constant ties to Hawaii, calling it home and adding that his wife is a "local girl," and sought to pre-empt any charges that he is "carpetbagger."

"Calling me a carpetbagger is outrageous," Holmes said. "I promised Barbara I wouldn't run against her. I went on and enjoyed some quality time with my family, and I'm glad to be back."

Holmes is preparing for a short campaign that could include a formidable opponent, Felix, who is chairman and chief executive officer for the Hawaii Medical Assurance Association.

"These folks have been out of the limelight for a long time, and that makes it a little more surprising," said University of Hawaii political scientist Neal Milner. "On one hand, people with big name recognition have a certain kind of advantage in this short race. On the other hand, this is a chance for newcomers to run at a reasonably low cost."

Felix, an ally of Mayor Mufi Hannemann, has not formally filed to run for the seat, but has been privately contacting City Council members. He did not return phone calls from the Star-Bulletin for comment.

Others who have filed to run include Paul Akau and Wilson Kekoa Ho.

Marshall's aide, Ikaika Anderson, who ran unsuccessfully for state representative, is also considering entering the race. Friday is the deadline for candidates to register for the election period, which begins early this month and ends April 23.

The successor for Marshall's seat will affect the dynamics of the nine-member City Council, which is evenly divided between Hannemann supporters and opponents.

Find this article at:

http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20090302_council_candidates_emerge.html

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Proposal: Hike Bus Fares, Parking, Property Tax



Written by Tina Chau - tchau@kgmb9.com

March 02, 2009 10:32 PM

"It's an excellent deal, it's the best place to park!" said one UH student of the lot next to the Honolulu zoo.

That excellent parking deal may be less excellent if the Honolulu mayor gets his way.

Right now, drivers at the zoo pay a quarter an hour. The city is proposing an increase to \$1.50/hour.

"That's crazy," said a spear fisherman packing away his gear inside the lot, "that's wrong."

Break it down, that's a quarter for ten minutes, the same as other parts of Waikiki.

Going to the zoo would cost more too. A child's ticket would go from \$1 to \$3. An adult ticket would go from \$4 to \$6. It's a little more for non-residents.

"In Calgary, I think it's \$20 for an adult and I think 12 bucks for a child," said the visitor.

Some bus riders would also be affected by fare increases. A single adult fare would go from \$2 to \$2.25. Adult monthly passes would go up \$10, from \$40 to \$50. Seniors and the disabled wouldn't be affected.

If ridership on The Boat doesn't improve, the city may cancel the commuter ferry and put its \$5 million budget to another use. That's disappointing news for one loyal rider.

"I just love it," he said, "it's amazing you know for Honolulu to have something like this going on."

Homeowners would also be hit with an increase in the residential property tax; a hike of 30 cents per \$1000 of assessed value. That's an extra \$300 a year for a million dollar home. It's just another way to help make up the city's \$128 million shortfall. Mayor Hannemann says it's not as bad as it sounds.

"We try to break it down so people can appreciate what this will cost," the mayor continued, "it's the price of a movie ticket without your popcorn, two blended coffee drinks...little more than a dozen malasada and eight steamed manapua."

Related story with more about the proposed increases:

- [Mayor's Budget Proposal: \\$128M Shortfall](#)



Last Updated (March 02, 2009 10:59 PM)

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Honolulu Mayor proposes hike in property taxes and other fees

By Marisa Yamane

Story Created: Mar 2, 2009 at 10:24 PM HST

Story Updated: Mar 2, 2009 at 10:24 PM HST

The price of paradise will go up for Oahu residents under Mayor Mufi Hannemann's proposed budget, released today.

The overall operating budget spends more than \$1.8B.

The capital budget has more than \$1.6B in projects, including \$1B for mass transit.

Without rail, the budget is smaller than last year, and does not include any cuts in services.

"It really shows that we are trying to tighten our belts as much as possible and not expand this budget any more that it needs to be done," said Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann.

But the budget comes at a price for residents.

As the city tries to close a \$128M shortfall, fees are rising.

Bus fare would rise \$0.25, to \$2.25 per way.

Municipal golf course fees would go up \$3.

And zoo admission jumps \$2.

The Mayor is also proposing to raise the property tax rate and motor vehicle registration fees.

This coming at a time when many families are living on tight budgets.

Many families are no doubt watching what they're spending these days, especially with the unemployment rate

continuing to climb.

So an increase in rates and fees by the city isn't exactly welcome news.

Meet soccer dad Keith Terashima.

"My son is right there with the blue shirt and red shoes. His name is Tyler," said Terashima.

And daughter Tristyn.

"She's, how old are you Tristyn? Six years old," said Terashima.

Terashima works two jobs. His wife also works.

And like most Americans these days, they're on a budget, with a goal of saving money.

"We gotta cut down on a lot of going out so much, and stuff like," said Terashima.

And the price of paradise could soon go up, if the City Council approves Mayor Hannemann's budget plan.

Hannemann wants to hike property taxes by about 9%.

So the average homeowner would end up paying about \$120 more per year.

"The last resort property taxes, I always said this would be the last option," said Hannemann.

The Terashimas live in Pearl City.

And because their property is valued at more than the median, they would see an even higher increase than the average homeowner.

"So we looking at \$200 or \$300 increase. I mean, it's not a good time. I think they should look at other ways to maybe cut down spending," said Terashima.

Under the Mayor's proposal, drivers would also have to pay more for their vehicle registration.

"That is something that bites into your budget, especially since I'm having my son getting to that age where he's going to be driving," said Terashima.

The Mayor also hinted at the possibility of starting to collect fees for trash pickup like they do on the neighbor islands.

"Everything is going up and it's getting scary because of the job situation and economy and everything," said Terashima.

So the Mayor laid out his plan, which is a suggestion to the City Council, because Council Members will ultimately determine which and how much fees will go up for the next fiscal year.

City employees will also be affected under the Mayor's budget.

It calls for no pay raises for employees, except union contracts already approved for Honolulu police officers, and the fire department.

And the Mayor and his cabinet would take voluntary 5% pay cuts.

"The Council is going to take a very hard look at is there other ways to go, other solutions, other reductions that can be made. I think it's our responsibility to take a scalpel to see what else we can do," said Honolulu City Council Chair Todd Apo.

"Not just cutting fat, some muscle where it is prudent, and careful not to get into the bone," said Honolulu City Council Member Nestor Garcia.

Next year the budget gap is expected to be much bigger.



KITV.com

Mayor Proposes Property Tax, Fee Hikes

City Projects \$50 Million Shortfall For Fiscal Year

POSTED: 3:13 pm HST March 2, 2009

UPDATED: 4:44 pm HST March 2, 2009

HONOLULU -- Mayor Mufi Hannemann on Monday laid out his budget proposal that would include hikes that will affect nearly everyone on Oahu.

At the top of his proposal was a property tax rate hike. Oahu homeowners can expect to pay 30 cents more per \$1,000 of home value would hike the current \$3.29/\$1,000 to \$3.59/\$1,000. That will be about \$10 more per month for the average homeowner, city officials said.

This comes as home values have slid over the past year. That would have meant a loss of millions of dollars in the city's main revenue stream if property tax rates would be kept the same.

The mayor said in his state of the city address last month that Honolulu County faces a \$50 million deficit ending on July 1 fiscal year. Hannemann said next year's fiscal deficit is \$177 million.

The mayor proposed fee hikes for several key city services.

The price for an adult fare would climb from \$2 to \$2.25. The price for a monthly pass for an adult would jump \$10 to \$50. It would be the first bus price increase in six years.

Proposed Fee Hikes:

- Motor vehicle weight tax -- would increase from 3 cents per pound to 4 cents for passenger vehicles and 3.5 cents for trucks to 4.5 cents
- Highway beautification fee -- increase from \$5 to \$6
- Bus fares -- single adult fare would increase from \$2 to \$2.25; adult monthly passes from \$40 to \$50; no price change for seniors or disabled; four-day passes for visitors would increase from \$20 to \$25.
- Golf fees -- green fees with a local golf ID would increase from \$16 to \$19; junior fees would increase from \$9 to \$12; golf cart fees would increase from \$16 to \$19
- Zoo fees -- child entrance fees go from \$1 to \$3; adult resident fees \$4 to \$6; nonresident adult fees \$8 to \$12
- Park attendant fees -- increase from \$10 to \$15
- Alarm permit fees - from \$15 to \$25; renewal fee from \$5 to \$25
- Special duty police fees -- the administrative fee for a single officer would increase from \$7 to \$14; \$1 to \$2 for each additional officer
- Hanauma Bay admission fees -- out-of-state visitor fee would increase from \$5 to \$7.50

Earlier, Hannemann said the 5,000 city employees represented by the Hawaii Government Employees Association and United Public Workers union would not get raises. He also said he would deny raises to city managerial employees to save about \$700,000.

The mayor said he, 36 department heads and deputy directors will all get 5 percent pay cut by working one day a month without pay. The gesture could save the city \$206,000, officials said.

Previous Story:

- February 19, 2009: [Hannemann Announces \\$50 Million Budget Shortfall](#)

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Letters to the Editor

For Monday, March 2, 2009

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Mar 02, 2009

Better traffic routing needed during closures

The Honolulu Police Department and Fire Department are required to respond and take control when an accident or incident occurs. Part of this response might involve traffic closure of roads. However, they need to assist the public in bypassing these areas.

HPD has the resources and authority to control traffic signals, implement detours or manually direct traffic. This type of response requires training, manpower and information. Training and manpower can be done. Information can be obtained by using their helicopter or the city traffic camera system.

Doesn't the traffic control center have the ability to adjust signals from its command center? What is its function and capability? If they cannot adjust traffic, the visual information from traffic cameras can aid the police in determining the bottleneck along alternate routes.

An elite group of police, engineer and other necessary personnel needs to be organized to address these traffic delays.

Leonard Leong
Honolulu

March 3, 2009

Higher city taxes, fees proposed

Homeowners, bus riders, golfers may be asked to help city trim shortfall

O'ahu residents would pay more in property taxes — and to ride the bus, golf at a municipal course, visit the zoo and use other city services — under a proposed budget unveiled yesterday by Mayor Mufi Hannemann.

Those and other steps, including the possible scuttling of the city's commuter ferry service, are needed to deal with a \$50 million budget shortfall in the fiscal year that begins July 1.

Lower visitor arrivals, declining real estate values and rising unemployment are taking a toll on the local economy. For the city, that translates into flattening property, fuel and hotel tax income coupled with rising costs for emergency services, fuel and debt.

Under the mayor's plan, the city operating budget will rise less than 1 percent, to \$1.8 billion. However, the capital improvement budget will jump 78 percent, to \$1.7 billion. About \$1 billion of that money will go to begin construction on a \$5.4 billion commuter rail system.

"We must tighten our belts to face these tough times, but we will not create the illusion of savings by neglecting our community's needs in ways that would cost everyone much more in the future," Hannemann said. "We will continue our important infrastructure improvements and we intend to remain the nation's safest big city."

Among the fee and tax hikes proposed were:

- A residential property tax hike estimated at \$10.34 a month for a typical homeowner and \$ 8.21 a month for a typical condo owner.
- A hike in the adult cash fare for TheBus to \$2.25, or \$50 a month. That's up from \$2 and \$40, respectively. Senior and youth fares would remain unchanged.
- An increase in green fees and cart rental fees at city golf courses.
- An increase in admission and parking fees for the Honolulu Zoo.

A host of other fees would also increase including the city motor vehicle weight tax, the highway beautification fee, alarm permit fees, special duty police fees and admission fees for out-of-state visitors to Hanauma Bay.

If the proposed property tax hike is approved, the residential rate would rise from \$3.29 to \$3.59 per \$1,000 of a home's assessed value. That would still be lower than when Hannemann took office in 2005, he said.

Hannemann's proposal is the first salvo in the city budget process. The City Council still must approve the budget and can make changes. The council has until June 15 to act on the budget ordinances and set property tax rates for the next fiscal year, which runs from July 1, 2009, to June 30, 2010.

Even if the council approves the budget as is, the city will face an estimated \$176 million budget shortfall in fiscal 2011, Hannemann said. Without the proposed tax and fee hikes, the budget shortfall would jump to \$265 million in fiscal 2011, based on an estimated 10 percent drop in real property tax revenues.

"So we're not out of the woods yet," Hannemann said. "Even if we solve this problem, we've got a humongous problem next year."

cutting costs

Other cost-saving initiatives include the elimination of pay raises for most city workers and a 5 percent pay cut for the mayor and his Cabinet. No layoffs are planned. The city also expects to decide in April whether to continue TheBoat, the Kalaeloa-to-Downtown ferry that costs \$5 million a year.

Among the mayor's proposed construction expenses:

- \$1.1 billion for Honolulu's planned elevated commuter rail from East Kapolei to Ala Moana.
- \$142 million for the city's solid-waste-to-energy facility.
- \$77 million for street repairs.

Hannemann said the city would consider other steps to deal with anticipated budget shortfalls, including charging a residential refuse collection fee and possibly merging fire and emergency services into one agency to take advantage of economies of scale. The city also will consider creating a homeowner class for real property taxes.

Council Chairman Todd Apo said the council will fully consider the mayor's proposed budget along with proposals from other sources, including other council members and the public.

"It's obviously realistic," Apo said. "It's one way of doing it.

"Its definitely tough. Everybody's going to have to accept this combination of an adjustment in the services they may have otherwise expected and had in the past with the realization that we're all going to have to pay a little bit more," Apo said.

Mayor's plan uncorks flood of price hikes

[By B.J. Reyes](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Mar 03, 2009

Honolulu residents already dealing with tough financial times might be forced to pay more in property taxes and other fees as the city works to overcome a \$50 million budget shortfall in the coming year.

The increases will solve a 50 million dollar budget shortfall caused by a drop in property values on Oahu.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann unveiled a \$1.8 billion budget that includes only a slight increase in spending but increases in property taxes and various city fees. It covers the 2010 fiscal year.

The increases are needed to avoid steep cuts in government services, such as public safety, sanitation and transportation, the mayor said.

"I think the challenge that we face is you never hear anyone say, 'I want less service, I want less police officers, I want less clean parks, I want less police protection,'" Hannemann said at a news conference at City Hall. "They always want more."

City Council Chairman Todd Apo said the mayor's budget would be thoroughly vetted.

"It's not life-ending devastation, but it's tough and we're going to have to work through it," Apo said. "Everyone's going to have to accept this combination of an adjustment in the services they may have otherwise expected and had in the past, with the realization that we're all going to have to pay a little bit more."

"We all want to minimize that impact, but we need to operate the city government."

Hannemann said he saw raising real property tax rates as a "last resort."

He noted that his administration already has instituted cost-saving measures such as 2 percent to 3 percent departmental budget restrictions, a hiring freeze, travel restrictions and deferments on various equipment purchases.

The city also has decided to cut 806 vacant jobs, saving \$36.3 million for the 2010 fiscal year.

"I think we've cut as much as we can cut," Hannemann said.

If approved by the Council, residential real property tax rates would increase 30 cents to \$3.59 per \$1,000 of property value.

Coupled with a \$75 tax credit, the tax on a home at the median price of \$624,000 for a homeowner under the age of 65 would increase by about \$10.34 a month, or \$124.08 a year. For a condominium at the median price of \$325,000, an owner under age 65 would pay \$8.21 more per month, or \$98.52 a year.

Fee increases would cover TheBus, Honolulu Zoo admissions and greens fees on public golf courses.

PROPOSED TAX AND FEE INCREASES

Here is how a 30-cent real property tax increase would affect the owner of a single-family home:



	FY 2009	FY 2010
Median sale price	\$643,500	\$624,000
Home exemption	\$80,000	\$80,000
Taxable amount	\$563,500	\$544,000
Tax rate	\$3.29	\$3.59
Annual RP tax	\$1,853.92	\$1,952.96
Tax credit	\$100.00	\$75.00
Monthly RP tax	\$146.16	\$156.50
Monthly increase		\$10.34

Source: Honolulu Mayor's Office

Here are fee increases proposed by Mayor Mufi Hannemann:

	FY 2009	FY 2010
MOTOR VEHICLE WEIGHT TAX PER POUND (Last increase in Jan. 2006)		
Passenger vehicles	3¢	4¢
Trucks	3.5¢	4.5¢
BUS FARES (Last increase in 2003)		
Cash fare — adult	\$2.00	\$2.25
Monthly pass — adult	\$40.00	\$50.00
GOLF GREENS FEES		
With sr. golf ID — monthly	\$32.00	\$40.00
With golf ID — adult daily	\$16.00	\$19.00
With golf ID — junior daily	\$9.00	\$12.00
HONOLULU ZOO ADMISSION		
Adult — resident	\$4.00	\$6.00
Adult — nonresident	\$8.00	\$12.00
Child	\$1.00	\$3.00
HONOLULU ZOO PARKING		
	\$0.25 per hour	\$1.50 per hour

The adult cash fare would increase a quarter, to \$2.25, while the monthly pass would jump \$10, to \$50. A four-day visitor pass would increase \$5, to \$25.

Zoo fares would increase for residents, visitors and children, while parking at the Waikiki attraction would increase to \$1.50 an hour, up from 25 cents an hour. Hannemann noted that the zoo has improved its exhibits in recent years and even attracted then-President-elect Barack Obama when he vacationed in Hawaii in December.

Public greens fees and golf cart rentals also would increase across the board.

"I think what we're presenting today is very fair," Hannemann said.

He noted that the budget is premised on current funding sources, such as the city's share of the transient accommodations tax and the 0.5 percent general excise tax surcharge, remaining intact.

State lawmakers, who are looking to close a \$1 billion budget deficit of their own, have floated the idea of using some of those revenue sources.

"We're there every day just trying to tell them, 'Please don't touch the TAT, and please don't touch the half-percent coming to the county,'" Hannemann said.

"I'm hoping that it doesn't happen, but that's a big question."

March 4, 2009

City deficit calls for fiscal austerity, and creativity

The city has taken a look "down the road," as the mayor said in his State of the City address last week, and if the immediate budgetary picture is bleak, the sight up ahead is downright scary.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann this week broke the bad news to taxpayers that they'll likely be hit by an array of tax and fee increases in the coming fiscal year to overcome a shortfall of about \$50 million. And that deficit had been even larger before the administration struck 806 funded positions from the city ledger, reduced managerial pay and made other cuts.

What's far worse is that, even with new tax increases continuing into the 2011 budgetary year, a deficit of about \$176 million will be left.

Beyond the dark clouds hovering overhead, it's preparing for the thunderstorm beyond that should be the focus of talks in the next few weeks between the administration and the City Council.

Future prospects are almost certain to involve some reduction in service, and minimizing the pain that will cause may take some new alliances with the private sector, even volunteerism. Coming up with the savings to bridge a huge fiscal gap will take all the collaboration among government agencies the mayor has recommended, and then some.

City department heads already have been urged to approach their counterparts in state government to explore new ways of saving through cooperative purchasing strategies, and that's a good sign.

Elected officials anticipate revenues to shrink even further in a tumbling economy and their share of the pie to shrink along with it: The city's not sure yet how much of the transient accommodation tax it will get. Honolulu leaders may have to contemplate instituting spending curbs sooner rather than later.

Ending the pilot of TheBoat's ferry service seems a given, especially if that \$5 million savings would ensure a larger property-tax credit for homeowners.

Overall, the mayor made a strong case for a moderate hike in the residential property tax rate, and it makes sense that business taxpayers, who have seen their rates go up previously, should not be hit again during a downturn.

But there's a lot to discuss during strategy sessions.

For example, it would be smart to begin talks now on the proposal to establish a homeowner class for real property tax, shielding owner-occupants from some of the rising tax burden.

Beyond the modest hikes in bus fares, golf fees, zoo admissions and other general fees, the administration may later add a fee for garbage collection. That's sure to be unpopular, but careful planning could make it more palatable. Other cities charge according to trash volume; residents could then have an incentive to reduce their rubbish by recycling, and save on the fee.

Finally, it's time for the council members to cast a critical eye over the spending plan for the coming year and look for ways to trim more. It might be time to resurrect the mayor's old narrative about "need to have" versus "nice to have" items, and apply that rigor to this budget.

\$176M city deficit warned

By [B.J. Reyes](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Mar 04, 2009

Additional fees for city services, consolidation of government functions and a further assessment of essential programs are all possible in the coming years as the city struggles to overcome current and future budget deficits.

Even if Mayor Mufi Hannemann's \$1.8 billion operating budget for fiscal year 2010 is wholly adopted by the Council — with all of its proposed tax and fee hikes — that would get the city through only the \$50 million budget shortfall.

TELL THE MAYOR

How should the city fix the budget deficit? What taxes or fees should be raised? Where should spending be cut? Send an e-mail to budget@starbulletin.com

There still would be a looming deficit of \$176 million for the 2011 fiscal year.

Each fiscal year begins July 1.

"We're not waiting for the end of the fiscal year," Hannemann said. "I'm addressing it right now."

Hannemann on Monday unveiled his 2010 budget, proposing increases in real property taxes, some bus fares, zoo admission prices and public golf rates to help make up the shortfall.

He says his administration plans to review all fees and determine whether increases are warranted to address the future shortfall. One new fee that is likely to be imposed is for garbage collection and recycling.

"We've got to be the only place that really supplies everything without a fee," Hannemann said.

Also being studied is the creation of a homeowners class for real property taxes, to address the issue of speculators and part-time residents, giving more of a break to those who actually live on their property.

He also plans to examine the possibility of consolidating services — such as folding Emergency

Medical Services in with the Honolulu Fire Department — and assessing whether all programs meet the definition of essential city services.

Hannemann has made it clear that nothing should be considered a sacred cow.

"I've even thrown out there ... as much as I love music, as much as I love art and drama and the like, whether it's still an appropriate function for the city to have the Royal Hawaiian Band," Hannemann told Star-Bulletin reporters and editors. "I love music more than any other mayor that has sat in my job, but that's something, too, that doesn't fall under the definition of core city services."

Councilman Nestor Garcia, the budget chairman, said he agreed that everything needs to be put on the table. He said he was even willing to examine the need for one of his preferred projects, TheBoat.

"Everybody has to put in their sacrifices," Garcia said. "One of the things I liked about the mayor's approach is it's not just 2010, but 2011, too."

Councilman Duke Bainum, who sits on the budget committee, said he's hopeful the council can avoid tax and fee hikes, "but we have to also be realistic and know that we're in uncharted financial territory."

Councilman Charles Djou, also a budget committee member, criticized the growth in government spending under Hannemann, noting that the final operating budget submitted by former Mayor Jeremy Harris in 2004 was \$1.2 billion.

"I think we have to look at a wholesale revision of the way the city government operates," Djou said. "This is far, far, far too much spending and it's fiscally irresponsible."

OUR OPINION

Mayor's budget draft makes the best of bad circumstances

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Mar 04, 2009

The economic downturn has decreased city revenues from taxes and fees, so it comes as no surprise that Mayor Mufi Hannemann is proposing increased rates to balance the city's budget in the upcoming fiscal year. His suggested increases appear to be distributed fairly and should require little if any change by the City Council before being put to use.

The sharp reduction in tourism has been reflected in a decline in hotel room and fuel tax revenues, while hotels, restaurants and other businesses that cater to travelers struggle to survive the economic crisis. Hannemann has recognized their plight by keeping commercial and industrial property tax rates the same. Taxes for homeowners, however, will go up, returning to 2007 rates. The monthly property tax hikes will average about \$10 for single-family homes and \$8 for condominiums.

With the reduction of home values, the net revenue to the city through property taxes will be questionable. Property tax rates will remain far below rates on the mainland, where property taxes typically pay for schools.

The mayor calls for an operating budget increase of about 1 percent, due largely to union contracts with police, firefighters and bus employees and increases in the debt service and city employees' health and retirement system contributions. Hannemann and his cabinet members are taking exemplary 5 percent salary cuts and city managers are accepting pay freezes.

Hannemann's proposed fee increases cross into numerous areas, such as fees for license-plate renewal, those for fire alarm permits and a doubling of fees for use of police officers for special duty.

Most noticeable to residents would be increased bus fares from \$2 to \$2.25 a day and from \$40 to \$50 for monthly passes. Those rates — especially the monthly rate — still would be a good deal compared to bus fares in mainland cities.

Green fees at city golf courses would rise from \$16 to \$19 a round for adults and from \$9 to \$12 for children, and monthly rates from \$32 to \$40 for seniors, while cart rentals would go from \$16 to \$19. Essentially that would mean an adult golfer sharing a cart would pay \$27.50 a round, still far below green fees at privately owned courses that are open to the public.

The steepest rate increase would be those residents who have benefited from ultra-cheap parking next to the

Honolulu Zoo. Rates would increase from 25 cents to \$1.50 an hour, finally reflecting the reality of typical parking rates throughout Waikiki.

Hannemann also proposes increases from \$4 to \$6 for resident adults, \$8 to \$12 for nonresidents and \$1 to \$3 for children for admittance to the zoo itself. To hear President Obama tell it from his most recent visit to the zoo with his children, that still would be a great deal.

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March 4, 2009

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

State of the City

Mufi indeed showed he is a good leader

I agree with Lee Cataluna that the State of the City speech that Mayor Mufi gave was masterful. He showed what a good leader he is by saying he and his staff will take pay cuts to help with the city budget. And he seemed willing to let TheBoat go, even though it's been a good idea and the people who do take it like it a lot.

He rightly pointed out that all of us are going to have to do our part with extra fees or taxes to make it through these tough times. But he assured us that make it through we will, and I agree. It's not going to be easy, and he has never taken the easy way out. Neither should the rest of us.

Brandi Pregil | Wai'anae

March 6, 2009

Rail-tax 'loan' a sign of poor fiscal policy

That clatter emanating from the Capitol is the sound of the budgetary can being kicked down the road.

The Legislature seems determined to keep all its options open for balancing the budget during the nation's, and the state's, most challenging financial recession in decades.

But Senate Bill 1626 should not be one of them. The Senate yesterday kept alive this bill, which seeks an easy way out of tough budgetary choices that should be confronted head-on.

SB 1626 originally sought to divert the half-percentage point added to the general excise tax for the fixed-rail project into the state's general fund. Following an outcry by city officials and proponents of rail, the Senate is trying to soften the blow by turning the measure into a \$150 million loan to the state from the transit fund.

Here's the "softening": The Senate Ways and Means Committee has specified that the borrowed cash would be exchanged for \$250 million in general obligation bonds, which the state ordinarily issues for financing capital improvement projects. The bill, as amended yesterday, also would bar taking any city funds until cash from the bonds is held in escrow and would require city approval before making the swap.

