

Meeting Summary of the
Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization

CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, October 29, 2008, 3:30 p.m.
State Capitol Building, Room 325
415 South Beretania St., Honolulu, Hawaii

Members Present:

Land Use Research Foundation
NB #34 Makakilo-Kapolei-Honokai Hale
American Planning Association Hawaii
American Society of Civil Engineers
Committee for Balanced Transportation
E Noa Corporation
Eye of the Pacific
Hawaii Teamsters and Allied Workers, Local 996
Honolulu Community Action Program
Interagency COORDINATION Councils
Leeward Oahu Transportation Management Association
NB #01 Hawaii Kai
NB #02 Kuliouou-Kalani Iki
NB #05 Diamond Head-Kapahulu-Saint Louis Heights
NB #09 Waikiki
NB #10 Makiki-Lower Punchbowl-Tantalus
NB #18 Aliamanu-Salt Lake-Foster Village
NB #23 Ewa
NB #25 Mililani-Waipio-Melemanu
NB #26 Wahiawa
NB #35 Mililani Mauka-Launani Valley
North Shore Chamber of Commerce
Tax Foundation of Hawaii
Waianae Coast Transportation Concerns Group
Waikiki Residents Association

David Arakawa, Chair
Michael Golojuch, Vice Chair
John Valera
Joseph Salvador
Ken Stanley
Tom Dinell
Twila Lai
Michael Costa
Darin Olson
CC Curry
Shannon Alivado
Greg Knudsen
Linda Starr
Bert Narita
Robert Finley
Charles Carole
Lorene Godfrey
R. Scott Belford
Dick Poirier
Joseph Francher
Pamela Young
Gil Riviere
Randall Hiu
Dick Boddy
Daisy Murai

Members Absent (Reps):

AARP
American Society of Landscape Architects
Castle & Cooke Homes Hawaii
Charley's Taxi
Citizens for a Fair ADA Ride
Federal Rental Assisted Tenants Agency
Hawaii Bicycling League
Hawaii Highway Users Alliance
Hawaii Transportation Association

Mary Protheroe
Chris Dacus
Dean Minakami
Dale Evans
Ronald Pike
David Yaw
Mitchell Nakagawa
Darcianne Evans
Gareth Sakakida

Hui Kupuna VIP
Institute of Transportation Engineers
League of Women Voters
NB #03 Waialae-Kahala
NB #08 McCully-Moiliili
NB #12 Nuuanu-Punchbowl
NB #13 Downtown
NB #14 Liliha-Alewa-Puunui-Kamehameha Heights
NB #20 Aiea
NB #21 Pearl City
NB #22 Waipahu
NB #24 Waianae Coast
NB #27 North Shore
NB #29 Kahaluu
NB #30 Kaneohe
Pacific Resource Partnership
Sierra Club Hawaii Chapter

Louise Horio
Pete Pascua
Jacqueline Parnell
Lester Fukuda
Ron Lockwood
Jay Fidell
Tom Smyth
Dale White
Carl Jacobs
Cruz J. Vina, Jr.
Robert Kakalia
David Brown
Antya Miller
Ken LeVasseur
Wendell Lum
Kyle Chock
Randy Ching

Guests Present:

Ralph Portmore	American Planning Association Hawaii
Barbara Boddy	Citizen
Gary Gill	Citizen
Michael Golojuch, Jr.	Citizen
Richard Ubersax	Citizen
Frank Genadio	Committee for Balanced Transportation
Art Frank	Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advisory Board
Heidi Hansen Smith	Department of Health
Elizabeth Kreuger	Department of Transportation Services
Nalani Dahl	DTS - Rapid Transit Division
Toru Hamayasu	DTS - RTD
Charlene Ota	Hawaii Centers for Independent Living
Norman DuPont	Hawaii Council of Association of Apartment Owners
Dean Nakagawa	Hawaii Department of Transportation
Tammy Lee	HDOT
Tom Eisen	NB #6 Palolo
Helen Carroll	NB #9 Waikiki
Nancy Hedlund	NB #11 Ala Moana-Kakaako
James Marn	NB #12 Nuuanu-Punchbowl

OahuMPO Staff Present: Gordon Lum (Executive Director), Pam Toyooka, Clement Chan, and Marian Yasuda

Chair David **Arakawa** called the meeting to order at 3:33 p.m.

1. New Business

“Financial Feasibility of Rail”

Chair Arakawa provided a summary of the meeting procedures and ground rules. Presentations by Toru Hamayasu, City and County of Honolulu, Department of Transportation Services (DTS), and Cliff Slater, Stop Rail Now and HonoluluTraffic.com, would be first. Following those presentations, three written questions would be posed by Chair Arakawa, followed by two oral questions posed by audience members. The presenters would take turns being the first and second person to respond to the questions. Each presenter would be given one (1) minute to respond to each question.

Mr. Hamayasu discussed the Honolulu Rail Transit Project and its place in the Oahu Regional Transportation Plan 2030 (ORTP). With the implementation of rail, projected vehicle hours traveled and vehicle hours of delay showed substantial decrease in traffic congestion when compared to the 2030 baseline. The financial plan for Honolulu Rail Transit was presented and funding sources were identified. Mr. Hamayasu stated that the Honolulu Rail Transit Project is consistent with both the ORTP and the locally-preferred alternative, as defined by the City Council. It is eligible to receive funds through the General Excise Tax (GET) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) New Starts funding.

