

Resident Focus Groups

Prepared for:
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And
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The Research-Based Marketing Professionals in the Pacific Rim

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From: Team OmniTrak

I. SUMMARY: 2010 FOCUS GROUPS WITH OAHU RESIDENTS

The following summarizes five (5) focus groups of Oahu residents conducted on April 7, 8 and 14, 2010. The focus groups comprised three distinct audiences: (a) two groups of young adults 18-34; (b) one group of senior residents 65+; and (c) two groups of T6/EJ residents.

Composition	Date	No. Groups	No. Participants
Young Adult Residents 18-34	April 7, 2010	2	18
Senior Residents 65+	April 8, 2010	1	9
T6/EJ Residents	April 14, 2010	2	17

A total of 44 Oahu residents participated in the focus groups. Of the 44 participants, 15, or about one-third, were West Oahu residents.

PURPOSE — The purpose of focus groups was to gain reactions from Oahu residents to proposed road improvement projects, secondary access projects, safety improvements and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies, and to ascertain residents' top priorities in each category.

The rankings discussed the next pages were derived from a consensus of participants in each group as well as qualitative feedback on the projects, and not on a headcount or other quantitative means of measurement.

I. Criteria for Selecting Road Capacity Projects

From the groups, the general criteria for prioritizing road capacity projects emerged as follows:

1. **Number of People benefiting from Capacity Increase**
2. **Current, not Future, Demand for Increased Capacity**
3. **Personal Impact upon Resident**

As a general rule, residents favored projects that they saw as **benefiting the greatest number of people**, which explains the high priorities given to urban Honolulu projects like the Ward-to-Punahou H-1 expansion and the Nimitz Flyover. Residents also tended to judge the projects in highly personalized ways and in terms of **how the projects would impact their lives directly** and immediately, rather than conceptually or as part of the island-wide transportation system as a whole. In other words, the key criteria in assessing project value was “*where does my traffic get heaviest?*” rather than “*how does it fit into other projects and the system as a whole?*” Despite efforts by the moderator to incorporate a larger view of the transportation network, most residents were unable to grasp the “big picture” or see beyond a project’s impact in the immediate area of construction.

In keeping with the emphasis on immediate personal experience, **differences in preferences tended to be geographically-based**. West Oahu residents put a much higher priority on projects in West Oahu (such as Kapolei road projects, Waianae Second Access, etc.) which clearly impact them or people they know. Non-West Oahu residents, however, were much less interested and gave little or no feedback to the Kapolei road projects presented in the groups.

In light of these results, a recommendation for future research is for the client to test road capacity projects **in relation to a conceptual framework of the transportation system** so residents more easily see the connection between short-term and long-term projects and how the different projects fit into the regional or island-wide system. Without explicit prompting, most residents tend not to envision the transportation system as a whole or react beyond the immediate impacts of isolated projects.

The other concern that surfaced regularly was the question of **how road capacity projects fit into the future rail transit system**. Of the three audiences, the T6/EJ residents were singularly focused on rail and on mass transit, and less engaged with road capacity than were young adults and seniors 65+. Much of this was because of their dependence on bus service and their expectation of rail transit serving their needs more efficiently than *TheBus*. They still thought highly of *TheBus* system but felt it could be tailored more to their needs, particularly in terms of fare costs and in accommodating handicapped residents.

(See also page 11 for further discussion of the T6/EJ audience.)

II. Oahu Road-Widening/HOV Projects: Priorities

Based on a consensus of participants, the five road-widening/HOV projects ranked as follows: ¹

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1. **H-1 Freeway widening, Ward Avenue to Punahou Street, 1 lane eastbound**
 2. Elevated 2-lane reversible HOV lanes above Nimitz Hwy (Nimitz Flyover)
 3. H-1 Freeway widening, Waiiau to Waiawa Interchange, 1 lane westbound
 4. H-1 Freeway widening, Waiawa to Makakilo Interchange, 1 HOV lane each way
 5. Puuloa Road widening from Salt Lake Blvd to Nimitz Highway
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The **Ward Avenue-to-Punahou Street H-1 road-widening** project ranked highest in 3 of the 5 focus groups owing to the perception of constant, daily congestion from traffic flowing eastbound and westbound into this corridor. The project would benefit the greatest number of commuters but, given the location in a dense residential area, would also cause the **most disruption** in terms of slowdowns and noise during construction. *“In the end, it [the disruption] will be worth it,”* concluded one resident.

“This is much better than the other projects. It’s a much better location. The congestion starts at Kinau and stops at Punahou exit.” (Adult 18-34)

“This one is excellent. The traffic there is horrible, there’s such a bottleneck right there, but once you hit that Punahou Street exit, it is wonderful.” (Senior 65+)

“It would be a good thing. All the problems come where you have all the merges, so widening could help it, especially in the morning. You could also do widening on the other side coming to Punahou from Hawaii Kai.” (Adult 18-34)

The **Nimitz Flyover** ranked highest in 2 of the 5 groups. Many residents commute daily on Nimitz Highway from West Oahu and understand the value of the HOV lanes in relieving congestion. Many reacted positively to the idea of expanding Nimitz Highway capacity as a major alternative to the H-1-Middle Street bottleneck. Significantly, **no one objected to the overhead construction** but one senior resident wondered how the flyover would be integrated into rail transit (mistakenly believing Nimitz Highway to be part of the rail route).

“I think it’s good. Anything that is adding lanes, on top, under, will give the cars more room because there are too many cars in Hawaii.” (Senior 65+)

“This would be an alternate route from H-1. People on H-1 coming east can keep going on Nimitz Highway instead of going left and taking H-1 at Middle Street.” (Adult 18-34)

“I work on Nimitz so I wouldn’t use [the flyover lanes]. But if I am just going through Nimitz and don’t need to stop anywhere, that would help me personally.” (Adult 18-34)

“I would be in favor if I knew how it incorporated the rail as a part of the second [HOV] layer. In other words, the two HOV lanes plus the rail route on the layer.” (Senior 65+)

¹ Rankings are based on a consensus attained in each group as well as qualitative feedback from group participants.