This is still questionable budgetary policy. Essentially the state would be borrowing money to cover operating expenses, something that it's not supposed to do. Worse, it's borrowing for statewide purposes from an account set up for a specific purpose, and funded exclusively by O'ahu taxpayers.

Even though the city stands to gain money in the deal, Mayor Mufi Hannemann voiced concern in his testimony that the swap would make the local financing of the rail project seem insecure. It may make authorities in Washington less inclined to pledge the federal dollars Honolulu hopes to receive. Several committee members yesterday echoed that concern — and they're right.

The economy is not going to rebound quickly, and lawmakers could find themselves trying to tap the rail fund repeatedly when budgetary gaps inevitably open up again.

That's because the plan fails to deal with the fiscal crisis in the only responsible way: restricting spending to the most essential needs.

The hard fact of a shrinking economy is that it demands that leaders find a way to live within the state's more limited means. Playing a budgetary shell game is not the solution.

Stimulus will bring \$43.8M to Hawaii for transit work

[By Gary Kubota](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Mar 06, 2009

Hawaii will be receiving nearly \$44 million for transit projects under the recently passed economic stimulus package intended to assist in the state's financial recovery.

The \$43,837,375 is to be applied to transportation capital improvements, rural transportation assistance and ferry services, U.S. Sens. Daniel Inouye and Daniel Akaka said yesterday.

Akaka and Inouye said funds released through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 will give a boost to the state's economy through tough economic times.

"We are happy there is an investment in transit," state Transportation Director Brennon Morioka said.

Morioka said he supports federal funding in alternate means of transportation, including bus, rail and ferry services.

The state Department of Transportation will receive \$2.93 million, and the remainder will go to the City and County of Honolulu, state transportation spokeswoman Tammy Mori said.

The city plans to spend some \$40.9 million on the construction of transit facilities at Middle Street and Wahiawa, parking lot improvements at Pearl City, reinforcement of bus stop pads and the purchase of 60 large-capacity hybrid buses.

City spokesman Bill Brennan said the economic stimulus money was in addition to the \$26 million to \$27 million received annually from the federal government for transportation.

"The idea is to either create or retain jobs," he said.

Brennan said he did not have an estimate as to the number of jobs that might be created, but the work would be mainly related to construction and services involving mechanics.

Honolulu and Kahului airports are under consideration for stimulus funding for explosives detection systems.

The Transportation Security Administration will be evaluating the proposals before making a decision.

The state has been designated to also receive some \$126 million in highway funds under the federal stimulus package.

The state and counties will be meeting to discuss their needs, before a decision is made on how the funds will be divided, Mori said.

Transportation officials plan to make an announcement by March 17 on details of the projects funded by the \$126 million.

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Letters to the Editor

For Friday, March 6, 2009

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Mar 06, 2009

Don't give city rail funds to state budget

I hope the state Legislature is wise enough to vote no on the proposal to siphon off Honolulu's rail funds to balance the state budget. This would be foolhardy and a short-term fix at the expense of a greater long-term traffic solution. Besides, rail would create thousands of new jobs and bring in more than a billion dollars of federal funds for economic stimulus.

Why jeopardize the rail project and hurt our chances of improving the economy?

Joe Lee

Hawaii Kai

March 7, 2009

Plan to improve Oahu highway a model of community cooperation

Community partners with government to turn dream into reality

By Will Hoover

Advertiser Staff Writer

What began more than a decade ago as a simple highway beautification dream has evolved into what state and city transportation officials believe is the model for how communities and government can work together more effectively.

Area residents had hoped back in 1998 for some way of improving conditions on Kamehameha Highway between 'Aiea and Pearl City — one of the busiest corridors in the state.

Now, nearly \$9 million has been appropriated for the beginning of long- and short-term improvement projects in the works for years along the roadway. Construction is expected to start in April. Groundbreaking is being scheduled for late this month or early April, said Tammy Mori, spokeswoman for the state Department of Transportation.

That work will include the installation of overhead traffic-monitoring cameras, pedestrian countdown walk signals, median fencing, and intersection improvements at Ka'ahumanu Street.

Subsequent projects will include modernized entryways connecting Kamehameha to Pearl Harbor historic sites; traffic signal phasing throughout the corridor; dedicated turning lanes at Acacia Road and Kuala Street, as well as Kuala Street and Waimano Home Road; and underground fiber optics connecting the highway to Honolulu's Downtown traffic control center.

Residents who live along the thoroughfare are enthusiastic because the community played a major role in the decision-making process.

"Kamehameha Highway had been neglected for years and years in terms of aesthetics, in terms of repair, and it has been treated as sort of an alternate route when the H-1 Freeway got clogged up," said William Clark, who sits on the 'Aiea Neighborhood Board, one of numerous community groups that became involved.

"The question was, is there something we can do to start making this highway what it was before — with some views, and something that's pleasing to look at for the people who live there, and better for the people who drive through it?"

community input

Out of that premise grew the Kamehameha Highway Improvements Project and the promise of ending traffic and bureaucratic gridlock simultaneously.

Following numerous exploratory meetings between local neighborhood boards, by the year 2000, the beautification notion had evolved to include traffic flow and pedestrian-safety improvements as well. There were traffic signals to be upgraded and guard rails to be fixed, folks said. Left- and right-turn lanes could be extended to accommodate more traffic, and bridges, overhead signs and drainage systems could be fixed, upgraded and beautified, they said.

Innovation came in the way government responded to the need, Clark said.

"Instead of the planners coming out and saying, 'This is what we're going to do to the highway,' it was the other way around," he said. "The planners were coming out and saying, 'What would you like to have done with your highway?' "

The 'Aiea and Pearl City Neighborhood Boards held joint committee meetings. Other groups, including the 'Aiea and Pearl City community associations, followed suit. In time, the community partners included the U.S. Navy, the Pearl Harbor Historic Sites, The 'Aiea/Pearl City Business Association, the Aliamanu/Salt Lake Neighborhood Board and Pearlridge Center.

By 2005, things had kicked into high gear with the establishment of the Kamehameha Highway Improvements Task Force. Its mission was to identify short-term to long-range improvement plans that would make the road safer and enhance its aesthetics while maintaining its sense of place.

model project

The task force not only included community organizations and the DOT, but also the Honolulu City and County Transportation Services.

"This project — the first of its kind in Hawai'i — is the result of long-range, consensus-based planning processes that involved entire communities," said Rep. K. Mark Takai, who co-chairs the Kamehameha Highway Improvements Task Force and has been a driving force behind the direction the project has taken.

The community-driven approach gives area residents a sense of ownership as well as a willingness to assist in its implementation, Takai said.

"It's actually a fairly comprehensive approach," added Brennon Morioka, director of the state Department of Transportation. The goal is to focus on low-cost, high-impact projects, he said.

More important, the Kamehameha projects initiative should pave the way for projects to come because it melds the wishes of communities with the technical expertise and funding ability of government.

"These projects were not driven by the DOT," Morioka said. "These were improvements that the community said they needed. Once we knew what the concerns were, then we developed the projects that would fit their concerns."

It's called Context Sensitive Solutions, or CSS, Morioka said. The Central O'ahu project is the first. But the department has now formally adopted CSS as policy. The 'Aiea/Pearl City projects have become the model for similar projects around O'ahu and the rest of the state, Morioka said.

"The Kamehameha Highway Improvements Projects is our first construction coming out of CSS," he

said.

But he said the idea is the wave of the future.

Additional Facts

At a glance

How to get involved in the Kamehameha Highway Improvements Project:

Call task force co-chairs Brennon Morioka, DOT director, at 587-2150; Wayne Yoshioka, city transportation director, at 768-8303; or state Rep. K. Mark Takai at 586-8455.

Visit the project Web site at www.kamehamehahighwayimprovements.org, or www.HeartofOahu.com.

Letters to the Editor

For Saturday, March 7, 2009

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Mar 07, 2009

Isle economy needs wise budgeting

President Barack Obama and Congress support investing in infrastructure and have fast-tracked the economic stimulus bill to create jobs. Gov. Linda Lingle and the Legislature support investing in infrastructure and have fast-tracked improvements like school repairs, roadwork and harbor work to create jobs.

Now Mayor Mufi Hannemann has proposed his budget, which includes a healthy dose of infrastructure for waste-to-energy, roads and rail transit, also to create jobs. The ball is in the City Council's court now. Let us hope Council members have learned from the examples set by federal and state leaders and will fast-track our island's infrastructure improvements. We need these improvements and the jobs they will generate now more than ever.

Lei Matsuura
Honolulu

Letters to the Editor

For Saturday, March 7, 2009

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Mar 07, 2009

Mayor's budget only makes things worse

Mayor Mufi Hannemann is having problems with his measly \$1.8 billion budget and he has to sock it to us -- again -- to make it work. On top of this growing insanity, we have agreed to let him push onto us at this time an unfathomable multibillion-dollar rail program. Lawmakers could easily relegate the general excise tax increase we got shoved down our throats. These economic times certainly warrant this possibility. Wouldn't that cash balance Hannemann's budget and then some? We need a multibillion-dollar rail project right now like we need a cut in the grade of pothole filler.

Is there anyone out there or am I all alone in this thinking? Where is the outrage? The bottom line is if everything stays on its present course, our home values will be down so far and our foreclosures up so high, Hannemann would have to raise our property taxes 1,000 percent and he'd still come up short and we'd still have potholes. Maybe Hannemann could provide us with more transparency like line item by line item up on the city's Web site. It could be a simple PDF. The president seems to think that is a good idea, doesn't Hannemann? Come on, it's time, speak up or forever hold your peace.

Jim Cone
President
Matrix Media of Hawaii Inc.
Honolulu

March 8, 2009

Kamehameha Schools urges that Honolulu rail be at ground level

Calls proposed elevated rail system a 'visual blight' that will increase noise, crime

By Sean Hao

Advertiser Staff Writer

Hawaii's largest private landowner wants the city of Honolulu to again consider building the planned \$5.4 billion train at ground level.

The city eliminated that option long ago on concerns that a ground-level train would operate at slower speeds and generate lower ridership and higher long-term costs.

However, Kamehameha Schools has joined others, including the American Institute of Architects, in raising concerns about the visual impact the approximately 30-foot-wide, 50-foot-high elevated track system will have on Honolulu's scenery. A ground-level train also could shave millions of dollars off the cost of the project, and that could allow the city to build a longer train system.

Whether the planned 20-mile train from East Kapolei to Ala Moana runs on the ground or on an elevated guideway could depend on how concerns about elevating the train affect the outcome of an ongoing environmental impact review. According to comments submitted to the city and federal government in early February, Kamehameha Schools supports the transit project.

However, the landowner expressed concerns that options such as an at-grade train system were not fully analyzed during the city's analysis of alternatives. In addition, the drawbacks of an elevated train weren't fully addressed in a recent draft environmental impact study, according to Kamehameha Schools.

Kamehameha Schools is also concerned about the effect on its land values and rental income. Kamehameha Schools has about 229 acres with 1,000 lessees and sublessees near the rail route. That makes Kamehameha Schools one of the biggest private landowners that could be financially affected by rail.

"While it is understandable why an elevated system might be utilized in rural areas of the transportation corridor ... a host of adverse economic and environmental impacts are associated with an elevated guideway system, including noise, reduced visibility and access to businesses, visual blight, and increased crime," Kamehameha Schools wrote the city.

Elevated System

Kamehameha Schools, which owns properties along Farrington Highway, Kamehameha Highway, Dillingham Boulevard and Halekauwila Street, issued the following statement, but wouldn't comment further on the letter to the city:

"I do want to emphasize that we believe the rail system can be a powerful stimulus to revitalize our economy, and we look forward to working with the city on actions that will mitigate the development impacts of the system," Kamehameha Schools spokeswoman Ann Botticelli said in an e-mail statement. "We feel we have a kuleana to respond to the (draft environmental impact statement) ... both as a landowner with ancestral ties to the lands in question and as a landlord to small businesses."

Kamehameha Schools isn't the only entity raising concerns that alternatives to an elevated rail weren't adequately considered.

City Transportation Director Wayne Yoshioka did not return calls for this story. However, City Councilman Gary Okino said that as far as the city is concerned, the planned commuter rail will be entirely elevated.

"It has to be an elevated system for several significant reasons," he said.

Supporters of the transit plan contend that the elevated track will not disrupt views or change the aesthetics in already congested urban Honolulu. In addition, elevating the train is also cheaper than building a network of underground tunnels or running the tracks at ground level, where more land would need to be acquired, proponents say. Elevating the train also should reduce commuting times and as a result, potentially increase ridership.

Over time, the higher costs of building an elevated train are offset by lower operating costs created in part because the trains won't need drivers, Okino said. That's because an elevated train that doesn't interact with auto traffic can be automatically operated without needing a driver.

Kamehameha Schools and other groups, such as the American Institute of Architects, need to become more informed about the benefits of an elevated system, Okino said.

"I think they're just not aware of the issues and they can deal with it," said Okino, who chairs the council's Transportation and Planning Committee. "There's tradeoffs. An at-grade system is definitely better looking, it's definitely cheaper in the beginning, but to me it lacks foresight."

Environmental impact

While the planned transit system isn't expected to prevent traffic along the busy H-1 Freeway commuter corridor from worsening, it is expected to give commuters an alternative to highways while reducing urban sprawl.

An ongoing environmental study is a major hurdle in the city's effort to obtain about \$1.4 billion in federal money to build the train system. The city expects to complete the environmental review in time to begin construction in December. The city's timeline calls for service between West Loch and Waipahu to start in late 2013 and full service to Ala Moana by the end of 2018.

According to the city, 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.

Still, Kamehameha Schools said it is concerned that the visual blight of the elevated guideway over time

could lead to less tenant interest, higher tenant turnover and reduced property values. The landowner also expressed concerns about the financial feasibility of the project given the economic slowdown.

The size of the elevated track also has some neighborhood groups and architects asking whether it will damage the city's attractiveness and block views of the ocean or mountains. Aesthetics and other issues were behind opposition to an elevated guideway from neighborhood boards representing Waikiki; Diamond Head/Kapahulu/St. Louis Heights and Ala Moana/ Kaka'ako.

Other groups that are concerned the elevated guideway could spoil views and scenery include the Honolulu chapter of the American Institute of Architects and the Hawai'i Hotel and Lodging Association. Both organizations said they support mass transit.

Jeff Nishi, president of the Hawai'i AIA chapter, said a rail system built at least partially at grade would cost less, have less visual impact and have greater potential for transit-oriented economic development.

"We're very much for rail," he said. "We want to see it go through and we certainly don't want to get in the way of it.

"But we want a versatile system that doesn't have to be above grade as planned."

Councilman Duke Bainum said the city shouldn't ignore cost and aesthetic concerns being raised about an elevated guideway. A train built at grade would cost significantly less money, which would allow the city to build an even longer train system.

"Instead of looking at 20 miles of redevelopment and renewal, you could be looking at 38, 40 miles," Bainum said. "Imagine that, if we could go to Mililani (and) go to Manoa in the first phase.

"This is too big a project — too important a project not to look at every option and to relook at every option."

March 8, 2009

West O'ahu done in again by gas spill, power outage

Fort Weaver slows to a crawl; in Kapolei, shoppers left in dark

*By Will Hoover and Michael Tsai
Advertiser Staff Writers*

Another Saturday, another mammoth test of patience for West O'ahu residents.

Recall: It was two weeks ago yesterday that an Aloha Petroleum tanker spilled some 2,500 gallons of gasoline onto H-1 Freeway near 'Ewa — and the subsequent lane closures resulted in a massive traffic snarl stretching all the way to Nana- kuli that took nearly 10 hours to unknot.

The troubles were twofold yesterday as another, much smaller gasoline spill on Fort Weaver Road forced the closure of town-bound lanes and a power outage left an estimated 25 businesses in the Kapolei Parkway area to manage in the dark for six prime-time shopping hours.

Slow-motion Saturday began shortly after 9 a.m. when a private construction company truck spilled approximately 10 gallons of fuel onto Fort Weaver Road near Hawaii Medical Center-West.

Honolulu police officers closed one lane of the road for about three hours to allow a cleanup crew from the construction company to remove contaminated soil and retrieve any fuel that may have gone down a nearby storm drain.

The lane closure retarded the already slow-moving town-bound traffic on the road, leading to backups that lingered into midafternoon.

Roseanne Ishihiro, 52, of 'Ewa, was trying to get from her home at the Sun Tierra complex to a volleyball match at Farrington High School when she realized she had made a big mistake heading out on Fort Weaver.

Pressed for time, she turned around, backtracking to Kapolei via Geiger Road to get on H-1.

It took her 45 minutes just to get to the on-ramp.

"My husband was following me in another car," Ishihiro said. "He just turned around and went home."

For Lori and Jason Reilly of Waipi'o, a missed turn was a stroke of luck.

"By accident, we took the wrong exit and ended up on Farrington Highway," Lori Reilly said. "It was the best thing we could have done."

By taking the wrong exit, the two missed the Fort Weaver Road mess, which they said was moving very slowly before 1 p.m.

Instead of enduring bumper-to-bumper traffic, the couple, along with their two children, Angel, 2, and "Little Jason," 4, breezed to Kapolei to check out Target.

"Actually, I work at Target at Salt Lake," said Lori Reilly, who was amazed at how much business the Kapolei Target was doing even in a blackout.

Just 15 minutes after the spill occurred, an equipment problem caused a power failure at Kapolei Parkway, complicating what was already expected to be a busy day at the Kapolei Commons shopping center.

The problem was traced to a cable fault, according to Hawaiian Electric Co. spokeswoman Sharon Higa.

The traffic snarl on Fort Weaver slowed the HECO repair crew's arrival at the scene and power was not restored until just before 3 p.m.

Among the businesses affected by the outage was the newly opened Target store.

Store manager Jon Radtke said there was 15 seconds of total darkness before an emergency generator system kicked in. And then it was shopping as usual, only slightly darker, as the store welcomed the expected crush of weekend shoppers.

Target and nearby Petco operated on emergency power throughout the outage, a Kapolei Commons representative said.

Radtke said the Kapolei Target's official grand opening will start at 8 a.m. today as scheduled.

Petco was celebrating the second day of a three-day grand opening when the lights went out.

General manager Jerry Coble said that although it has not been officially confirmed, Friday apparently set a record as the biggest first-day opening of any Petco in the country. And he said they expect to do twice the business today.

Jarrett Chang, manager at Sports Authority, said the store's grand opening yesterday went off without a hitch — until the store went dark.

At that point, the grand opening moved outside to the front of the store.

Belle Ezar, of 'Ewa Beach, said by 2:30 p.m. traffic was moving faster on Fort Weaver Road.

"But it was still moving slowly," she said, as she strolled into Target.

Eric Torrate of Waipahu had never shopped at a Target before yesterday.

"It's a little crowded," he said. "And it's a little hot because there's so many people."

His wife, Laraine, wasn't complaining.

"We'll be back," she said. "It's cheaper and they have the bigger sizes. A lot of stores don't carry those."

March 8, 2009

Letter to the Editor

city budget

City should fast-track infrastructure as well

President Obama and Congress support investing in infrastructure and have fast-tracked the economic stimulus bill to create jobs. Gov. Lingle and the Legislature support investing in infrastructure and have fast-tracked improvements like school repairs, roadwork and harbor work to create jobs.

Now Mayor Hannemann has proposed his budget, which includes a healthy dose of infrastructure for waste-to-energy, roads and rail transit, also to create jobs. The ball is in the City Council's court now. Let us hope they have learned from the examples set by federal and state leaders and will fast-track our island's infrastructure improvements. We need these improvements and the jobs they will generate now more than ever.

Lei Matsuura | Honolulu

Letter to the Editor

For Sunday, March 8, 2009

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Mar 08, 2009

Diverting rail funds would be disastrous

The Legislature is thinking about taking Honolulu's rail fund and using it to shore up the deficit in the state budget. Lawmakers need to be reminded that the Legislature approved the rail tax in 2005, the City Council approved the rail project in 2006 and Oahu's voters validated their support for rail in 2008. It is the will of the people that rail should proceed.

Changing the rules of the game now will only send a bad message to Congress that Honolulu is once again getting cold feet on rail. The Legislature should not risk losing the thousands of jobs and federal funding that comes with rail just to balance the state budget for one year. And the Legislature should not jeopardize the most important infrastructure project ever planned to address the future growth and transportation needs of our island.

Mike Chang
Honolulu

March 9, 2009

Ridership booming on public transport

U.S. survey reports highest use in 52 years despite drop in gas cost

By *Lena H. Sun*
Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Despite job losses and falling gasoline prices, record numbers of Americans rode subways, buses and commuter rail last year, boosting public transportation ridership to its highest level in 52 years, according to a survey to be released today by the American Public Transportation Association.

Advocates say the ridership figures show growing support for public transportation. They hope to use that support to push for federal funding beyond the \$8.4 billion in stimulus money set for transit. More investment in transit not only helps the economy, advocates say, but also helps the environment and fosters energy independence.

"Now, more than ever, the value of public transportation is evident and the public has clearly demonstrated that they want and need more public transit services," said APTA President William Millar.

"These are investments that pay off for decades and decades to come," he said. Boston opened the nation's first subway in 1897. More than a century later, Millar noted, "I can still ride it today."

The 10.7 billion transit trips Americans took last year amounted to a 4 percent increase over trips taken in 2007; at the same time, Americans drove measurably less, according to the Transportation Department.

The increase is significant because cheaper gas and job losses tend to drive transit ridership down. Almost 60 percent of transit riders go to work.

The APTA survey found that ridership increased last year on all modes of transit across the country. Ridership rose on 14 of the nation's subway systems (3.5 percent), 20 of 21 commuter rail systems (4.7 percent) and 20 of 26 light-rail systems (8.3 percent). Some of the big increases were in places such as South Florida, Dallas and Salt Lake City, not necessarily among the largest communities served by transit, officials said.

long wait for bus

Bus service increased 3.9 percent, but ridership on systems serving populations of less than 100,000 rose 9.3 percent, the survey found. Riders in those systems typically wait up to an hour for their buses, officials said.

Transit officials said that even with fewer people going to work and cheaper gas, riders are taking transit to save money. On Oct. 1, a gallon of regular gas was \$3.61, compared with \$4.11 a gallon on July 17. By year's end, the national average was \$1.61.

In South Florida, average weekday ridership on the Tri-Rail commuter line is about 15,000 trips, a small number compared with the hundreds of thousands of vehicles that cram Interstate 95 every day between Fort Lauderdale and Miami. But ridership on Tri-Rail, which runs from Miami to West Palm Beach, rose 18 percent in the fourth quarter and nearly 23 percent for the year. Reflecting a nationwide trend, more riders climbed aboard in the second and third quarters last year as gasoline prices skyrocketed, and the number stayed even when prices at the pump fell. The trend is holding, with ridership up about 8 percent in January over the same month last year, Tri-Rail spokeswoman

Bonnie Arnold said.

The Dallas light-rail system, which has an average weekday ridership of 70,000 trips, registered a ridership increase of more than 8 percent in the fourth quarter and more than 10 percent for the year.

As gasoline prices fell, other benefits became more apparent, said Morgan Lyons, a spokesman for Dallas Area Rapid Transit. Instead of traffic-clogged drives that could take up to an hour, riders could be on the train for 35 to 40 minutes and do work or relax.

Service cuts

Ridership demand notwithstanding, enormous budget deficits and falling sales and property tax revenue have forced many transit agencies to raise fares and cut service. Last month, the Cincinnati Metro said it was reducing service on 27 bus routes to balance its 2009 budget. Maryland officials cut commuter rail and bus service.

Looking ahead, transit officials say ridership is likely to fall in the first quarter of this year because of the slumping economy. But they say stimulus-funded projects set to get under way this spring will show policymakers the benefits of transit investment.

"There are a lot of eyes watching those of us who are in receipt of stimulus funds," Millar said. If transit agencies spend the money quickly and create jobs, building "tracks to somewhere" instead of "a bridge to nowhere," federal policymakers "will be much more inclined to listen and invest additional sums," he said.

Lawmakers would rob Oahu to fill treasury

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

A SENATE committee that approved a measure to transfer half of the city's rail transit revenue to the state's treasury is essentially proposing to steal money from Oahu taxpayers.

Even with an amendment to issue bonds to pay back the city, there is no guarantee that the bonds will be authorized, nor any assurance that state lawmakers will not again dip into the pot that was meant to pay for Honolulu's rail transit project.

In addition, the transfer may set off legal disputes since the City Council enacted the excise tax surcharge specifically for the transit project. If the city -- or Oahu taxpayers -- challenge the legislative action, the fund transfer could be encumbered until legally resolved.

The bill would allow extension of the 0.5 percent surcharge for two more years, which should not be necessary if the state plans to reimburse the city for its "loan." It also would punt to the Council the politically unpalatable task of lengthening the taxable years and further burdening city residents and businesses.

All but one of the Ways and Means Committee members voted "with reservations" to advance the bill, evidence that it has little support. Members didn't like the idea of one county's taxpayers having to pay more of a share of the state's expenses than others.

But their "reservations" don't seem to be strong enough. They seem, instead, to be reserving the option to take the money and run away from their fiscal responsibilities.

Pacific Business News (Honolulu) - March 9, 2009

<http://pacific.bizjournals.com/pacific/stories/2009/03/09/daily11.html>

PACIFIC BUSINESS NEWS

Monday, March 9, 2009, 2:29pm HAST

Hawaii trade, transportation and utilities sector grows 6%

Pacific Business News (Honolulu)

The number of workers in Hawaii's trade, transportation and utilities sector has grown 6.1 percent in the past five years.

There were 109,000 employees in the sector — which consists of wholesale trade, retail trade, transportation and warehousing and utilities — in December 2003. That number has increased to 115,700 in December 2008, according to data from the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#).

Workers made on average \$543.84 a week in December 2008, up 22.3 percent from \$444.59 in December 2003.

Hourly wages were up 19 percent from \$13.85 in December 2003 to \$16.48 in December 2008.

The number of hours worked increased 2.8 percent from 32.1 hours in December 2003 to 33 hours in December 2008.

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Pacific Business News (Honolulu) - March 9, 2009

<http://pacific.bizjournals.com/pacific/stories/2009/03/09/daily7.html>

PACIFIC BUSINESS NEWS

Monday, March 9, 2009, 11:59am HAST

Public transit use jumps 4 percent in 2008

Pacific Business News (Honolulu)

Though gas prices plummeted in the second half of the year, a report released Monday by the American Public Transportation Association shows that Americans took 10.7 billion trips on public transportation in 2008, a modern record.

