

Scoping Report Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project

April 6, 2006

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City and County of Honolulu

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The City and County of Honolulu Department of Transportation Services (DTS) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are preparing an Alternatives Analysis (AA) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a proposed project to provide high-capacity transit service in an approximately 25-mile travel corridor between Kapolei and the University of Hawaii at Manoa and Waikiki. The notice of intent to prepare the EIS appeared in the Federal Register on December 7, 2005 and the EIS Preparation Notice (EISPN) appeared in the State of Hawaii Environmental Notice on December 8, 2005. The scoping comment period under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the EISPN consultation period officially began on the respective dates of publication and closed on January 9, 2006.

All interested individuals and organizations, and federal, state, and local agencies were invited to comment on the purpose and need, project alternatives, and scope of the AA and EIS, rather than stating a preference for a particular alternative. The opportunity to express preference for a particular alternative will be after the release of the AA Report, which compares various alternatives.

Public scoping meetings were held at two locations within the study corridor. They were conducted in an open-house format that presented the purpose of and needs for the project, proposed project alternatives, and the scope of analysis to be included in the AA and the draft EIS. The meetings allowed members of the public to ask their individual questions of project staff and provided an opportunity for the public to provide either written testimony or oral testimony, recorded by court reporters.

The first scoping meeting was held at Neal S. Blaisdell Center, Pikake Room, at 777 Ward Avenue on December 13, 2005 from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and was attended by approximately 450 people. The second meeting was held at Kapolei Middle School Cafeteria, at 91-5335 Kapolei Parkway on December 14, 2005 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and was attended by approximately 200 people. The high attendance at these meetings was a result of DTS's substantial media and community outreach efforts, which included targeted outreach to underrepresented non-English speaking populations.

The two public scoping meetings were supplemented with an agency scoping meeting targeted to those federal, State and County agencies potentially interested in the project. The agency scoping meeting was held at Neal S. Blaisdell Center, Pikake Room, at 777 Ward Avenue on December 13, 2005 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. and was attended by approximately 20 agencies and utility companies.

Following closure of the public scoping process, continued public outreach activities will include meetings with interested parties or groups. The project web site, www.honolulutransit.org, will be periodically updated to reflect the project's current status. Additional opportunities for public participation will be announced through mailings, notices, advertisements, and press releases. Anyone wishing to be placed

on the project mailing list may do so by registering on the web site at www.honolulutransit.org, or by calling (808) 566-2299.

Project scoping meetings were publicized through newsletter mailings, website and phone-line information, newspaper advertisements, radio advertising, distribution of informational flyers, and news service coverage. Informational flyers were distributed in ten languages that were identified as being spoken by population groups within the corridor: Chinese, English, Ilocano, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Samoan, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. No requests were received for materials or presentations in any language except English.

Newsletters were mailed to approximately 15,400 addresses. Radio advertising appeared on sixteen stations. Three stations catering to non-English speaking demographics carried advertising in Chinese, Ilocano, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Samoan, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. Also, Mayor Mufi Hannemann appeared on the KINE radio morning program on December 13, 2005 and invited listeners to the scoping meetings. Table 2-1 summarizes radio advertisement and coverage.

Table 2-1. Radio Advertising

Station	Air Date	Format
KSSK	Dec 7-13	Adult Contemporary
KCCN	Dec 7-13	Hawaiian
KGMZ	Dec 7-13	Oldies
KHUI	Dec 7-13	Hawaiian
KHVH	Dec 7-13	Talk
KINE	Dec 7-13	Hawaiian
KPHW	Dec 7-13	Urban/New Age
KPOI	Dec 7-13	Rock
KUMU	Dec 7-13	Easy Listening
AM1540	Dec 7-13	Korean
FISH	Dec 7-13	Christian
KHNR	Dec 7-13	News/Talk
KKEA	Dec 7-13	Sports and Talk
KKNE-AM	Dec 7-14	Hawaiian-Traditional
KNDI	Dec 7-13	Ethnic
KQMQ	Dec 7-13	Edge
KZOO	Dec 7-13	Japanese

Informational flyers were posted at the following community organizations and churches in the languages of the groups served by the organization:

Boys & Girls Club Waiola	Korean Presbyterian Church of Honolulu
Boys & Girls Club Plantation Road	Kaimuki Christian Church
Young Men’s Christian Association	University Avenue Baptist Church
Hawaii Pacific University	Kalihi Palama Health Center
Lanakila Health Center	Kalihi Child Care Pre-School
Hawaii Literacy	Pauahi Community Center
New Hope Christian Fellowship	Youth Basketball Association - Honolulu
First Chinese Church of Christ	United Chinese Society
Nuuanu Baptist Church	The Filipino Community Center

Legal advertisements were placed in the Honolulu Star-Bulletin on November 30 and December 7, 2005. Display advertisements were placed in twelve newspapers for a total of twenty run-dates. The newspapers included island-wide papers, local papers, and ethnic targeted papers. The advertising placement is summarized in Table 2-2.

Table 2-2. Newspaper Advertising

Publication	Run Dates
Honolulu Advertiser	12/7/2005, 12/11/2005, 12/12/2005, 12/13/2005
Star Bulletin	11/30/2005, 12/1/2005
Hawaii Hochi	12/7/2005, 12/12/2005
Korean Times	12/7/2005, 12/11/2005
Filipino Chronicle	11/26/2005, 12/10/2005
MidWeek	12/7/2005
Leeward Current	11/30/2005, 12/7/2005
Ka Nupepa	12/7/2005
Hawaii Herald	12/2/2005
Fil-Am Courier	12/1/2005
West Oahu Current	11/30/2005
Ka Wai Ola	December Issue

The December 13th Scoping Meeting received substantial media coverage, including spots on the KHON, KFVE, KITV, KGMB, and KHNL television news and KHPR radio. The news coverage included notice of the following evening’s scoping meeting at Kapolei Middle School.