Participants were divided about the **H-1 widening in Pearl City (Waiawa to Waiawa)**, with some West Oahu residents contending that an added lane would actually *worsen* congestion by funneling cars into already crowded lanes merging into the H-2 Freeway. *"It will create a bottleneck at the H-1/H-2 junction,"* said one West Oahu commuter. Others felt that congestion relief efforts should focus on the sector *before Pearl City* rather than in the project zone.

"At Sam's Club (in Pearl City) there is already a bottleneck. If they open up a lane it's going to bottleneck some more. You got to go further than that." (Adult 18-34)

"They already widened two lanes here and it didn't really help because people are staying on the right and trying to merge into the right. Everyone is staying in that lane and they are trying to get over and it backs everything up. You already have traffic and I don't think it's a good idea." (Adult 18-34)

"This area is not as bad as the area getting to that point. The heavy traffic is before that." (T6/EJ resident)

Reactions to this project revealed that commuters have difficulty seeing the "big picture." Even when explained, commuters do not grasp how increased capacity at earlier points will ease traffic due to exits before the narrowed section of H-1 (i.e., west of the expansion).

"What happens when those four lanes revert to two lanes after this [H-1 widening]? It's going to be a bottleneck." (T6/EJ resident)

Compared to the above projects, the **H-1 widening from Waiawa to the Makakilo Interchange** was seen as less urgent because congestion here is moderate, according to West Oahu residents. Those who ranked it highly saw increased demand in the future but not at present. Rather, road-widening would be of more benefit *on either side of this corridor* – east of Waiawa in Pearl City or west of Makakilo (i.e., the Leeward Coast).

"There is no traffic there. All the traffic is in Pearl City town-bound." (Adult 18-34)

"From Waikale to Kapolei, it's a breeze. There's no traffic going that way. Traffic lessens right after you pass Pearl City going west. Going town-bound, the HOV lane would be great but it must extend beyond Waipahu." (Adult 18-34)

"That's good except that it would help if they go further west (with road-widening). They need to go beyond Kapolei to Makaha." (T6/EJ Resident)

Most participants did not see the need for **Puuloa road-widening** and few said they use Puuloa Road on a regular basis. Those familiar with the road, moreover, thought that the widening had been completed and wondered why more work was needed – in spite of an expanded explanation of Puuloa Road as an alternative to the H-1 congestion at Red Hill.

"The widening is finished. I drive it all the time and it's really good now, nice and smooth. I don't know why you're talking about widening here, they just finished it." (Senior 65+)

"Didn't they just widen it two years ago? Who is going to use this road and who is this going to serve?" (Adult 18-34)

"I don't think they have a problem with congestion in this area anymore." (Senior 65+)

III. Secondary Access Projects: Priorities²

Three projects were presented (below) and, based on responses, the **Waianae Second Access** emerged as the top choice of focus group participants.

1. Second Access to Waianae

2. Second Access to Wahiawa (Whitmore Village to Mililani Mauka)
 3. Central Mauka Road (Waiawa to Mililani Mauka)
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Four of the 5 groups ranked the **Second Access to Waianae** highest, with Leeward Coast participants backing the project enthusiastically. Among non-Leeward residents, feedback varied somewhat. Younger adults tended to be less supportive, discounting the region as a destination and feeling that the region's population didn't warrant it. Older residents, on the other hand, supported a Second Access both as 1) an escape route in case of emergencies, and 2) as a new primary route to Waianae diverting traffic from Farrington Highway on a daily basis.

"This sounds ideal. They (Waianae Community) do need the escape route, a secondary road. The highway there has only two lanes." (Senior 65+)

"The Waianae Coast is always suffering. When there is an accident or a water main break, we're stranded, we can't get out." (T6/EJ Resident)

"Look at what stores are available and where they are. Everything is in town or in Kapolei. That's where people are going. What do people go to Waianae for?" (Adult 18-34)

Relative to the other access projects, residents did not prioritize future demand. They saw no immediate need for a **Second Access to Wahiawa** other than to serve the military families in the area or North Shore residents commuting to Honolulu. The current population of Wahiawa and Whitmore Village hardly warrants this, they felt, and growth is likely to be far into the future.

"I think the advantage of this is to the military because I see a lot of military families going to Wahiawa. But for the rest of us, traffic-wiser, I don't know." (Adult 18-34)

"I think it's a great idea but it's really for future growth some number of generations ahead, and we have a lot of areas being impacted by congestion right now." (Senior 65+)

"Whitmore Village is a nice community but not many people live there. This would be good for people coming from the North Shore into town." (Adult 18-34)

Relative to the **Central Mauka Road**, participants were not aware of the traffic bottlenecks in the Mililani Mauka community and questioned if congestion on the H-1 justified an alternate route. They did not see a real need given that traffic problems are contained to the zone below Waipio.

"The traffic on H-2 is only from Pearl City to Waipio. After that, there's no traffic to Mililani, so it's not that critical to have a second route to Mililani." (Adult 18-34)

"Mililani to Waipio isn't bad, it's only Waipio to H-2/H-1 junction that is bad. I would make the road right before Waipio and extend it all the way to the Airport." (Adult 18-34)

² For a full description of the Secondary Access Projects, see the Discussion Guide in the Appendix beginning page 10.

IV. Kapolei Road Improvements: Priorities³

The Kapolei road projects received limited feedback, and on that basis, the **Farrington Highway widening** and the **Hanua Street extension** ranked highest among the five projects presented.