Those trips represented a 4 percent increase over the number of trips taken in 2007 on public transportation, while at the same time, vehicle miles traveled declined by 3.6 percent in 2008, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The ridership record continues a long term trend of ridership growth. Public transportation use is up 38 percent since 1995, a figure that is almost triple the growth rate of the population -- 14 percent.

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Letters to the Editor

For Monday, March 9, 2009

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

Greedy state might right the wrong of rail

The old aphorism "two wrongs don't make a right" faces a serious challenge here in the Aloha State. The first wrong was the Hannemann regime jamming through its fiscally irresponsible train system necessitating an increase in the state excise tax for Oahu residents. Because the city isn't capable of collecting this surcharge, it pays the state to collect it.

But now the state is in financial trouble and rather than re-negotiate plush union contracts or cut employees, the state Legislature wants to steal this money from the city to help sustain the state's fiscal irresponsibility. Hence, two wrongs may make a right; namely Mufi's foolish plan for a fiscal black hole of a train system is nixed by a state that can't be trusted not to steal the money it collects for that purpose.

As Margaret Thatcher was fond of saying: "Socialism works until one runs out of other people's money to spend."

Michael P Rethman
Kaneohe

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Letters to the Editor

For Monday, March 9, 2009

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

Stop howling and get to work on budget

Look out, the sky is falling! Or maybe not, Councilman Djou ("\$176 million city deficit warned," Star-Bulletin, March 4). Perhaps the mayor is just proposing some reasonable ways to close the budget gap without severely curtailing the services we all depend upon. I sure hope we don't have another big useless political fight over what should be a fair and straightforward approach to solving the city budget problem.

I hope any City Council member who objects to parts of the budget has a better proposal and doesn't just back-seat drive! Our economy is troubled, and we need strong and focused leaders, not a bunch of Chicken Littles -- although I hear Hawaii Kai does have a feral chicken problem.

Kalani Melvin

Kailua

March 10, 2009

Mayor's plan raises bus fares by 25 cents

Proposed 25 cent increase could be just the beginning as city deals with budget deficits

*By Sean Hao
Advertiser Staff Writer*

High fuel costs and employee pay raises are putting pressure on the city to raise bus fares for the first time in six years.

The city is considering a series of fare hikes for the popular TheBus transit system, starting with a 25 cent, or 12.5 percent, adult fare hike to \$2.25 this year.

If approved by the City Council, that increase is likely to be followed by more fare hikes. The plan to increase fees is driven in part by city budget deficits and rising costs at TheBus.

The heavily subsidized public transit system lost \$151 million in the 12 months that ended June 30 2008, according to a recently released audit. That's up nearly \$12.5 million from the prior year's losses.

The mounting losses are attributed mainly to increases in the cost of fuel. However, in the future TheBus also will be grappling with higher wages. Last summer O'ahu bus drivers, mechanics and other support staff approved a contract giving them a 21 percent pay raise over the next five years.

The city is spending \$127 million to subsidize TheBus this year.

"That subsidy will increase without the proposed fare increases," said Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann, who proposed the fare hike last week. "Even if we didn't have this budget shortfall, we'd have to take a look at increasing TheBus fares."

The city is required to recover 27 percent to 33 percent of bus operating costs from passenger fares. That so-called farebox recovery ratio would drop below 27 percent next year without the fare hike, Hannemann said.

Several City Council members also said that a fare hike may be needed.

"I think we're pretty close" to needing to raise bus fares, said council member Gary Okino, who chairs the council's Transportation and Planning Committee. "Definitely, I almost guarantee you that will be part of the discussion. We'll try to (avoid it), but obviously we've got to find money somewhere."

Council member Duke Bainum agreed that a bus fare hike may be needed.

"We're bumping right up. We're close to it," he said. However, "If we can avoid rising the bus fares for another year I'm certainly advocating that."

A 25-cent hike in bus fares could cost bus riders about \$5 million a year, but wouldn't be enough to close the \$50 million gap in the city's 2010 budget. Even with a fare hike the city's TheBus subsidy is only expected to drop by about \$2 million, to \$125 million in fiscal 2010.

The last time the city increased bus fares was 2003, when the maximum cash fare was raised from \$1.50 to \$2. Under a budget plan released by Hannemann last week, that fare would rise to \$2.25 and the cost of a monthly pass would increase from \$40 to \$50. Senior and youth fares would not increase.

Hannemann did not disclose how much more fares could rise in the future.

fares in other cities

Fares for TheBus would remain in line with other cities even if the proposed fare increase was approved, Hannemann said. Mainland bus fares vary from \$1.50 to \$3.25 in Pittsburgh, \$2 to \$2.50 in Seattle, \$1.75 to \$2.25 in Minneapolis and \$2 in Denver, according to city officials.

Still, any hike in fares could drive away some riders.

Since 1980, TheBus has experienced little net passenger growth, despite a 19.3 percent increase in Honolulu's population. In 2007, TheBus had 72.6 million passengers. That's slightly more than the 71.6 million passengers it carried in 1980.

Roger Morton, president and general manager of O'ahu Transit Services Inc., operator of TheBus, said the agency will finish this fiscal year within its budget. That's mainly because of a sharp drop in fuel prices, which peaked in August at \$4.61 a gallon. Today, TheBus is paying about \$2 a gallon for fuel.

"We were worried about it of course," Morton said. "There are certain uncontrollable expenses and fuel is certainly uncontrollable."

The proposed fare hikes follow service improvements, including additional country express routes, new buses, new transit centers in Wai'anae, Mililani and Kalihi, and a circulator bus service in Mililani.

"Even with increases (TheBus) is still a good deal," Hannemann said. "It's not like we've been standing pat on our bus service and operations. We believe we've improved it dramatically."

March 10, 2009

Senate rejects bill to divert city transit tax revenue to state

Advertiser Staff

The state Senate today rejected a bill that would have diverted \$150 million from a Honolulu transit tax to help close the state's budget deficit.

The bill would have given the city the option to extend the tax surcharge for two years — to 2024 — and would have repaid the city with \$250 million in bonds.

State Sen. Donna Mercado Kim, chairwoman of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, recommended that the bill be sent back to committee.

Kim told her colleagues that she did not want to do anything to jeopardize the city's rail project. She cited a letter of concern about the bill from U.S. Sen. Daniel K. Inouye, D-Hawaii.

The state House and Senate were moving out dozens of bills today in advance of the deadline on Thursday for bills to cross between chambers.

The House turned back a bill that would have extended the deadline for an environmental impact statement for Hawaii Superferry.

The law that allows Superferry to operate while the environmental review is being completed expires this summer.

The state Department of Transportation has said the review should be completed before the deadline, but there is some concern that environmentalists could sue to stop the project if the review is not finished by the cutoff.

The House, meanwhile, passed a bill that could lead to further caps on noneconomic damages in medical malpractice lawsuits against doctors in five specialties. A task force would recommend the caps.

The Senate moved out a bill that would restructure the state's ailing public hospital system. The bill would allow hospitals within the system to convert to nonprofit or private companies to become more financially competitive.

March 10, 2009

U.S. Senate passes spending bill with \$372 million for Hawaii projects

By *JOHN YAUKEY*

Advertiser Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Senate tonight passed a \$410 billion spending bill containing hundreds of millions of dollars for projects in Hawaii, including money to develop commuter rail service and support for Native Hawaiian education and healthcare.

The bill would fund most government programs and services through fiscal 2009, which ends Sept. 30. Funding for defense, homeland security and veterans benefits was passed separately.

The Senate passed the legislation by voice vote, which means there was no recorded tally. Both Hawaii senators were strong supporters of the bill.

The House passed its version of the spending bill Feb. 25 by a vote of 245-178, with both of Hawaii's representatives voting in favor.

President Barack Obama is expected to sign the legislation soon.

Hawaii's total take from the bill is estimated at about \$372 million, according to an analysis by the two Island senators.

The bill is but a chapter in a book of recent federal spending, some of it meant to spur the ailing economy. That includes a \$787 billion economic stimulus package, which contained about \$1 billion in direct aid to Hawaii over the next two years.

"Will the United States be better off in the next year if we enact this bill? The answer is obviously yes," Sen. Daniel K. Inouye said.

Inouye, chairman of the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee, was the leading manager of the bill on the Democratic side.

Some of the top items for Hawaii in the spending bill include:

- \$60 million for the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration Pacific Regional Facility.
- \$33 million for Native Hawaiian education.
- \$21 million for the East-West Center.
- \$20 million for the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project.
- \$14 million for Native Hawaiian healthcare.

In the Senate, the bill drew a stark ideological line between lawmakers eager to bring federal money home, and budget hawks, who decried the measure as laden with earmarks.

Inouye spent much of the last week fighting off a raft of Republican amendments meant to derail the legislation or at least chip away at the earmarks.

Any change in the bill would have forced it back to the House for reconciliation, which House leaders declared a nonstarter. That would have meant continuing government funding at current levels instead of increasing it by roughly 8 percent, as called for in the spending bill.

Inouye's strategy was to advocate for indisputably worthy earmark recipients, such as emergency first-responders, infrastructure projects, healthcare and flood control measures. Referring to the long string of amendments meant to cut the spending, Inouye asked, "How many of these will we accept before we go into law enforcement and healthcare?"

The bill contains between 8,000 and 9,000 earmarks — the exact number depends on who's counting — including requests from lawmakers no longer in office. Inouye was among the top 10 senators in terms of earmark requests.

In total, the earmarks make up less than 2 percent of the bill but have sparked vociferous debate over federal spending.

Inouye had 106 special requests for funding totaling more than \$225 million, according to an analysis of all Senate earmarks by the non-partisan Taxpayers for Common Sense.

Sen. Daniel Akaka had a hand in about \$134 million in earmarks, mostly in conjunction with other lawmakers.

Second-term Rep. Mazie Hirono led the 435-member House of Representatives with \$138.6 million in earmarks, in large part because they were co-sponsored with Inouye.

In fourth place in the House was Rep. Neil Abercrombie, with \$111.4 million.

Other notable provisions for Hawai'i in the spending bill include:

- \$9.5 million for the Advanced Technology Solar Telescope.
 - \$7.8 million for research on preventing the extinction of Hawaiian sea turtles.
 - \$7 million for expanding the James Campbell National Wildlife Refuge.
 - \$6.7 million for tropical and subtropical agriculture research.
 - \$5.8 million for Hawaii's share of a Native Hawaiian and Native Alaskan Higher Education initiative.
-

March 10, 2009

Letters to the Editor

Rail transit

Lawmakers should vote no on SB 1626

We've been talking about rail transit for more than 30 years and the November vote leaves no question that the people want rail transit on O'ahu. But SB 1626 unnecessarily jeopardizes the \$1 billion in federal funds to build rail by allowing the state to borrow up to \$150 million from the rail transit fund.

Our congressional delegates have said tampering with the dedicated funding source sends mixed signals to Congress. And according to the University of Hawai'i economists, spending on construction will fall \$2 billion in the next two years. We will lose 9,000 jobs.

We cannot risk losing the rail transit project and the economic stimulus that it provides to our island and state. We ask our state senators to please vote "no" on SB 1626.

Alicia Maluafiti | Go Rail Go

March 11, 2009

\$372 million for Hawaii in federal spending bill

Hawai'i to gain federal funds for rail project, Native Hawaiians

WASHINGTON — The Senate yesterday passed a \$410 billion spending bill that contained hundreds of millions of dollars for projects in Hawai'i, including money to develop commuter rail service and support for Native Hawaiian education and healthcare.

The bill would fund most government programs and services through fiscal 2009, which ends Sept. 30. Funding for defense, homeland security and veterans' benefits was passed separately.

Hawai'i's total take from the bill is estimated at about \$372 million, according to an analysis by the state's senators.

The Senate passed the legislation by voice vote, which means there was no recorded tally. The voice vote was taken after the Senate voted 62-35 to end the debate. Sixty votes were required to shut down debate.

Both of Hawai'i's senators were strong supporters of the bill.

The House passed its version of the spending bill Feb. 25 by a vote of 245-178, with both of Hawai'i's representatives voting in favor. President Obama is expected to sign the bill today, the White House said.

The bill is but a chapter in a book of recent federal spending, some of it meant to spur the ailing economy. That includes a recently passed \$787 billion economic stimulus package, which contained about \$1 billion in direct aid to Hawai'i over the next two years.

"Will the United States be better off in the next year if we enact this bill? The answer is obviously yes," U.S. Sen. Daniel K. Inouye said as the spending bill passed yesterday.

Inouye, chairman of the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee, was the leading manager of the bill on the Democratic side.

Some of the top items in the bill for Hawai'i include:

- \$60 million for the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration Pacific Regional Facility.
- \$33 million for Native Hawaiian education.
- \$21 million for the East-West Center, a think tank on the University of Hawai'i-Manoa campus.
- \$20 million for the Honolulu High-Capacity (rail) Transit Corridor Project.
- \$14 million for Native Hawaiian healthcare.

earmarks an issue

In the Senate, the bill drew a stark ideological line between lawmakers eager to bring federal money home, and budget hawks, who decried the measure as laden with lawmakers' pet projects, or earmarks.

Inouye spent much of the past week fighting off a raft of Republican amendments meant to derail the legislation or at least chip away at the earmarks, some bound for Hawai'i.

Any changes in the bill by the Senate would have forced it back to the House for reconciliation, which

House leaders declared a nonstarter.

That would have meant continuing government funding at current levels instead of increasing it by roughly 8 percent, as called for in the spending bill.

As Republicans sought to remake the bill, Inouye's strategy was to advocate for indisputably worthy funding, such as money for emergency first-responders, infrastructure projects, healthcare providers and flood control measures.

Referring to the long string of amendments meant to cut the spending, Inouye asked, "How many of these will we accept before we go into law enforcement and healthcare?"

The Senate rejected all the Republican amendments.

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In fourth place in the House was U.S. Rep. Neil Abercrombie, with \$111.4 million in earmarks, according to Taxpayers for Common Sense.

how hawai'i benefits

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 - \$5.8 million for Hawai'i's share of a Native Hawaiian and Native Alaskan Higher Education initiative.
-

March 11, 2009

City says little security risk in rail

By Sean Hao
Advertiser Staff Writer

An attack on the Prince Kuhio Federal Building from Honolulu's planned elevated commuter train is "most improbable," according to an ongoing threat and vulnerability assessment being conducted by the city.

Two federal officials have asked the city to shift the route of the planned \$5.4 billion elevated commuter train away from the building because of security concerns. In a recent letter to City Council members, U.S. District Judge Helen Gillmor said the currently proposed route down Halekauwila Street exposes the nearby courthouse to a potential terrorist bombing or attack by an individual holding a grudge against a particular judge. U.S. District Marshal Mark Hanohano also signed the letter.

However, according to a draft threat assessment by the city, the train is not likely to serve as a platform for a terrorist attack. This assessment was started last year and is being done in conjunction with the Honolulu Police Department and city consultant Parsons Brinckerhoff.

The city said the threat assessment report may be available to the public once it's completed. However, the city did provide a summary of the report that states: "As a result of this evaluation, the possibility of an assault from the viaduct to the courthouse is deemed to be most improbable for many reasons, including: lack of access to viaduct, easy detection of trespassers, lack of sufficient time to plan an attack, lack of time to carry out an attack, lack of a plausible escape route by a perpetrator, challenge of coordination between train schedules and target availability, and alternatives for accomplishing such an assault which would have significantly less risk of failure."

A draft of the report has been provided to Gillmor and further discussions to address security concerns are planned for the future, said city spokesman Bill Brennan.

Gillmor last week reiterated her earlier concerns that the guideway structure, which will be at the same level as the windows of three judges' chambers, will increase the risk to judges and the courthouse. She pointed to the 1995 bombing of a federal building in Oklahoma City and the 2004 commuter train bombings in Madrid, Spain, as examples of the risk. And last May, the federal courthouse in San Diego was struck by a nail-filled pipe bomb.

No one was injured in the San Diego incident. However, the Madrid bombing killed nearly 200 people, and the bombing of the federal building in downtown Oklahoma City claimed 168 lives.

"We are concerned about what has happened in other federal courts," Gillmor said. "Federal judges on occasion are targets and the proximity of the rail on Halekauwila to the federal courthouse and building is of continuing concern."

Gillmor has asked the city to shift the train's route to Queen Street, King Street, Beretania Street or elsewhere.

So far, the city remains committed to the current route. However, the city said it plans to take security measures that will create significant challenges for anyone attempting an assault from the viaduct.

Security planning is ongoing and will continue to be updated and refined, the city said.

The city's threat evaluation team includes a Parsons Brinckerhoff force protection specialist with Department of Defense experience, a PB senior security specialist who was a former Transportation Security Administration executive for mass transit, and a PB senior safety and security specialist who

was a former Federal Transit Administration director of safety and security. All of these specialists have conducted numerous vulnerability assessments for transit systems.

The evaluation process included examining similar systems, including the Miami Dade People Mover, Detroit People Mover and Seattle Monorail. All three travel close to buildings, in some cases within 50 feet, according to the city. The Detroit People Mover is adjacent to a federal courthouse. The systems reviewed had experienced no known threats or incidents or attempted incidents, the city said.

Under city plans, construction of the East Kapolei to Ala Moana rail will start in December. However, construction is not expected to reach the Downtown area for several years, giving officials time to resolve the courthouse security issue.

City Councilman Charles Djou has introduced a resolution recommending changing the train's route. That bill has yet to receive a hearing by the council's Transportation and Planning Committee.

"HPD's assessment (of the threat posed by the train) obviously doesn't square with the U.S. marshal's assessment," Djou said. "I think this deserves a public hearing so we can air all of these concerns and figure out which way is the best way to go."

March 11, 2009

Legislature keeping its tax-raising options open

Hikes in excise, oil, hotel room taxes still on tap to ease deficit

By *DERRICK DePLEDGE*
Advertiser Government Writers

State lawmakers agreed yesterday to keep alive several bills that would raise taxes to help close the state's budget deficit, but the state Senate dropped a proposal to take a portion of the Honolulu rail-transit tax after the intervention of U.S. Sen. Daniel K. Inouye.

The state Council on Revenues is expected to forecast another decline in state revenues when it updates its estimate tomorrow, so lawmakers wanted to preserve as many options as possible to confront the deficit.

If the council predicts less revenue, Gov. Linda Lingle would have to make additional spending cuts or find new sources of money to get through the fiscal year that ends in June. The Lingle administration and lawmakers would also have to adjust their assumptions for the upcoming two-year budget cycle.

"I'm still very, very concerned. I don't know what it's going to look like at the end of session," said state Senate Vice President Russell Kokubun, D-2nd (S. Hilo, Puna, Ka'u). "These pukas that we have to fill are so huge. I think that's why we just want to keep everything on the table, keep it moving, and at the end — I'm assuming — we're going to be able to piece something together here."

State House Speaker Calvin Say, D-20th (St. Louis Heights, Palolo Valley, Wilhelmina Rise), said the House draft of the budget does not include an increase in the general excise tax but said the landscape could change after the council's forecast.

"As of last week, we have a balanced budget," Say told reporters during a break in a lengthy House session. "We are not raising taxes midway through the session. I feel very comfortable in that the package we have balances the budget without raising the GET (general excise tax)."

Lingle, a Republican, has urged majority Democrats not to raise taxes because she believes it would hurt consumers in the already weakened economy.

But lawmakers, working to make a deadline tomorrow for bills to cross between chambers, moved out several tax-related bills.

In the Senate, lawmakers positioned a bill for a vote tomorrow that would increase the general excise tax to raise revenue for public education and cover tax breaks for the poor. The bill could be used as a vehicle later for a GET hike to help close the budget gap.

The Senate also passed a bill to increase hotel room taxes to raise state revenue. The House moved a bill that would suspend the distribution of hotel-room taxes to counties for six years.

Ethanol delay

The House endorsed a tax increase on oil to help finance food and energy security programs. The bill would suspend an ethanol-blend requirement in gas for three years, which is expected to help offset the cost of the tax increase to consumers.

The House agreed to raise taxes on cigarettes, which will be up for a vote tomorrow, and divert money from the state's tobacco settlement fund to the state's general fund. The tobacco settlement fund is the state's share of an agreement with tobacco companies on the health costs of smoking.

The House also pushed forward with a state income tax increase on higher-income residents while eventually increasing the standard deduction and personal exemption, which could help other taxpayers.

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

State Sen. Donna Mercado Kim, D-14th (Halawa, Moanalua, Kamehameha Heights), the chairwoman of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, asked her colleagues to send the bill back to committee after receiving a letter of concern from Inouye.

Inouye, D-Hawai'i, warned that the bill could put in jeopardy \$1 billion in potential federal money for the rail project. He said the bill might cause U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and Congress to "question Honolulu's seriousness and commitment."

"If the senior senator says there are concerns, who am I to counter that?" said Kim, who had her own misgivings about the bill. "It was never our intention to derail the rail."

Mayor Mufi Hannemann, who had opposed the bill, praised the Senate's decision.

"I am happy the Senate reaffirmed its support for the city's rail-transit project by not tampering with the local funding," the mayor said. "I appreciate the fact that Senator Inouye agreed that it would have been unwise to jeopardize the federal funding."

Several Republicans criticized Democrats for thinking about tax increases.

"The majority is continuing the policy of taxation and spending as a means to sustain a very ineffective bureaucracy," said state Senate Minority Leader Fred Hemmings, R-25th (Kailua, Waimanalo, Hawai'i Kai.)

Schools, highways

In floor sessions yesterday, the House and Senate plowed through dozens of bills and made some significant decisions.

The Senate advanced a bill that would provide \$155 million in bonds for repair and maintenance projects at public schools. Lawmakers also moved out the Lingle administration's highway modernization and recreational renaissance plans for state parks, trails and small-boat harbors.

Lawmakers agreed to consider restructuring the Hawai'i Health Systems Corp. and give ailing public hospitals the option of converting to nonprofit or private status to become more financially competitive.

The Senate agreed to advance a bill that would divert money from the state's rainy day fund to maintain spending on public education, human services and health programs.

In the House, lawmakers backed a salary freeze for the governor, lieutenant governor, judges, department directors and state lawmakers until 2011. The freeze would not change a 36 percent pay increase that lawmakers received in January.

The House passed a bill that could lead to further caps on noneconomic damages in medical malpractice lawsuits against doctors in five specialties. A task force would recommend the caps, while a rate commission would suggest market-based malpractice premium rates.

The House supported a bill that would make it easier to try minors between 15 and 17 years old as adults in murder cases. The bill is known as "Karen's law" for Karen Ertell, an 'Ewa Beach woman allegedly raped and murdered by a neighborhood teenager.

The House advanced a bill that would help homeless people who came here from other states return to the Mainland.

House lawmakers chose to reject a bill that would have extended the deadline for an environmental

impact statement for Hawaii Superferry. The law that allows the ferry to operate during the environmental review expires this summer.

The House also sent back a bill that would have adjusted the limit on corporate contributions to corporate political action committees. The limit would have increased to \$50,000 per election cycle, up from a \$2,000 limit per cycle — or \$1,000 per election — that is not being enforced pending the state Campaign Spending Commission's appeal of a legal challenge.

Public-interest groups had decried the bill as an invitation for more corporate money in politics, but House leaders said they sent the bill back to committee because of technical flaws. The bill also would have altered a limit on Mainland donations to state candidates.

Both the Superferry and campaign-finance bills could theoretically be revived before the end of session, but the action yesterday reduces the chances the bills will be brought back.

In the Senate, yesterday was the first day senators could use a procedural tool in the state Constitution to try to recall a civil-unions bill that has been stalled in committee.

State Senate Majority Leader Gary Hooser, D-7th (Kaua'i, Ni'ihau), who has said he would force a vote at some point in the session, said senators are still talking.

State House Majority Leader Blake Oshiro, D-33rd ('Aiea, Halawa Valley, 'Aiea Heights), the bill's sponsor, said advocates of civil unions would likely prefer the bill not advance if it is watered down with amendments.

Senators have discussed possibly amending the bill by expanding rights for same-sex partners but stopping short of equating civil unions and marriage under state law.



[Back to Hawaii News index](#)

Posted: Wednesday, March 11th, 2009 7:22 AM HST

Capitol killing fields cull bills

By Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — Only the strong ideas survive this week at the Hawaii Capitol.

Lawmakers are killing off hundreds of bills that didn't make the cut to become law. The ill-fated measures included proposals to help balance the state budget with Honolulu's rail transit money, to allow even more time for an environmental study of the Hawaii Superferry and to change corporate political contribution limits.

The state House and Senate advanced about 300 bills each Tuesday, leaving behind some 1,500 in each chamber that lacked political support, were considered fundamentally flawed or weren't important enough. Thursday is the deadline for non-budget bills to pass their originating chamber.

What's left will shape the remainder of this year's legislative session, which will be consumed by efforts to come up with enough money to fill a gaping hole in the budget over the next two years that could exceed \$1 billion.

"We really are trying to balance the budget without increasing any kind of general excise tax," said Speaker of the House Calvin Say, D-St. Louis Heights-Wilhelmina Rise. "Yes, you may see some fee increases, but in the end it is for the greater good."

The plan to raid \$150 million from Honolulu's rail transit tax collections fell short after U.S. Sen. Daniel Inouye stepped in. He wrote a letter to state Senate leadership warning that the bill could jeopardize \$1 billion in federal money for the rail project, and the Senate obliged by killing the measure Tuesday.

Another failed bill would have extended the deadline for the completion of an environmental review of the Hawaii Superferry. Without the measure, the environmental study must be approved by late June, as required by a law

allowing the Superferry to operate.

"It could possibly shut down their business, and we don't know for how long," said Minority Leader Rep. Lynn Finnegan, R-Mapunapuna-Foster Village. "It's not good for jobs, and it's not a good signal to the mainland about whether or not we're business friendly."

The corporate contribution bill would have allowed businesses to donate up to \$50,000 to political action committees, but lawmakers turned away the proposal amid protests from government watchdog groups.

Most of the dead bills didn't even make it to a floor vote Tuesday. Instead, they stalled in committees whose approval would be required for them to advance.

That's what happened to bills seeking to ban smoking on Waikiki Beach, prohibit sales of slim cigarettes, outlaw text messaging while driving and bar driver's licenses from illegal immigrants.