On November 15, 2005, the project website became active with public involvement information about the project. The project's EISPN and scoping information package were posted to the website. Project informational flyers were posted to the website in 10 languages and publicized in the newsletter. The website also provided a page to enter scoping comments.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Transit Administration

Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement for High-Capacity Transit Improvements in the Leeward Corridor of Honolulu, Hawaii

AGENCY: Federal Transit Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

SUMMARY: The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the City and County of Honolulu, Department of Transportation Services (DTS) intend to prepare an EIS (and Alternative Analysis (AA)) on a proposal by the City and County of Honolulu to implement transit improvements that potentially include high-capacity transit service in a 25-mile travel corridor between Kapolei and the University of Hawaii at Manoa and Waikiki. Alternatives proposed to be considered in the AA and draft EIS include No Build, Transportation System Management, Managed Lanes, and Fixed Guideway Transit. Other transit alternatives may be identified during the scoping process.

The EIS will be prepared to satisfy the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and its implementing regulations. The FTA and DTS request public and interagency input on the purpose and needs to be addressed by the project, the alternatives to be considered, and the scope of the EIS for the corridor, including the alternatives and the environmental and community impacts to be evaluated.

DATES: *Scoping Comments Due Date:* Written comments on the scope of the NEPA review, including the alternatives to be considered and the related impacts to be assessed, should be sent to DTS by January 9, 2006. See **ADDRESSES** below.

Scoping Meetings: Meetings to accept comments on the proposed alternatives, scope of the EIS, and purpose of and needs to be addressed by the alternatives will be held on December 13 and 14, 2005 at the locations given in **ADDRESSES** below. On December 13, 2005, the public scoping meeting will begin at 5:00 p.m. and continue until 8:00 p.m. or until all who wish to provide oral comments have been given the opportunity. The meeting on December 14, 2005 will begin at 7:00 p.m. and continue until 9:00 p.m. or until all who wish to provide oral comments have been given the opportunity. The locations are accessible to people with disabilities. A court reporter will record oral comments. Forms will be provided on which to provide written comments. Project staff will be available at the meeting to informally discuss the EIS scope and the proposed project. Governmental agencies are also invited to a separate scoping meeting to be held on December 13 from 2:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. Further information will be available at the scoping meeting and may also

be obtained by calling (808) 566-2299, by downloading from www.honolulutransit.org, or by e-mailing info@honolulutransit.org.

ADDRESSES: Written comments on the scope of the EIS, including the alternatives to be considered and the related impacts to be assessed, should be sent to both the Department of Transportation Services, City and County of Honolulu, 650 South King Street, 3rd Floor, Honolulu, HI, 96813, Attention: Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project, or by the internet at www.honolulutransit.org and to Ms. Donna Turchie, Federal Transit Administration, Region IX, 201 Mission Street, Suite 2210, San Francisco, CA 94105 or by email: Donna.Turchie@fta.dot.gov.

The scoping meetings will be held at the Neal S. Blaisdell Center, Pikake Room, at 777 Ward Avenue on December 13, 2005 from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and at Kapolei Middle School Cafeteria, at 91-5335 Kapolei Parkway on December 14, 2005 from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: The FTA contact is Ms. Donna Turchie, Federal Transit Administration, Region IX, 201 Mission Street, Room 2210, San Francisco, CA, 94105. Phone: (415) 744-2737. Fax: (415) 744-2726.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Scoping

The FTA and DTS invite all interested individuals and organizations, and federal, state, and local agencies, to comment on the purpose and need, project alternatives, and scope of the EIS. During the scoping process, comments should focus on the purpose and need for a project, identifying specific transportation problems to be evaluated, or on proposing transportation alternatives that may be less costly, more effective, or have fewer environmental impacts while improving mobility in the corridor. At this time, comments should not focus on a preference for a particular alternative. The opportunity for that type of input will be after the release of the AA final report, which will compare various alternatives.

Following the public scoping process, public outreach activities with interested parties or groups throughout the duration of work on the EIS will occur. The project web site, www.honolulutransit.org, will be updated periodically to reflect the status of the project. Additional opportunities for public participation will be announced through mailings, notices, advertisements, and press releases. Those wishing to be placed on the project mailing list may do so by registering on the web site at www.honolulutransit.org, or by calling (808) 566-2299.

II. Description of Study Area

The proposed project study area is the travel corridor between Kapolei and the University of Hawaii at Manoa (UH Manoa) and Waikiki. This narrow, linear corridor is confined by the Waianae and Koolau mountain ranges to the north (mauka

direction) and the ocean to the south (makai direction). The corridor includes the majority of housing and employment on Oahu. The 2000 census indicates that 876,200 people live on Oahu. Of this number, over 552,000 people, or 63 percent, live within the corridor between Kapolei and Manoa/Waikiki. This area is projected to absorb 69 percent of the population growth projected to occur on Oahu between 2000 and 2030, resulting in an expected corridor population of 776,000 by 2030. Over the next twenty-five years, the Ewa/Kapolei area is projected to have the highest rate of housing and employment growth on Oahu. The Ewa/Kapolei area is developing as a “second city” to complement downtown Honolulu. The housing and employment growth in Ewa is identified in the General Plan for the City and County of Honolulu.

III. Purpose and Need

Existing transportation infrastructure in this corridor is overburdened handling current levels of travel demand. Travelers experience substantial traffic congestion and delay at most times of the day, both on weekdays and on weekends. Automobile and transit users on Oahu currently experience 42,000 daily vehicle-hours of delay. By 2030, this is projected to increase nearly seven-fold to 326,000 daily vehicle-hours of delay. Because the bus system primarily operates in mixed traffic, transit users experience the same level of delay as automobile drivers. Current morning peak-period travel times for motorists from Kapolei to downtown average between 40 and 60 minutes. By 2030 the travel times are projected to more than double. Within the urban core most major arterial streets will experience increasing peak congestion, including Ala Moana Boulevard, Dillingham Boulevard, Kalakaua Avenue, Kapiolani Boulevard, King Street and Nimitz Highway. Expansion of the roadway system between Kapolei and UH Manoa study corridor is constrained by physical barriers and by dense urban neighborhoods that abut many existing roadways.