1. **Farrington Highway Widening**
 2. **Hanua Street Extension**
 3. **Kualaka'i Parkway Widening and Extension**
 4. **Keoneula Boulevard Extension**
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The **Farrington Highway widening** was the top priority in 3 of the 5 groups mainly because it was seen by West Oahu residents as the alternative route to H-1 connecting the Kapolei, Ewa and Waipahu communities. With widening, more commuters and residents may use Farrington Highway as a connector artery, they felt, eventually relieving congestion on H-1.

"I used to drive Farrington Highway to get to Waipio sometimes. It's an alternative road in case people in Kapolei get stuck. If they had more lanes and you could get there quicker, then I might use it." (Adult 18-34)

"This [Farrington Highway widening] would help. My friends take Farrington and sometimes it's congested because it's the only alternate route [besides H-1]." (T6/EJ Resident)

Few participants were familiar with Kapolei, but those who were familiar understood the importance of the **Hanua Street Extension** in linking the James Campbell Industrial Park (JCIP), a key commercial center, to the H-1 Freeway. This connection is needed because current road capacity in the City of Kapolei is not adequate to handle the traffic from JCIP.

"The traffic in Kapolei is crazy because a lot of people work in Campbell Industrial Park. The intersection at Costco and at the Water Park is bad for traffic." (Adult 18-34)

"This [Hanua Street Extension] would help because big trucks can go straight from the H-1 freeway to Campbell Industrial Park and that would take the trucks off the other roads and open up more space." (T6/EJ Resident)

The **Kualaka'i Parkway widening and extension**, while not a critical need presently, would in time serve residents in future housing developments situated near Roosevelt Parkway.

"They just opened [Kualaka'i Parkway]. That road is wide open, there is a lot of room. But when they start building up Kapolei, you'll need it for the future." (Adult 18-34)

Most had little to say about the **Keoneula Boulevard Extension** out of unfamiliarity with the area. Those familiar with Keoneula Boulevard were not altogether convinced of needing the extension given the light use of the existing roads in the area (i.e., Geiger and Renton roads).

"This would serve the outermost people down in Ewa Beach. I don't think it is crowded right now, so I would say it's not needed." (Adult 18-34)

"I live on Keoneula Blvd and I don't ever see any traffic there. There are not a lot of people going in that area." (Adult 18-34)

³ For a full description of the Kapolei road projects, see the Discussion Guide in the Appendix starting on page 10.

V. Responses to Safety Improvements⁴

Of the four Safety Improvement strategies presented in the groups (below), **Safeguarding Pedestrians and Bicyclists** and **Designing Safer Roadways** appeared to be the most critical priorities based on the consensus of opinion.

1. **Safeguarding Pedestrians and Bicyclists**
 2. Designing Safer Roadways
 3. Reducing or Discouraging Aggressive Driving
 4. Protecting Vehicle Occupants
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The groups supported all the strategies but did not agree with the proposed means to implement them, frequently volunteering their own suggestions for attaining safety goals.

Residents endorsed **Safeguarding Pedestrians and Bicyclists** but suggested doing so via increased *signaling at mid-block crosswalks* and *more public education* generally. Many accidents occur, one participant observed, because drivers don't heed pedestrians in mid-block crosswalks. For example, the crosswalks on Pali Highway encourage people to cross in front of fast-moving traffic – a dangerous situation, some said. In public housing areas, occupants do not respect the priority held by pedestrians in crosswalks and need to be educated.

“Coming down the Pali Highway from Windward, going into the neighborhoods, there are no lights at the crosswalks and we've had a lot of accidents. In that area, people are always trying to walk in front of a bus that is stopped but it's hard to see them from 3 or 4 lanes across. There should not be crosswalks where there are no lights.” (Adult 18-34)

“It's mostly around public housing like Kuhio Park Terrace and Mayor Wright Housing. People do not stop for the crosswalks and they need to be educated about crosswalks.” (T6/EJ Resident)

Complaints about H-1 freeway on- and off-ramps were frequent and spontaneous throughout the groups. Many favored **Safer Roadway Design** strategies that specifically included more *synchronization of traffic signals* and *installation of signals on freeway on-ramps*. Younger adults argued that on-ramp signals were needed to regulate the merging of vehicles into freeway traffic. Other residents wanted better *synchronization of traffic lights*, which, they felt, would improve the timeliness of bus service and improve traffic flow overall.

“If you put the stop lights on on-ramps, it will relieve the stress of merging with traffic.” (Adult 18-34)

“On the mainland, they have stop lights on the on-ramps that help to moderate the flow of traffic.” (Adult 18-34)

“Bus service is fine in the morning but in late afternoon and nighttime, they all bunch up so that they all come at the same time. That's because of the poor management of the traffic lights. If you don't catch one of those, you're stuck for an hour.” (Adult 18-34)

⁴For a full description of Safety Improvements, see the Discussion Guide in the Appendix starting on page 10.



Reducing or Discouraging Aggressive Driving initially ranked high as a priority. Residents were unanimous on the need to deter Aggressive Driving but not on the means to do this or whether “seeking more stringent penalties” would be effective.⁵ For seniors, the issue was lax enforcement of existing laws rather than lenient penalties, and the solution was to have a greater police presence on the highways. *“There are not enough police on the road,”* said one senior.

“This is harder to enforce. There are already rules to govern that behavior but people don’t get caught. Every time you see this behavior, it’s like, ‘where’s the cop?’” (Adult 18-34)

“You need the Highway Patrol to enforce the existing laws.” (Senior 65+)

“How do you keep people from driving crazy?” (Adult 18-34)

Protecting Vehicle Occupants, while important (especially banning flat bed truck riding) was felt to be less critical of a priority than protecting pedestrians or designing safer roads.