Still alive are bills to use tobacco settlement money for the state budget, raise cigarette taxes, cap medical malpractice reform damages, ban genetic modification of Hawaiian taro, tax Internet sales and restrict sales of former Hawaiian kingdom lands .

"It's a whole smorgasbord of things that are on the table today," said Majority Leader Rep. Blake Oshiro, D-Aiea-Halawa.

Other measures set for further consideration through the end of this year's legislative session in May would extend high-tech tax credits, allow police to go after people involved in dog fighting, prevent public viewings of human cadavers without government approval and delay a project for publicly funded elections on the Big Island until 2014.

Pacific Business News (Honolulu) - March 9, 2009

<http://pacific.bizjournals.com/pacific/stories/2009/03/09/focus1.html>

PACIFIC BUSINESS NEWS

Friday, March 6, 2009 | Modified: Wednesday, March 11, 2009, 12:00am HAST

Competition builds for Hawaii public works projects

Pacific Business News (Honolulu) - by [Janis L. Magin](#) Pacific Business News

When the state put a job at **Honolulu International Airport** out to bid two years ago, only two companies competed for the \$39 million project.

Last month, a job to replace the passenger loading bridges at the airport drew six times the interest — 12 contractors bidding between \$10.2 million and \$12.9 million.

It's a sign that Hawaii's public infrastructure projects are taking on a new glamour during the economic downturn. Frozen credit markets have all but dried up many private projects, spurring contractors to seek work building roads, bridges, sewers and schools, and fixing and upgrading the island state's airports and harbors.

Hawaii **Department of Transportation** Director Brennon Morioka said that not only is it common to get six or more bids for projects, the bids that are coming in are for lower dollar amounts.

"They're sharpening their pencils and we are getting much better bids," he said.

Major capital improvements

Morioka's department has the largest portion of the state's \$1.8 billion capital improvement plan for projects that are funded and ready to go — \$790.7 million for roads, harbors and airports — and also some of the largest projects on the list including the \$77 million second phase of the Queen Kaahumanu Highway widening, due to start this year, and the \$48 million first phase of the Lahaina Bypass, which Maui-based **Goodfellow Bros.** started recently.

The department is spending \$2.3 billion over 15 years to modernize the state's airports and is working on the start of a six-year, \$618 million modernization program for its commercial harbors.

Proposals to increase fuel taxes and registration and vehicle weight fees to fund the department's six-year, \$4 billion plan to modernize the state's highways are being considered by the Legislature this session. And the City and County of Honolulu's rail transit project could generate millions of dollars in spending when it breaks ground, possibly this year.

Hawaii also is in line to receive more than \$220 million for roads, mass transit and clean water infrastructure projects from the federal government as part of President Barack Obama's stimulus package, according to the office of Rep. Mazie Hirono, D-Hawaii. The package includes \$125.7 million in highway infrastructure funds that also could be used for rail and port infrastructure; \$43.8 million for mass transit projects, including the purchase of buses; and \$30.8 million for constructing municipal wastewater plants and developing clean water plans.

The counties also are at work fixing roadways, bridges and sewer systems, and have long lists of other projects they would like to accomplish.

Frank Coluccio Construction Co.'s trucks were a familiar sight along Kapiolani Boulevard as the company upgraded the city's water and sewer system, a \$30 million project. Engineer Tim Pearia said the city has plenty of work for 2009, including a \$40 million sewer project in Waimalu.

The company, which does a lot of public sewer projects, has seen more competition for jobs that other contractors would not have touched during the boom years, Pearia said.

Other contractors agree.

"There's no choice other than military and infrastructure work," said Roger Peters, executive vice president and general manager of dek Pacific, which recently completed Honolulu International Airport's new \$40 million interisland parking garage. "The private sector is not totally dead, but it's been significantly reduced in terms of the opportunities."

While it may appear that there is a lot of work from the state and counties, there actually is more competition for fewer overall jobs, which means thousands of trade workers still are on the bench, said Bill Wilson, president of **Hawaiian Dredging Construction Co.**



Christina Failma, PBN

Road repairs shut down lanes on Kalakaua Avenue in front of the Hawaii Convention Center this week. As the frozen credit market dries up private construction projects, Hawaii companies are competing more aggressively for millions of dollars in government work.

[View Larger](#)

“It sure seems on an overall basis that there’s less available work,” he said. “While we’ve been fortunate to have as much as we do have, it’s not as much as we did have.”

Hawaiian Dredging, which recently broke ground on Disney’s new resort at Ko Olina, routinely works on infrastructure projects — it recently completed the first phase of the Queen Kaahumanu Highway widening in Kailua-Kona on the Big Island and is working on the City and County of Honolulu’s \$80 million upgrade to the Sand Island Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Parsons, which does mostly infrastructure projects, also has seen more competition for public works projects in the past couple of months. When it won the \$50 million contract in 2007 to do upgrades at the city’s Honouliuli Wastewater Treatment Plant, there were two other bidders, said Senior Vice President Tom McCabe.

“And then last month, there was a bid for the Wahiawa Wastewater Treatment Plant and there were 11 bidders,” said McCabe, noting that Parsons came in fourth for that job. “Basically one year later, the number of bidders almost quadrupled.”

More cargo capacity

Dozens of large projects will be put out to bid over the next couple of months.

One of the state’s harbor modernization program’s first projects, a \$20 million interisland cargo facility for **Young Brothers** at Hilo Harbor, is getting ready to go out to bid, Morioka said. Expanding cargo facilities for both **Matson Navigation Co.** and Young Brothers at Kawaihae Harbor, acquiring more land at Maui’s Kahului Harbor and redeveloping Honolulu Harbor’s Kapalama Military Reservation into an area for cargo operations also are part of the plan.

“We still anticipate future growth of cargo capacity needs — that’s on every island,” Morioka said. “We’re trying to expand capacity at each of our harbors.”

Over the next six to nine months, the department also will put two highway widening projects on Kauai out to bid that will total about \$95 million, he said.

jmagin@bizjournals.com | 955-8041

March 12, 2009

Roads in disrepair even as rail is pursued

How can Mayor Hannemann go forward with his grand mass-transit plan when our Honolulu roadways are in such deplorable condition? There are potholes and uneven streets throughout the island, which must be due to a combination of improper materials, equipment and workmanship.

Other states such as California and Oregon have rain and snow and salt air and their roads are maintained much better than ours. We are not receiving much bang for our bucks paid to the city by vehicle registration and taxes on our gasoline.

The 'Ewa side of the top of Ward Avenue has been full of ruts and uneven pavement for years and nothing has been done. I hope some of the federal stimulus money the state receives is filtered to the city for road repaving.

Larry Langley
Honolulu



Urban rail news in brief - March 2009

12 Mar 2009

A Request for Proposals has been issued inviting contractors to build the first 10.5 km section of the **Honolulu Rapid Transit** line between West Oahu and Farrington Highway. Future contracts will be awarded for seven stations, track, vehicles, traction power and train control systems as well as a depot and workshop. The initial segment is due to open in 2013, whilst the remainder of the 32 km line to downtown Honolulu and Ala Moana will be built in three sections and is scheduled for completion in 2018.



Metro Line 3 services to **Athens International Airport** were suspended on February 14 for six months whilst the construction of three intermediate stations at Holargos, Nomismatokopio and Aghia Paraskevi is completed. In the interim, a bus service will connect Ethniki Amyna and Doukissis Plakentias.

Four firms have responded to a Request for Qualifications for a \$128m design-build-operate-maintain contract for a tram line to link central **Cincinnati** with the uptown area. The companies include a consortium called Cincinnati Streetcar Development Partners led by Veolia; URS Washington Division; Herzog Contracting Corp; and Bombardier Transit Corp.

The first of 22 additional LRVs ordered for the **Tuen Mun light rail** network in Hong Kong's Northwest New Territories is expected to enter service this year, with the remainder to follow by 2010. Being built by CSR in Nanjing under subcontract to an Australian company, the Phase IV vehicles will be needed to accommodate an expected increase in feeder traffic to and from WestRail stations following the opening of the Kowloon Southern Link in the second half of 2009 (MR 3.09 p28).

The city of **Nice** has allocated €30m for transport projects in its 2009 budget. This includes preliminary work on a second tram line linking the city centre to the airport. Work should start in 2010 and last two-and-a-half years.

On January 28 Dutch infrastructure manager ProRail, the province of Overijssel and the towns of Zwolle and Kampen announced a joint project to convert the existing 13 km **Zwolle - Kampen line** to tram-train operation by 2012. The single-track line is to be electrified and fitted with passing loops and five intermediate stations, at a cost of €16m.

Beijing municipal government has approved the construction of metro Line 15. The 45.7 km route from Xiyuan to Shunyi, with 21 stations, will be built in two phases and completed in 2015. Phase 1 between Wangjing West and Hedong in Shunyi will start this year.

More than 600 passengers rode **Westside Express Service** trains during opening day on February 2. The 23.7 km line uses Portland & Western Railroad tracks and connects Wilsonville, Tualatin and Tigard with the Beaverton Transit. The service is operated during weekday peak hours with three Colorado Railcar DMUs and one trailer, each with a capacity of about 116 passengers. The project took 14 years to complete and cost approximately \$160m.

Delhi Metro opened the 6.4 km Vishwavidyalaya - Jahangirpuri extension of Line 2 for passenger service on February 4, adding five stations to the network. The ITD CEM joint venture working on the future Central Secretariat - Badarpur line celebrated their first breakthrough by a Herrenknecht TBM at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium on January 21.

The foundation stone for the **Mumbai monorail** was finally laid by Maharashtra chief minister Ashok Chavan on February 9 (RG 1.09 p15). The ceremony was delayed due to the terrorist attacks on November 26. Nevertheless, contractors Scomi and Larsen & Toubro commenced work in December 2008 and expect to complete the monorail by June 2011.

Four bidders shortlisted for the concession to operate the **Tyne & Wear Metro** from April 2010 (RG 1.09 p32) were announced on January 30, following receipt of nine expressions of interest. Invitations to negotiate will be sent to DB Regio Tyne & Wear Ltd, MTR Corp, Serco-NedRailways Metro Ltd and in-house bidder Nexus. The preferred bidder is expected to be named in November, with contract signature due in January 2010.

Curitiba, the state capital of Paraná, is planning to build a 22 km metro line, crossing the city from south to north, at a cost of around US\$1bn. The project would form part of preparations for the World Cup in Brazil in 2014.

The first of six additional Citadis trams ordered by **Metropolitano de Tenerife** left Alstom's factory in Barcelona on February 6. The trams will be used to operate Line 2, which is due to open in June (MR 3.09 p40).

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March 12, 2009

Implement a road tax tied to odometers

In Sunday's Star-Bulletin, there was an article from the New York Times about gas tax revenue expected to decline due to increasing mileage, less driving and hybrid and electric drive technologies. This decline affects the gas tax needed to maintain the roads. We'll need to move eventually from a gas tax to a road tax.

The article mentioned the complexity involved, for a road tax, in tracking where and when people drive, and quoted: "You'd have to have a record of where the car is at all times, and that certainly would frighten America."

Not so! Nobody needs to know where and when you drive. The car's odometer tells the number of miles you drive, and that's all the government needs for levying a tax on road usage.

Every jurisdiction in the country mandates periodic safety and/or emissions checks for vehicles. To implement a road tax, simply have the odometer reading and vehicle number fed into a computer when the safety check is done. The owner is then billed by the tax agency, as we are for property tax. Departments of transportation would have to place special computers at all safety check stations, but that's a whole lot easier than trying to track the location of every single vehicle out there.

Jim Harwood
Manoa



March 12, 2009

Train ridership is up across America

The American Public Transportation Association just reported that transit ridership is up by 4 percent across the nation, and this appears to be a long-term trend. This is good news and it's an indication that change is happening as President Barack Obama has predicted and encouraged.

Taking public transit is good for our environment, good for our economy and good for our own pocketbooks because we can save money on gas, parking and other fees associated with the automobile.

Honolulu's rail transit project is set to start construction by the end of this year, and we too can join the rest of the country with modern, reliable mass transit for our city.

Joe Lee
Hawaii Kai

Letters to the Editor

For Friday, March 13, 2009

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

Dipping into transit funds? Don't you dare

How can the state government [take city rail funds](#) to balance the budget? Wouldn't this amount to illegal taxation? What's the deal here? If they take the money, can we deduct what we have paid on our tax return? And how do we determine what that amount would be? This is no different from stealing from the hurricane fund. This is an unfair, unjust and disgusting idea. How dare they!

Laura Warren
Wahiawa

Letters to the Editor

For Friday, March 13, 2009

State and City Council should leave rail alone

Every day there is more national news about rail as an economic stimulus and job creator. In Houston, the city's new rail line extension will create 25,000 jobs in the next four months. Seattle's newest rail project will generate nearly 3,000 construction jobs.

In Dallas, nearly 3,000 construction workers are building a rail extension now, with thousands more jobs to come.

These cities are the examples we should follow. We need the jobs that rail construction on Oahu will create.

Politicians in the state Legislature and the City Council need to stop messing around with rail. Don't they understand how bad the recession is in our state? Don't they understand that rail is the only stimulus project able to generate thousands of jobs during a recession?

They shouldn't be arguing about rail. Instead, they should be pushing it forward with all their strength and create some jobs for us, their constituents.

John Nakagawa
Kailua

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Letters to the Editor

For Saturday, March 14, 2009

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

Put city rail money toward state budget

The news just gets worse and worse regarding future state tax revenues. Down, down, down, the money goes. The state will have to cut programs and lay off people. Unfortunately many of the people hurt the most will be the more helpless ones, such as the mentally ill who are cared for by the state. And laying off state workers will remove consumers from the state economy, causing even more layoffs at the places where they would have spent their money. This is a huge disaster.

Whether you like it or not, the state must take the money that would go to rail. The rail system will not improve traffic (will mostly take people from the bus) and would be a huge tax burden at a time when the public cannot afford it. We simply cannot have massive layoffs of state workers and deep cuts in state programs. The pain would be too great. Take the rail money - it would delay the rail system, but the immediate needs are just too great.

Mark Terry

Honolulu

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March 15, 2009

Communities invited to help plan rail hubs

Honolulu's planned \$5.4 billion commuter train won't be pulling into East Kapolei until late 2013 at the earliest.

However, the character of communities surrounding the area's three planned stations will depend in part on the outcome of a series of community meetings that start this week. Community members attending that workshop will hear presentations about the train, which is expected to support a city growth policy that directs development to the 'Ewa plain. Attendees then will be asked to provide input that will be used to tailor rules governing housing density, parking and pedestrian amenities around train stations planned for Kapolei.

Those rules are key because the system's stations, which will be capable of moving about 6,000 passengers an hour in each direction, are expected to become hubs for housing, business and employment. The creation of so-called "walkable" communities around the stations could spur land values and real estate development.

The more people participate in developing those rules the better, said Honolulu City Council Chairman Todd Apo.

"Transit-oriented development really sets out the future," he said. "People need to participate. People need to come in and talk about what they see is the future of West O'ahu."

The city's goal is to foster transit lifestyles and higher-density developments near train stations, which could curb urban sprawl.

Later this month, the City Council is expected to pass Bill 10, which establishes the process for creating transit-oriented development zoning regulations around stations.

The bill would essentially create special districts with specific community-tailored rules. Those rules would be designed to:

- Enable a mix of land uses and higher-density housing.
- Encourage travel by rail transit, buses, walking, bicycling and other non-automobile forms of transportation.
- Eliminate or reduce minimum off-street parking requirements to spur residents and others to use mass transit.

The scale of transit-related economic development also could depend heavily on the availability of other landowner incentives such as property tax breaks, revenue bonds and tax increment financing.

The city's timeline calls for service between West Loch and Waipahu to start in late 2013 and full service

to Ala Moana by the end of 2018. The train's first stop would be in Kapolei next to the Kroc Center. The second stop would be near the planned University of Hawai'i-West O'ahu campus, while the third stop would be in the heart of the planned Ho'opili community.

Kapolei is the second major community to start the transit-oriented development planning process. The same process started in Waipahu a year ago. On Tuesday, the city will hold a separate community workshop in Waipahu on a draft transit-oriented development plan for the area's two stations.

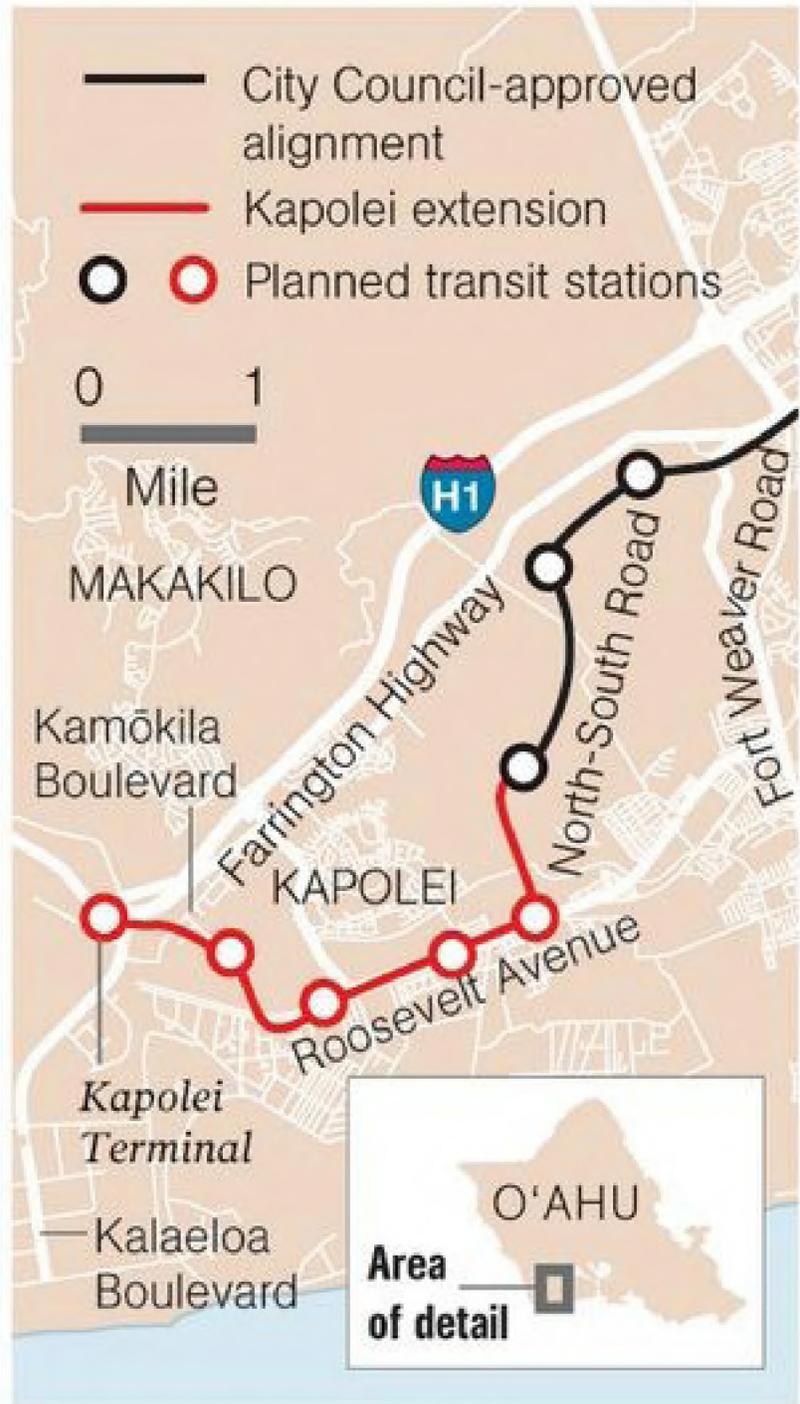
That plan will be a compilation of community input received so far, said Kathy Sokugawa, chief planner for the city Department of Planning and Permitting. The plan attempts to balance the needs of residents, developers and landowners, she said. It still needs to go before the city planning commission and the City Council before becoming official.

In Kapolei, the city has a nearly clean slate to work with. That's because land near the three stations currently consists mainly of empty fields, unlike the stations planned for urban Honolulu, said council member Gary Okino, chair of the Transportation and Planning Committee.

"Other areas will be a little bit tough because you've got to work with development that's already in place," he said.

In Kapolei, "you're starting from a blank slate, so it's a great opportunity to do something really good," Okino added.

PROPOSED RAIL ROUTE



Source: Honolulutransit.org

The Honolulu Advertiser

Letters to the Editor

For Sunday, March 15, 2009

Taking rail funds would be unfair to voters

In regard to Senate Bill 1626, now before the Legislature, that proposes to use Honolulu's rail transit money to balance this year's state budget:

Rail is a quality-of-life issue for our island and should be allowed to proceed now that Oahu voters approved it. We are the ones who decided in favor of rail and we are the ones who are paying for it. It would be unfair for the Legislature to take that money away from Honolulu and spend it on state projects.

If rail is compromised or delayed, the biggest losers are the residents of the Leeward Coast. They get up a four in the morning and commute into town for an hour and a half, then do it again to get home after dark. It is unreasonable to jeopardize rail and the future well-being of West Oahu and all island residents by diverting rail money to balance the state budget.

Blake Miyasaki
Kaneohe

Waipahu Transit Development Plan to the Public



Written by KGMB9 News - news@kgmb9.com

March 16, 2009 05:04 PM

The City has come up with its plan for development around mass transit stations in Waipahu. Now it wants to know what families in the area think.

The townhall meeting is Tuesday, in the Waipahu Elementary School Cafeteria from 6:30 pm - 9:00 pm.

To take a look at the plans click [here](#).



Last Updated (March 16, 2009 05:04 PM)

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KITV.com

State's DOT List To Use \$246 Million Stimulus

Projects Include Bridge Replacement To Upgraded Traffic Lights

POSTED: 5:15 pm HST March 16, 2009

UPDATED: 5:42 pm HST March 16, 2009

HONOLULU -- The state on Monday released a list of \$246 million worth of transportation projects, which will use federal stimulus funds across Hawaii.

The 22 projects will create more than 3,000 jobs, officials said. Some of the projects have been on the books for years. Without money to fund them, they have been stalled, until now.

One of the highest-priced projects on Oahu will replace the old Punaluu Bridge, along Kamehameha Highway, costing \$17 million. If you look under the bridge, which was built in 1926, you can see why it needs replacement.

[Slideshow: Project Maps](#) | [State List](#) | [Counties List](#)

Neighbor Makua Annon, whose family will have to temporarily move during the project, said state officials have been telling him about it for nearly one decade.

"My son was born in 2000, and he's 9 years old now, and they told us then, and about every year after that, you know, it was like, 'OK, we got to find a place to live again.' It was just, 'Not yet. Not yet,'" Annon said.

"Some have been around for a number of years that have simply been deferred because of the lack of funds and what the stimulus does it allows ready-to-go projects with a lack of funding to progress," state Transportation Director Brennon Morioka said.

Another big Oahu project will cost about \$1.8 million for a seismic retrofit of the Makakilo interchange over the H-1 Freeway, to better resist earthquake damage.

About \$58 million will be spent for explosive detection improvements at both Honolulu and Kahului airports.

"A lot of effort went into trying to spread these projects around, not just having geographic distribution, but also looking at the different types of trades that we want to be able to affect and put people back to employment," Morioka said.

Officials said they decided on different projects based on whether they were ready to go out to bid in the next few months.

"With construction activity on the decline, and the rising unemployment that we've experienced recently, we must

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make certain that these funds produce maximum results for the people of our state," Gov. Linda Lingle said.

There is also highway resurfacing on all the neighbor islands, including a 2-mile bike path at Lydgate State Park on Kauai and improvements to Market Street on Maui.

A Honolulu County project includes the installation and upgrading of traffic signals at nine locations on Oahu.

Previous Stories:

- March 16, 2009: [State DOT Projects For Stimulus Funds](#)
- March 5, 2009: [Inouye Says State To Receive \\$44M For Transit Projects](#)
- February 23, 2009: [Lingle Meets With Obama, Says Funds Arriving Soon](#)
- February 22, 2009: [Governor To Accept Stimulus Money For Hawaii](#)
- February 17, 2009: [\\$2B In Federal Funds Aim To Stimulate Hawaii](#)
- January 28, 2009: [Stimulus Plan's Include \\$2B For Hawaii](#)
- December 15, 2008: [State Unveils \\$1.86 Billion Stimulus Projects Plan](#)

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Mayor Hannemann Unveils Future Rail Hub Ideas



Written by KGMB9 News - news@kgmb9.com
March 16, 2009 07:24 PM

Honolulu's Mayor today revealed the city's vision for some future rail hubs. these are renderings of what the city calls "transit oriented developments" for the Waipahu town plan. Shops, businesses, and even homes will be built around the two proposed stations along Farrington Highway. The city says it wants to spruce up the community, but still keep the history of the old sugar plantation town.

"We are going to be retaining affordable low-rise housing, obviously by revitalizing and we plan to incorporate a park, where there is no one existing today," Mayor Hannemann said. "So this is the Pupu area. Neighborhood, mini parks adjacent to infill development.

Another idea was to open up Kapakahi Stream to create a festival marketplace. The city will hold public meetings in each community along the line. The first is tomorrow at Waipahu Elementary School starting at 6:30 in the cafeteria.



Last Updated (March 16, 2009 10:42 PM)

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Public Comments Welcome on Waipahu Transit Stations

By KHON News

Story Created: Mar 16, 2009 at 6:10 PM HDT

Story Updated: Mar 16, 2009 at 7:39 PM HDT

A draft of Waipahu's transit oriented development plan will be presented Tuesday night during a community workshop.

On Monday the city demonstrated how the area around two transit stations in Waipahu would change under the proposal.

The public will have another month-and-a-half to comment on the plan before it heads back to the department of planning and permitting for revision.

Transit oriented planning is already underway for three rail stations in East Kapolei.

Find this article at:

<http://www.khon2.com/news/local/41351802.html>

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Pacific Business News (Honolulu) - March 16, 2009
[/pacific/stories/2009/03/16/daily6.html](#)

PACIFIC BUSINESS NEWS

Monday, March 16, 2009, 10:11am HAST | Modified: Monday, March 16, 2009, 10:19am

Report: Honolulu in bottom half for quality of life

Pacific Business News (Honolulu)

Honolulu ranks 66th among midsized metros for its quality of life.

