

Hawaii Dealer

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Are plans being
laid for gridlock?

(See story page 6)



Other stories...see president's remarks on NADA training page 4.





Why “Plan” for Traffic Level F?

Years ago, streetcars didn't take us to where we wanted to go, so we became a car economy.

Most American cities, including Honolulu, moved away from public rail long ago and developed extensive highway and surface street systems to allow suburban development—a comfortable lifestyle which many consider the American Dream.

Today's rush hour traffic congestion, however, is taking the glow off of that dream. Many in their cars on Oahu now must squeeze through the tight-lane hourglass when coming into town from Ewa, Kapolei, Mililani, Waipahu, Makakilo, Nanakuli, Waianae, Wahiawa, and now even those coming in from Pearl City, Aiea, and St. Louis Heights are joining in the morning traffic queue.

A previously enjoyable twenty-minute drive in from the suburbs has turned

into a grinding hour-long session on the congested roadways. But still, it is estimated that only a small percentage of current drivers on Oahu will give up their cars to take the train. But why so few? For most commuters the choice to continue to drive will be because work commutes, family lifestyles, or errands require more transportation flexibility. The train just doesn't go where they want to go.

Also, most of the commuters on Oahu live more than 600 feet from the proposed train route and that distance seems to be the limit when it comes to walking to the station.

Is it too late to stop from making the wrong turn when it comes to solving transportation needs on Oahu?

Some think it is not.

Consider the idea for HOT Lanes. These elevated highway lanes, with electronically-

collected fees paid by the users, are needed even if the train project goes through. The biggest mistake now is to focus on the train as a solution to traffic congestion. It isn't one.

Surprisingly, the City's Public Transit Alternatives Analysis report reveals that all the alternatives proposed will lead to a Level of Service (LOS) of “F” on the Leeward highways in 2030. This information however, has largely been swept under the rug by the process.

The report shows that with all the options proposed by the City (No Build, Improved Bus System, Managed Lanes, or Rail) the current congested roadways in the Leeward corridor will remain at “F” Level of Service.

Hawaii's driving public, however, is expecting a much more positive traffic outcome after all this public transit effort and what may be \$6 billion in expenditures.

The City's study shows the 2030 traffic remains at LOS (F).

Alternative	Description	Date	LOS*
City's Alternative 1	No Build	2030	F (traffic)
City's Alternative 2	Improved Bus	2030	F (traffic)
City's Alternative 3	Managed Lanes (City's 2-Lanes, eliminated zipper)	2030	F (traffic)
City's Alternative 4	Rail	2030	F (traffic)

Source: See City's Alternatives Analysis

*LOS equals Traffic Level of Service

It seems ill-advised to “plan” for F.

However, the Hawaii Highway Users Alliance (HHUA) proposes a “Super HOTLane” – which features elevated overhead lanes, with automatic fees collected electronically. This alternative (an overhead, 3-lane, reversible toll highway) delivers a traffic LOS (A), with the remaining “free” lanes below operating more smoothly than with any of the current options the City is considering.

Stakeholders advocating smooth-flowing

traffic in the corridor feel the proposal for the Super HOTLane alternative needs to be fairly considered.

A comparison of the HOT Lane proposal with the train proposal can be made by consulting tow websites: honolulutraffic.com and honolulutransit.com.

Commuters stuck in traffic can draw their own conclusions based on the two website presentations.

In the next 25 years, the solution to

traffic congestion should likely be lanes, not trains. Many acknowledge that on the longer horizon, when more vertical development takes place in the corridor, a train solution may be needed (25-50 years from now).

The BEST solution would be for all the stakeholders to take one another's positions into consideration and for a total solution to be crafted in the idealistic and collaborative way that led to a delightful and useful public work like our State capitol—a stunning architectural work of art and a useful building.

Smooth-flowing lanes and smooth-running trains can be in our future; we just can't ignore one at the expense of the other. The current focus on the train needs to be expanded to include additional HOT lanes.

The current lack of cooperation between the City of Honolulu and the State is not helping.

De-politicizing the process through the creation of a quasi-government Transportation Authority is something the legislature should consider next year. Otherwise, it looks like the gridlock between the City and the State will lead to continued gridlock on the roadways.



This bumper sticker on a Honolulu car...has application to the attitude about traffic.



Westbound traffic on H-1 at 6 p.m. on an April Monday.

Level of Service (LOS)

The Level of Service (LOS) is a qualitative rating of the effectiveness of a roadway serving traffic, measured in terms of operating conditions. LOS describes the state of traffic flow on a roadway, and is derived from other measures such as travel speed and volume-to-capacity ratio. Six letter grades, ranging from A (most desirable) to F (least desirable), are used to rank performance of roadways. Descriptions of the six LOS grades are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: LEVEL OF SERVICE DEFINITIONS FOR ARTERIAL STREET SEGMENTS

LEVEL OF SERVICE	VOLUME/CAPACITY RATIO	DEFINITION
A	0.00 - 0.60	EXCELLENT: Completely free flow conditions. Vehicle operation is virtually unaffected by presence of other vehicles. Minor disruptions are easily absorbed without causing significant delays.
B	0.61 - 0.70	VERY GOOD: Reasonably unimpeded flow, the presence of other vehicles begins to be noticeable. Disruptions are still easily absorbed, although local deterioration in LOS will be more obvious.
C	0.71 - 0.80	GOOD: The ability to maneuver and select an operating speed is clearly affected by the presence of other vehicles. Minor disruptions may be expected to cause serious local deterioration in service and queues may form behind significant traffic
D	0.81 - 0.90	FAIR: Conditions border on unstable flow. Speed and ability to maneuver are severely restricted due to traffic congestion. Only the most minor disruptions can be absorbed without the formation of extensive queues and deterioration of service to
E	0.91 - 1.00	POOR: Conditions become unstable. Represents operation at or near capacity. Any disruption, no matter how minor, will cause queues to form and service to deteriorate to LOS F.
F	Greater than 1.00	FAILURE: Represents forced or breakdown flow. Operation within queues is unstable and characterized by short spurts of movement followed by stoppages.

Source: Adapted from Highway Capacity Manual 2000, Transportation Research Board, 2000. OMPO Performance Monitoring & Evaluation Plan 2005. For the purpose of the OMPO Congestion Management System, a facility will be defined as "congested" if the Volume to Capacity Ratio (V/C ratio) in the AM peak is greater than 0.90, which equates to LOS E or F.

The Gridlock Ahead

The V/C Ratio for the Leeward corridor roadways, in 2030, AFTER the train is in operation, is projected by the City's study to be 1.81. Texas Transportation Institute officials said that Hawaii's recent Oahu 2007 Martin Luther King Day gridlock experience, with 2 to 3-hour delays, equated to a 1.81. OR, with HOT Lanes the V/C is 0.00 - 0.60 LOS A on the elevated lanes.