“Protecting vehicle occupants is first. Safety should be your top priority. It’s preventable.” (Senior 65+)

“We need safer roadways. This makes the most sense. The other three I don’t know what they would accomplish. This one has more benefits.” (Adult 18-34)

VI. Transportation Demand Management (TDM): Priorities

Seven (7) TDM strategies were presented to the groups with the aim of “reducing the number of cars on the road and increasing the use of alternative transportation,” as follows.

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1. **Employer-Provided Bus Service**
 2. Use of shuttles from designated parking lots at special events
 3. Emergency ride home program for people who rideshare
 4. Outreach, promotion and marketing of *TheBus*
 5. Strategies such as car sharing
 6. Telecommuting
 7. Variable hours for classes at the University of Hawaii at Manoa
 8. Free real-time online carpool matching
-

The top priority was clearly **employer-provided bus service**, chosen both for the perceived lower costs (relative to vehicles and bus fares) and for the high comfort level residents felt in riding with fellow workers in company-sponsored buses.

“I don’t want to share a car with people I don’t know. But if I can ride with people I work with, that’s a great incentive.” (T6/EJ Resident)

“The employer bus would be the most effective because everyone is going to the same place.” (Adult 18-34)

⁵ The complete description is “reducing or discouraging aggressive driving by, for example, defining what aggressive driving is and seeking more stringent penalties and restrictions to deter this behavior.”

Using shuttles to special events and promoting and marketing *TheBus* held appeal in the groups and especially for seniors and T6/EJ residents who largely depend on mass transit. Residents also showed interest in **ride-sharing strategies** and **emergency ride home** programs.

"I like the use of the shuttles. They already do that at UH. I usually park by the JCC and take a shuttle to campus. It would be good to use shuttles, maybe around town, so that you can park and take a shuttle to downtown and avoid traffic." (Adult 18-34)

*"I'm for promotion of *TheBus*. I would love to take the bus all the time and it would be great if they had more frequent schedules."* (Senior 65+)

"It would be great if the state gives incentives for people to start carpools, like give a tax break or dollars for gas." (T6/EJ Resident)

By contrast, **real-time online carpool matching** was universally panned, each group saying that contacting strangers online for rides was unsafe, especially for females. Much more preferable would be *carpool matching within organizations* because of the high comfort level employees feel riding with colleagues and the fact that the strategy is being practiced in the private sector.

"This [online carpool matching] seems scary. It's not for girls. How about the bus service for workers? That seems safer." (Adults 18-34)

"I'm not going to meet somebody online." (T6/EJ Resident)

"They should consider a carpooling system. Hawaii Pacific University with 5,200 employees are doing this. If they could implement this in private companies, these strategies would work." (Adult 18-34)

Many participants did not think **telecommuting** was a feasible alternative because few jobs could be done at home, they said. *"I wouldn't want my doctor to telecommute,"* said one participant.

"I don't think this strategy is realistic. Realistically, how many people can handle their job at home? Not many. At HMSA where I work, there are only three people out of all the employees who work from home." (Adult 18-34)

"I don't think there are many jobs that you can telecommute. If you're in sales, would you want to not talk to people and only talk to a screen?" (Adult 18-34)

Young adults were not very supportive of **variable hours for UH classes** since other strategies, such as Distance Learning and campus shuttles, were already in place to reduce student commuting. One participant suggested, however, that the concept of variable hours be applied to the workplace in the form *flex-time* or *staggered hours* strategies.

"That's [variable class hours] going to make classes more expensive." (Adult 18-34)

"This is done already with online classes and cable TV classes from UH." (Adult 18-34)

"I was thinking you could apply variable hours at UH to business. Instead of starting at 8 am, maybe start at 10 am." (Adult 18-34)

VII. Concerns about Road Projects & Other Suggestions

Traffic disruption surfaced as a major concern related to the road projects. Residents fully expect that road construction would cause more congestion and inconvenience to drivers if it occurred during daylight hours. While the tradeoff (between the benefit and inconvenience) was acceptable for key projects (such as H-1 Ward-to-Punahou widening), residents **strongly suggested that construction be done at night** or on weekends in order to limit disruption to commuters and noise to residents in the area.

“The result of adding one lane [to H-1 at Waiawa] might not be worth the commotion it causes. For six months, it will take 45 minutes to get to work instead of 35 minutes.” (Adult 18-34)

“How will they build this [Nimitz Flyover] without stopping traffic? It’s a double-decker highway. They will have to shut down Nimitz Highway.” (Senior 65+)

“There are lots of apartment buildings on that stretch [of H-1 from Ward Avenue to Punahou Street]. When they start construction, a lot of people will be angry.” (Adult 18-34)

In addition, concern about project **cost and economic feasibility** was expressed throughout the groups. Seniors worried about the tax consequences of road projects in light of the future cost of rail transit. Younger adults, for their part, felt that public funds might best be spent on less costly fixes and adjustments rather than on capital projects.

“If we’re talking long range, how are we going to pay for rail plus the additional construction on the streets? Our income now tends to be more fixed so it’s the issue of taxation and paying for transportation in the long run.” (Senior 65+)

“Instead of adding all these roads and spending all that money, they should work on little things like adding stop lights on the on-ramps that don’t cost as much.” (Adult 18-34)

“There are simple things that can be done – on-ramps, fixing potholes, bike lanes, guardrails, driver safety – that is not going to cost millions but it’s going to help a lot. In other words, work smarter, not harder.” (Adult 18-34)

Lastly, many residents felt that there were simply “too many cars” on Oahu and that authorities should consider (a) limiting the number of cars owned per household; (b) raising the minimum driving age to disallow licensing minors under age 18; or (c) more frequent testing of current drivers.