Bizjournals, PBN's online partner, ranked 124 midrange metropolitan areas with populations between 250,000 and 1 million as of 2007. Those areas were rated on their quality of life based on 20 factors such as population growth, mortgage affordability, poverty rate, median household income, homeownership rate, average commuting time and others, using data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

The highest scores went to well-rounded places with healthy economies, light traffic, moderate costs of living, impressive housing stocks and strong educational systems, according to the bizjournals report.

Provo, Utah, was ranked No. 1, followed by Boulder, Colo., and Madison, Wis.

Honolulu had 3.4 percent population growth, a 27.3-minute average commute, a median household income of \$65,367 and a population of 905,601.

The full report is available here: www.bizjournals.com/edit_special/77.html#1.

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March 17, 2009

Stimulus money to create 3,170 new jobs

Officials spell out how they'll spend Hawai'i's federal stimulus money

BY PETER BOYLAN
Advertiser Staff Writer

Hawai'i will use \$246 million in federal stimulus money to improve highways, airports and bus systems, projects that should generate about 3,170 jobs.

Federal, state and county lawmakers agreed to divvy up the initial round of money from the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds as follows:

- \$125.7 million for state and county highway improvements;
- \$76.5 million for improvements to Honolulu International Airport and Kahului Airport;
- \$43.8 million for county bus transit improvements.

The federal stimulus will deliver \$940 million to Hawai'i over the next two years, creating or sustaining an estimated 15,000 jobs through investments in education, transportation, energy, and communications infrastructure.

Gov. Linda Lingle signed two orders in her office yesterday that allow the state to accept the money and put projects out to bid. A list of all transportation projects the state wants to fund with federal stimulus money is due at the U.S. Department of Transportation today.

Lingle thanked the four county mayors and U.S. Sen. Daniel K. Inouye for working with state officials long before the stimulus act was signed into law to identify needs and projects that were ready to launch the moment federal money was secured.

"The purpose of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act is to jump-start economic growth for our nation," said Inouye, in a statement. "For Hawai'i, today's announcement of highway and airport projects moves us in this direction."

"We know we're in a historically tough time," said Lingle, discussing the stimulus money at her office yesterday. "We do see a bright future ahead once we get through this difficult period."

Some of the projects lined up to receive federal stimulus money have been on the books for years but so far have been unable to receive funding.

Hawai'i will receive \$127.5 million for state and county highway improvement projects.

Of this total, the state will use \$63 million for 10 separate projects on Kaua'i, O'ahu, the Big Island, Maui and Moloka'i.

The counties will divide \$64.9 million with the Big Island receiving \$35.6 million, O'ahu \$19.2 million, Kaua'i \$6 million and Maui County \$4.12 million, according to state officials.

On O'ahu, the money will be used in part to replace the South Punalu'u Bridge on Kamehameha Highway and to perform a seismic retrofit of Farrington Highway and Makakilo Separation structures that arch over the H-1 Freeway, officials said.

The infrastructure projects tapped to receive federal money were put together by the Federal Highways Administration, the state Department of Transportation, the four county transportation directors and the O'ahu Metropolitan Planning Organization.

All county highway projects are being coordinated by the state.

"We are making smart investments by choosing these projects wisely. This effort has not come easily ... it has been all about working together," said Brennon T. Morioka, director of the state Department of Transportation.

In deciding what road projects to submit to the federal government, state and county officials had to evaluate whether a project was ready to be put out for bid in the next six to eight weeks and whether an environmental impact study was needed.

The federal funding formula also demands transparency and orders the state and counties to distribute the work across all the Islands and in "economically distressed zones and areas where the project would have an impact in creating jobs," according to the state.

March 17, 2009

Three rail-transit hubs in Kapolei proposed

*By Gordon Y.K. Pang
Advertiser Staff Writer*

The city has tentatively identified three spots as locations for Transit-Oriented Development hubs in the soon-to-be-bustling East Kapolei region for the \$5.4 million commuter rail line.

The West O'ahu public will get its first chance to learn about, and comment on, the proposed transit stops at a public information meeting held by the city Department of Planning and Permitting from 7 to 9 p.m. tomorrow at the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands Hale Pono'i Building, 91-5420 Kapolei Parkway.

The Kapolei meeting could be lively. A number of 'Ewa Beach residents are miffed that the first segment of the rail line does not go into their community while a host of Kapolei/Makakilo residents are unhappy it doesn't go deeper west into their neighborhood.

The tentative sites are:

- At the planned Kroc Center on North-South Road, at or near the proposed East-West Connector Road. It would be the westernmost stop for the first segment of the rail project.
- A short distance from the eastern border of the University of Hawai'i at West O'ahu's first phase, also along North-South Road.
- In the heart of the proposed Ho'opili community, a 11,500-unit project which would rival Mililani in size.

The planning process for the three TOD hubs is expected to take at least a year.

Planning for the TOD sites are being closely watched because as hubs for housing, business and employment, they could spur development for those areas and increase property values.

Two TOD hubs were identified for Waipahu, and the community there began developing plans for the two locations a year ago. The city is presenting a draft plan to the public there tonight.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann urged the public to attend the TOD meetings.

"The bottom line is we really want to encourage the community to please come out and participate," Hannemann said yesterday. "This is your plan, this is your vision. This is your future. ... No rail, no transit-oriented development. It's as simple as that."

Additional Facts

Waipahu transit meeting tonight

City officials will brief the Waipahu community tonight on the draft plan for two Transit-Oriented Development sites associated with the upcoming \$5.4 million rail project.

The meeting take place 6:30 to 9 p.m. at the Waipahu Elementary School cafeteria at 94-465 Waipahu St.

Two major transit stops are planned for the Farrington Highway corridor in Waipahu, one on each side of town. The first is at Mokuola intersection near Waipahu Depot Road. The other is at Leokū Street near the Waipahu Town Center.

For more information, go to www.honoluludpp.org/planning.

Recessionary winds will blow through Honolulu in 2010

John Clinkard

March 17, 2009

Over the past year-and-a-half, the Honolulu economy has steadily lost momentum due to weakness in two key industries. First, the leisure and hospitality sector, the key economic driver of both the metro area and the state, has lost 3,600 jobs over the past 18 months.

This loss comes as a direct result of sharp drops in discretionary business and personal travel spending in the United States and in Japan. According to the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization (UHERO), total visitor arrivals dropped by 10.6% in 2008, which in turn led to a 7.7% decline in total visitor expenditures.

Driven in large part by the drop in tourism spending, the value of both residential and non-residential construction spending intentions in 2008 exhibited their largest drop in more than five years. This drop contributed to the loss of 2,100 jobs over the year.

Two of Honolulu's industrial sectors continued to add jobs in 2008 and are likely to continue to do so in 2009. First, governments at all three levels added about 2000 jobs over the 12 months ending in December 2008, while employment in education services was up by 900 jobs over the same period.

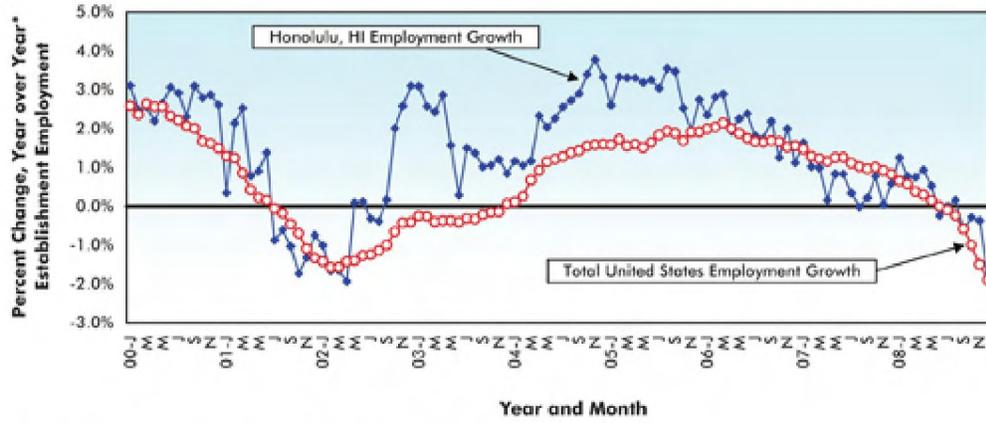
Looking ahead, it appears that any significant increase in business and personal travel is contingent upon global economic recovery, which is unlikely to occur before the end of 2009.

Moreover, according to the latest [UHERO Q1/09 construction forecast](#), the outlook for private residential and non-residential construction is likely to be very depressed over the next two years, exacerbated by the severe tightening of credit conditions, a lack of securitized finance and general economic uncertainty.

One bright spot on an otherwise very bleak construction outlook is increased government spending on infrastructure. Specifically, the recently passed Federal Stimulus Package and the State of Hawaii's Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) initiative should boost government contracts awards to \$1.25 billion in 2009.

In the latter part of 2009, this spending could be augmented by a proposed Hawaii Department of Highways transportation infrastructure program and a Honolulu city and county light rail project.

EMPLOYMENT GROWTH: HONOLULU, HI vs TOTAL UNITED STATES



*"Year over year" is each month versus the same month of the previous year.

Data source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (Department of Labor).
 Chart: Reed Construction Data – CanaData.

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Stimulus might generate 3,000 construction jobs

Health centers split \$2.7M in funding

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

State officials are hoping that a big new portion of the federal stimulus package will generate more than 3,000 jobs in local construction for transportation projects.

Gov. Linda Lingle announced yesterday that the state was applying for \$248.2 million in federal stimulus money.

The state and county highway departments would get \$127.9 million for road repairs and maintenance. An additional \$76.5 million will go for Honolulu and Kahului airports. Most of that money is for new explosives detection machines used to screen luggage before it is put on departing planes.

The money is part of a national \$700 million airport program by the Transportation Security Administration.

The final \$43.8 million will go for county bus system improvements, according to the state.

Brennon Morioka, state transportation director, said "we tried to be diverse" when asked how they selected projects for the stimulus money.

"We tried to look at jobs for all the trades," Morioka said.

— [Richard Borreca](#)

.....

FULL STORY >>

[By Star-Bulletin staff](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Mar 17, 2009

Fourteen community health centers that serve low-income populations on six islands will share more than \$2.7 million in federal economic stimulus funds.

 State Lists 246 Million Dollars in DOT Stimulus Projects



The state says the 22 projects will create more than three thousand jobs. Some of the projects have been on the books for years but have been stalled due to lack of funds. 3/16/09

[\[Watch\]](#)



The financial aid comes as the centers face a possible cutback in state funding as the administration and lawmakers wrestle with a \$75 million budget shortfall. The community centers received about \$5.6 million last year for serving uninsured clients.

The centers will receive the individual grants by later this month, according to an announcement from U.S. Sen. Daniel Inouye.

The allocation of money from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act was based on a formula giving the centers an additional \$19 per uninsured patient.

The 14 centers served a total of 110,000 residents in 2007, according to Beth Giesting, chief executive of the Hawaii Primary Care Association.

Inouye said the funding "is a reflection of the increased demand for services from community health centers during our tough economic times. It is a time when the working poor, the uninsured, and rural and high-risk populations must often choose between health care or putting food on the table," Inouye said in the announcement.

Oahu centers will receive the following:

- » Kalihi-Palama Health Center, \$342,984.
- » Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center, \$335,656.
- » Waikiki Health Center, \$210,619.
- » Kokua Kalihi Valley, \$209,258.
- » Koolau Community Health and Wellness Center, Kahuku, \$143,669.
- » Waimanalo Health Center, \$140,768.

Where will the transportation money go?

Here are transportation projects for which officials are seeking federal stimulus money:
Project Title Cost

State

H-1, Seismic Retrofit, Farrington Highway & Makakilo Separation	\$1.8 million
Kamehameha Highway, South Punaluu Bridge Replacement	\$17 million
Hawaii Belt Road, Clean & Paint Steel Members, Kukuaiu, Kuwaikahi, Ninole and Maulua Bridges	\$11 million
Maalo Road Resurfacing	\$1.2 million
Kuhio Highway Resurfacing, Kawaihau Road to Kapaa Bridge	\$2 million
Kuhio Highway, Short-term Improvements, Kuamoo Road to Temporary Bypass Road	\$17 million
Piilani Highway Pavement Preservation, Lipoa Street to Kilohana	\$5 million

Hana Highway PPM, Kaupakalua Road to Huelo	\$2 million
Maunaloa Highway Resurfacing, MP 0.5 - Airport	\$4 million
Kalae Highway PPM, Maunaloa Highway to Kalaupapa Lookout	\$2 million

Oahu

Traffic Signals at Various Locations, Phase 10	\$4 million
Traffic Improvement at Various Sites, Harding Ave. and 5th & 11th Avenues	\$2.8 million
Waipio Point Access Road Improvements	\$5 million
Traffic Management Center Auxiliary Power Facility	\$400,000
Kalaeloa Blvd. Widening and Reconstruction, Phase 1 OR&L ROW to Lauwiliwili Street	\$7 million

Big Island

Ane Keohokalaoloe Highway (governor's certification pending)	\$35 million
Waimea Trails and Greenway (governor's certification pending)	\$600,000

Kauai

Lydgate Park to Kapaa Bike/Ped Path (Phase 3)	\$4.12 million
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Maui

Market Street Improvements, Phase 2	\$6 million
Buses for all counties	\$43.8 million

State

Explosive Detection System Integration Improvements, Honolulu Airport	\$43 million
Explosive Detection System Integration Improvements, Kahului Airport	\$18.5 million
Apron Pavement Structural Improvements, Kahului Airport	\$15 million

Waipahu folks urged to speak up about rail

A public hearing is set for tonight on the transit development

[By B.J. Reyes](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Mar 17, 2009

Mayor Mufi Hannemann is urging Waipahu residents to voice their comments and concerns about proposed rail transit development in their neighborhood.

Community members will have that opportunity at a public meeting tonight.

Hannemann is set to unveil Transit-Oriented Development plans for the community at a meeting scheduled for 6:30 p.m. at the Waipahu Elementary School cafeteria.

Transit-Oriented Development relates to the structures surrounding the terminals for the rail transit system. It would include housing, commercial space and even recreation space around the transit stations.

The two transit terminals in Waipahu are located at Farrington Highway-West Loch, in front of Don Quijote, and the Waipahu Transit Center.

"I think the bottom line is we really want to encourage the community to please come out and participate," Hannemann said yesterday at a news conference. "This is your plan. This is your vision. This is your future."

Total cost estimates were not immediately available, but David Tanoue, director of the city Department of Planning and Permitting, said the city has priced out the various phases of the development plan.

The development is a 25-year project that has been vetted by community members through a series of six advisory meetings, officials said.

Thirty-two members of the community — including residents, developers, landowners and government officials — were part of the advisory boards.

"We want to continue working with the city to flesh out these plans and continue to gather input

from the community," said Richard Oshiro, chairman of the Waipahu Neighborhood Board.

The city plans to solicit further public input before submitting a final draft to the City Council by the end of April.

Officials noted that the draft being unveiled tonight still is in the early stages, and the city plans to examine ways to attract developers, such as public-private partnerships.

"We want to be real careful about not getting too much ahead of ourselves," Hannemann said.

"We need to have a template, a vision, a plan the community can buy into. Then we can talk turkey in terms of what we need to do to entice a developer."

Find this article at:

http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20090317_Waipahu_folks_urged_to_speak_up_about_rail.html

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March 18, 2009

Resident voices must be heard in transit planning

The opportunity to have a real voice in the way a town develops doesn't come around very often. For some well-established communities along the route of the planned rail-transit line, there's never been a chance like this.

Last night, Waipahu, the first of the communities to discuss "transit-oriented development," or TOD, met again, continuing a conversation that began last year. Tonight residents of East Kapolei will begin the process in a town meeting at 7 p.m. at the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, Hale Pono'i building, 91-5420 Kapolei Parkway.

And today the City Council should vote to approve Bill 10, the ordinance that will provide the legal underpinnings for all this careful planning.

The product for each of the transit stops is to draw up a special set of regulations that will govern development in that specific zone. Each community has different needs, so what works for one community may not suit the others.

In general, though, the object is to have an outline in place that would guide decisions on the projects that would be built within the zone. Ideally, the result should be a coherent statement of what the community wants for the area, and the process of building it should be streamlined — which in itself is an incentive for developers.

The rules would include:

- Allowances for a mix of land uses, including affordable housing, in a given area.
- Limits for building height and density, paired with requirements for amenities such as open space and community centers.
- Design elements that would enable easy use of non-automotive transit, including bikeways and walkways as well as the train itself.

Among the general goals Bill 10 makes explicit is the policy statement that the city wants to avoid "gentrification" along the rail route. Undoubtedly the projects will include some higher-end housing units, but it's critical to avoid a major redevelopment of a town that won't accommodate the people who currently live in the community.

These include people who may be well into retirement by the time the project is done. With the aging of baby boomers sure to expand the elder population, creating living areas for them — and others who have limited income — is of paramount importance.

The TOD discussions should bring in ideas from developers for ways that will enable these goals to be met. Other cities have applied successful strategies such as higher densities near the core and tax-

incentive financing, among other means.

But the most essential assurance of success, without a doubt, has been the involvement of the community. It's hard to imagine the creation of a vibrant new neighborhood without that.

March 19, 2009

75 attend West O'ahu meeting on 3 rail hubs

Residents urged to brainstorm on 'live, work and play' areas

*By Gordon Y.K. Pang
Advertiser West O'ahu Writer*

KAPOLEI — About 75 West O'ahu residents, and a few curious people from outside the region, gathered last night to learn more about three Transit-Oriented Development hubs planned for the East Kapolei region.

While the three hubs have been identified, the city and its planners want the community to offer input about what the areas around the rail transit stations will look like.

Architect Tim Van Meter urged West O'ahu residents to think big, to come up with plans where people can "live, work and play in an urban development. You can do it all right here."

During brief brainstorming sessions, residents said they like plans for a "greenway" and mixed-used districts. They also raised concerns, chief among them parking.

Planning for the TOD sites are being closely watched because as hubs for housing, business and employment, they could spur development for those areas and increase property values.

That's especially true for the three East Kapolei TOD sites, which are all on what's now vacant land.

Specifically, the sites are at:

- The planned Salvation Army Kroc Center on North-South Road, at or near the proposed East-West Connector Road. It would be the westernmost stop for the first segment of the rail project.
- A short distance from the eastern border of the University of Hawai'i-West O'ahu's first phase, also along North-South Road. Previous plans called for putting the TOD closer to the middle of the campus, but that idea was rejected by UH-West O'ahu officials.
- In the heart of the proposed Ho'opili community, a 11,500-unit project that would rival Mililani in size. The project still needs approval from the state Land Use Commission in separate proceedings that begin today.

Wai'anae resident Barbara Keola, 60, said she wants to ensure that the needs of seniors are incorporated into the TOD plans.

"We have a need for low-income housing for seniors, supermarkets, doctors and hairdressers," said Keola, a volunteer for AARP's Wai'anae office.

Chad Haili, 32, who works for a tugboat operation, drove all the way from Nu'uuanu to listen to the plans. "This whole concept is designed for younger generations," Haili said, noting that he's looking at relocating his family into West O'ahu.

The planning process for the three TOD hubs is expected to take at least a year. The next step for the Kapolei TOD plan is a tentative proposal that will be brought back to the community in mid-May.

At Waipahu Elementary School Tuesday night, concerns about being forced to leave their properties due to the TOD process were top of mind for some of the approximately 125 people who attended.

But city officials said the administration has no plans to develop the hubs, or use its eminent domain power to force the sale of lands, beyond what is necessary to directly establish the transit stations

themselves.

The city is in the final stages of forming the guidelines for the Waipahu hubs, and the city presented a draft plan to the public there for two TOD hubs.

One is in the Mokuola portion of Waipahu and the other is on the Leoku side.

Richard Oshiro, chairman of the Waipahu Neighborhood Board, said the TOD plans provide a shot in the arm for the region.

"It's not about the train so much as it is the orderly development and planning of the future of Waipahu," Oshiro said.

After the plans for the Kapolei and Waipahu hubs are completed, the city will work on Transit-Oriented Development plans for the Pearl City/Aiea and Kalihi regions.

The city Department of Transportation Services is seeking construction bids for the \$5.4 billion project.

Construction is expected to be begin in late 2009 and the first portion, between West Loch and Waipahu, is expected to begin operations in 2013. Service to Ala Moana is slated to be available by the end of 2018.

KHON2 FOX Hawaii

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Superferry Ruling May Impact Other Laws

Originally printed at <http://www.khon2.com/home/ticker/41546442.html>

STORY SUMMARY>>>

The recent decision by the Hawaii Supreme Court to rule unconstitutional the law allowing the Superferry to set sail while an environmental review is underway may have a ripple effect on other “specialized” legislation.

Councilman Charles Djou held a press conference Thursday, saying he would move to have other laws that apply specifically to the City and County of Honolulu declared unconstitutional if the high court did not reconsider its opinion.

“There are a number of laws that the Hawaii Legislature has written that apply only to Honolulu but not to any other entity,” said Djou. “Under the logic of the Superferry ruling from the Hawaii Supreme Court, those laws should be voided.”

Djou pointed to five laws, including stricter liquor licensing and overtime for vehicle towing, which apply only to Honolulu County. But perhaps the most significant he said is the measure that allowed the city to raise the general excise tax by .5% to fund a rail transit system.

That law, which took effect in January of 2007, specifically said a county with “a population greater than five hundred thousand” could only use the additional GET surcharge for “a mass transit project.”

“The Hawaii Supreme Court’s ruling was so broad and so sweeping,” said the Djou, “it throws a monkey wrench into so many different aspects. Rail is one of many that’s going to completely mess up government here in Hawaii.”

City Corporation Counsel Carrie Okinaga issued a statement in response to inquiries by Khon2 regarding Djou’s position.

“The facts of the Superferry case were very unique, and differed considerably from the circumstances under which the county surcharge legislation was enacted,” said Okinaga. “We do not believe the recent ruling will have any bearing on the validity of the surcharge or the rail transit project it is funding on Oahu.”

However state lawmakers, including Senate President Colleen Hanabusa aren’t so sure.

“The way that the transit tax legislation was written it was specific to Honolulu. So I think that when you look at the Superferry decision, it goes into detail about the fact that you cannot favor or discriminate against a county.”

In its decision, the Hawaii Supreme Court cited a 1962 law passed by Colorado lawmakers that targeted a specific town. The Colorado Supreme Court eventually ruled the law unconstitutional since it could only be applied to the town of Glendale.

Even during the current legislative session Hawaii state lawmakers are crafting so called “special legislation.”

“We have one bill for example that passed over from the Senate last week that puts a one hundred year moratorium on agricultural use for two senatorial districts on Oahu,” said republican Senator Sam Slom. “We have others that talk about specific valleys and their use and of course we have rail transit.”

The attorney for Stop Rail Now, a group trying to halt the construction of Honolulu’s mass transit project, told Khon2 the high court’s decision on the Superferry law provides a possible opening to declare the rail transit tax unconstitutional.

“The question is not an easy one,” said Earle Partington. “It’s going to take a lot of research I think to determine that.”

Regardless of the differing legal opinions on the impact of the Superferry ruling, Djou is prepared to move forward with a resolution to void other laws that apply only to Honolulu, if the Hawaii Supreme Court fails to reconsider its decision.

If approved by five Council members, such a resolution could force the city’s Corporation Counsel to consider whether or not the rail transit tax and other specialized laws violate Hawaii’s Constitution.

Or as Djou noted, any private citizen could file a lawsuit just as the Sierra Club did when it sought to declare the Superferry law unconstitutional.

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Letters to the Editor

For Thursday, March 19, 2009

Schools should stay out of transit planning

With Kamehameha Schools' leadership, each time they take a step forward, such as trustees declining pay raises, they take two steps backward. The latest example is the schools' demand that Honolulu's rail system travel on the ground instead of the city's plan for trains to travel above traffic on a guideway.

Ask yourself, how would reconfiguring the entire 20-mile route to travel on the ground affect the project's timetable? A reasonable answer is a delay of many months, perhaps years, during a time when our island desperately need the thousands of jobs that would be created by construction. It also would delay the traffic relief that rail will bring to those who live on the west side, including the schools' students, parents, teachers and staff.

Kamehameha Schools' leadership is out of touch with what the people of Oahu want. We voted for rail. We want rail. Please do not stand in the way.

Jason Wong
Honolulu

March 20, 2009

Hawaii economy likely to be rough for at least 2 more years

'Next several years' will be tough on businesses, residents, report says

By Greg Wiles
Advertiser Staff Writer

Hawaii's economic tough times figure to continue into next year, according to the most recent forecast from University of Hawaii economists.

The report, titled "After Sharp Drop, Recovery Will Take Time," said the economy will bounce back but probably not this year or next.

The University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization said visitor arrivals, a key indicator for the state, will decline or flatten through 2010 and unemployment will rise this year and next.

"The next several years will be difficult ones for Hawaii's businesses and households," said the report, which projects a deeper downturn than the UHERO forecast published in November.

"The visitor industry will languish as the deepest global recession in decades continues to undermine travel demand," the report said.

The cloudy outlook follows a worsening of forecasts for the U.S. and Japanese economies, which are also in recession. UHERO noted the credit crisis and collapse in consumer confidence had turned a mild U.S. downturn into a deeper problem and that Japan's economy will also see a steep contraction this year.

"This was a very sharp downturn," said Carl Bonham, UHERO executive director, noting a decline in jobs last year and projected declines this year and next.

"It's consistent with the very rapid increase in unemployment."

According to the forecast:

- Hawaii's visitor arrivals will fall 5.2 percent this year and remain unchanged next year.
- A falloff in commercial building activity and a weakening in the residential construction market will result in construction jobs dropping by 16 percent over the next two years. Construction spending will decline by almost one-third in the 2009-10 period.
- Personal income adjusted for inflation will fall this year and next because of job losses, stagnant wages and investment losses.
- The number of jobs in the state will contract, with growth not expected until 2011.

Unemployment will average 7 percent this year (up from the 4 percent average in 2008), and rise further in 2010. UHERO said the state's jobless rate will peak during the July-September quarter of next year and remain above 6 percent for several years.

"This is a severe and lengthy jobs drought by historical standards," the forecast said.

"The state's fiscal crisis is likely to result in government job cuts as well."

The Good News

Not all the projections were bad in the report, which estimated a cooling of inflation and points to a boost from the federal stimulus plan over the short-term. UHERO noted the national economy should reach bottom later this year, and that Hawai'i may, too.