Numerous lower-income and minority workers live in the corridor outside of the urban core and commute to work in the primary urban center. Many of these workers rely on public transit because they are not able to afford the cost of vehicle ownership, operation, and parking.

The intent of the proposed alternatives is to provide improved person-mobility in this highly congested east-west corridor. A high-capacity improvement project would support the goals of the regional transportation plan by serving areas designated for urban growth, provide an alternative to private automobile travel and improve linkages between Kapolei, Honolulu’s Urban Center, UH Manoa, Waikiki, and urban areas between these points.

III. Alternatives

The alternatives proposed for evaluation in the AA and draft EIS were developed through a screening process that identified the best reasonable alternatives from the range of possible alternatives. At a minimum, FTA and DTS propose to consider the following alternatives:

1. No Build Alternative, which would include existing transit and highway facilities and planned transportation projects to the year 2030.
2. Transportation System Management (TSM) Alternative, which would provide an enhanced bus system based on a hub-and-spoke route network, community bus circulators, conversion of the present morning peak hour only zipper lane to both a morning and afternoon peak hour zipper lane configuration, and relatively low-cost capital improvements on selected roadway facilities to give priority to buses. These capital improvements may include: transportation system upgrades such as intersection improvements, minor road widening, traffic engineering actions, bus route restructuring, shortened bus headways, expanded use of articulated buses, express and limited-stop service, signalization improvements, and timed-transfer operations.
3. Managed Lanes Alternative, which would include construction of a two-lane grade-separated guideway between Waipahu and Downtown Honolulu for use by buses high-occupancy vehicles (HOVs), and toll-paying single-occupant vehicles. The lanes would be managed by setting the minimum occupancy for HOVs and the tolls for single-occupant vehicles at levels that would preserve free-flow speeds on the facility.
4. Fixed-Guideway Alternatives, which would include the construction and operation of a fixed transit guideway between Kapolei and UH Manoa and Waikiki on one of several possible alignments. Alignment alternatives to be considered include, but are not limited to:
 - Kamokila Boulevard/Salt Lake Boulevard/King Street/Hotel Street/Alakea Street/Kapiolani Boulevard Alignment, which would serve various communities and activity centers between Kapolei and UH Manoa, including UH West Oahu, Waipahu, Pearlridge, Aloha Stadium, Salt Lake, Kalihi, Downtown Honolulu, Kakaako, Ala Moana Center, and Moiliili.
 - North-South Road/Camp Catlin Road/King Street/Queen Street/ Kapiolani Boulevard Alignment, which would serve various communities and activity centers between Kapolei and UH Manoa, including UH West Oahu, Waipahu, Pearlridge, Aloha Stadium, Pearl Harbor, Honolulu International Airport, Salt Lake, Kalihi, Downtown Honolulu, Kakaako, Ala Moana Center, and Moiliili.
 - Ft. Weaver Road/Farrington Highway/Kamehameha Highway/ Dillingham Boulevard/Kaaahi Street/Beretania Street/King Street/Kaialiu Street Alignment, which would serve various communities and activity centers between Kapolei and UH Manoa, including Kalaeloa, Ewa Villages, Waipahu, Pearlridge, Aloha Stadium, Pearl Harbor, Honolulu International Airport, Kalihi Kai, Downtown Honolulu, Thomas Square, and Moiliili.
 - North-South Road/Farrington Highway/Kamehameha Highway/ Airport/Dillingham Boulevard/Hotel Street/Kapiolani Boulevard with a Waikiki Spur Alignment, which would serve various communities and activity centers between Kapolei and UH Manoa, including Kalaeloa, UH West Oahu, Waipahu,

Pearlridge, Aloha Stadium, Pearl Harbor, Honolulu International Airport, Kalihi Kai, Downtown Honolulu, Kakaako, Ala Moana Center, Moiliili, and Waikiki.

After appropriate public involvement and interagency coordination, other alternatives suggested during scoping may be added if they are found to be environmentally acceptable, financially feasible, and consistent with the purpose of and need for major transportation improvements in the corridor.

IV. Probable Effects

The EIS will evaluate and fully disclose the environmental consequences of the construction and operation of an expanded transit system on Oahu. The EIS will evaluate the impacts of all reasonable alternatives on land use, zoning, displacements, parklands, economic development, community disruptions, environmental justice, aesthetics, air quality, noise and vibration, wildlife, vegetation, threatened and endangered species, farmland, water quality, wetlands, waterways, floodplains, energy, hazardous materials, and cultural, historic, and archaeological resources. Impacts to parklands and historic resources covered by Section 4(f) of the 1966 U.S. Department of Transportation Act also will be addressed.

To ensure that all significant issues related to this proposed action are identified and addressed, scoping comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments and questions should be directed to the DTS as noted in the **ADDRESSES** section above.

V. FTA Procedures

The EIS is being prepared in accordance with: the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, and its implementing regulations by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR parts 1500-1508); the FTA/Federal Highway Administration's "Environmental Impact and Related Procedures" regulations (23 CFR part 771); and Federal transit law (49 USC 5300) and its implementing regulations for major capital improvements (49 CFR 611). In accordance with FTA policy, the NEPA process will also address the requirements of other applicable environmental laws, regulations, and executive orders, such as the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, Section 4(f) of the 1966 U.S. Department of Transportation Act, the Executive Orders on Environmental Stewardship and Transportation Infrastructure Project Reviews, Environmental Justice, Floodplain Management, and Protection of Wetlands.

