



**CITY COUNCIL**  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
 October 24, 2008

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 Oct 24 3 28 PM '08

***Changes to Rail Transit Must be in OahuMPO Plan for Federal Funds***

Any major changes to the City's planned fixed guideway system must be reflected in the OahuMPO regional transportation plan in order to ensure continued federal funding, according to Gordon Lum, executive director of the Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization (OahuMPO), which coordinates federal transportation funding for Oahu. Lum briefed members of the Council Transportation & Public Works Committee yesterday on the process that transportation projects must meet to qualify for federal funds.

Lum underscored several key points about the Oahu Regional Transportation Plan (ORTP):

**Federally Required and Fiscally Balanced**

"ORTP 2030 is a fiscally balanced plan required by a number of state and federal mandates and requirements, which include the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users ("SAFETELU"). These requirements, mandated by the U.S. Department of Transportation, verifies the eligibility of metropolitan areas for federal funds earmarked for surface transportation systems through the year 2030, and as such, projected costs must be balanced against anticipated revenues," Lum said.

**Fixed Guideway is a Key Component**

He said, "A major component of the ORTP 2030 is a fixed guideway between East Kapolei and Ala Moana. Also included in the plan are projects to increase the capacity of H-1 itself with new interchanges, additional High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes, freeway widenings, and operational improvements at key locations."

(more)

**Changes to the Locally Preferred Alternative Must Go Through a Defined and Elaborate Process**

"An elevated reversible HOV viaduct, similar to what was proposed last week, is not on the ORTP 2030. The project approved by the Council and the Policy Committee of OahuMPO in April 2006 and May 2007 is for a 20-mile fixed guideway from East Kapolei to Ala Moana. In order to be eligible for federal funding, new proposals must be accurate and consistent with the ORTP 2030 (or its future update). The next update scheduled for the ORTP is anticipated to be approved by April 2011," Lum said.

**Back to Square One**

City Department of Transportation Services Director Wayne Yoshioka said under questioning that, "If the City decides to pursue another New Starts project other than what the City Council has already approved (fixed guideway Locally Preferred Alternative/Minimum Operable Segment), it would need to restart the Alternatives Analysis which would need to show specific project, mobility and cost justifications, as well as confirm a permanent source of funding. Only after those steps are taken would OahuMPO need to take action which will require time."

Lum said that to allow a different New Starts project to be eligible for preliminary engineering federal funding, it must first be adopted as part of the ORTP by the OahuMPO Policy Committee, and would require:

- additional technical analyses to document its impact to the ORTP; and
- additional time to allow for public review and comment.

"These steps were required when the fixed guideway LPA/MOS was adopted as part of the ORTP 2030," Lum said.

Committee Chair Nestor Garcia said he appreciated the opportunity for committee members to hear from the person in charge of coordinating federal transportation funding on Oahu. "It is now apparent that any real chance of federal funding of alternate ideas not on the ORTP 2030, is zero," he said.

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