



AIA HONOLULU TALKING POINTS ADDRESSING THE PROPOSED HONOLULU TRANSIT CORRIDOR PROJECT

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- AIA Honolulu supports multi-modal transportation including the concept of a fixed rail system for Oahu. However, we remain concerned over the appropriateness of the proposed all-elevated transit system particularly through the urban core of Honolulu.
- AIA Honolulu strongly encourages the City Administration and City Council to re-consider selection and implementation of a flexible light rail system—one that will be capable of operating at street level (at-grade), above or below-grade depending on the conditions of each community; and that would allow for future adjustments and expansions to be built faster, more economically, and with potentially fewer environmental, visual and economic impacts.

TECHNOLOGY

- The citizens of Honolulu voted for a steel-on-steel “fixed guideway” rail system for Honolulu. The vote did not specify an all-elevated system as currently planned by the City Administration. Additional consideration should be made to the selection of the newer, flexible light rail technologies capable of operating at-grade, elevated or below grade as the conditions warrant.
- According to the Federal Transportation Administration whose agency guides Federal funding for Honolulu’s proposed *New Starts* project: A “fixed guideway” refers to any transit service that uses exclusive or controlled rights-of-way or rails, entirely or in part. The term includes heavy rail, commuter rail, light rail, monorail, trolleybus, aerial tramway, inclined plane, cable car, automated guideway transit, ferryboats, that portion of motor bus service operated on exclusive or controlled rights-of-way, and high-occupancy-vehicle (HOV) lanes.
- AIA research reveals that there are currently 35 light rail systems in the U.S. that operate at-grade, either fully or in part, and only one entirely elevated system, Miami, which was built in the 1970s. We urge the Administration and City Council to re-evaluate their specific selection of transit technology which incorporates high platform cars running on a fully automated, elevated automated, “hot” third rail system.

- AIA urges the Administration and City Council to adjust their plans to incorporate the latest state-of-the-art technology for light rail systems, which includes low platform cars operating with intermittent third rail technology, alternating with overhead catenary wire and safe for pedestrian access and crossing.
- AIA research indicates that approximately ½ of the proposed 20-mile transit route could be built at-grade, saving the City and County of Honolulu and Oahu's taxpayers estimated billions of dollars.
- AIA research reveals significant initial construction cost savings for a flexible light rail system. Construction costs for at-grade light rail are estimated to be 1/3 to 1/2 the cost of the City's proposed all elevated-automated rail system.
- For major initial construction time savings, a flexible at-grade rail system is estimated to take approximately 1/2 the time to construct as compared to an all elevated-automated rail system.
- Flexible at-grade light rail systems could provide a more complete rail transit service for Oahu—potentially serving 2/3 of our island's population, with the routes extending to Waikiki and UH Manoa—and possibly even to Kahala Mall and Mililani, Wahiawa, Haleiwa—this for a similar \$5.4 billion price tag as is currently projected by the City.
- AIA research reveals that a flexible light rail system would have lower long-term maintenance costs than the proposed fully automated, elevated system.
- The calculation of maintenance costs for the proposed elevated automated rail system should include the maintenance costs of elevated rail structures, inevitable economic loss created by the blighted lands under the elevated rail guideway, added security costs and increased social costs of graffiti and homeless encampments under the elevated rail guideway structures.
- AIA research reveals that the total travel time to ride a flexible light rail system running at-grade through approximately 10 miles of the proposed 20-mile route would be only 10 additional minutes per rider from Kapolei to the terminus at Ala Moana Station.

ALIGNMENT

- Consideration should be given to move the proposed rail route further inland, to maximize ridership accessibility and walking distances, revitalize our existing town centers and to minimize the impact of damage from natural disasters including tsunami,

hurricanes and earthquakes.

- The proposed elevated automated rail system would block our existing mauka-makai views and our future long-term access to the waterfront and ocean along Pearl Harbor and Honolulu, which would negatively impact the community for both residents and visitors.

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD)

- TOD will be limited to areas in the immediate vicinity of the elevated rail stations if the system is built as currently envisioned by the City.
- At-grade rail will promote TOD and the redevelopment of adjacent properties throughout its length in addition to areas around the stations.

ECONOMIC VIABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

- Honolulu is currently facing a serious economic recession and we must consider the economic viability of the proposed system in light of our struggling economy.
- Before any additional funds are committed to the design and construction of the proposed transit system, the Administration and City Council must provide the Citizens of Oahu with sufficient information to fully address:
 1. *Is the proposed solution the best one for addressing Oahu's traffic problems?*
 2. *How much is it truly going to cost Oahu's taxpayers?*
 3. *How are we to pay for it?*
 4. *Can we feasibly sustain the planned system?*
- AIA encourages the use of social, environment, and aesthetic criteria—as well as economic efficiency—in the design of routes and supporting facilities for all transit modes.
- AIA supports a rail transit system for Honolulu and believes a flexible light rail system, built partially at-grade, could be completed and maintained for less money, saving our taxpayers billions of dollars.

For additional information, visit our web site: www.aiahonolulu.org