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# HONOLULU ON THE MOVE

SEPTEMBER 2011

THE HONOLULU HIGH-CAPACITY TRANSIT CORRIDOR PROJECT NEWSLETTER

## HONOLULU ON THE MOVE

SEPTEMBER 2011



### Contact Us

You can reach us by calling project information at 566-2299 or by submitting your comments to [www.HonoluluTransit.org](http://www.HonoluluTransit.org).

Call or email us if you would like to receive an electronic version of this newsletter or would like to be removed from our mailing list.

## Waipahu High School Student Participates in "Generation Green on Board" Summit in D.C.



Photo: Student participants from all over the U.S. gather for a photo at the U.S. Department of Transportation headquarters.

By Sharmaine Tiburcio, Waipahu High School

I was selected to participate this summer in the "Generation Green on Board" Youth Summit in Washington, D.C., hosted by the American Public Transportation Association. I would never have guessed that I was going to be one of the lucky 50 students from across the nation, who was able to attend an all-expense-paid trip to our nation's capital.

The experience was definitely exciting and memorable. Everyday I learned something new, especially about advocating for public transportation. This was also my first time on the mainland, so riding on the Metro for the first time was a complete thriller. I really liked it and how the system was designed. It's organized, easy to use, and it's efficient. Coming from Hawai'i, our only mode of public transportation is TheBus. Now that we are finally taking the next step and developing O'ahu with Honolulu Rail, I am very excited to see what the outcomes will be.

We had workshops and many guest speakers such as the president of APTA and the Secretary of the Department of Transportation. We had time to tour various places such as WMATA, Capitol Hill, the White House, and historical monuments and memorials as well. It was fun and educational which is what I loved best about the trip. To be honest, I have interacted with such a diverse group of students even though I come from Hawai'i. I met many friends from different states and just learned so much from them and their typical lifestyle. They of course, learned about Hawai'i as well from me and the two other lucky students from Hawai'i, Alyza, and Evan.

I would like to encourage all students to give public transportation a try because it will make a big difference in our environment and our future.

## Rail Project Moving Apace to Address Traffic Problems

As seen in the Sunday, September 10, 2011 edition of the Honolulu Star-Advertiser's Island Voices by Toru Hamayasu, HART Interim Executive Director & CEO

Honolulu's rail system continues to be in the news, and the time is right for an update and to provide key information on some important issues.

With construction of the guideway structures set to begin this fall along the 20-mile route, a new series of community meetings will soon begin regarding our station designs.

Contrary to recent reports from rail opponents, rail stations will not be "aircraft carriers in the sky." In fact, our stations will take up a space of 240 feet long and 60 feet wide – hardly comparable to a 1,090-foot-long Nimitz class aircraft carrier.

Honolulu's new rail system will be much quieter and smoother than older systems still operating in places such as New York, Chicago and Boston.

The alignment passes through a developed urban corridor, and sound barriers and other technological developments will help reduce noise levels. The sound of a train going by would be quieter than the sound of a passing bus at a distance of 50 feet.



Toru Hamayasu

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## Rail Project to Conduct City Center Archaeological Survey



Photo: Crews will conduct survey work along the alignment to test for archaeological information.

Taking a proactive approach, Honolulu's rail transit planners and archaeologists will soon begin archaeological survey work along the urban Honolulu section of the rail route to identify historical and cultural archaeological resources.

The Archaeological Inventory Survey (AIS) to begin this fall will aid the Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation (HART) in its design of the elevated rail guideway in the areas between Aloha Stadium and Ala Moana Center. Similar survey work has been completed for the first two construction phases of the rail route from East Kapolei to Aloha Stadium.

The survey work, which will be completed before rail construction begins in the urban Honolulu area, is required under the rail project's ongoing environmental work relating to the protection of archaeological cultural and historic resources.

Rail project staff has been working with community members and other stakeholders, to ensure businesses and residents in the

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HONOLULU RAIL TRANSIT PROJECT

## INFORMATIONAL COMMUNITY UPDATE RAIL TOWN HALL MEETINGS

The Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation (HART) will present a series of five informational community updates on the Honolulu Rail Transit Project. The public is welcomed to attend and learn up-to-date details from project experts, experience informational displays, and ask questions of HART representatives.

