

Our responses to the City's May brochure

Front page: **Top reasons for rail:**

EXCERPT: Good for MOBILITY -- One train can move 300 people which equals 6 buses or 300 cars! That means one rail line equals 6 lanes of cars.

OUR RESPONSE: The I-495 busway in New Jersey carries 32,000 people per hour in a single lane. Rail transit here will only carry 9,000 at maximum.

Source: <http://honolulutraffic.com/passperhour.htm>

"(This) comparison of person moving capacities for various U.S. rail and HOV projects...appears to cut through the myth that HOV facilities (e.g. busways) do not have the person carrying equivalent of rail lines. Both modes can serve the person carrying capacity needs of about any corridor in North America." Charles A. Fuhs. High Occupancy Vehicle Facilities. Parsons, Brinckerhoff, Quade & Douglas. December 1990.

EXCERPT: Good for the ENVIRONMENT -- It's sustainable - rail can be powered by alternative energy like solar, wind or H-power. This means less air and water pollution and fewer green house gas emissions.

OUR RESPONSE: The average light rail line has energy consumption of 4,386 Btu per passenger mile, which is about the same as an SUV and far more than an automobile at 3,445 Btu. Operating rail by wind or solar is not being proposed anywhere. The greatest gains in energy use are coming automobiles such as hybrids, electrics, and lightweight diesels at 60 mpg average.

U.S. Govt. Sources: http://www1.eere.energy.gov/vehiclesandfuels/facts/favorites/fcvt_fotw221.html
http://cta.ornl.gov/data/tebd26/Edition26_Chapter02.pdf Table 2.12
http://www.carkeys.co.uk/road_test/hyundai/14074.asp

EXCERPT: Good for the ECONOMY -- The rail project will create 90,000 person years of employment or 11,000 direct and indirect jobs annually. And, building a reliable, dependable, efficient transportation system encourages healthy economic growth.

OUR RESPONSE: 82 percent of the capital cost and 100 percent of the operating losses will be funded with local dollars.

EXCERPT: Good for COMMUNITIES -- Rail encourages managed, orderly growth along the route. Planning where and how communities expand means we can keep the country country.

OUR RESPONSE: It really means Transit Oriented Development, or heavy subsidies for developers, which has been the case in every other TOD; the subsidies are needed to entice people to live in so-called "vibrant" communities.

EXCERPT: Good for YOU -- The less time you spend in traffic means the more time you have for yourself and your family and that means a better quality of life for everyone.

OUR RESPONSE – Only a planner or a politician could equate public transportation with quality of life. What people want is traffic congestion relief.

EXCERPT: "Metro says ridership on its light rail system has doubled in 20 months."

OUR RESPONSE – The American Public Transportation Association shows ridership on Houston's light rail was up 6.29 percent 2007 over 2006 and up just 3.08 percent for the 1st Quarter 2008 over the same quarter in 2007. Some doubling. City transit officials know better than to listen to other transit officials when the real data are readily available.