“I think the number of cars sold every year should be regulated. The state should not allow sales of more than a certain number of cars per year. Every company should have a limit on the number of cars they sell” (Adult 18-34)

“Limit the number of cars per household. Every house on our street now has 4-5 cars! Everyone who has a 15-year old kid does not need to buy them a car. I don’t get that. None of us had cars when we were 15.” (Senior 65+)

VIII. T6/EJ Residents: Mass Transit Issues

Perhaps because they are so dependent on public transit, T6/EJ residents have a **heightened skepticism** of agencies' ability to plan and solve transportation issues, with some calling the road-widening projects "just a waste of money." In general, they were much less engaged than were other groups with road capacity projects – which they see as peripheral to their needs -- and more **focused on mass transit** i.e. *TheBus* and *The Handi-Van*. Many in this audience view rail transit, not road improvements, as critical to their future transportation needs and consider the rail system to be the benchmark from which to judge all other transportation efforts.

"I don't have confidence that it [H-1 widening from Waiawa to Makikilo] will get done properly and with good planning." (T6/EJ Resident)

"I want to let them [transportation agencies] know that their planning sucks. It doesn't work in serving our needs." (T6/EJ Resident)

"If they don't build the rail system, they may as well build parking stalls on the H-1 Freeway because that is what it's going to become – a parking lot." (T6/EJ Resident)

T6/EJ residents spoke frequently of their **challenges in using public transportation**, chief of which related to (a) timeliness of bus service; (b) reach of bus service in sparsely populated areas; (c) insufficient express service; and (d) cost of transit fares for handicapped residents.

"I have wasted so much time waiting for buses, sometimes in the rain. They don't [come on time], unfortunately. If the traffic is heavy and congested, they're behind schedule so you have to sit there waiting for them." (Senior 65+)

"I would love to take the bus all the time. I would take it more often if they had more service and it's not so much of a stop-and-go thing in traffic where the bus is jammed with people and I have to stand the whole time." (Senior 65+)

"There is no bus to Campbell Industrial Park where I work. When I worked there, I had to borrow someone else's car just to go to work every day." (T6/EJ Resident)

"I can't afford to take The Handi-Van even though I have the card for it. I know it's hard to believe but that's how broke I am. It's the best way for me to get around and I can't afford to use it." (T6/EJ Resident)

Another complaint in using *TheBus* was that bus drivers typically do not inform riders *in advance* of the need to switch buses on the route due to a stoppage or a service breakdown.

"This has happened to me numerous times when they've had me get off one bus to get on another bus and they don't inform me before that happens. I would like to know if I'm going to be delayed and I don't think it's a problem to turn to the passengers and say we've had a little problem in about 10 or 15 minutes, we're going to be transferring you to another bus. They don't do that until you get right there and the bus is waiting." (T6/EJ resident)

Handicapped residents have an especially **strong sense of entitlement** when it comes to mass transit. Handicapped members in the groups complained that bus drivers are reluctant to accommodate them during school-related rush hours when there is an influx of schoolchildren going to and from school. One resident, describing her difficulties with wheelchair access, even suggested that the City provide her with a dedicated “practice bus” to give her more time and practice in loading and unloading her motorized wheelchair.

“I’ve suggested that the City have different type of buses so that we can go and practice [loading our wheelchairs] without holding up the bus because some people get pretty short tempered if we’re trying to get on the bus with our [wheelchair] scooters. We want to practice because nowadays each bus is different.” (Senior 65+)

“Sometime the bus drivers don’t want to take you if you’re in a wheelchair. I’ve run into that situation especially when the schools let out. The bus is full of school kids and they will not pick up the wheelchair.” (T6/EJ Resident)

Finally, T6/EJ residents want the City to **reinstate local ferry service** and also hold the agencies at fault for not running it efficiently and not promoting it adequately. “The Boat,” in their view, was a “wonderful system” that could have been of great benefit to commuters from West Oahu as well as weekend recreational users. “Just when people are really starting to use it,” said one former ferry rider, “they [the agencies] take it away.”

“I used to take the boat between Campbell Industrial Park and Aloha Tower in the mornings and it was very good, but there was no advertisement about it, there was no public relations effort on their part. A lot of what happens is there are some good ideas on improving public transportation, but it doesn’t get out to the public.” (T6/EJ Resident)

“The Boat was an example of very poor planning because it ran only during the weekdays, not on the weekends where families could take advantage. Especially when we’re looking at the economy, people can’t afford to go take kids out to movies but they can afford to take them on a boat ride.” (T6/EJ resident)

This concludes discussion of focus groups among residents 18-34, seniors 65+ and T6/EJ residents of Oahu.

**DISCUSSION GUIDE
OAHU T6/EJ RESIDENTS, SENIORS AND YOUNG ADULTS (4804B)
Spring 2010**

FOCUS GROUP SCHEDULE		
GROUPS #1 & 2	April 7, 2010 at 5 pm and 7 pm	OAHU YOUNG ADULTS 18-34
GROUPS #3	April 8, 2010 at 5 pm	OAHU SENIORS 65+
GROUPS #4 & 5	April 14, 2010 at 5 pm and 7 pm	OAHU T6/EJ RESIDENTS

INTRODUCTION

[8-10 Minutes]

Hello. My name is Pat, and I'll be your moderator today. We'll be here for about one hour and the purpose of today's group is to talk about transportation issues on the island of Oahu. The purpose is to provide input into the Oahu Regional Transportation Plan or "ORTP" for short. ORTP is a planning document put together by the local government agencies charged with managing transportation on Oahu. As community members, your feedback is essential to the planning process.

OmniTrak is an independent market research firm hired by the Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization to gain feedback from the public. We really value your opinion and results will be confidential.

GROUND RULES

- To allow the conversation to flow more smoothly, here are some ground rules so we will all be moving in the same direction.
 - **Only one person talking at a time please**
 - **Please speak up**
 - **Feel free to express whatever you feel – no right or wrong answers**
- Explain one way mirror and taping
- Invite them to eat

SELF-INTRODUCTION

Please tell us about yourself your first name

- where you live
- Your commuting patterns?