Join us for a meeting in your area:

### WEST O`AHU

Tues., Sept. 27, 2011 | 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.  
Kapolei Hale, Conf. Rms. A, B & C  
1000 Uluohia St., Kapolei

### EAST O`AHU

Wed., Sept. 28, 2011 | 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.  
Kalani High School Cafeteria  
4680 Kalaniana`ole Hwy., Honolulu

### CENTRAL & LEEWARD O`AHU

Thurs., Sept. 29, 2011 | 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.  
Highlands Int. School Cafeteria  
1460 Ho`olaulea St., Pearl City

### WINDWARD O`AHU

Tues., Oct. 4, 2011 | 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.  
Castle High School Cafeteria  
45-386 Kaneohe Bay Dr., Kaneohe

### URBAN HONOLULU

Wed., Oct. 5, 2011 | 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.  
Blaisdell Center, Maui Room  
777 Ward Ave., Honolulu

## Toru Hamayasu—Island Voices

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Honolulu's system fits more in line with the new classification that is being recognized in the industry as a light metro, and is not a heavy rail system.

The shorter vehicle configuration and smaller-sized stations will be a better fit for Honolulu.

We have been working for years with several Native Hawaiian groups, business and community leaders, and other stakeholders to ensure the rail system fits in with its surrounding communities and that Hawaii's sense of place is captured in our station design and transit artwork projects.

Surely most would agree that streets congested with fuel-burning cars and trucks, and the pollution that goes along with that, hardly represent Hawaii's sense of place.

Traffic will continue to worsen as our population grows. Rail will reduce congestion in the future – without rail, congestion will be far worse. Even Cliff Slater, a longtime rail opponent and a plaintiff in a lawsuit to block the project, admitted during a July 2010 City Council rail hearing: "We don't disagree at all that rail will have an effect on reducing traffic congestion from what it might be if we did nothing at all," he said. Clearly, we must act now before it gets much worse.

We will be in Washington, D.C. this month to discuss the

project and to continue to pave the way for an upcoming federal Full-Funding Grant Agreement. It is always encouraging to see the confidence the Federal Transit Administration has repeatedly shown in Honolulu's rail project. The rail project already received \$120 million in federal funds and is on track to receive a total of \$1.55 billion in federal funding. The FTA would not be investing in our project, if it had any doubts about whether it would succeed.

Yet opponents try to mislead the public insisting the \$5.3 billion price tag will increase by billions of dollars.

The project's cost estimates are regularly reviewed and approved by the FTA. In fact, the FTA recently completed its cost and schedule risk assessment and concluded that Honolulu's cost estimates are done correctly.

After decades of discussions, meetings, hearings and debates, we're on the right course to address our traffic problems. It will take commitment from HART, state, city and federal officials and, above all, the community to stand up for the project as opponents try to bog down progress with lawsuits, delays and misinformation.

U.S. Sen. Daniel Inouye offered some words of wisdom in his recent address to the HART board of directors. The senator said that it is very easy to be opposed to something, but "it is much more difficult to be for something because you have to stand up and take a lot of crap, to put it bluntly."

We couldn't agree more.

## Rail Project City Center Archaeological Survey

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affected area are informed and that they have the opportunity to share their input regarding the upcoming fieldwork.

Survey work along the route will help inform decisions designed to reduce the project's potential impact on any archaeological, historic or cultural resources, including iwi kupuna or human skeletal remains. For example, the location of the

support columns for the rail system's elevated guideway could be slightly adjusted to bypass areas where iwi may be located.

The City has applied for a community noise variance from the state Department of Health that would allow night and weekend work to minimize impacts to area businesses and week traffic. Two community meetings were held in July to discuss ways to minimize night construction noise and impacts.

To prepare for the archaeological work, the rail project team has already begun meeting with stakeholders, including the O`ahu Island Burial Council, Office of Hawaiian Affairs and individual lineal and cultural descendants. Along with the use of maps and records, the information gathered through these meetings will be used as background during the survey.