"If we stabilize the financial markets, the economy will bottom out this year, and we'll begin to see some growth next year," Bonham said. "There's some evidence that not as many people think the economy is going to fall apart as just a few months ago."

The state's own efforts to inject money into infrastructure projects along with the O'ahu mass-transit project should provide help over the medium-term, the report said.

Moreover, UHERO's unemployment rate forecast shows the Hawai'i number lower than what some economists are projecting for the nation as a whole.

The forecast was delivered with a caveat given the uncertainty that's surrounded the past year's economic turbulence. Bonham said economists had a difficult time last year giving forecasts because of the rapid downturn.

He said forecasters could be wrong in predicting a gradual recovery beginning sometime next year, and that the possibility exists a rebound might be bigger than what's seen now.

March 20, 2009

Ho'opili weighs jobs, homes alongside traffic, farm land

*By Gordon Y.K. Pang
Advertiser West O'ahu Writer*

As members of the state Land Use Commission ponder approval for the proposed 11,750-unit Ho'opili community, they are being asked to weigh the creation of thousands of new homes with concerns about traffic and the loss of agricultural lands.

The state Office of Planning is raising issues about the traffic and other concerns about Ho'opili in an LUC hearing that began yesterday and will continue today.

Meanwhile, most of those offering testimony before the commission yesterday said they support the project because it will provide opportunities for new homes, jobs and services for the fastest growing region on O'ahu.

Developer D.R. Horton-Schuler Homes LLC wants an OK from the commission to build up to 11,750 residential units on 1,554 acres between Kapolei, 'Ewa and Waipahu. Also planned are business, commercial and light industrial uses as well as schools, parks and open spaces as a part of an integrated mixed-use community.

The plan's progress is being closely watched. While there's disagreement over whether there will be more pluses or minuses, no one denies that a community the size of Mililani or Hawai'i Kai will have a huge impact on the communities around it.

City planners, meanwhile, have designated Ho'opili as one of three spots in East Kapolei where there is to be a train station and related development for the city's \$5.4 billion rail-transit project.

While the Ho'opili property is identified by the city General Plan and 'Ewa Development Plan for urban uses, the project must still obtain rezoning from the Honolulu City Council in addition to the LUC urban classification.

The LUC hearing is expected to continue today, and again for two days next month. A decision is not expected until late spring at the earliest.

more answers sought

Abbey Seth Mayer, director for the state's planning office, said his agency supports the developer's request for urban designation, but added that the developer should provide more answers on several community concerns including traffic, loss of agricultural lands, and stormwater drainage.

Mayer pointed out that the developer's own environmental impact statement points to several intersections and freeway interchanges rated as being unacceptable during peak morning and afternoon hours even without the project.

"This project, along with other major developments proposed in the region, will further exacerbate congestion on the surrounding transportation system," Mayer said.

Dean Uchida, a Horton-Schuler Homes vice president for the Ho'opili project, said in an e-mail that Horton-Schuler Homes officials "have been actively meeting with the state Department of Transportation and we are working to address their concerns."

'Ewa Beach resident Glenn Oamilda told commissioners that the traffic is taking a financial, psychological and physical toll on area residents.

The Ho'opili project would be at the entryway to H-1 for 'Ewa and 'Ewa Beach residents, Oamilda said.

"It's like damming the river upstream where people downstream cannot get to the water," he said. "It's the same concept. They're blocking us from getting to the freeway."

highway improvements

The developer and its supporters previously have stated that a number of improvements are slated to be completed in the next few years, among them the North-South Road and an accompanying H-1 interchange, as well as a widening of Fort Weaver Road from four to six lanes.

Horton-Schuler Homes officials have also said they are ready to pay their fair share of transportation improvements in the region.

Further, they've pointed out that the project is designed to be a mixed-use community where people can live, work and play without getting into their cars.

Already incorporating live-work units at its Mehana project in Kapolei, Horton-Schuler Homes said up to 5,100 of its units may end up being low to medium density live-work residential units.

Those testifying in support of the project yesterday said they like that concept.

Kurt Fevella, chairman of the 'Ewa Neighborhood Board, said the project would provide amenities not just for current West O'ahu residents, but future generations as well.

"I have a 4-year-old daughter and I want her to stay here and not go to the Mainland," Fevella said.

The three surrounding neighborhood boards — Waipahu, 'Ewa and Makakilo/Kapolei/ Honokai Hale — have not taken positions on the project. But the chairpeople for the Waipahu and Makakilo-Kapolei boards — Richard Oshiro and Maeda Timson, respectively — also offered testimony endorsing the project.

Timson said the task force meetings have been productive and that Horton-Schuler Homes officials have listened and worked to address community concerns.

Leonard Leong of Royal Contracting said in written testimony that his company has already had to lay off workers and cut the hours of those left. "Ho'opili represents thousands of jobs and an investment of tens of millions of private dollars," Leong said.

13.7% of farm land

Mayer, in his written report, also pointed out that a majority of the land being eyed for Ho'opili is now home to four farms, among them the 1,000-acre Aloun Farms.

"The proposed project will result in the direct loss of approximately 1,497 acres of agricultural land being leased for various agricultural operations," Mayer said.

The farmers entered into their lease agreements with the understanding that the long-term plans for their acreage called for urban uses.

Horton-Schuler has agreed to help Aloun relocate and is working with the farm owner to gradually phase out agricultural uses only as needed by the development.

The state Department of Agriculture made no recommendation for the Ho'opili project but pointed out to commissioners that they should consider that the 1,500 acres of ag land represents 13.7 percent of O'ahu's available farm land.

Plans call for the project to be built out in increments over 20 years, with between 4,000 and 6,250 units and between 400,000 and 800,000 square feet of mixed use/live-work commercial space in the first decade.

March 20, 2009

Letters to the Editor

'Ewa development

Lots of focus on plans, but roads come first

Frustrated in 'Ewa. It makes me angry when I read that a developer is against the idea of building roads before developments. (West O'ahu People, March 4). Then the next day he has his commentary about the "Long-term vision for 'Ewa" (Honolulu Advertiser, March 5). Dean Uchida of D.R. Horton talks about the long-term plans for this region.

Well, planning or not, it has failed in many ways. Specifically, traffic. It is hard to not question whether or not Mr. Uchida has driven in and out of 'Ewa recently. Sure, Fort Weaver Road and other main arteries in and out of 'Ewa are currently being expanded or built; however, I say that if you want to boast about planning, then these roads should have been built years ago.

Dean Watson | 'Ewa Beach

March 21, 2009

More than 1,200 Hawaii jobs lost in February mass layoffs

That's up from 786 at same time last year — and rise may continue

*By Greg Wiles
Advertiser Staff Writer*

More than 1,200 Hawai'i workers were given pink slips last month in so-called mass layoffs, in which companies let go at least 50 workers.

A report from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that the state continues to pile up job losses, with mass layoffs 1 1/2 times last year's February total of 786.

The number of mass layoff events also doubled to 15 in February from seven a year earlier.

Some Hawai'i companies are shedding employees because of the worst recession since statehood, while others are simply closing.

In February, Maui Land & Pineapple Co. announced it was laying off 98 workers, and several notable restaurants, including Nick's Fishmarket, Brew Moon and E&O Trading Co., announced their closings.

The number of workers affected by mass layoffs has generally been increasing over the past 12 months, with the total ballooning to more than 1,000 in four of those months. In April, 1,583 ex-workers filed unemployment claims stemming from such events, which included the shutdowns of Aloha and ATA airlines.

May had 1,118.

The tally hit 1,650 in December. During that month, Hilo Hattie and Acutron Co. announced 90 layoffs, and Hawaiian Commercial & Sugar furloughed 700 employees for a week.

The trend of layoffs could continue this year, though it is hoped the federal stimulus and other programs will help with employment. The University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization's newest forecast says unemployment is likely to continue increasing this year and average 7 percent.

Nationally in February, Hawai'i was one of 48 states and the District of Columbia where there were year-over-year increases in average weekly initial unemployment claims. But the state's unemployment remains below national levels and mass layoffs didn't increase as quickly here in February as they did nationally.

The national unemployment rate hit a seasonally adjusted 8.1 percent in February.

Hawai'i's rate was likely below that level. The state is expected to report that last month's unemployment was at least 6 percent when it releases the February report late next week.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that California had the highest number of initial claims because of mass layoffs, with 45,557. California yesterday reported that its unemployment rate climbed to 10.5 percent in February, the second consecutive month of double-digit unemployment.

March 22, 2009

Mayor expands on rail progress, spending increases

By Mufi Hannemann

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

On The Hot Seat last week was Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann, who addressed issues ranging from rail transit to the Pro Bowl.

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

Jason: Are we on track with rail transit? After what happened with the Superferry and environmentalists, or a small vocal minority using the courts to get its way, I worry that something similar will happen to rail. I hope special interests do not wreck this project for the rest of us who really see the need for transportation options.

Mayor Mufi Hannemann: We're absolutely on track and are following through on what 53 percent of voters approved in the last election, which is a rail-transit system sooner rather than later. The federal government support has never been stronger. And we continue to overcome attempts to derail us. Rest assured that we always took the Environmental Impact Statement phase very seriously and are working to address all the concerns expressed by those who commented on the Draft EIS. We're making great progress on the Transit Oriented Development aspect of rail with two recently completed meetings in Waipahu and the Kapolei/Ewa area. Community-based planning is our mantra, and I'm delighted that many people in these areas are participating in the process. The goal is to break ground late this year. This is the best economic stimulus project that the state of Hawai'i has going for it right now.

Bob W.: In recent City Council budget hearings Duke Bainum was very critical of using CIP money to fund the purchase of equipment, like vehicles. But during his previous tenure on the City Council, wasn't he a big advocate for exactly the same thing?

Hannemann: Indeed, Councilmember Bainum was a member of the council that voted for the policy to use the capital budget for the purchase of equipment in 2002. In fact, five times he voted for budgets that included the purchase of equipment with CIP funds. As the former budget chair of the council, he should know better than to criticize a policy that he voted for and supported on many occasions.

Matt: The City and County of Honolulu's FY2010 budget represents a 30 percent increase in YOY spending from FY2009; included in this spending increase are additional real property taxes (9 percent increase) and increased fees for use of the bus, municipal golf courses, vehicle weight tax, and even our zoo.

Given the current economic environment where residents of Honolulu are already cash-strapped and are tightening our budgets, how can we afford such a substantial increase in spending? Does a 5 percent pay cut justify a 30 percent budget increase?

Hannemann: You've been provided the wrong information and analysis. First of all, the operating budget increase is less than one half of one percent over the current year!

As for the fees, many of them have not been raised for many years. For example, the golf fees have not been raised for nearly 10 years, the zoo parking fees nearly 30 years. And we are required to

raise the bus fares if they fall below the City Council-established policy of having the fare box account for 27-33 percent of the operating cost.

The real property tax rate increases we proposed for the average home and condo owner will be about \$10 a month, or about the cost of one movie, eight steamed manapua or one bento lunch and a drink. Additionally, we were very sensitive to the needs of our seniors and the disabled. Their bus fares will stay the same and their monthly tax increases are lower than the typical homeowner. The fact of the matter is we have been managing this budget very responsibly. We've earned clean financial audits, we've saved money like we never have before and we don't raid funds that are earmarked for specific purposes.

As for making light of my Cabinet's willingness to work one day a month for free, I don't see any other entity in government willing to do the same. That speaks volumes of their willingness to sacrifice and put something in the "stone soup." We're all in this together, Matt.

kailuareresident: The Hawai'i Tourism Authority rejection of the Pro Bowl was nationally embarrassing, especially considering the dire economic times. Why did they vote like that, and what caused them to finally see the light and accept the NFL's offer?

Hannemann: Although HTA is a creature of the state and the Pro Bowl is definitely a state responsibility, I could not stand idly by to see this great economic revenue-generating opportunity leave Honolulu. That's why I jumped to the forefront and personally discussed concerns the HTA board members had with voting to keep it here. Three of those votes switched in the end. And I'm very grateful that we were able to avert a very bad situation. Now the challenge is for the state to have a comprehensive sports marketing strategy to avoid future opportunities going to other areas. The city is more than willing to assist in that regard.

Lauren Nicholas: The rail-transit community development plan had some good ideas in it. Will there be other community-based planning for rail transit?

Hannemann: After Kapolei and Waipahu, which are under way, we are looking to initiate the TOD process for the Pearl City/Aiea community and then to Kalihi/Middle Street area. The plan is to continue along the transit line in developing community-based neighborhood plans for each station area.

Jamie Hann: I catch the bus. What happens to the bus when rail starts operating?

Hannemann: The buses will definitely be a part of what we call an integrated multi-modal system. In fact, by having the rail system handle the congested central corridor, we liberate our buses to provide more extensive and more frequent service to the communities. The same fare for the bus will apply to the rail and will allow you to transfer seamlessly.

Terri Ann: I am glad Target opened in Kapolei. It's a good sign for growth on the west side. What are you doing to develop Kapolei into a true "Second City?"

Hannemann: I've always said our goal is to develop Kapolei into a great city, not just a second city. Since we've been in office, it's clear that we've taken public-private partnerships to a new level as evidenced by our relationship with private developers such as Kapolei Property.

We're building infrastructure, including roadways and utilities in Kapolei city in excess of \$170 million. In fact, we recently opened the Kamokila extension, providing alternative access into the rapidly developing activity center which includes Target, Costco, Home Depot and Sports Authority. With this new infrastructure in place and a very visible public safety presence, we are laying the groundwork for Kapolei to maximize its potential as a great place for people to live, work and play. We're grateful for the strong support the community and the area councilmembers Todd Apo and Nestor Garcia have given us to enable these projects to be built quickly.

Additional Facts

This week

Editorial and Opinion Editor Jeanne Mariani-Belding puts Laura Thielen, director of the Department of Land and Natural Resources, on the Hot Seat — and lets you ask the questions — during a live blog

chat Wednesday from noon to 1 p.m. Join the conversation at www.Honoluluadvertiser.com/opinion

March 24, 2009

Hawaii's lagging economy drags down state's rail tax collections

By Sean Hao

Advertiser Staff Writer

A slowing economy continues to take a toll on tax collections needed to fund Honolulu's planned commuter rail system.

During February, net transit tax collections rose slightly to \$13.3 million, versus the \$13.2 million collected in February 2008, according to the state Department of Taxation. Despite the rise in collections in February, transit-tax collections overall remain below projections.

City officials expect to raise \$188 million, or an average of \$15.7 million a month, during the fiscal year ending June 30. However, through the first eight months of the fiscal year, monthly collections are averaging about \$13.7 million. If that trend continues, the city could be short nearly \$24 million in transit funds by midyear.

The city's rail plan anticipated transit tax revenue growing each year. But plunging visitor arrivals, slumping real estate sales and a downturn in construction make it unlikely revenue will be up this year. City officials hope any near-term revenue shortfall will be offset by an economic rebound in future years.

A rebound in tax collections this fiscal year also seems unlikely. Earlier this month, the state Council on Revenues, which generates forecasts used to set the state budget, lowered its projection of state revenues for the fiscal year that ends June 30. The council said revenues would be 5 percent less than the previous year.

The state began collecting a half-percentage point general excise tax surcharge for transit in January 2007. The tax is scheduled to expire in 2022. Overall, that tax has raised nearly \$324 million during the first 26 months. That figure, and all figures in this story, do not include the 10 percent the state takes off the top to pay for administering the tax.

During the first eight months of the current fiscal year, the transit tax generated \$109 million for the city, which is level with the \$109 million raised during the first eight months of the prior fiscal year.

City officials hope to use the tax to raise nearly \$4.1 billion, on an inflation-adjusted basis, from 2007 to 2022 to pay for the 20-mile rail system linking East Kapolei to Ala Moana. That, coupled with about \$1.4 billion in anticipated federal money, is expected to pay the estimated \$5.4 billion in capital costs associated with rail, according to the city's financial plan.

Officials want to begin construction in December, contingent on federal approval, and launch service between 2013 and 2019.

March 24, 2009

Rail ridership in U.S. a 'good sign' for Hawaii

New train systems beating forecast for first-year estimates

By Sean Hao

Advertiser Staff Writer

Ridership on recently opened Mainland commuter trains is outstripping expectations, which could be a positive sign for Honolulu's planned \$5.4 billion elevated commuter train.

New commuter trains in Charlotte, Phoenix and Salt Lake City have already beaten their forecast ridership estimates partly because of last year's spike in fuel prices. Whether these new public-transit systems can hold on to and expand ridership amid falling fuel prices and rising unemployment remains to be seen. However, Honolulu city officials said they're encouraged by the ridership trends at recently opened Mainland train systems.

"If Phoenix and Charlotte are doing good, it's a really good sign for us," said City Councilman Gary Okino. "I personally think Honolulu's going to be a lot better than Charlotte or Phoenix because those systems are on the ground.

"I think people are going to be a lot more attracted to our (elevated) system because it's going to be faster and it's going to carry a lot more people."

Ridership is a key barometer for determining the success of a public-transit system. That's because higher ridership can reduce road traffic levels and the amount of public subsidies needed to fund train operations.

The ability of new train systems to beat ridership forecasts runs counter to historical trends. Nationally, ridership on urban train systems tends to fall short of expectations, according to an April 2008 report by the Federal Transit Administration. That study found that 19 federally subsidized train projects completed between 2003 and 2007 are expected to carry, on average, 74.5 percent of their originally forecast ridership. Two of the projects studied exceeded initial ridership forecasts, six were between 60 percent and 80 percent of forecasts, and 10 had ridership levels well below forecasts.

One of the biggest ridership disappointments occurred on the 11-mile Tren Urbano, or urban train, in San Juan, Puerto Rico. That system, which opened in late 2004, is expected to carry just 23.6 percent of its originally forecast ridership. That's 86,796 fewer average weekday boardings than expected.

low forecast

The ridership successes at recently opened systems reflect changes in forecasting methods instituted because of the major passenger shortfalls encountered by the Puerto Rico train, said city transportation Director Wayne Yoshioka. City officials have consistently expressed confidence that Honolulu's elevated commuter train can meet or exceed a ridership forecast of 95,310 riders a day by 2030 for a route that

passes by Honolulu International Airport.

"The travel forecasting side is now very, very conservative, so it almost assures that you're going to hit your mark if not exceed it when you open up," Yoshioka said. "We're certain that (Honolulu's forecast) is conservative."

Honolulu city officials hope to begin construction on the 20-mile East Kapolei to Ala Moana train in December, contingent on federal approval, and launch service in phases between 2013 and 2019.

A preview of what to expect can be found in Phoenix, where a new \$1.4 billion, 20-mile light rail train launched service in December. More than 150,000 people rode the new light-rail trains during the first weekend. During January, the system experienced an average weekday ridership of 30,617 boardings, according to Phoenix Valley Metro. That's well above the first-year average ridership forecast of 26,000 daily boardings.

ridership slipping

Systems in Salt Lake and Charlotte also are off to better-than-anticipated starts. However, there are signs that ridership in both cities may be slipping as low fuel prices and rising unemployment drive down passenger numbers.

Ridership at the 38-mile Frontrunner train in Salt Lake City, which opened in April of last year, initially surpassed expectations. Ridership peaked at about 8,700 average weekday boardings in August, which was above the first-year forecast of 5,500 average weekday boardings. However, in December, average weekday boardings dipped to 5,311, according to the Utah Transit Authority.

Similarly, the 10-mile Lynx light rail line in Charlotte, N.C., had an average of 13,963 weekday riders in January, according to Charlotte Area Transit. That's well above the forecast of 9,100 average weekday riders during the first year. Still, January's ridership was down sharply from a peak of about 17,000 in July when gasoline prices were higher and the economy was healthier.

After Lynx opened in December 2007, ridership climbed about 23 percent through July 2008. However, Charlotte Area Transit System bus ridership increased by 24 percent, according to a September report by the John Locke Foundation, which is a Raleigh, N.C.-based free market advocate. According to the study, about two-thirds of the increase in Lynx ridership could be attributed to gas price increases, regional growth and economic circumstances, rather than the availability of better transit service.

"This means that ridership is likely to be vulnerable to declining gasoline prices or a strengthening economy," the study stated.

local concerns

Critics of Honolulu's plan to build a commuter train express similar concerns.

A train, when combined with TheBus, is projected to increase overall mass-transit ridership to 7.4 percent of total transit trips in 2030, compared with just 6.1 percent if the commuter rail line is not built, according to the city. That's a 21 percent increase in public transit ridership. However, mass-transit ridership in Honolulu historically has declined as a percentage of the population during the past several

decades.

Rail critic Cliff Slater believes Honolulu's train ridership will not meet expectations because people will continue to prefer driving their autos to work.

"We have overall nationally and locally an underlying decline in ridership," said Slater, who wants the city to build an elevated highway rather than rail. "The fact that we're looking at a market share decline for public transportation despite the billions and billions of dollars that we're throwing at it is evidence that personal transportation is preferred by anyone that can afford it, which is eighty-odd percent of the population."

Letters to the Editor

For Tuesday, March 24, 2009

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

You can't compare rail to Superferry

City Councilman Charles Djou's opinion that the rail tax is now unconstitutional shows what great lengths rail opponents will go to in their effort to stop the rail project.

Unlike the Hawaii Superferry, rail went through a rigorous public review process, dozens of public hearings and even more public forums and open meetings. This cumulated with a ballot question last November, and Oahu voters chose rail. The city is now in the process of completing a thorough and detailed environmental impact statement and will have that completed before construction is scheduled to begin. This differs very much from the Superferry, where the state allowed it to proceed without an EIS or any public hearings.

More important, Congress just granted the city an additional \$20 million for planning rail, and contractors are already bidding on the first segment. Rail means jobs, thousands of them. And rail means a billion dollars in federal funding and an economic stimulus for Hawaii that will help us through this deep recession.

If there is any legal question at the courts, the Legislature and the City Council should act quickly to ensure that rail goes forward without delay.

Johnathon Sakamoto
Honolulu

March 25, 2009

Ridership data buoys hopes for O'ahu rail

There is, in these bleak financial times, at least one thing to feel bullish about: public transportation.

Specifically, rail ridership appears to have taken off faster than expected in several cities that are relative newcomers to the world of rail. These include Phoenix, Salt Lake City and Charlotte, all of which have topped their own projections for the intake of fares.

That certainly should encourage this city's residents, who are on the verge of pledging the first millions to the planning of Honolulu's \$5.4 billion, 20-mile elevated train connecting the West Side and Downtown.

It also should underscore the importance of maintaining the flow of tax money into the local coffers to finance the project. During a fiscal shortfall at the national and municipal levels, it's critically important to maintain Honolulu's competitive edge for the federal dollars needed to close the funding gap. And one way to do that is to demonstrate an unwavering revenue commitment on the home front, even through times when the take from taxes, predictably, falls short of the mark.

At the moment, ridership in Charlotte and Salt Lake City, which enjoyed similarly strong launches, may be slipping because the dip in fuel prices has reduced one key incentive for mass transit. But as the economy cycles upward again, so will the price of oil, further prodded by diminishing supplies and accelerating global demand.

It's the long-term trend that bears watching, and those signs point at the need for transit alternatives that are less reliant on fossil fuel for power.

The City Council should feel the imperative to get this project on a course for efficient development to minimize excess costs, the bane of Isle projects.

But Honolulu also has an important factor weighing in its favor: a high ridership already in place for its well-established bus system. Imagine the attraction of those riders to a train with the capacity to move more people, faster, to their destination.

Community Hubs to Surround Many Rail Stops



Written by KGMB9 News - news@kgmb9.com

March 25, 2009 04:34 PM

Mayor Mufi Hannemann has signed a bill to help develop areas along planned rail routes.

The plans call for more pedestrian-friendly communities and building parking garages and shops.

The mayor spoke about how this will affect future communities.

"Having an opportunity to shape your community to redefine what you'd like to see in the future, especially with housing, commercial, retail, park space," Hannemann said.

Last week, the mayor unveiled the first neighborhood transit oriented development plans for Waipahu.

He says the next step in the development plans is Kapolei.



Last Updated (March 25, 2009 06:06 PM)

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March 26, 2009

Help arrives for 'Ewa traffic

Off-duty officers placed at key intersections, new lanes help ease backup

*By gordon y.k. pang
Advertiser West O'ahu Writer*

Prompted by a hellacious traffic backup that stretched nearly to the H-1 Freeway off-ramp until the late hours on March 12, the contractor for the Fort Weaver Road widening project has agreed to place off-duty police officers at key intersections of 'Ewa Beach's main artery at peak morning and afternoon hours.

The presence of those officers, the rejiggering of the timing of traffic signals along Fort Weaver, and the recent opening of a third lane in both directions along the stretch between Laulaunui Drive and the 'A'awa Drive/Old Fort Weaver Road intersection, have helped to ease the notorious backup in the area that sometimes runs until well into the evening on weekdays.

"It's been like night and day," said Rep. Kymberly Pine, R-43rd ('Ewa Beach, Iroquois Point, Pu'uloa), of the improvements.

Seeing the backup as she got off the freeway on March 12, Pine did what many 'Ewa and 'Ewa Beach residents do.

"I turned around and went to Kapolei," Pine said of the detour that takes 'Ewa motorists four miles into the heart of Kapolei via H-1 or Farrington Highway, and then four miles back through the back road of Roosevelt Avenue.

The state Department of Transportation, which oversees Fort Weaver, asked contractor Hawaiian Dredging Construction Co. to leave the special-duty officers in place a few hours after the end of daily construction activity beginning March 13 following the backup the day before that was blamed on a traffic light malfunction. Tammy Mori, DOT spokeswoman, said department crews also went out to record travel times during various periods of rush hour.

"Because we received so much feedback from having the officers on site throughout the evening, we asked the contractor to help support this service," she said.

The special-duty officers will continue to work key Fort Weaver intersections during afternoon peak hours "at least through the end of April, when we open up the new road through Renton Road, which will help with traffic flow a lot," Mori said.

The latest improvements don't assure a smooth drive in and out of Fort Weaver, however. Yesterday, for instance, a backup on the makai end of the road in the area of Papipi Road caused such a standstill that cars detoured on Roosevelt Avenue into Kapolei to get onto H-1 to drive east toward Honolulu. It's the same route Pine took, except in reverse.

The \$60 million second phase of the Fort Weaver project widens its four lanes to six along the 2.6 miles just south of Laulaunui Drive and just beyond Geiger Road.

Originally scheduled to open by the end of February, the stretch between Laulaunui and the 'A'awa Drive/Old Fort Weaver Road intersection opened last week.