The first step in preparation of the EIS will be an AA that will be consistent with both the requirements of NEPA for evaluation of a range of reasonable alternatives and the requirements of Federal transit law for consideration of alternatives during the development of major capital investment projects proposed for Federal funding. Upon completion, the AA final report will be available to the public and agencies for review and comment, and public hearings on the AA will be held at advertised locations within the study area. Based on the AA and public and agency comments

received, the City and County of Honolulu will identify a locally preferred alternative (LPA). The second step in preparation of the EIS will be the development of a Draft EIS to add further detail about the LPA and its impacts. Based on the findings in the Draft EIS and comments from the public and agencies, the City and County of Honolulu may decide to request that the LPA enter preliminary engineering (PE) of the LPA. FTA requires that the LPA be adopted and/or confirmed in the conforming Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for Oahu as a condition for initiation of PE. With adoption into the RTP, and if the LPA meets the evaluation criteria identified in Federal law, FTA will approve the project into PE, which will include the simultaneous preparation of the Final EIS.

Issued on: December 7, 2005

Leslie T. Rogers
Regional Administrator

Notification of Agency Scoping Meeting

The agency scoping meeting was held to provide an opportunity for those agencies potentially interested in the project, or having relevant expertise pertaining to the project, to have input at an early stage. Invitation letters were sent on December 5th, 6th and 7th, 2005 to 87 Federal, State and County agencies and utility companies that had either participated in prior transit planning efforts on Oahu, or had responsibilities or expertise that were considered to play a role in the current transit planning program. Agencies that received invitations are indicated in Table 4-1.

Table 4-1. Agency Scoping Meeting

Agencies and Organizations Invited to and/or Attending Agency Scoping Meeting	Attended Agency Meeting	Scoping Input Received	Further Consultation Requested
Federal			
Department of Agriculture (Natural Resource Conservation Service)			
Department of Defense (U.S. Air Force-Hickam)			
Department of Defense (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)		X*	
Department of Defense (U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii)			
Department of Defense (U.S. Army Garrison-Hawaii (APVG-GWE-M))			
Department of Defense (U.S. Naval Base Pearl Harbor)			
Department of Homeland Security (U.S. Coast Guard – 14 th Coast Guard District)			
Department of the Interior (Fish and Wildlife Service)			
Department of the Interior (National Park Service)			X
Department of the Interior (U.S. Geological Survey Pacific Island Ecosystems Research Center)			
Department of Transportation (Federal Aviation Administration)	X		
Department of Transportation (Federal Highway Administration)	X		
Environmental Protection Agency			X
Federal Emergency Management Agency			

Table 4-1 (continued). Agency Scoping Meeting

Agencies and Organizations Invited to and/or Attending Agency Scoping Meeting	Attended Agency Meeting	Scoping Input Received	Further Consultation Requested
State of Hawaii			
Department of Accounting and General Services			
Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism			
Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (Strategic Industries Division)			
Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (Office of Planning)	X		
Department of Defense			
Department of Education			
Department of Hawaiian Home Lands			
Department of Health			
Department of Health (Clean Air Branch)			
Department of Health (Clean Water Branch)			
Department of Health (Environmental Planning)	X		
Department of Health (Noise, Radiation, and Indoor Air Quality Branch)			
Department of Health (Solid and Hazardous Waste Branch)			
Department of Land and Natural Resources			
Department of Land and Natural Resources (Commission on Water Resource Management)	X		
Department of Land and Natural Resources (Land Division)			
Department of Land and Natural Resources (State Historic Preservation Division)			
Department of Land and Natural Resources (State Parks Division)			
Department of Transportation			
Department of Transportation (Airports Division)			
Department of Transportation (Harbors Division)	X		
Department of Transportation (Highways Division – Planning)	X		
Hawaiian Community Development Authority	X		
Hawaii State Library			
Legislative Reference Bureau			
Office of Environmental Quality Control			
Office of Hawaiian Affairs			
Office of Hawaiian Affairs (Native Rights, Land and Culture Division)	X		
University of Hawaii			
University of Hawaii (Environmental Center)			
University of Hawaii, Manoa (Facilities Planning and Management Office)	X		
University of Hawaii, Manoa (Water Resources Research Center)			

Table 4-1 (continued). Agency Scoping Meeting

Agencies and Organizations Invited to and/or Attending Agency Scoping Meeting	Attended Agency Meeting	Scoping Input Received	Further Consultation Requested
City and County of Honolulu			
City and County of Honolulu			
Department of Design and Construction	X		
Department of Environmental Services			
Department of Parks and Recreation			
Honolulu Board of Water Supply			
Honolulu City Council			
Honolulu Fire Department	X		
Honolulu Municipal Reference and Records Center			
Honolulu Police Department (Traffic)	X		
Libraries			
Aiea Public Library			
Ewa Beach Public and School Library			
Kaimuki Public Library			
Kalihi-Palama Public Library			
Kapolei Public Library			
Library For The Blind and Physically Handicapped			
Liliha Public Library			
McCully-Moiliili Public Library			
Mililani Public Library			
Neighborhood Boards			
No. 1, Hawaii Kai			
No. 2, Kuliouou/Kalani Iki			
No. 16, Kalihi Valley			
No. 23, Ewa			
No. 26, Wahiawa			
No. 27, North Shore			
No. 28, Koolauloa			
No. 29, Kahaluu			
No. 31, Kailua			
No. 35, Mililani Mauka/Launani Valley			

Table 4-1(continued). Agency Scoping Meeting

Agencies and Organizations Invited to and/or Attending Agency Scoping Meeting	Attended Agency Meeting	Scoping Input Received	Further Consultation Requested
Other Organizations			
Aloha Tower Development Corporation			
Chaney Brooks and Company	X		
Charlier Associates, Inc.	X		
Hawaiian Electric Company	X		
Hawaiian Electric Company (Project Management Division, Engineering)			
Hawaiian Telephone Company	X		
Honolulu Advertiser			
Honolulu Star-Bulletin			
Kaneohe Business Group			
Kailua Chamber of Commerce			
Leeward Oahu Transportation Management Organization			
Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization	X		
The Gas Company	X		

* U.S. Army Corps of Engineers scoping input was received after the official end of scoping, but was included because they have regulatory authority over project elements.