The archaeological inventory work includes traditional techniques such as trenching and soil testing, along with using updated technology such as ground penetrating radar.

There will likely be traffic impacts from the archaeological work. Rail project staff will notify the community and the media of any road closures and other situations that may impact traffic. Updates will be posted on the rail project's website at [www.HonoluluTransit.org](http://www.HonoluluTransit.org).

A draft protocol regarding the treatment of iwi kupuna should they be encountered during the archaeological survey work is also posted on the rail project's website.

## Support for the Honolulu Rail Transit Project Remains Strong in Nation's Capital



Congresswoman Hanabusa

Congresswoman Colleen Hanabusa, back in the islands during a recent congressional recess, said that with the elimination of earmarks, it's the commitment of the executive branch to federally fund projects such as the Honolulu Rail Transit Project.

"I think that if there's anything that's been very clear is the fact that the administration, of course President Obama in particular, has always voiced strong support for the Honolulu Rail Project. So from that vantage point, I believe Hawai'i is in a very good place."

Hanabusa and the rest of Hawaii's congressional delegation attended a briefing on the rail project earlier this year with U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and Federal Transit Administration Administrator Peter Rogoff.

"Secretary LaHood has made it very clear that they are committed. And of course Senator Inouye, even with the absence of earmarks, is able to show his support. So I think when you look at it from that perspective, the project has gotten more support than anything else from the delegation as well as from the people."

With recent debate over the country's debt ceiling and spending, Hanabusa says the Honolulu Rail Project is precisely the kind of project that's needed all across the country, combining job creation, infrastructure improvement and economic revitalization.

"The only way that the economy of the United States is going to recover, and basically the good faith and credit as well as the people's confidence, is if in fact we start to do job creation. And, I think that then folds right into what the President's been talking about is his commitment to infrastructure. The Honolulu Rail Project is exactly one of those projects," said Hanabusa.

"I believe that given how President Obama feels so strongly about it, how strongly Secretary LaHood feels about it, and the fact that the project is on line, we should be able to look to that with additional support now, because it is addressing the major problem that we face, not only as a state but also as a nation, which is how are we going to get people back to work, how are we going to kick start this economy. We all know it's got to be in the area of an infrastructure kind of commitment. And that's this project."

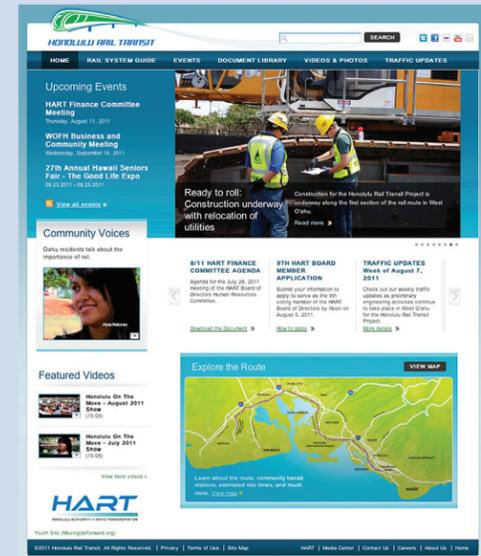


Photo: Homepage of the new HonoluluTransit.org website.

## Transit Project Revamps Website

The Honolulu Rail Project's website at [www.HonoluluTransit.org](http://www.HonoluluTransit.org) has been redesigned to provide a more engaging and user-friendly format for its users.

The fresh, new site will keep users up to date on the latest news, including construction, rail-related community meetings, and recent decisions by the newly-formed Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation (HART).

Stay tuned, stay informed. Visit our website at [www.HonoluluTransit.org](http://www.HonoluluTransit.org).

The Honolulu Rail Transit Project's new QR Code (Quick Response Code) that connects individuals with iPhones and smart phones to the project's website.



## GOT QUESTIONS?

If you have questions about the rail transit project that you would like to see addressed in our newsletter, e-mail them to [info@HonoluluTransit.org](mailto:info@HonoluluTransit.org) or call our project hotline at 566-2299.

