

The Misevaluation of the Managed Lanes Alternative

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process requires that the City & County of Honolulu (City), “Rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives ... include reasonable alternatives not within the jurisdiction of the [City].”

The U.S. Council on Environmental Quality’s requires that “Reasonable alternatives include those that are practical or feasible from the technical and economic standpoint and using common sense, rather than simply desirable from the standpoint of the applicant.”

The City eliminated Managed Lanes Alternative on the grounds that:

- 1) It was too expensive to build. They projected costs of \$2.6 billion despite the fact that a) similar facilities were then being built in Florida for \$450 million, b) allowing for inflation the cost would be double per lane mile than that of the H-3 freeway. They even put a bus station on the Managed Lane, which is entirely unnecessary.
- 2) The operating costs were too high. They projected them at 36 percent greater than the No-Build alternative (essentially doing nothing) because the City projected operating 50 percent more buses to achieve a five percent increase in ridership. This despite the obvious result of running buses on a congestion free facility is that they can return in the opposite direction on an uncongested freeway for many trips. This would result in less operating costs than the No-Build operating in congested conditions. In addition, the City projected a ridiculous amount of 5,200 park-and-ride stalls for the Managed Lane Alternative, only slightly less than the 5,700 stalls projected for the rail line, instead of a pro-rata increase in the 529 stalls presently available
- 3) There would be heavy traffic congestion at the Koko Head. However, they made no discernible effort to apply their engineering competence and ingenuity to ingress and egress. Dr. Panos Prevedouros, Professor of Traffic Engineering at the University of Hawaii, himself a member of the Task Force, commented, that “... the most egregious violation ... was the deliberate under-engineering of the Managed Lanes Alternative ...” Subsequently, he devised a series of on/off ramps for it to remove the congestion being complained of and provided micro-simulations to show how this was possible.
- 4) There would be more traffic congestion than rail. However, this was only because the City removed the currently existing zipper lane from the H-1 freeway. The [City Council Task Force recommended](#) that the zipper lane be reinstated and had other proposals to remedy the poorly engineered Managed Lanes Alternative. Had they done they would show a dramatic change in traffic.

Dr. Prevedouros and his students subsequently studied the Managed Lane Alternative and concluded in their study, [Transportation Alternatives Analysis for Mitigating Traffic Congestion between Leeward Oahu and Honolulu](#), that Managed Lanes would greatly improve traffic congestion at a much lower cost than rail transit.

Summary: Had the City seen fit to “rigorously explore and objectively evaluate” the Managed Lane Alternative, as required by law, it would have shown equal transit ridership, less automobile traffic on the existing H-1, all at one-fifth the capital cost of rail transit and just one tenth of the burden on Honolulu taxpayers.

For complete detail and sources of data and other information on this matter, see http://www.honolulutraffic.com/DEIS_Comments8_I.pdf

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