

Riding the rail means an endless parade of buses

By Marjorie Morgan
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Rail construction on Kamehameha Hwy, near Puu Poni St. in Pearl City.

My family can hardly wait. We can see how rail will change our lives forever.

First thing each weekday, we'll walk from our home to the shuttle bus stop. It will take only 10 minutes, and the weather will probably be accommodating.

We will patiently wait for the bus, and hope it comes within 10 or 15 minutes. Sooner or later it will take us to the nearest train station, where within minutes we will be on our way to town.

The 20 stops will be humbug, but we will dependably reach the Ala Moana train station not much more than an hour after leaving our home.

Unfortunately, that won't be the end of our commute. From the Ala Moana rail station, Mommy will then take bus No. 1 to work. Daddy will take bus No. 2 to work. Mikey will take bus No. 3 to Saint Louis School. Sally will take bus No. 4 to Saint Francis School. And baby will take bus No. 5 to preschool.

Oh wait, baby can't go on the bus alone. I guess Mommy will take baby on bus No. 5 to the preschool. After dropping baby off, Mommy will patiently wait for a bus No. 6 that is headed back to the rail station. From there, Mommy will transfer to bus No. 1.

After work, Daddy will walk back to the bus stop closest to his office, which in his case is only a half-mile and partially protected from the elements. After waiting there for 10 to 15 minutes, Daddy will take bus No. 5 to within a quarter-mile of Mikey's baseball game.

Sally's walk from her school to her bus station will take only 10 minutes, and the wait for her bus only another 15 to 20 minutes, but her bus stop will be only 5 to 10 minutes from the ballpark where she will join Daddy at Mikey's game.

When her workday ends, Mommy will take bus No. 1, transfer to bus No. 6, pick up baby, wait for a bus No. 6 headed in the opposite direction, eventually transfer to bus No. 5, so that she and baby can meet the rest of the family at the game.

Afterward, the family will walk to, and wait for, bus No. 8 ... transfer to bus No. 9 ... and eventually reach the downtown rail station where everyone can enjoy a wonderful dinner.

Oh wait, too expensive. Instead, we'll just ride the train back to the west side, find seats as riders start getting off at 20 stations, walk to our bus stop where we will eventually take bus No. 10 to within a 10-minute walk of our home.

Unless something unexpected happens, we will enjoy the walk and be home by the kids' bedtime.

Oh, wait. I forgot about dinner ... and working out tomorrow's transportation plan. Except for Sally's swim meet at a cross-town school, baby's doctor's appointment at Queen's, and Mikey's soccer practice, it will be a lot like today's terrific schedule.

Oh wait, what about stopping off at grandma's place to wish her a happy birthday? That could be a problem. We don't expect to have money in the budget for an occasional side trip by taxi once the city raises our property taxes to pay for rail operations.

And to pay payments on all the rail bonds as they come due, the city will need to cut many corners, but that's OK. I'm pretty sure my kids will get used to not having air-conditioning, clean seats, or any form of security in or around the rail stations.

The trains may be dilapidating, cement guideways crumbling, steel rusting, and escalators stalling, but at least my family will have rail.

Marjorie Morgan, of Kailua, is a retired civilian of the Honolulu Police Dept.; she is concerned about the rising cost of building and maintaining rail.