"There were some delays where crews were unable to pave because of inclement weather," Mori said. "We also ran into some electrical problems."

Crews just poured concrete for the deck of the Cane Haul Pedestrian Bridge, and railings are to be

put up shortly, she said.

The next improvement motorists will see is the new turn lanes and revamped signalized intersection at the 'A'awa Drive/Old Fort Weaver Road intersection early next month, Mori said.

The better news is that once the new signalized intersections are operating, traffic managers will be able to control the systems from a remote location, Mori said. New traffic cameras will also be installed farther down Fort Weaver "so traffic can be better monitored and the public will be able to receive more accurate (and) timely information on traffic conditions."

In the next month, an additional lane will open on both sides from 'A'awa/Old Fort Weaver to the key intersection at Renton Road. The balance of the project is estimated to be done by late August, Mori said.

Area residents applauded the extended hours of the off-duty officers and said they can't wait for the entire project to end.

Shirley Aganad, 60, of Ocean Pointe, said both the expansion of Fort Weaver and the opening of the North-South Road, which will connect with Kapolei Parkway, should ease traffic somewhat.

She and her husband try to work their daily schedules around peak traffic hours, but it doesn't always work.

"You see it back up at odd times," Aganad said. "When you think you should be sailing you can't, and when it seems like you're supposed to be backed up, you're coming through."

Mel McKeague, 53, an 'Ewa Beach resident for more than three decades, said the changes will help but that it will be too little too late.

"The roads are obsolete before they're done," McKeague said. "They're overdeveloping the area. Homes are popping up here like mushrooms."

New law opens up possibilities near rail transit stations

[By Gary T. Kubota](#)

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

A bill that would permit new land uses around rail transit stations was signed into law yesterday by Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann.

Hannemann, who has favored developing a rail system from Kapolei to Ala Moana, said the transit bill will allow greater flexibility in planning a "vibrant transportation system that will help all of us."

During a news conference at Beach Walk Plaza yesterday, the mayor also signed into law a bill that allows Waikiki businesses an easier process for developing and posting signs.

Waikiki Improvement Association President Rick Egged said the new sign law will provide more ease for businesses, including the placement of their names on parking structures serving their enterprises.

"It's going to make a big difference to our Waikiki businesses," Egged said.

The transit bill establishes "Transit-Oriented Development Zones" around rail transit stations that would allow for more efficient land use by a number of means, including the elimination or reduction of minimum off-street parking requirements and allowing of higher urban densities.

City Planning Director David K. Tanoue said the public meetings will be held in respective communities to receive suggestions about the special districts.

The city has held several meetings already in the Waipahu area, he said.

Tanoue said the Planning Department will eventually draft a zoning bill incorporating various suggestions.

The law calls for planners to avoid the "gentrification" of special districts and to allow for mixed

uses, including affordable housing.

Find this article at:

http://www.starbulletin.com/news/20090327_New_law_opens_up_possibilities_near_rail_transit_stations.html

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March 27, 2009

Contractors lining up to bid for Honolulu rail's \$550M first phase

By Sean Hao
Advertiser Staff Writer

Seven teams of contractors are vying for a \$550 million to \$600 million deal to design and build the first phase of Honolulu's elevated commuter rail from East Kapolei to Leeward Community College.

City transportation director Wayne Yoshioka wouldn't disclose the identities of the teams during testimony to the City Council Budget Committee earlier this week. However, his testimony suggests that there's a healthy level of competition for the major construction project.

Early next month, an evaluation committee will narrow that list to four teams that will be chosen to actually bid on the first phase of the \$5.4 billion elevated commuter train that eventually will connect to Ala Moana, Yoshioka said.

The city plans to award the contract sometime this fall if it receives needed federal approvals. Under current plans, the city will use a limited form of private partnership called design-build for the first 6.5-mile segment of the 20-mile rail. That arrangement makes contractors responsible for designing a system that works.

The three losing teams will each receive \$500,000 to help offset the costs of competing for the design-build project. That's an unusual practice for Honolulu. However, Yoshioka said stipends are a standard way for Mainland communities to encourage firms to spend time and money competing for such large construction projects.

"After a while the (losing) firms, even the good ones, start saying 'well, we can't do this very often, if we do this often enough we'll go bankrupt,'" Yoshioka testified. "Because of the issue, many of the design-build efforts, especially the large ones, offer stipends."

City Councilman Charles Djou yesterday said the stipends do not seem unreasonable, but he wanted to know more about whether other cities had similar practices.

"I'd rather not have to expend those resources," Djou said. "That is not common in the city's procurement practice."

Djou said news that seven teams were fighting for the first major transit contract is a good sign.

"That's a healthy number," he said. "Obviously, the more the better. That's a good start."

Other major transit contracts to be put out for bid this year include a \$250 million rail vehicle and systems contract and a \$120 million contract to build a maintenance and storage facility. Those contracts won't be awarded until early 2010.

Those procurements are part of a plan to launch limited train service in phases, from late 2013 to late 2018.

March 27, 2009

Gambling

Letter to the Editor

Property tax

\$10 more per month is a lot, considering

Mayor Hannemann tells us that his proposed property tax increases are only \$10 more per month and "about the cost of one movie, eight steamed manapua or one bento lunch" (Hot Seat, March 22).

Our property taxes have gone up every year since 2004, when he became mayor, either through property value increases, tax rate increases or a combination of the two. Ten dollars more per month means that it is on top of all the increases over the last four years. So while property values are decreasing and property taxes should be, too, we are going to keep our current taxes and increase them by \$120 per year, about 10 percent more for the average homeowner.

As for what I would do with the \$120 a year in increased taxes, maybe once in awhile I would like to treat myself to what he condescendingly thinks it costs for a movie, manapua or a bento lunch. Or maybe I can use it to offset the \$450-per-year GET increase for the mayor's rail system.

Garry P. Smith | 'Ewa Beach

March 28, 2009

Hawaii joblessness at 30-year high: 6.5%

February unemployment in Isles reaches 6.5 percent as mass layoffs continue

*By Greg Wiles
Advertiser Staff Writer*

Hawaii's unemployment rate climbed to its highest level in more than three decades last month as 6.5 percent of the state's workforce was idled.

Figures released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics shows unemployment more than doubled from the 3.1 percent seasonally adjusted rate a year earlier.

The jobless rate was the highest since October 1978, when unemployment hit 6.6 percent as high inflation dampened state and national economies.

Hawaii's unemployment rate has been steadily rising since the second half of last year as a troublesome economic downturn took a toll on jobs. In February, Maui Land & Pineapple Co. announced 98 layoffs, and several well-known restaurants closed, including Nick's Fishmarket, E&O Trading Co. and Brew Moon.

While bad news for the state, Hawaii's unemployment rate remained below the national average of 8.1 percent.

"Hawaii usually follows the rest of the nation," said labor economist Lawrence "Bill" Boyd. But "our rate tends to be a little bit lower."

Hawaii's 6.5 percent rate tied with Texas for the 15th lowest rate in the country.

Honolulu's joblessness was 5.4 percent as unemployment inched higher on O'ahu.

Other figures released yesterday show:

- The number of unemployed stood at 42,250 last month, or about twice as much as a year earlier.
- There were 3,700 fewer nonagricultural jobs in February compared with January and 19,200 fewer than 12 months earlier.
- Except for Lana'i, unemployment more than doubled on each island on a nonseasonally adjusted basis from a year before.
- Hawaii and Kaua'i counties had the worst unemployment of the state's major islands at 9.1 percent. Kaua'i's rate has more than tripled during the past year.

- Maui's unemployment more than doubled to 7.7 percent.
- Moloka'i continued to have the worst unemployment at 12.9 percent, while Lana'i came in at 7.7 percent.

jobless ranks rise

The rising rate was not a surprise given a nagging recession that's contributed to job losses here and on the Mainland. It's expected that unemployment will continue to rise here, with 236 workers being added to the jobless ranks this month when the Hawaii Superferry shut down.

The University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization has forecast unemployment will rise to 7 percent this year and increase more next year as the state works through the worst economic downturn since statehood.

Boyd said Hawai'i's unemployment rate would be higher if not for the number of multiple job holders in the state. He said as much as 8 percent to 9 percent of the workforce here hold more than one job, while nationally the figure is more on the level of 6 percent to 7 percent.

Thus more people could be losing one of their jobs and still be counted as employed when their income has declined, Boyd said.

All states and the District of Columbia had higher year-over-year rates, and 49 states and the District of Columbia saw their unemployment rates move higher in February from the previous month, when Hawai'i's rate was 6.1 percent.

Seven states including California, Nevada and Oregon had unemployment rates that topped 10 percent last month. That's up from four states in January.

tough on mainland

Economists predict the national jobless rate will hit 10 percent by year's end even if the recession were to end later this year as some hope.

Michigan's jobless rate climbed to 12 percent, the highest in the country. South Carolina registered the second-highest at 11 percent and Oregon came in third at 10.8 percent.

North Carolina came in fourth with an unemployment rate of 10.7 percent, the highest there on records dating to 1976. California and Rhode Island tied for fifth place at 10.5 percent each.

That was a record high for Rhode Island. The seventh state with a jobless rate above 10 percent was Nevada at 10.1 percent.

Wyoming once again had the lowest unemployment rate, 3.9 percent.

Additional Facts

Job fair today

What: Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard apprentice and engineering job fair

When: Today, 8:30 a.m. to noon

Where: Honolulu Community College, 874 Dillingham Blvd.

Unemployment hits 12-year high

[By Allison Schaefer](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Mar 28, 2009

Hawaii's unemployment rate skyrocketed to its highest level in 12 years last month as the state's key construction and tourism industries continued to stagger under the weight of a faltering economy.

While Hawaii's 6.5 percent seasonally adjusted jobless rate tied the state with Texas for the 14th lowest in the nation, it is the isles' highest monthly level since it hit 6.6 percent in June 1997, said Ryan Markham, special assistant to the director of the state Department of Labor and Industrial Relations.

"It isn't great when unemployment is on the rise, but relative to the rest of the country, we are doing OK," Markham said.

Hawaii's February rate remained well below the national average of 8.1 percent, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics.

In February, 607,950 Hawaii workers were employed, the Labor Department reported yesterday. That was 1,200 fewer than were employed in January and 21,500 fewer than in February 2008. Unemployed workers grew to 42,250 in February from 39,750 the previous month and 20,350 the previous year.

Job losses were experienced in construction, which lost 900 jobs during the month; leisure and hospitality, which lost 600 jobs; financial services, which lost 300 jobs; and trade, transportation and utilities, which lost 100 jobs. Employment expanded in several sectors, including professional and business services, which added 400 jobs; other services, which added 300 jobs; and education and health services, which added 100 jobs.

More job growth is expected later this year as \$1.89 billion in federal stimulus funding gets pumped into the hands of state laborers and tradesmen, Markham said. And, hopefully, tourism will recover as consumer confidence improves and investment in emerging markets begins to pay off, he said.

"We are also excited about the \$700,000 per week in additional stimulus money that will help our local economy as unemployment claimants get an additional \$25 per week in benefits," he said.

The additional benefit took effect Feb. 22, and claimants began receiving back pay this week, Markham said.

"That's a good chunk of change that will go back into Hawaii's economy," he said. "We're hoping it will create more jobs."

Competition for prospective jobs is fierce, said Judy Bishop, owner of Bishop & Co., a Honolulu-based staffing and career counseling company.

"It's an employer's market. We get 100 resumes a day when last year we might have gotten five," Bishop said. "Job seekers must show employers that they are willing to give 120 percent, and they might have to consider taking jobs that are 10 to 15 percent less than they were making."

It is also more challenging to bring job seekers and employers together in a down economy, said David Bower, director of marketing for ALTRES, which advertises itself as Hawaii's largest locally owned employment agency.

"The truth is that a lot of jobs don't get advertised," Bower said. "There are a lot of barriers in the market because recruitment and advertising are so expensive."

People network within their companies to find or fill jobs, and a lot of companies turn to staffing agencies to find applicants because it is more cost-effective, he said.

Job seekers who customize their resumes and show that they understand the company's vision will stand out from other applicants, Bishop said. Joining industry organizations and using social networking applications like Linked In and Twitter are good ways to expand professional circles, she said.

"Job seekers need to tell everyone that they know that they are looking for a job. It's the most effective way to find opportunities," Bower said.

Job seekers who need to gain entry into the market should consider temporary work, Bishop said.

March 30, 2009

Rail stations may be short on parking

Many commuters will have to walk, wait for bus to catch train

By Sean Hao

Advertiser Staff Writer

Limited parking spaces could cause commuters to think twice about driving to one of Honolulu's planned rail stations for a train ride.

The city forecast that residents and tourists will take more than 95,000 trips a day on Honolulu's planned \$5.4 billion rail system. Nearly nine out of every 10 of those trips will be by people arriving at train stations by bus, bicycle or foot. But that will still leave nearly 11,000 trips coming from those who will drive to train stations, according to the city's draft environmental impact study.

Where those drivers will park remains unclear.

The city plans to provide parking for 4,100 autos at four train station park-and-rides located between East Kapolei and Aloha Stadium. Riders commuting from urban Honolulu going west will get no new city-provided transit parking lots under current plans.

For the most part it's not economically feasible for the city to provide parking around stations in urban Honolulu, said city transportation director Wayne Yoshioka. In addition, the city wants to encourage drivers to keep their autos parked at home.

"We're not trying to look for parking right in the corridor because that kind of defeats the purpose," Yoshioka said. "The whole point is to change modes. The hope is that in urban areas we have a lot more (people) walking to transit stations, (and) for some of the suburban riders the hope is they don't drive in — they'll take a feeder bus in."

Deciding how much public parking to provide around train stations requires delicate balancing. If there are too few spaces, or parking is too difficult to find, people may decide not to ride the train.

Honolulu city officials hope to begin construction on the 20-mile East Kapolei to Ala Moana train in December, contingent on federal approval, and launch service in phases between 2013 and late 2018.

Each station will have bike racks, and trains will accommodate bicycles. However, city parking will only be provided at park-and-ride lots in East Kapolei, and at the University of Hawai'i-West O'ahu, Pearl Highlands and Aloha Stadium. Another 1,000 spaces for both bus and train riders will be built near a Middle Street transit center.

Public parking outside of those facilities may be hard to find.

That's because the city last week enacted a new law that establishes a process for creating transit-

oriented development zoning regulations around stations. Those rules are partly designed to eliminate or reduce off-street parking within 2,000 feet of stations in an effort to spur residents and others to use mass transit.

Walk, wait for bus

The city's goal is to foster transit lifestyles and higher-density developments near train stations. Those who don't live near train stations can take TheBus to one of the stations. There are 3,800 bus stops within a 10-minute walk of 95 percent of O'ahu's urban residents, according to the city.

However, it remains to be seen whether people will leave their autos at home to walk to a bus stop then catch a bus to a train station, said Panos Prevedouros, a UH engineering professor. Train riders will want to be able to park at train stations, he said.

"It's a big convenience," Prevedouros said. "You take your car. You park and you take the rail for the long haul or for the congested part of the haul."

The 4,100 to 5,100 spaces planned for city train stations isn't out of line with the amount of public parking provided at recently opened Mainland train systems. For example, the 10-mile Lynx light rail line in Charlotte, N.C., opened in November 2007 with 5,554 park-and-ride spaces, according to media reports. Phoenix's new 20-mile light rail train launched service in December with about 3,500 park-and-ride spaces.

However, the combined average weekday boardings for both of those systems is about 45,000. That's fewer than half the 95,000 average weekday boardings expected for Honolulu's train in 2030.

Honolulu doesn't need to offer as many spaces as those less-densely populated cities, Yoshioka said.

If the city does not provide adequate parking near stations, demand could spill over into nearby communities. According to the city study, the areas most likely to experience demand for spillover parking include: West Loch, Pearlridge, Iwilei and Ala Moana Center. Those four stations could attract a spillover parking demand of 140 to 370 automobiles each day.

To compound parking concerns, elevated guideway columns and station entrances are expected to eliminate more than 1,000 on-street and off-street parking spaces along the 20-mile route, according to the study.

Working it out

Yoshioka said the city will have several strategies for addressing parking problems that may arise once the train begins operations. Those include:

- Implementing neighborhood parking programs that provide residents with parking permits.
- Establishing leasing arrangements with nearby property owners that have excess weekday parking capacity.
- Building new parking facilities.

- Developing off-street parking programs with retailers to minimize on-street parking spillover.

"In each case sometimes you don't actually know until you open what happens," said Yoshioka. "Our intent as we're preparing to open is to do specific parking studies in those areas and assess that. If you're finding an indication that there would be a problem, then you go out and try to implement strategies to try to make sure it doesn't impact the neighborhood adversely."

March 30, 2009

Lingle to testify tomorrow on budget plan

Gov. Linda Lingle is scheduled to testify tomorrow morning before the Senate Ways and Means Committee on the administration's proposed budget plan to close the latest \$255 million revenue shortfall projected by the Council on Revenues.

The meeting is scheduled for 10 a.m. at the state Capitol conference room 211.

According to Lingle's administration, her current plan balances the budget without general tax increases, without layoffs or furloughs of state employees, without making further cuts to public services or programs, and without taking any money from the counties, such as the Transient Accommodations Tax or Honolulu County's general excise rail transit tax. The plan also focuses on ensuring a positive general fund balance of approximately \$160 million at the end of fiscal year 2011, according to the administration.

KITV.com

Transit Brings In High-Paid Positions

City Officials Say Project Needs Top Talent

POSTED: 2:44 pm HST March 30, 2009

UPDATED: 5:41 pm HST March 30, 2009

HONOLULU -- Mayor Mufi Hannemann's administration is asking the Honolulu City Council to approve creating as many as 79 administrative jobs to oversee the city's \$5 billion rail transit project that includes several high salaries.

Managing the largest public works project in the state's history will require top talent with salaries high enough to attract qualified candidates, city spokesman said. Officials said the salary numbers they are using are maximums and that the actual salaries could be less.

The city's top rail executive would be paid far more than the mayor.

The Executive Assistant II in the rail transit office would have a salary of up to \$148,000 if the City Council approves the mayor's budget. That is \$13,000 more than the mayor and significantly higher than the managing director and city's department heads.

City Executive Jobs:

- Transit Executive Assistant II \$148,764
- Mayor \$135,786
- Managing Director \$126,734
- Department Heads \$118,339

"I'm not sure that even those folks that voted for rail were voting to create a very large, a very expensive and a very permanent bureaucracy," Councilman Duke Bainum said.

"The salaries seem high, but we need to pay these guys so we get the right people to do it ... to attract somebody who's highly qualified," Councilman Gary Okino said.

There are eight other rail transit executive positions in the budget proposal. A second deputy director could earn as much as \$126,000 and seven executive assistants who would be paid a maximum of \$130,000 or \$108,000 a year.

Proposed Rail Transit Executive Jobs:

- Transit 2nd Deputy Director \$126,516
- 5 Transit Executive Assistant I \$130,00 each
- 2 Transit Executive Assistants I \$108,372

The city's spokesman, Bill Brennan, earns nearly \$89,000 a year responding to information requests for all city departments. However, he would be paid less than the chief rail transit spokesperson, whose proposed salary is \$92,000 a year. Two other rail transit information specialists would earn \$75,000 and \$82,000 annually.

Rail Transit Public Relations Jobs:

- Transit Information Officer \$92,400
- Transit Information Specialist III \$82,128
- Transit Information Specialist III \$75,972

"Certainly you have to get the public informed. I'm just wondering if we have to do it at such a high pay level," Bainum said.

City Council Budget Chairman Nestor Garcia said the mayor's staff will have to justify the pay for each position.

"We are competing with all the other jurisdictions that are trying to start up or expand on their transit projects. I understand that we need to recruit quality people," Garcia said.

Two librarians who run the city's library next to City Hall for all departments are paid \$53,000 and \$45,000 a year. Budget documents show there would be a librarian devoted only to rail transit, earning \$62,000 annually.

City budget documents show 35 rail transit jobs are already funded and the Hannemann Administration is asking for 44 more, starting July 1. That would raise the total of rail transit related salaries to \$6.3 million and another \$3.5 million for fringe benefits.

The city provided a statement in regards to this story.

"In anticipation that this project will require people with specialized skills, the city has budgeted for an appropriate compensation range to attract qualified candidates. The figures cited are the maximum of the range. The actual salaries could be less.

These pay ranges are by no means out of scale for a transit project of this nature, which is so important to our island's future. The pay scale is meant to be attractive and comparable to similar positions elsewhere in the industry.

For example, the Executive Assistant positions will be held by people with specialized planning, engineering or other transportation-related skills.

The positions will be funded through revenue from the Oahu GET surcharge and/or federal funds," city spokesman Johnny Brannon said in the written statement.

CURRENT CITY TRANSIT POSITIONS		
Position:	Number:	Total Salary:
Clerk Typist	2	\$78,936
Sr. Clerk Typist	4	\$165,804
Secretary III	1	\$51,948
Secretary IV	1	\$56,184
Records Mgmt Analyst IV	1	\$62,424
Accountant V	1	\$70,224
Fiscal Officer II	1	\$85,428

Contracts Officer	1	\$75,972
Land Acquisition Officer	1	\$92,400
Planner IV	1	\$70,224
Planner VI	2	\$158,100
Planner VII	3	\$263,256
Info Spclt III	1	\$75,972
Librarian II	1	\$62,424
Civil Engineer VI	3	\$263,256
Architect VI	1	\$85,428
Electrical Engineer VI	1	\$85,428
Mechanical Engineer VI	1	\$85,428
Chief Plans Examining Eng	1	\$88,848
Traf Engineer III	1	\$85,428
Admin Svcs Offcr II	1	\$71,664
Exec Asst I	2	\$216,744
Second Deputy Director	1	\$126,516
Public Comm. Administrator	1	\$87,108
Civil Engineer VIII	1	\$91,440
total:	35	\$2,656,584

PROPOSED CITY TRANSIT POSITIONS		
Position:	Number:	Total Salary:
Executive Assitant II	1	\$148,764
Executive Assistant I	5	\$648,180
Information Officer	1	\$92,400
Civil Engineer VI	1	\$92,400
Planner VII	2	\$184,800
Information Specialist III	1	\$82,128
Planner VI	7	\$574,896
Procurement and Specification Spc VI	1	\$82,128
Contracts Officer	1	\$82,128
Electrical Engineer V	2	\$164,256
Traffic Engineer II	2	\$164,256
Civil Engineer V	9	\$739,152
Architect V	2	\$164,256
Graphic Production Artist II	1	\$71,112
Administrative Specialist I	1	\$62,424
Graphic Artist III	1	\$60,744
Traffic Technician VI	1	\$60,744
Records Management Analyst I	1	\$53,352
Secretary III	1	\$54,012

Secretary II	2	\$99,864
Purchasing Clerk I	1	\$42,684
Total:	44	\$3,724,680

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March 31, 2009

What office will Mufi run for next?

By Lee Cataluna
Advertiser Columnist

Candidate announcements, like Christmas decorations at the mall, seem to be coming earlier all the time.

The next primary election isn't until September 2010 and already we've had announcements for governor, lieutenant governor and Congress. That's earlier than tinsel in July.

The big question now is what is Mufi Hannemann going to run for? Neil Abercrombie called dibs on the Democratic race for governor. Ed Case twittered that he wants to go back to Washington. There may be second- and third-string wannabes to challenge both those primary races, but Hannemann is the only one in sight who has the potential of being a spoiler for either Abercrombie's or Case's aspirations. There may be other names floating around, but no one with the take-no prisoners campaign style of Hannemann. If he doesn't formally announce soon, it'll be like putting out the lawn reindeer in December — traditional, but not too good for making money.

Even though people were saying confidently for months that Abercrombie was planning to come back from D.C. to run for governor, it was still hard to believe considering the safe seat he would be giving up. That one move alone, whether Abercrombie wins the election or not, is like pulling a bottom plank from the Hawai'i Democrats' Jenga tower. It puts all the other pieces in play and makes the whole thing precarious and — finally! — exciting.

If Abercrombie hadn't announced his intentions so early, where would Ed Case be? Still waiting to hear about Neil, perhaps. Certainly Case has a history of taking on incumbents, but running for an open seat is just easier and, given his most recent defeat, cleaner.

There are the smaller questions that arise with this shift in the party: Will Hannemann give up the mayor's seat if it means giving Duke Bainum a shot at City Hall? Is Bainum gearing up for a run for Congress? Who is licking their chops anticipating the LG spot next to Abercrombie's name on the ticket? Do any of the current state legislators think their reputation will survive intact after this session of fumbling the budget crisis while accepting big raises? And is Duke Aiona worried at all or is he just eating his five fruits a day and laughing at the Democrats pulling at each other like the proverbial crabs in a bucket?

When Ed Case did his online survey about what office he should run for, governor or Congress, he said the results were a tie. It seemed then that the answer should have been "find out what Neil Abercrombie is running for first." All else flowed from that.



Honolulu On The Move

NEWSLETTER OF THE HONOLULU HIGH-CAPACITY TRANSIT CORRIDOR PROJECT

Rail and the Economy



- Independent projections show building rail transit will generate more than \$1 billion for Hawai'i's economy in 2010.*
- By 2011, rail's construction activity is anticipated to create more than \$2 billion for Hawai'i's economy.*
- Rail systems are an economic stimulus returning up to \$6 for every \$1 invested.**
- Federal funds will have "Buy America" clauses, assisting our nation's economic recovery.
- By reducing future traffic congestion and improving mobility, rail will make it easier for local businesses to deliver goods and services.
- Honolulu's rail system is endorsed by business and labor groups such as the Chamber of Commerce of Hawai'i, the West O'ahu Economic Development Association, the Hawai'i Government Employees Association, the United Public Workers and more.

*Research by UH West O'ahu economics professor Lawrence Boyd

**American Public Transit Association

Rail Construction Will Employ 10,000 Workers a Year



Aloha!

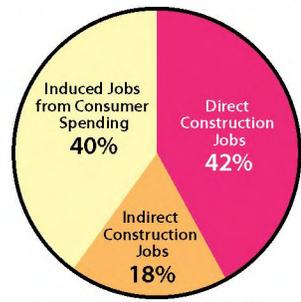
The project is beginning to gear up to build Honolulu's planned rail transit system and create new jobs in the midst of the state's recession.

The bidding process has started to construct the initial 6.5-mile segment connecting East Kapolei with Pearl Highlands. The City has issued the first invitation to bid and will select a builder this fall for the segment, with groundbreaking at the end of the year. Construction of the entire 20 mile system should take nine years.