I. OAHU RESIDENTS' TRANSPORTATION ISSUES [10 Minutes]

- A. First, how do you get around? What kind of transportation do you mainly use?
(LISTEN FOR BUS, OWN VEHICLE, VANPOOL, HANDIVAN, etc.)
- B. Do you have any difficulty getting around? (IF YES) What kinds of difficulties, if any, do you typically encounter in getting around?
- C. For you personally, what concerns you the most about Oahu's transportation system?

II. OAHU TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGES [10 Minutes]

- A. Let's focus on the big picture now. When it comes to Oahu's transportation system, what is the most important challenge facing residents like yourself?
- B. How can Oahu's system best be improved for someone who needs public transportation to get around?
- C. How much of a challenge is congestion? What would be ways to address congestion on our roads? How could we lessen the congestion problem? Any other ways?

III. RESPONSE TO ROAD-WIDENING/HOV PROJECTS [30 Minutes]

- A. Let's focus on road-widening as a solution to congestion. First, tell me, where on Oahu is road-widening most needed, if at all?
- B. Now I'm going to show you some projects. For each one, please tell me:
1. How would it impact congestion in the area?
 2. What would be the impact on disruption?
 3. What benefits, if any, are worth the inconvenience trade off?

SHOW MAP WITH EACH:

- Widening the H-1 Freeway, **Waiiau Interchange to Waiawa Interchange**, one lane in the westbound direction. Could provide congestion relief during peak periods. Provides a third lane from Pearl City (westbound) to the H-1/H-2 junction in order to reduce congestion in this corridor.
- Widening the H-1 Freeway by adding 1 HOV lane in each direction from **Waiawa to Makakilo Interchange**. Could provide congestion relief and reliable travel times for HOV and transit vehicles during peak periods. To accommodate future growth and development makai of H-1.



- Widening H-1 from **Ward Avenue to Punahou Street**, one lane in the eastbound direction. Could provide congestion relief during peak periods.
 - Widening **Puuloa Road** from Salt Lake Blvd to Nimitz Highway, from 3 lanes to 5 lanes. Could provide congestion relief during peak periods. Help the flow from H-1 to Nimitz Highway in case of an emergency or congestion on Red Hill.
 - **Building elevated 2-lane reversible HOV lanes above Nimitz Highway** from Keehi Interchange to Iwilei at Pacific Street. Could provide congestion relief and reliable travel times for HOV and transit vehicles during peak periods. Extension of the current airport viaduct providing 2 HOV lanes going eastbound in the morning and westbound in the afternoon/evening.
- C. Please rank these projects in order of priority from highest to lowest for reducing congestion. Which one should be the top priority for road improvements?
- D. If you were driving from outlying areas, for example, Windward or West Oahu, which of these projects would best improve traffic flow into Honolulu or into the primary urban center? Why do you say that?
- E. Now thinking about the projects, which three do you think would be most disruptive while under construction? How would the benefits offset the inconvenience?

IV. SECONDARY ACCESS PROJECTS

[15 Minutes]

- A. Getting to certain communities is difficult because of congestion and limited road access, and particularly when the primary road is closed due to incidents or emergencies.

For each one, please tell me...

1. **Advantages**
2. **Disadvantages**

- **Second Access to Waianae** (2-lane access road between Farrington Highway at Maili over the Waianae Range to Kunia Road in Ewa) Would provide an emergency escape route for the Leeward Coast community that would also be open 24/7 as needed for congestion relief.
- **Second Access to Wahiawa** (2-lane access road from Whitmore Village to California Avenue in Wahiawa, continuing through to Meheula Parkway in Mililani). It would provide an alternative access route between Mililani and Whitmore Village, allowing users to potentially avoid congestion on H-2 during peak periods. Provide additional road capacity through Wahiawa town to Mililani Mauka and to accommodate future growth/development in the area north of Wahiawa town.
- **Central Mauka Road** (4-lane road from Mililani Mauka to Waiawa, connecting Meheula Parkway to Kamehameha Highway in Pearl City) Would provide an alternative access route between Mililani and Waiawa, allowing users to potentially avoid congestion on H-2 during peak periods. To accommodate future growth/development of at least 5,000 homes (Koa Ridge development)

- C. Now thinking about all 3, how would you rank them in priority? Which is top priority, second priority and third priority?
- D. Why do you say that ____ should be the top priority? Why should it be more critical than the other two projects?

V. KAPOLEI ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

[15 Minutes]

- A. Now I'll show you some proposed improvements for the Ewa and Kapolei areas.

[SHOW MAPS]

For each one, please tell me how you feel it will help the traffic flow in Ewa communities...

- **Kualaka'i Parkway** widening and extension (formerly North-South Road) Would provide an alternative access route from H-1 into Kapolei, allowing users to potentially avoid congestion on existing arterials during peak periods. Would also provide new access to undeveloped areas of Kapolei, which would help realize community desire for development of Kapolei as "Second City."
 - **Farrington Highway** road widening from Waipahu to Kapolei. Would provide additional capacity for this alternative to H-1, which would provide congestion relief on H-1 during peak periods while allowing users to potentially avoid congestion on H-1.
 - **Hanua Street** extension from Malakole Street to Farrington Highway. Would provide an alternative access route from H-1 into Kapolei and port area, allowing users to potentially avoid congestion on existing arterials during peak periods. Specifically providing access between JCIP and Farrington Hwy. and the city of Kapolei. Would also provide new access to undeveloped areas of Kapolei port area, which would help realize community desire for development of Kapolei as "Second City."
 - **Keoneula Boulevard** extension from just west of Kapolei Parkway to Franklin D. Roosevelt Avenue. Would accommodate growth in the Ocean Point development in Ewa and the future Haseko Marina. As a reliever for traffic on Ft. Weaver Rd.\. Provide new access to undeveloped areas of Kapolei, which would help realize community desire for development of Kapolei as "Second City."
- B. Now please rank these four proposals: #1 helps traffic flow the most, #2 the second most, etc.