Summary of Agency Scoping Meeting

The agency scoping meeting was held from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. on December 13 2005, at Neal S. Blaisdell Center. Twenty agencies and utility companies attended the scoping meeting. Table 4-1 provides information on the agencies invited to the scoping meeting, those who attended, those who provided scoping input, and those who requested further consultation. More than the 87 invited agencies and utility companies are shown in Table 4-1 because a specific branch or division of an agency was represented at the meeting, while the agency invitation had been sent to the agency as a whole.

The meeting was recorded on a digital audio recorder, and notes of the discussions were taken. The meeting was moderated by DTS, and the presentation included the meeting purpose, introduction to the project, alternatives under consideration, planning process overview and schedule, and plans for public scoping. DTS stated that comments pertaining to purpose and need, alternatives, and scope of analysis would be particularly useful at this time.

Following the presentation, questions were requested. The subsequent discussion is summarized below.

Station Locations

QUESTION: Wally Gretz from University of Hawaii at Manoa asked if station locations have been established.

ANSWER: Consideration of station locations is just beginning. Some general areas where stations are expected to be desirable have been identified, but nothing specific has been proposed. Comments on candidate station locations are appreciated.

Public Involvement Program

QUESTION: Liz Fischer of FHWA asked, “What will be the ongoing public involvement program?”

ANSWER: The public will have the opportunity to comment at ongoing public meetings and an active project web-site - other mechanisms of public involvement are still being developed. The availability of the Alternatives Analysis will be publicly announced and opportunities for public input on alternatives will be provided. Public hearings will occur prior to the City Council’s decision on the LPA. Public hearings will also be held when the DEIS is released.

Coordination with the Transportation Planning Process

QUESTION: One commenter asked if there will be coordination with local transportation planning processes.

ANSWER: Yes.

Alternatives

QUESTION: Darice Young of the FAA asked if only one alternative would be selected.

ANSWER: It is unlikely that there will be sufficient funding for more than one major transit project, although the alternative selected could include a phased construction schedule. Should rail be selected, it is possible to select an alternative that incorporates elements of Alternatives 4a through 4d, or additional elements to be developed subsequently.

Wally Gretz stated that the rail alternative did not include a managed lanes component.

Alignments and Technologies

QUESTION: Is it possible that different fixed-guideway technologies could have different alignments?

ANSWER: Yes, because of the different operating characteristics of the different technologies.

QUESTION: Stanton Enomoto of the Hawaii Community Development Authority asked whether it is possible to combine several technologies.

ANSWER: Only one technology is likely to be chosen for ease of maintenance and cost. However, in areas such as downtown, a single technology could have the option to run above ground, underground or at-grade.

Maintenance Facilities

QUESTION: Carlos Hernandez of Charlier Associates asked if maintenance facilities have been examined.

ANSWER: At this time, little planning has been devoted to maintenance facilities because maintenance facility requirements will change based on the alternative. For example, if rail is selected, the maintenance facility will need to be on or near the alignment. If managed lanes are selected, the bus maintenance facility could be located away from the managed lanes facility/roadway.

Technical Analyses

QUESTION: Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization (OMPO) Director, Gordon Lum asked what will be different in this analysis compared to prior analyses.

ANSWER: The project extends the study corridor further Ewa (west) than prior planning efforts. Inclusion of Kapolei in the area of detailed analysis will allow more potential for transit-oriented development in less developed areas. The technology comparison will be updated, and a different technology may be selected than previously (the Honolulu Rapid Transit Project proposed a fully-automated, elevated rail technology). Because of the extension of the project into less developed areas, at-grade technologies may be more feasible in some sections.

In addition, the transportation baseline has changed based on new population and employment projections and increased development. The Oahu Regional Transportation Plan (ORTP) is currently being updated, and the updated plan will be incorporated into the analysis.

The agency scoping meeting ended after this discussion.

Agency Scoping Comments and Responses

After the scoping meeting, comments were received from the following agencies and utility companies:

United States Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration

United States Environmental Protection Agency
United States National Park Service
Hawaii Community Development Authority
State of Hawaii Department of Accounting and General Services
State of Hawaii Department of Education
State of Hawaii Department of Hawaiian Home Lands
State of Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources
State of Hawaii Office of Environmental Quality Control
State of Hawaii Office of Hawaiian Affairs
University of Hawaii
Honolulu Department of Design and Construction
Honolulu Fire Department
Downtown Neighborhood Board
Hawaiian Electric Company

The following is a summary of the comments from these organizations. Responses to the comments follow each comment as indented text.

United States Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) requested ongoing coordination as the project continues to develop.

The project team will continue to coordinate with the FAA during project development.

United States Environmental Protection Agency

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) identified that a Clean Water Act Section 404 individual permit may be required for the project and provided guidance on interagency coordination. They also identified the need to evaluate air quality, invasive plant species management, environmental justice and indirect and cumulative impacts as part of the draft EIS.

These issues will be addressed in the Alternatives Analysis and draft EIS.

United States National Park Service

The National Park Service provided information that there are over 4,000 daily visitor trips to the USS Arizona Memorial. The service identified a preference for an alternative that would provide a transit stop at the memorial (makai of Kamehameha Highway), rather than at the mauka side of Kamehameha Highway.

Station locations will be evaluated in the Alternatives Analysis, and information provided by the Park Service will be considered in station analysis.

Hawaii Community Development Authority

The Hawaii Community Development Authority (HCDA) commented that Alternative 4d appeared to be most consistent with the Kalaeloa Master Plan. Also, they noted that there is space within Kalaeloa for a transit maintenance facility and for park-and-ride facilities. They also expressed interest in transit oriented development along Saratoga Avenue.

The project team will engage in ongoing coordination with HCDA about the location of support facilities and transit oriented development.

State of Hawaii Department of Accounting and General Services

The State of Hawaii Department of Accounting and General Services noted that Alternatives 3 and 4 would likely affect properties managed by the department and requested ongoing coordination.

The project team will organize ongoing coordination with the Department of Accounting and General Services.

