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**Media Advisory:** 8/24/05

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## **HOT air about HOT lanes**

At yesterday's media event for the signing of Bill 40, the Mayor issued "The Facts Behind HOT Lanes," a two-page commentary on the HOT lanes proposal.

Our primary concerns with this commentary are as follows:

- The Mayor says that a two-lane HOT lanes facility would only carry 1,400 vehicles per lane hour as opposed to the 1,800 and 2,000 vehicles that we have used. [The Federal Highway Administration's "Guide for HOT Lane Development," Chapter 6](#), page 1,<sup>1</sup> says that the Orange County SR-91 HOT lanes carry 1,800 vehicles per hour and that traffic instability only occurs for vehicles in excess of 2,000 per hour.
- The Mayor shows little understanding of how HOT lanes operate when he computes the total cost for an average family using it every day. In practice, as the [FHWA](#)<sup>2</sup> tells us, hardly any motorists use the HOT lanes on a daily basis. Across income groups, HOT lanes are used sporadically for those times when the cost of the toll is less than the cost in time and/or money for being late to pick up children from day care, being late for work, missing a doctor's appointment, etc. They are favored heavily, across income groups, even by those who rarely use them because they are seen as a reliable option that can be used when necessity dictates.
- The Mayor says that the HOT lanes will be twice as wide as a transit guideway so it would cost twice as much. First, the fact is that the rail line would be 35 feet wide ([SDEIS, Fig. 2.11](#))<sup>3</sup> and the HOT lanes will be 42 feet wide (two lanes @ 12 feet and two safety lanes @ eight feet with two one foot barriers). That means that the HOT lanes will be only 20 percent wider than the rail line would have been. Second, the idea that a simple highway — a bid project — would cost more than a non-bid rail project with all its trains, stations each with stairs, elevators, escalators, rails — and few potential suppliers — is ludicrous.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.itsdocs.fhwa.dot.gov/JPODOCS/REPTS\\_TE/hot/chapter\\_6.htm](http://www.itsdocs.fhwa.dot.gov/JPODOCS/REPTS_TE/hot/chapter_6.htm)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.honolulutraffic.com/lexuslane.htm>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.honolulutraffic.com/pillarwidth.gif>