VI. SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

[10-12 Minutes]

A. Now let's discuss *safety issues* and ways to make driving safer. Each card has a proposal for making roads safer. Let me read each one, and then please tell me how effective or they would be in making our roads safer...

[SHOW DESCRIPTIONS]

- **REDUCING OR DISCOURAGING AGGRESSIVE DRIVING** by, for example, defining what aggressive driving is and seeking more stringent penalties and restrictions to deter this behavior.
- **PROTECTING VEHICLE OCCUPANTS** by, for example, imposing community service as penalties on motorists who do not wear a seat belt, fines for parents and guardians who do not have child safety seats, and by banning passengers from riding in the back of pickup trucks.
- **SAFEGUARDING PEDESTRIANS AND BICYCLISTS** by, for example, increasing enforcement of existing pedestrian and bicycle-related laws, such as jaywalking and crosswalk rights of way and share the road..
- **DESIGNING SAFER ROADWAYS** for example, by installing medians and other physical barriers, incorporating synchronized traffic signals, traffic calming, roundabouts, separate left turn signals and turn pockets.

B. Tell me, of these four measures, which would be your top priority, and why?

C. If you had to pick one location on Oahu where safety improvements are most needed, where would it be? And why this location?

VII. TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT [10-12Minutes]

- A. Let's talk generally about some strategies to reduce the number of cars on the roads and increase use of alternative transportation. This is called "transportation demand management" or TDM. Tell me how effective each of these strategies would be in reducing congestion. First....?
- Free real-time online carpool matching
 - Outreach, promotion and marketing of *TheBus*
 - Emergency ride home program for people who rideshare
 - Use of shuttles from designated parking lots at special events, such as major sports or cultural events like the Pro Bowl
 - Employer provided bus service for employees
 - Strategies such as car sharing
 - Telecommuting

[ASK ONLY YOUNG ADULT 18-34 GROUPS:]

- Variable hours for classes at University of Hawaii Manoa

[MODERATOR: DEFINE VARIABLE HOURS AS "Extending the hours for classes both early and late to reduce congestion because of people arriving at the same time"]

- B. Now just like previously, please help be rank the effectiveness of each in terms of reducing congestion. Which would help most? Second most? Etc.
- C. Is there another strategy you can suggest? Maybe strategies that have worked elsewhere that you know about? **(PROBE)**
- VIII.** Finally, if you were speaking directly to the heads of Oahu transportation agencies, is there anything you would say specifically to them? **(PROBE)**

WRAP UP.

THANK. EXPLAIN GRATUITY. EXPLAIN PARKING.

END.



ROSTER OF FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

YOUNG ADULTS 1

Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Occupation	Education Level	Marital Status	Hshld Income	Primary Transportation	Area Reside
M	29	Japanese	Massage Therapist	HS Grad	Sgl	\$100K	Private Car	East
M	26	Filipino	Electrician	HS Grad	Sgl	\$50K-\$75K	Mixed	Leeward
M	27	Hawaiian	Transporter	Coll Grad	Sgl	\$50K-\$75K	Private Car	Mililani
M	22	Filipino	Para Prof Tutor	Coll Grad	Sgl	\$25K-\$35K	Private Car	Leeward
M	34	Caucasian	Drywall	HS Grad	Mrd	\$75K-\$100K	Carpool/Pvt Car	Leeward
M	27	Mixed	Retail/Restaurtant	HS Grad	Sgl	\$25K-\$35K	Bus/Bike	Metro
F	24	Hawaiian	Office Assistant	HS Grad	Sgl	\$35K-\$50K	Bus	Leeward
F	25	Chinese	Student	Some Coll	Sgl	\$50K-\$75K	Bus	Metro
F	20	Caucasian	Title Processor	Some Coll	Sgl	\$50K-\$75K	Private Car	Leeward
F	29	Japanese	Fiscal Officer	Coll Grad	Sgl	\$75K-\$100K	Private Car	Metro
F	22	Japanese	Financial Planner	Coll Grad	Sgl	\$100K+	Private Car	Leeward
F	31	Mixed	Ins Agent Coord	HS Grad	Sgl	\$75K-\$100K	Carpool/Bus	Leeward
F	24	Hawaiian	Skills Trainer	Coll Grad	Sgl	\$75K-\$100K	Private Car	Windward
F	34	Caucasian	Educ Asst	Coll Grad	Sgl	\$50K-\$75K	Private Car	East

Group Profile - Young Adults

YOUNG ADULTS 2

Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Occupation	Education Level	Marital Status	Hshld Income	Primary Transportation	Area Reside
M	25	Japanese	Financial Planner	Coll Grad	Sgl	\$100K+	Private Car	Windward
M	21	Hawaiian	Student	HS Grad	Sgl	\$50K-\$75K	Private Car	Windward
M	22	Japanese	Self-Emp	HS Grad	Sgl	\$100K+	Walks/Bus	Metro
M	31	Caucasian	Photographer	Coll Grad	Sgl	\$35K-\$50K	Private Car	Metro
M	31	Caucasian	Sales Mgr	Coll Grad	Mrd	\$75K-\$100K	Private Car	Windward
M	31	East Indian	Fin Consultant	Coll Grad	Mrd	\$100K+	Private Car	Metro
M	25	Filipino	Nursing Asst	Coll Grad	Sgl	\$75K-\$100K	Private Car	Leeward
F	24	Chinese	Educ Assistant	Coll Grad	Sgl	\$75K-\$100K	Private Car	East
F	31	Caucasian	Cust Relations	Coll Grad	Mrd	\$75K-\$100K	Private Car	Leeward
F	26	Mixed	Sales Assoc	Some Coll	Sgl	\$75K-\$100K	Private Car	Metro
F	26	Chinese	Tour Agent	Bus/Trade	Sgl	\$75K-\$100K	Private Car	Leeward
F	26	Hawaiian	Receptionist	HS Grad	Sgl	\$50K-\$75K	Private Car	Metro
F	32	Japanese	Homemaker	HS Grad	Mrd	\$50K-\$75K	Private Car	East