State of Hawaii Department of Education

The State of Hawaii Department of Education (DOE) noted that students and facilities of the DOE would be affected by the proposed project and requested that the effects be considered during project evaluation. Impacts on school lands, the safety of students that would use the system, and noise levels at schools were noted as issues of concern.

These issues will be addressed in the Alternatives Analysis and draft EIS.

State of Hawaii Department of Hawaiian Home Lands

The State of Hawaii Department of Hawaiian Home Lands expressed a preference for a route following Saratoga Avenue and North-South Road in the Kapolei area. They also commented that UH West Oahu, Leeward Community College, and UH Manoa should be connected by the route.

While selection of a locally preferred alternative will not occur until after publication of the Alternatives Analysis, the above alignments and service to the listed colleges will be considered within the range of alternatives being evaluated.

State of Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources

The State of Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources noted that Stream Channel Alteration Permits and other water resource approvals may be required. The draft EIS should address whether stream beds or banks would be affected. They also requested future consultation on aquatic resource concerns.

The issues of required permits and approvals will be addressed in the EIS. The project team will organize ongoing coordination with the Department of Land and Natural Resources.

State of Hawaii Office of Environmental Quality Control

The State of Hawaii Office of Environmental Control identified several items that should be included in the draft EIS, including:

- Acronyms and glossary
- Aesthetics discussion including landscaping plans
- Comparison of currently studied alignments to alignments considered by prior studies
- Evaluation of hazardous materials and remediation measures proposed, and
- A list of permits, approvals, and funding sources.

The Office of Environmental Quality Control also requested that a copy of the EISPN be sent to additional groups and requested information about overall project schedule.

The project team will address the requested topics in the draft EIS and the Alternatives Analysis as appropriate. Copies of the EISPN were sent to the requested groups. The draft EIS is expected to be issued in the spring of 2007 following selection of a locally preferred alternative (LPA). The earliest date that construction would begin is the year 2009 and the likely duration of construction has not yet been determined and will vary based on the selected alternative.

State of Hawaii Office of Hawaiian Affairs

The State of Hawaii Office of Hawaiian Affairs raised two issues based on available information, including:

- Whether archaeology and historic studies will be completed
- Protection of kooloaula plant.

These issues will be addressed in the Alternatives Analysis and draft EIS.

University of Hawaii

The University of Hawaii emphasized the importance of compatibility of the proposed transit system to their planned West Oahu campus. After coordination with other major land owners in the Kapolei area, they identified the alignment presented in Alternative 4d as their preferred alignment in the Kapolei area.

The project team will be evaluating Alternative 4d as part of the Alternatives Analysis process.

Honolulu Department of Design and Construction

The Department of Design and Construction requested coordination on project planning with several other city projects.

The project team will organize ongoing coordination with the Department of Design and Construction.

Honolulu Fire Department

The Honolulu Fire Department provided three references related to fire, life, and safety issues for guidance in developing the alternatives. The three references provided are:

“Road and Hydrants for Private Developments,”

A Letter from Attilio K. Leonardi, Fire Chief, Fire Department of the City and County of Honolulu. “Subject: Traffic Calming Program and Roadway Beautification Projects,” and

“NFPA 130, Standard for Fixed Guideway Transit and Passenger Rail Systems, 2003 Edition.”

The project team will review and consider the guidance documents during the alternatives analysis and project development process.

Downtown Neighborhood Board Number 13

Downtown Neighborhood Board No. 13 requested consulted party status on the EISPN.

The Downtown Neighborhood Board will be assigned consulted party status.

Hawaiian Electric Company

Hawaiian Electric Company, Inc. (HECO) provided a letter stating that HECO may have planned or existing public utility facilities along proposed alignments for the fixed-guideway alternatives. If relocation is necessary, Public Utilities Commission approval may be required and HECO will seek reimbursement for relocation costs.

The project team will coordinate with HECO during project development. It is likely that utility relocations would be required under all of the alternatives being studied except the No-Build Alternative.

United States Army Corps of Engineers (letter dated February 13, 2006)

The Corps of Engineers identified that a Rivers and Harbors Act Section 10 permit and a Clean Water Act Section 404 individual permit may be required for the project and provided guidance on further interagency coordination. .

These issues will be addressed in the Alternatives Analysis and draft EIS.

Consulted Party Status under HRS Chapter 343

Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 343 and the implementing regulations contained in Title 11, Chapter 200 of the Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR) require that agencies, citizen groups, and concerned individuals be consulted for input. Interested parties may request consulted party status, to receive ongoing project information and coordination. Several agencies and entities requested consulted party status under Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 343. The parties requesting and being granted consulted party status are shown in Table 4-2.

Table 4-2. Parties with Consulted Party Status

Party
Downtown Neighborhood Board Number 13
The Outdoor Circle

Summary of Public Comments

During the scoping and EISPN comment period, 528 comment submissions were received via mail, website, telephone, and the scoping meetings. Correspondence requesting to be placed on the mailing list is not included in this report. Comments that focus on a preference for a particular alternative are included in the appendices to this report, but are neither summarized nor considered, as the technical information required to select an alternative has not yet been developed. Likewise, comments on taxation do not relate to the technical analysis nor to the comparison of transit alternatives and are neither summarized nor considered in this report, but have been included in the appendices.

Comments that relate to process, presentation materials, and website design have been included in the appendices, as well as reviewed and considered, but are not summarized or responded to in this report. Comments regarding transportation issues not related to planning and development of a high-capacity transit system, such as comments on existing traffic signal or bus operations, were forwarded to the appropriate agency, but are not summarized or responded to in this report.

The majority of comments received related to a preference for one of the alternatives or a proposed modification to one of the alternatives. Several questions were asked about cost, schedule, and project phasing. Cost, schedule and project phasing information will be developed during the Alternatives Analysis process and will be provided when it becomes available.