Mr. Slater stated that rail projects across the country consistently exceed their budget projections for construction costs and do not meet their predicted ridership or revenue from fares. The current economic problems that we are experiencing will further reduce the collections of general excise tax revenue with income from that tax already well below projected levels. Mr. Slater stated that the federal funding from the FTA is uncertain. He questioned the City’s ridership projections for the rail project and noted that other transit projects around the country did not meet most of their ridership projections.

Discussion Highlights:

[Note: Written questions were read by Chair Arakawa. Answers from Mr. Hamayasu are identified by “TH”; answers from Mr. Slater are identified by “CS”.

- Question: What is the cost of the rail project; and how much of the cost will the federal government cover? Will taxes be increased to provide additional funds?
 - CS: This project will cost 7.1 billion for the complete build-out. Operating losses will cause property taxes to increase by 40%. The cost of refurbishing and replacing trains will further increase the cost of maintenance.
 - TH: 2008 rail project costs will be released with the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The 20-mile system, in 2006 dollars, is projected to cost \$3.7 billion. The FTA share of the project will be about 20%, or roughly \$1 billion. Operating and maintenance costs will amount to about 2% of the City’s operating budget. Property taxes will not need to be increased to pay for that. Cost of replacement and repair is considered, which is why the lower-maintenance steel-on-steel technology is preferred.

- Question: Can you provide a cost comparison between the rail project and the EZ Way proposal?
 - TH: The EZ Way proposal does not currently have any documentation supporting the cost estimates of \$2.5 billion that have been stated. Rough calculations by the City estimate at least double that estimation.
 - CS: High-Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes have been built in Florida \$450 million for a 14-mile system. Construction cost differences between Florida and Hawaii are estimated to be 32%.
- Question: Since the elevated EZ Way proposal is not in the ORTP, how can that project qualify for Federal funding?
 - TH: Not only is this proposal not in the ORTP, but, this system would also not be a transit project. So, if this project could qualify for federal funding, it would have to come from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). That would require other highway projects being planned in Hawaii to be abandoned to allow funds for EZ Way. The cost-effectiveness of the EZ Way is double the threshold required by the FTA.
 - CS: HOT lanes funding could come from either the GET tax collection or from the FHWA, in conjunction with the toll revenues.
- Question: Are there more federal dollars available by considering the elevated guideway as a platform for innovation and job creation and leveraging other agencies' funding?
 - CS: That is not something that has been investigated by Stop Rail Now.
 - TH: That is not something that has been investigated by DTS.
- Question: What is the cost of wasted gas per driver in the current congestion conditions?
 - TH: It is currently expected that the rail system will reduce the travel time by 11%. The DEIS will show a revised travel time reduction with rail.
 - CS: HOT lanes will allow vehicles to travel at 55 miles per hour, which is the most efficient speed for travel. It will also speed up the travel on other roadways by reducing the number of vehicles on those roadways.
- Question: How will the disabled be able to board the train within the short time allowed at each station; and will that delay the schedule for the train?
 - CS: Public transit is not a solution for the elderly and handicapped. Door-to-door transportation is what the elderly and handicapped need; the private sector should be involved in that solution.
 - TH: The Handi-Van will continue to help those who are really challenged. For those who are able to utilize public transit, travel will be easier on the train. The train has level boarding for wheelchairs or strollers, braille tile on the ground for boarding, and chimes announcing the doors opening and closing.
- Question: What have you been doing in the past 16 years?
 - CS: After the prior attempt at mass transit was killed in 1993, a committee was

convened to come up with ideas for transportation solutions. The outcome from that was a report that never went any further.

- TH: Bus Rapid Transit was attempted, but dedicating a lane of traffic for bus use was not acceptable to the public.
- Question: How does rail transit compare to other options in terms of keeping transportation expenditures within our State?
 - TH: The dependency on imported fuel sources can be reduced by generating electricity in alternative ways. The electrical requirement of this system is less than 1% of annual consumption of electricity annually.
 - CS: The automobile containing 1.1 person is more energy efficient than the average of rail systems built since 1970.
- Question: How much funding has been set aside for the purchase of right-of-ways? What happens if the landowner refuses to accept the City's offer for the purchase of their land?
 - TH: The City must offer the appraised value of the property to the homeowner and will assist with relocation of a residence or business to a comparable location. Currently, \$70 million is set aside for right-of-way acquisition.
 - CS: The City's plan in 1978, with inflation, included \$400 million for land acquisition and relocation costs.

Mr. Slater concluded by saying that the evaluation of the City's rail project must be compared to experiences in similar communities. Buses and vanpools would have priority on the proposed HOT lanes.

Mr. Hamayasu concluded by saying that it is the government's duty and responsibility to respond to the communities' needs for transportation. Rail is 26% more efficient per passenger mile than cars for energy consumption. Cost over-runs happen in all types of projects and are not unique to transit. Mr. Slater's HOT lane proposal cost for 20 miles is projected by the City to be \$2.6 billion.

Chair Arakawa thanked the audience for their submitted questions, 41 in total, and the presenters for their participation.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:08 p.m.