When rail construction begins in 2010, it will be a job-creating engine vital to the economic recovery of our state. The project's construction activity is expected to employ about 10,000 people a year on average, according to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Economic models show that about 42 percent of the employment will be directly related to construction: engineers, architects and skilled workers like carpenters, masons, ironworkers, and

Employment Created by Rail Construction*



*Person years of employment.

others, along with managers and office staff.

About 18 percent will be indirect jobs in additional industries as workers spend their paychecks on essentials like food, housing, clothes, transportation and school supplies, as well as entertainment and travel.

Based on nine years of construction activity, the project will create:

- 38,000 person-years of direct employment for engineering and construction workers.
- 17,000 person-years of indirect employment in industries like retail, food and beverage and service industries.
- 36,000 person-years of induced employment resulting from an overall expansion of the regional economy due to the construction.

A person year of employment is one job created for one person for a year.

Local business reporter Howard Dicus noted in his blog, "rail is the only major project already on the boards that fairly qualifies as economic stimulus."

MARCH 2009



Honolulu On The Move

Contact Us

You can reach us by calling the project hotline at 566-2299 or by submitting your comments to www.honolulutransit.org.

Call or email us if you would like to receive an electronic version of this newsletter or would like be removed from our mailing list.

Engineering Our Future



Question: What has two hands, 10 fingers, colorful crayons and a big smile?

Answer: A keiki at the "Engineering Our Future" display at Kahala Mall.

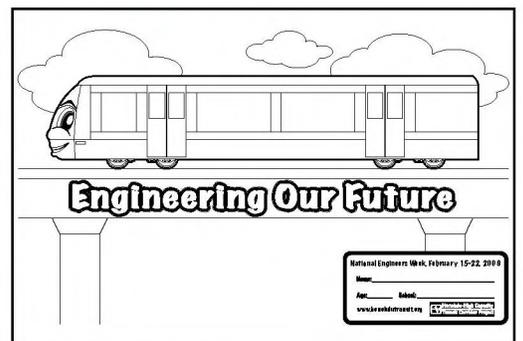
As part of Engineering Week, a national event that celebrates the profession's contributions, the project staff created "Engineering Our Future" to educate young people about what trains are, how they work and what engineers do.

More than 300 pre-schoolers and elementary students (and a few parents) let their imaginations run free as they colored trains and guideways. Afterward, children and their parents read brightly-colored displays about engineering and watched an animated fly through of the rail route.

Many keiki took their colored trains home with them, while others pinned their trains to the booth walls for other children and parents to see.

The Hawai'i Council of Engineer Societies recognized "Engineering Our Future" as the most educational display and awarded it the platinum award. Several of the student drawings are online at the project's website: www.honolulutransit.org.

If you would like keiki engineering materials for a classroom or school, please contact the project at 566-2299 or at info@honolulutransit.org. We will be happy to provide coloring sheets and a presentation for the class.



Honolulu Rail Transit Project

Honolulu On The Move 

566-2299 | www.honolulustransit.org

HONOLULU RAIL TRANSIT



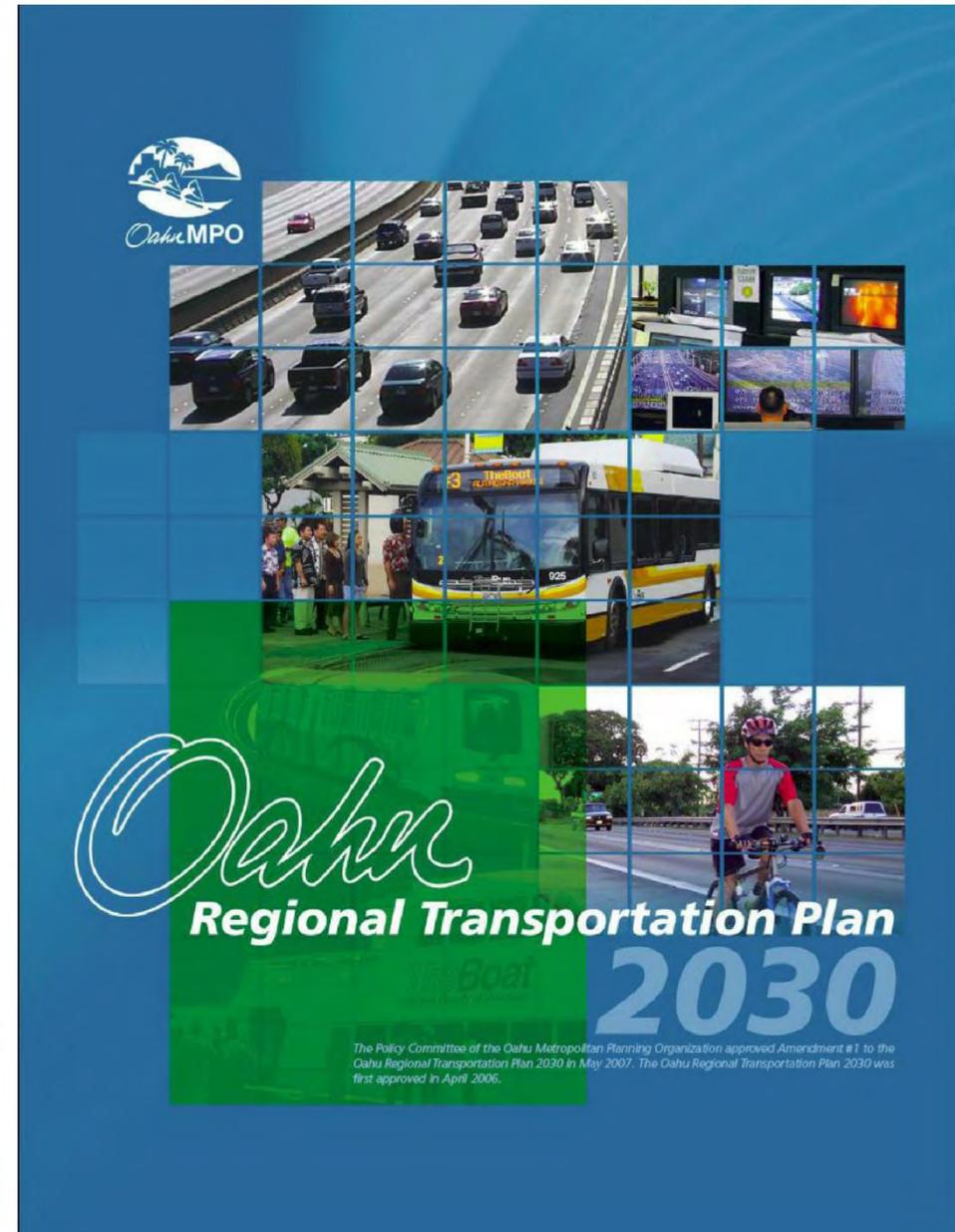
Planning for the Future

O'ahu in 2030

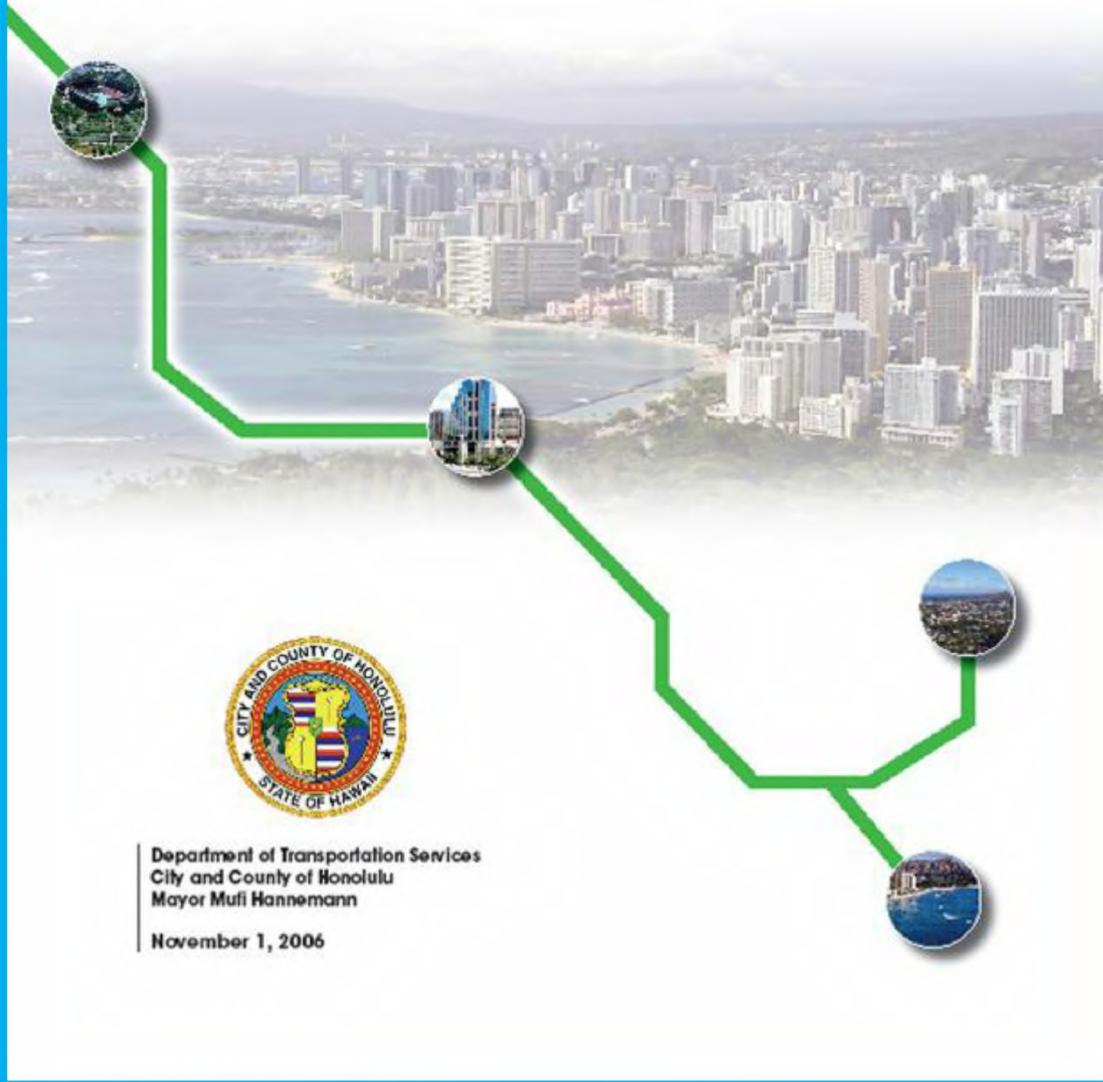
- **200,000 more residents than in 2005**
- **100,000 more jobs than in 2005**
- **750,000 more daily trips than in 2005**

Multi-Modal Options to Improve Mobility

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



Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project Alternatives Analysis Report



Department of Transportation Services
City and County of Honolulu
Mayor Mufi Hannemann

November 1, 2006

City Council Selection

December 22, 2006

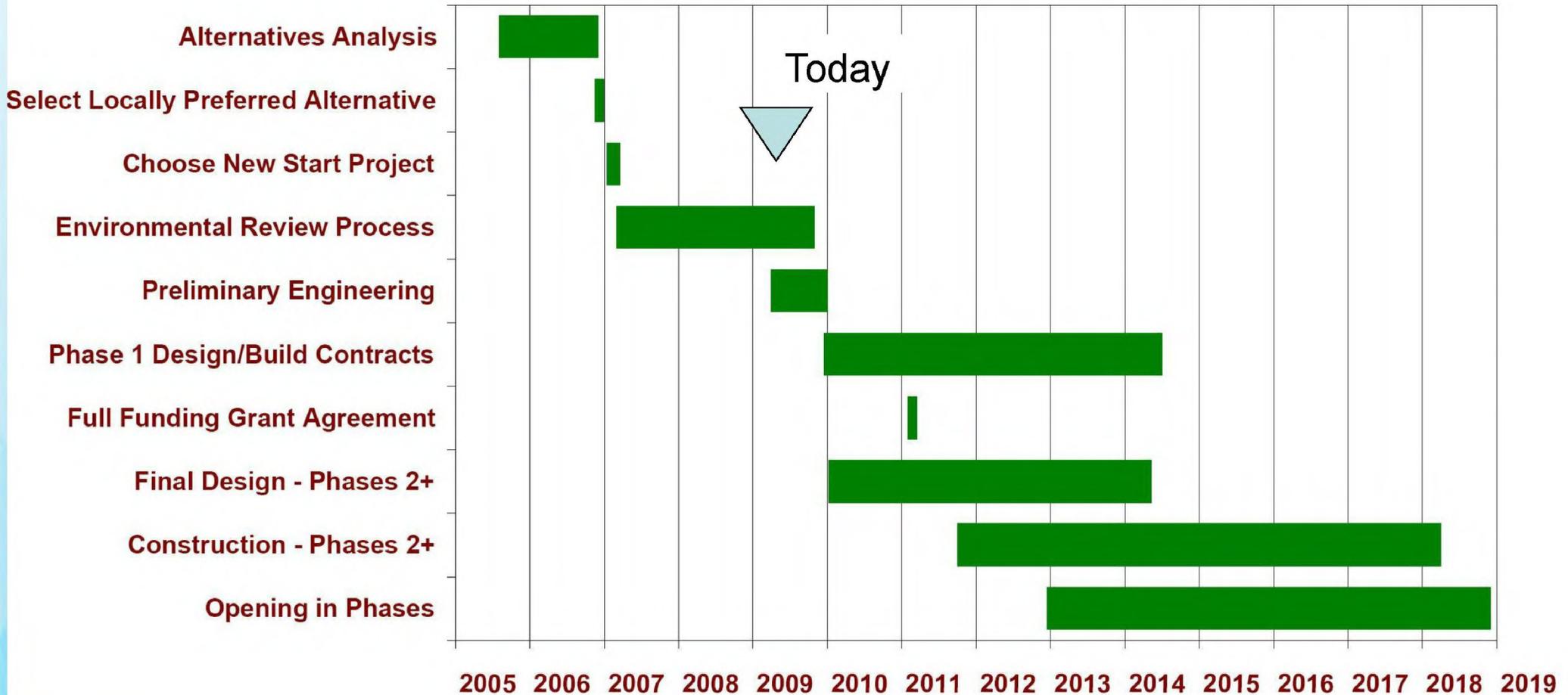
- By a vote of 7 to 2 the City Council selected Fixed Guideway

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

Locally Preferred Alternative

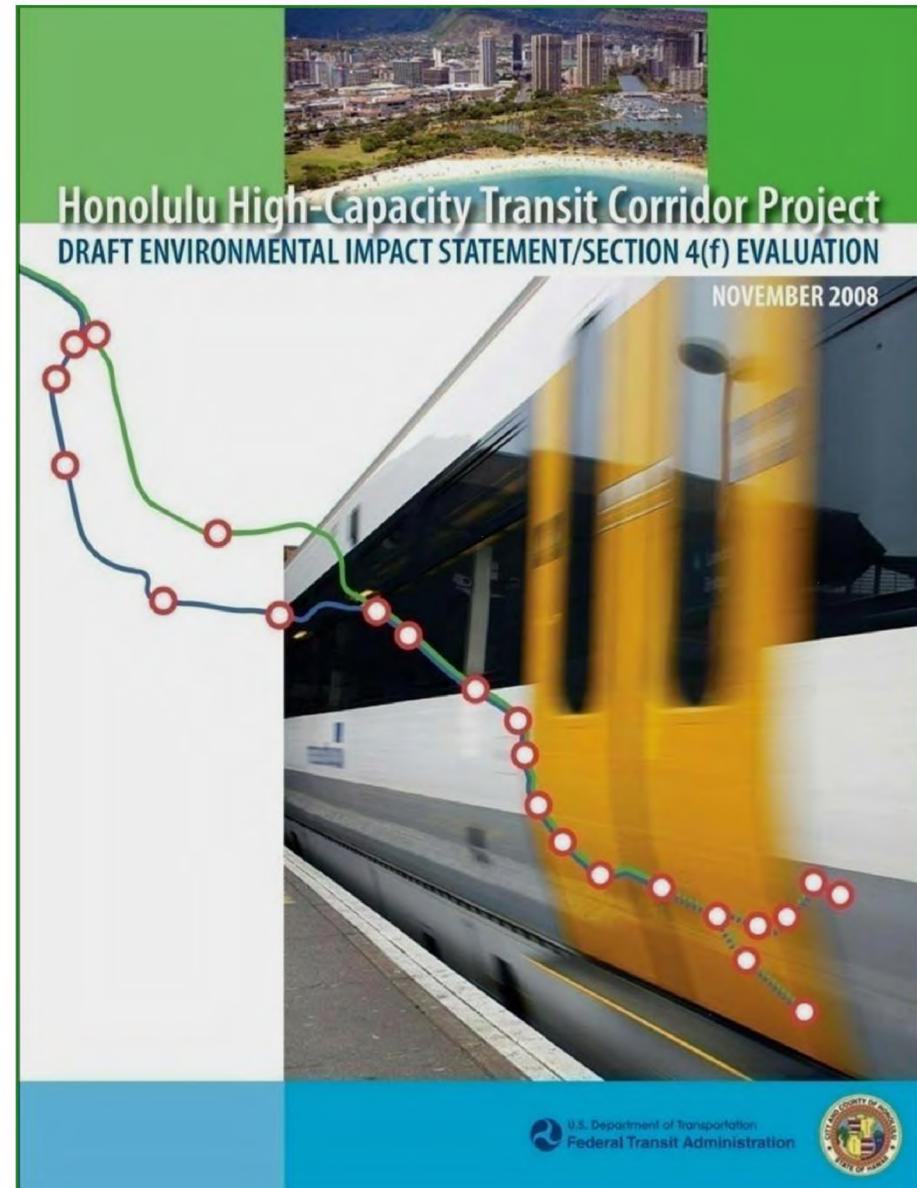


Project Schedule



Environmental Impact Statement

- **Draft EIS Comment Review Period**
Nov. 24 – Feb. 6
- **Comments Addressed in Final EIS**
Late Summer 2009
- **Record of Decision**
Fall 2009



Draft EIS Topics

- Chapter 1 Background, Purpose and Need**
- Chapter 2 Alternatives Considered**
- Chapter 3 Transportation**
- Chapter 4 Environmental Analysis, Consequences, and Mitigation**
- Chapter 5 Section 4(f) Evaluation**
- Chapter 6 Cost and Financial Analysis**
- Chapter 7 Evaluation of Alternatives**
- Chapter 8 Comments and Coordination**

What could it look like?



Honolulu On The Move 

566-2299 | www.honolulutransit.org

What could it look like?



Kamehameha Highway at Ka'ahumanu Street



Kamehameha Highway near Radford Drive



Crossing Nu'uuanu Stream



Halekauwila Street at Mother Waldron Park



How would I use it?

1. Walk or take bus to Waipahu Transit Center Station • 10 – 15 min
2. Take escalator or stairs up to station platform • 1 min
3. Wait for train • 2 min
4. Board train and ride to Civic Center Station • 26 min
5. Take escalator to ground and walk to work • 5 min

Total Trip from home in Waipahu to Civic Center 44 - 49 minutes

How much will it cost to build?

	Millions of 2008 Dollars
Estimated Construction Cost	2,100
Design / Construction Contingency	555
Construction Subtotal	2,655
Right-of-Way	150
Vehicles	295
Professional Services	795
Project Reserve	230
Capital Cost	4,125
Finance Charges	380
TOTAL COST	4,500

Sources and Uses of Funds

	Millions of Inflated \$
GET Surcharge Revenues	4,050
FTA New Starts Funds	1,385
TOTAL REVENUE	5,435
Capital Cost	4,930
Finance Charges	505
TOTAL COST	5,435

Operating & Maintenance Cost

- Rail operating & maintenance cost, after fares, will be ~\$45 million a year
- 2-3% of the City's annual operating budget, an amount that can be accommodated without an increase in taxes

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

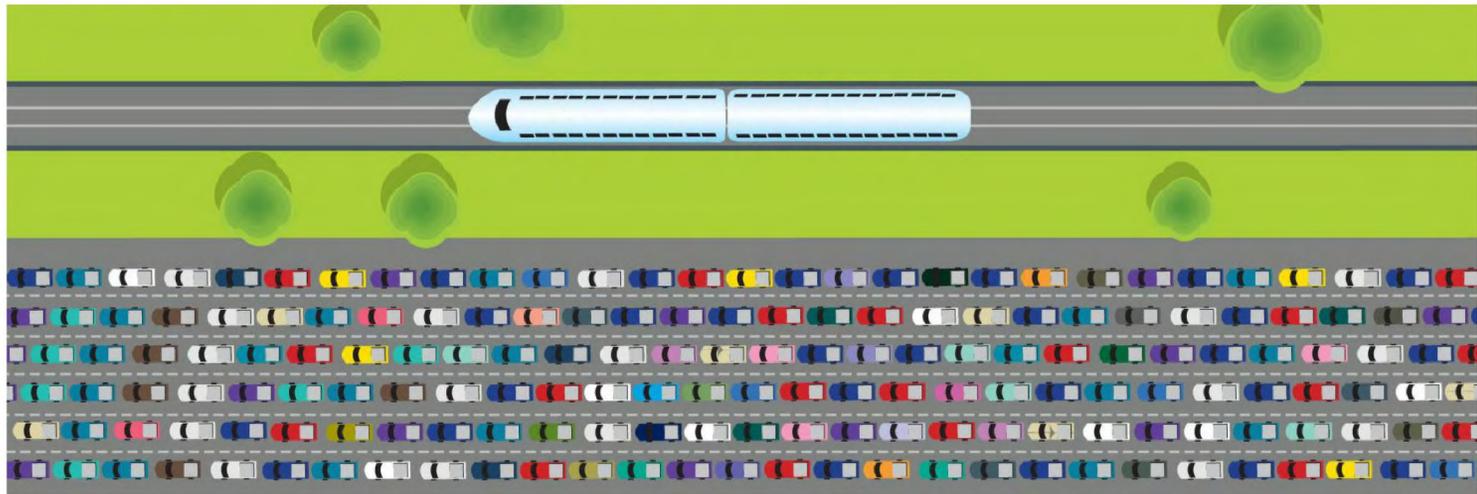
Projected Economic Benefits

- Building rail can fight the recession
- Creating 10,000 – 11,000 jobs a year
- Generating jobs in construction, restaurants, retail, and other industries



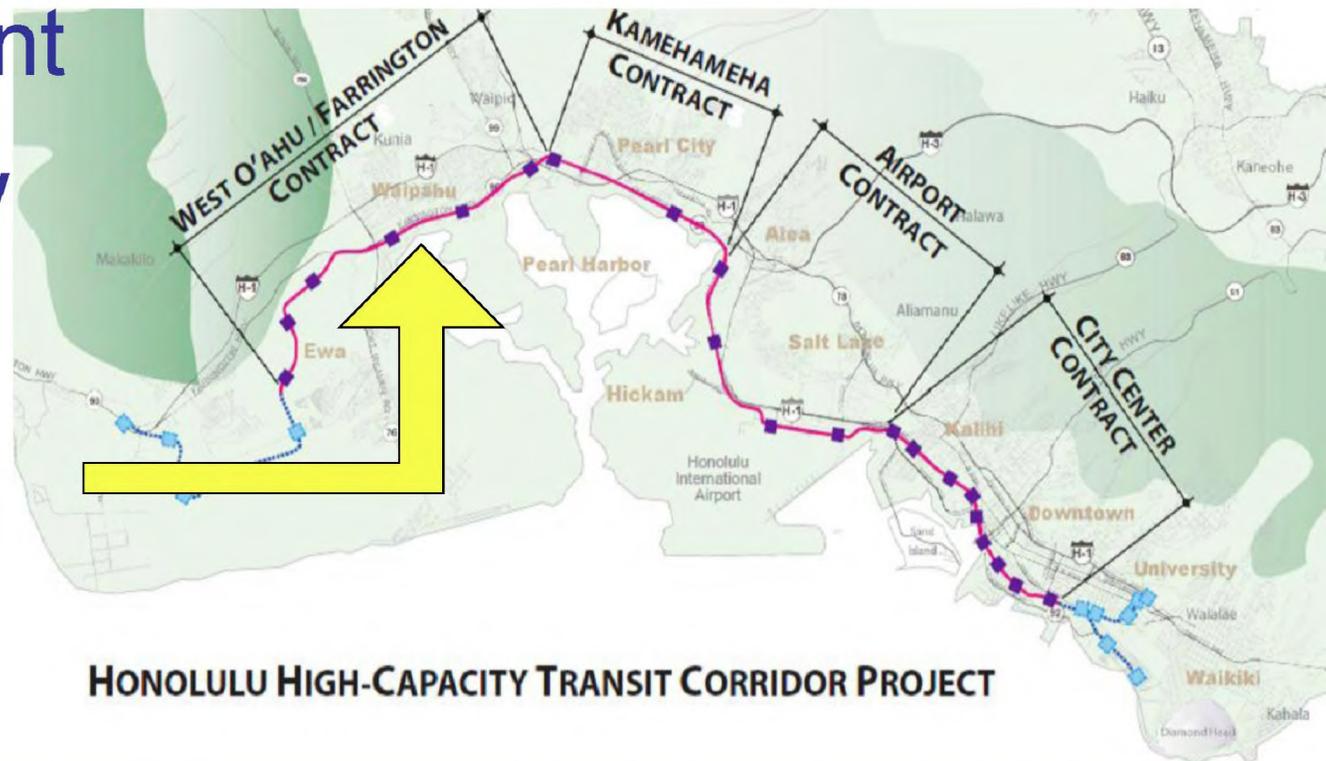
Traffic Benefits

- Rail will reduce future traffic delay by over 20%
- Rail will remove more than 30,000 cars and trucks from our roads each day
- One 300-passenger train can take 200 vehicles off our roads



Moving Forward

- First construction contract receiving bids
- Construction to begin late 2009
- First segment operating by 2012



What's Next...

- **Late Summer 2009:** Release of Final EIS
- **Fall 2009:** FTA issues Record of Decision
- **Fall 2009:** Award design/build contract for first phase

What's Next...

- **Spring 2011:** Full funding grant approval from federal government
- **Late 2012:** Initial service in Waipahu
- **Late 2018:** Start full service between East Kapolei and Ala Moana

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

Mahalo!