Substantive Comments on Purpose and Need, Alternatives, and Scope of Analysis

Comments Related to Purpose and Need

Several comments suggested that the study corridor should be expanded beyond the current study corridor (extending from Kapolei to the University of Hawaii at Manoa). Areas proposed to be included within the study corridor were:

- Waianae Coast
- Central Oahu
- The Primary Urban Core Koko Head of Kapahulu Avenue, including Kaimuki and part of Kahala
- East Oahu, including Hawaii Kai and part of Kahala, and
- The entire island.

The study corridor was developed after evaluating long-range population and employment projections for Oahu and considering available funding. By 2030, 69 percent of the population and approximately 80 percent of the employment on the Island of Oahu is projected to be located within the study-area corridor. The study corridor was selected to provide the greatest transportation benefit for the funds that are anticipated to be available; however, improvements will not be limited to the corridor. Island-wide improvements to the bus system will be proposed to better utilize the features of each alternative, whether TSM, managed lanes, or a fixed-guideway transit system. Future expansion of the system would be possible if other funding sources are identified.

Additional comments suggested that the purpose of the project should be expanded to address traffic congestion.

A transit system is only a portion of the entire transportation system. While the transit system will reduce the number of drivers on congested roadways within the corridor, the corridor is expected to continue experiencing growth in travel demand. The transportation corridor between Kapolei and the University of Hawaii at Manoa will continue to experience substantial traffic congestion; however, congestion in the corridor is expected to decrease somewhat after the system opens, and grow at a reduced rate after that time because of automobile trips diverted to transit. The purpose of the project has been modified to reflect that a high-capacity transit system would reduce congestion compared to the No-Build Alternative, but can not be expected to reduce congestion to the extent that automobile traffic would flow freely in the corridor at all times.

Comments were received that the purpose and need statement should be expanded to address mobility for commercial goods and services and for private automobiles.

The Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project is evaluating one aspect of island-wide transportation needs in coordination with the Oahu MPO, which is responsible for integrated transportation planning. The Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project analysis is meant to evaluate project alternatives that may be constructed within the authorization of Act 247, enacted by the Hawaii state legislature in 2005. The act prohibits the construction of a non-transit project with the authorized excise-tax surcharge. Projects with the purpose of providing roadway mobility for automobiles and commercial vehicles are outside of the authorization of Act 247; therefore, they will not be added to the purpose of the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project. Any projects relating to commercial or private automobile mobility included in the Oahu 2030 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (when it is adopted by the Oahu MPO) will be included in all alternatives evaluated in the Alternatives Analysis process.

Other comments on purpose and need stated that the project had to consider both existing development and future planned development.

As described above, the study corridor was defined to include the densest portions of Oahu. Consistency with local long-range plans, which include consideration of both existing land-use and future planned development, is integral with the need for the project.

Comments Related to Alternatives

The majority of substantive public comments related specifically to the proposed alternatives. Several comments suggested alternatives such as additional freeway lanes, conversion of existing arterial lanes to contra-flow, construction of bike lanes in place of transit, construction of a roadway for automatically guided automobiles, and construction of new freeways.

These alternatives are outside the project's purpose of providing a high-capacity transit system and are not being considered in the Alternatives Analysis process.

Several other comments suggested policy changes related to requiring driver education, limiting car ownership, changing development patterns through tax incentives, restricting parking, mandating carpools, and limiting the number of people who may move to Oahu.

Some of these proposals could be considered social policies, which are not generally within the jurisdiction of the City and County of Honolulu, and other policies mentioned are outside the purpose of providing a high-capacity transit system.

Several comments suggested either near-term or long-term improvements to the existing bus and paratransit system.

Recommendations for near-term improvements have been passed on to TheBus staff, while suggestions for longer-term improvements are being considered while defining the TSM Alternative.

No alternative alignments were proposed related to Alternative 3 except for general comments that the system should be more widespread and applied to existing freeway lanes. Comments were received that elevated bus-only lanes should be constructed, instead of a shared HOV and HOT lane configuration.

The number of buses anticipated to be required is less than the available capacity of the facility, therefore, high-occupancy (HOV) or toll-paying (HOT) vehicles could be allowed to use the excess capacity available under Alternative 3 without degrading bus travel times.

Other comments suggested that Alternative 3 should be evaluated as a reversible two-lane system rather than providing one lane in each direction of travel. One comment

suggested evaluation of a bus rapid transit system (such as being evaluated in Alternative 3) but using tour buses.

Alternative 3 will be evaluated both as a two-way and as a two-lane one-way reversible system. The use of tour buses would be an alternative technology but not substantially different from the types of buses being considered for Alternatives 2 and 3; therefore, it will not be evaluated separately.

Commenters also recommended the evaluation of fixed-guideway alignments along several routes. The following fixed-guideway routes were identified:

- Abandoned OR&L rail line
- North-South Road
- H-1 Freeway
- Farrington Highway
- Fort Weaver Road
- Kamehameha Highway
- Aolele Street
- Salt Lake Boulevard
- Pearl Harbor Crossing
- Middle Street
- Nimitz Highway
- Dillingham Boulevard
- North King Street
- Queen Street
- South King Street
- Kona Street
- Kapiolani Boulevard
- Kalakaua Avenue
- Ala Moana Boulevard between downtown and Ala Moana Center
- Kuhio Avenue
- Ala Wai Canal

Many of these proposed alignments are included in one or more of the Fixed Guideway Alternatives that were presented during the scoping process. Others were previously evaluated and rejected because they demonstrated less ridership potential, higher cost, or more difficult environmental and social issues than the selected alternatives. The only alignment that was not included in one or more of the alternatives not previously reviewed and eliminated was Ala Moana Boulevard between downtown and Ala Moana Center. It was reviewed prior to publication of the final screening report and eliminated based on the same criteria used to evaluate the other alignments.

As discussed above, suggestions for routes outside of the study corridor may be considered for a future project, but are not being considered for the current project.

Several comments and questions were asked regarding the configuration of the alternatives, and if sections proposed as part of one could be combined with sections of another alternative.

Combining sections of one alternative with another is possible – the alternatives are all being reviewed and different ways to combine the various alignments are being considered as part of the Alternatives Analysis.