Group Profile - Young Adults

SENIORS

Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Occupation	Education Level	Marital Status	Hshld Income	Primary Transportation	Area Reside
M	73	Caucasian	Retired, USN	Coll Grad	Mrd	\$75K-\$100K	Private Car	Leeward
M	82	Caucasian	Retired, Forrester	Coll Grad	Mrd	\$50K-\$75K	Private Car	Windward
M	69	Japanese	Retired, Engineer	Coll Grad	Mrd	\$50K-\$75K	Private Car	Leeward
M	69	Caucasian	Retired, Comp Spec	Coll Grad	Mrd	\$75K-\$100K	Private Car/Bus	Metro
M	69	Japanese	Retired, Furn Ref	H.S. Grad	Wid	\$75K-\$100K	Private Car	Leeward
M	71	Hawaiian	Self-Emp, Tax Cons	Coll Grad	Mrd	\$50K-\$75K	Private Car	East
F	78	Chinese	Retired, Tvl Agent	Coll Grad	Div	\$100K+	Private Car	Metro
F	82	Chinese	Retired, Soc Svcs	Coll Grad	Div	\$25K-\$35K	Bus	Metro
F	72	Japanese	Retired, Recept	Some Coll	Wid	\$50K-\$75K	Bus	Metro
F	70	Filipino	Retired	HS Grad	Mrd	\$75K-\$100K	Private Car	Metro
F	66	Filipino	Retired, Airline	Coll Grad	Wid	\$50K-\$75K	Carpool	Metro
F	73	Caucasian	Retired, Banker	HS Grad	Div	\$25K-\$35K	Bus	Metro

Group Profile - Seniors

T8/EJ 1

Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Occupation	Education Level	Marital Status	No. In Hshld	Hshld Income	Primary Transportation	Area Reside
M	39	Micronesian	Not Employed	Some Coll	Mrd	10	\$25K-\$35K	Private Car	Metro
M	67	Caucasian	Retired	Some Coll	Div	1	<\$12K	Patient Trans.	Leeward
M	42	Filipino	Janitorial	< H.S.	Sgl	4	<\$12K	Bus	Metro
M	67	Filipino	Retired	Some Coll	Mrd	2	\$12K-\$16K	Private Car	Metro
M	59	Mixed	Not Employed	Some Coll	Div	1	<\$12K	Private Car	Windward
M	41	Caucasian	Dispatcher	H.S. Grad	Div	2	\$12K-\$16K	Bus	Metro
M	46	Caucasian	Disabled	Some Coll	Div	1	<\$12K	Bus/Handi-Van	Metro
F	58	Afr American	Disabled	Some Coll	Div	1	<\$12K	Bus	Leeward
F	38	Hawaiian	Records Analyst	Coll Grad	Mrd	4	\$20K-\$25K	Private Car	Windward
F	41	Hispanic	Not Emp	Coll Grad	Sep	4	\$20K-\$25K	Private Car/Bus	Leeward
F	58	Chuukese	Interpreter	H.S. Grad	Div	2	<\$12K	Private Car/Bus	Metro
F	28	Hawaiian	Childcare	< H.S.	Sgl	13	\$35K-\$50K	Bus	Leeward
F	59	Japanese	Retired	H.S. Grad	Div	2	\$12K-\$16K	Bus	Metro
F	64	Filipino	Not Emp	H.S. Grad	Sgl	6	\$20K-\$25K	Bus	Metro
F	28	Japanese	Student	Some Coll	Sgl	2	\$12K-\$16K	Handi-van	Leeward

Group Profile - T6/EJ

T8/EJ 2

Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Occupation	Education Level	Marital Status	No. In Hshld	Hshld Income	Primary Transportation	Area Reside
M	34	Micronesian	Driver	H.S. Grad	Mrd	6	\$12K-\$16K	Private Car	Metro
M	53	Afr American	Disabled	Some Coll	Sgl	1	<\$12K	Bus	Metro
M	34	Samoan	School Bus Driveer	H.S. Grad	Sgl	5	\$16K-\$20K	Private Car	Metro
M	43	Japanese	Fastfood Worker	H.S. Grad	Mrd	4	\$20K-\$25K	Private Car	Metro
M	86	Korean	Retired	Coll Grad	Mrd	2	\$12K-\$16K	Bus	Leeward
F	27	Micronesian	Deli Worker	H.S. Grad	Sgl	6	\$16K-\$20K	Bus	Central
F	34	Hawaiian	Part. Disabled	Coll Grad	Sgl	2	<\$12K	Bus	Leeward
F	29	Hawaiian	Provider Rep	Coll Grad	Mrd	5	\$20K-\$25K	Private Car/Bus	Leeward
F	40	Marshallese	Supervisory	H.S. Grad	Sgl	5	\$12K-\$16K	Private Car/Bus	Leeward
F	30	Mixed	Student	H.S. Grad	Sep	4	\$12K-\$16K	Bus	Metro
F	39	Samoan	Dispatcher	H.S. Grad	Sep	3	\$12K-\$16K	Bus	Metro
F	43	Hawaiian	Not Employed	Some Coll	Sgl	1	<\$12K	Private Car	Metro
F	64	Filipino	Not Employed	Coll Grad	Sep	6	\$16K-\$20K	Bus	Metro
F	29	Caucasian	Housekeeper	< H.S.	Mrd	2	\$12K-\$16K	Walk	Metro

Group Profile - T6/EJ