Several comments pertained to profiles, specifically inquiring about the elevated, at-grade, and underground alignments for the alternatives.

All three profiles are being considered for various alignments where they are feasible and practical. The profile of the various alignments will be evaluated in further detail in the Alternatives Analysis. Issues such as groundwater, soil conditions, safety and operation of at-grade crossings, and emergency egress from elevated systems will be considered during the evaluation of each of the possible transit technologies (light rail, rapid rail, monorail, people mover, and magnetic levitation).

The following suggestions for station locations along the Fixed Guideway Alternative were included in the comments:

- Aloha Stadium
- Pearlridge
- Waialeke Shops
- Ala Moana Center
- Airport
- Kapolei
- University of Hawaii at Manoa
- Waikiki
- Kakaako
- Downtown
- University of Hawaii West Oahu future campus
- Ewa
- Leeward Community College
- Intersection of Salt Lake Boulevard with Arizona Road
- Waipahu
- Kalihi
- Aiea
- Aloha Tower
- HECO Downtown Power Plant (convert site to a station)
- Pearl Harbor/Hickam

- USS Arizona Memorial
- Hawaii Convention Center
- Ala Wai Golf Course

Each location suggested will be reviewed as the station locations are determined for each of the fixed-guideway alignments. The station locations being evaluated in the Alternatives Analysis will be presented in the *Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project Alternatives Analysis Definition of Alternatives Report*.

Several comments were made regarding fixed-guideway technologies; in particular a request was made to reconsider personal rapid transit (PRT).

PRT was previously eliminated because it has limited speed and ridership capacity. It will not be included in the Alternatives Analysis. Fixed-guideway technologies that will be evaluated in the Alternatives Analysis include: light rail, rapid rail, people mover monorail, and magnetic levitation.

Speed and noise were two issues identified related to technology alternatives.

Speed and noise issues will be considered in the evaluation of the alternatives. Vehicle operating speeds will be presented in the definition of alternatives section, while differences in noise generated by the various technologies will be presented in the noise section of the Environmental Effects chapter of the Alternatives Analysis.

Several comments related to the operation of a specific alternative and how it would connect and interface with other modes of transportation. Park-and-ride lots, bus feeder service, and bicycle amenities were all identified as important to consider during the alternative development process. Other operational comments related to the transit fare system, hours and frequency of service, integration with TheBus, whether or not there should be operators on the vehicles, consideration of long-term maintenance, transit oriented development around stations, and amenities at stations for senior and disabled riders.

The project team will consider these issues as the alternatives are refined for analysis during the AA process.

Comments Related to Scope of Analysis

A wide range of issues were identified for consideration in the analysis. No comments were received identifying previously unknown resources or hazards located along the proposed alignments of any of the alternatives.

Aesthetics and views were widely mentioned. Other concerns were raised about construction impacts, noise impacts, displacements, economic impacts, community connectivity, energy consumption and conservation options, emergency services and

public safety, service to elderly and disadvantaged populations, natural hazards, and impacts to parks and recreational facilities. Questions were also raised about compatible land use development, and any ordinances or regulations requiring changes or modifications to accommodate the implementation of a high-capacity transit project. Interface with pedestrian and bicycle facilities was also identified as a topic of interest.

The identified topics of concern will all be evaluated in the Alternatives Analysis. The evaluation of each alternative for the range of environmental topics identified will be presented in individual sections within an Environmental Effects chapter in the Alternatives Analysis. For example, differences between noise impacts that would occur as a result of the Managed Lanes Alternative or the Fixed Guideway Alternative will be presented in the Noise Section of the Environmental Effects chapter. Where needed, additional analysis will be provided in the draft EIS for the Locally Preferred Alternative.

One question was raised about whether the project would institute mitigation measures beyond those required by legal environmental regulations.

The project intends to minimize negative environmental effects where practical, but does not intend to undertake environmental improvement activities that are not related to the implementation of the proposed project.

The goals of the scoping process were to establish the purpose of and the needs for the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project, identify the alternatives that should be evaluated for the project, and determine the scope of the analysis that will be conducted to support the Alternatives Analysis and draft EIS.

A preliminary purpose and need, list of alternatives, and list of topics to be evaluated were presented to the public and other interested parties. The comments received from members of the public and consulted agencies resulted in several changes to the proposed purpose and need and alternatives being evaluated. A statement was added to the discussion of the purpose of the project that the project, in conjunction with other Oahu Regional Transportation Plan improvements, would moderate anticipated traffic congestion in the corridor. A second option was added to the Managed Lanes Alternative that would include operating the managed lanes as a two-lane reversible facility.

Several elements of the Fixed Guideway Alternative were reviewed. An alignment along Ala Moana Boulevard was evaluated and eliminated because it would be longer, further from the downtown core, and have greater potential visual impacts than other alignments evaluated. The presentation of the Fixed Guideway Alternative was changed to allow for a simpler combination of various alignment options in different portions of the study corridor. Also, an elevated alignment along Halekauwila Street was added to the range of alternatives being considered in the Alternatives Analysis because Halekauwila Street is wider than Queen Street in many areas and the alignment would draw similar numbers of riders as the Queen Street Alignment that is under consideration.

Comments on station locations for the Fixed Guideway Alternative were reviewed. A set of proposed station locations for each alignment was developed considering the input and several other criteria, such as available space, local land use, and spacing between stations.

The final alternatives selected for evaluation in the Alternatives Analysis, including station locations, are documented in the *Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project Alternatives Analysis Definition of Alternatives Report*.

Comments received on the scope of the environmental analysis included concerns about such topics as: noise, environmental justice, visual impacts, wetlands, natural hazards, energy, and displacements. The Alternatives Analysis and draft EIS will evaluate the effects of each alternative under consideration at the time that the document is being prepared on each of the elements of the environment discussed in Chapter 5 of this report. The analysis will follow applicable U.S. Department of Transportation guidelines. Appropriate mitigation measures will be noted in the Alternatives Analysis and evaluated during preparation of the draft EIS.

