



The League Of Women Voters Of Honolulu ALOHA VOTER

A Non-Partisan Organization To Encourage Informed Citizen Participation In Government And Politics

Visit us at : www.lwv-hawaii.com
Reach us at voters@lwv-hawaii.com

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Phone 808 531-7448

Architect Attends "Workshop"

Architect Peter Vincent wrote:

I attended the Waipahu Station workshop last evening. It was a charade, albeit a well orchestrated one. The City and their consultants presented the system, offered a brief reason why the system must be elevated, then broke into smaller groups, each with an artist and facilitator. There was NO opportunity or allowance for general questions or comments.

Once in small groups of 20-30 people, the facilitator asked people to comment on what they would like to see for specific elements of the elevated station - walls, roof, etc. Comments from folks in my group included: not too much concrete, tropical, concern for maintenance and traffic, concern for security and accessibility, graffiti.

The irony is that people are getting exactly what they don't want, but are being led to believe that their comments are being incorporated into the design of the project. I stated that I'd like to see the station at grade and the facilitator and Parsons Brinkerhoff-hired architect/artist looked at me like a deer in the headlights then moved on.

I drove the route before the workshop to better understand what's being proposed in that community

City Goes It Alone to Fund Rail

With no assurance of federal funds, the Honolulu City Council has appropriated \$1.1 billion to start the rail transit system. The money will come from bonds issued by the city.

City Councilman Charles Djou and the late Duke Bainum have pushed for a budget proviso mandating that ground cannot be broken before the Federal Transit Administration issues a Record of Decision. The Mayor and the head of Transportation Services have promised that they will do nothing before that Record is issued, but have objected vigorously to putting that promise into the budget.

Honolulu's rail system does not appear on the FTA's list of transit projects for 2009 or 2010.

Pearl Johnson

and to see firsthand. I am clear that the elevated line will cut Waipahu town into two and have a negative impact on the adjacent retail.

Unfortunately, these workshops do NOT present a chance for our voice to be heard. I am convinced that the City/PB/Infraconsult carefully planned the workshop to essentially eliminate someone like me making comments that could be heard by peo-

Honolulu League Joins New Coalition

Honolulu League has joined a newly-formed coalition, the Oahu Coalition for Affordable & Flexible Transit, to push for a better alternative to the Mayor's heavy (not light) rail transit system. We joined the coalition because, as Pearl Johnson said in its June 10 press release, "While the LWW-Honolulu has opposed the entire all-elevated rail plan from its inception, we understand that it could now happen. If it does, the League wants to ensure that the voters and residents of Honolulu County will get the most technologically advanced, affordable, flexible, convenient, accessible, and safest mass transit system within the limited means of Oahu's small tax base."

An AIA member of the Honolulu Chapter of the American Institute of Architects explains the coalition's alternative flexible light rail system: "The new light rail technology with low floor cars, using wireless intermittent "safe" third rail power is the most affordable modern light rail technology out there for Honolulu. It can meet our needs of running at-grade, elevated and, in historic districts and the urban Honolulu core, without overhead power wires where it runs on buried wireless-intermittent power under the cars.

See Coalition on page 3

Welcome New Member

Susan M. Chandler

Mahalo Contributors

Pamela Lichty
Ann Marie Duca
Piilani Kaopuiki

League News

We received a cash donation from the Neighborhood Board Commission for helping with its recent election. Our thanks go to volunteers Jean Aoki, Dorothy Cornell, Bob Crone, Yvonne Kearns, Robin Loomis, JoAnn Maruoka, Dot & Phil Morrison and Carol Whitesell, as well as to Piilani Kaopuiki who served as chief liaison officer.

With the departure of Jackie Parnell, Pat Otake has stepped up to chair the Affordable Housing committee. Call Pat at 923-0992 to join the committee.

Suzanne Meisenzahl, chair of the Women's Health and safety committee, will not be able to represent League at the July 29 meeting of the Oahu Domestic Violence Task Force. Call Suzanne at 735-5998 if you can fill in.

Save Saturday, December 5 for our annual planning meeting at the Hale Koa hotel.

Honolulu League needs a representative at the Citizens Advisory Committee of the Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization now that Jackie Parnell has left. Call the office at 531-7448 to volunteer.

Did You Know?

The Royal Hawaiian Band costs Honolulu taxpayers over \$2 million per year, according to Bob Jones in June 17 Midweek.

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"It was developed by Alstoms, is called Alstom's APS and has been used in Bordeaux, France for over 5 years. It is my understanding that Alstoms has contracts to install APS in Angers, Orleans, Reims, and Dubai.

"Bombardier has developed a similar light rail technology and it is currently being tested in Germany. It is also made by Spain CAF, and I heard that Siemens is making this new technology also. It is expected that soon, the two Japanese manufacturers will be making this new wireless light rail technology.

"This newer light rail technology is the most flexible and most affordable rail transit technology out there presently and is capable of speeds from 30 to 60 miles per hour. AIA Honolulu has a video of this on our transit website, and this video has been shown to the City Council members and others in the community. It shows the system running in the downtown historic district of Bordeaux, France, and has been in service since December 2003.

"The Bombardier Vancouver SkyTrain elevated-automated metro rail system is 23 years old, and was first used in Vancouver as part of the Vancouver Expo in 1986. This uses the system planned for Honolulu, a "hot" third rail power which cannot be safely brought back to grade, due to the electrocution problem of people and animals contacting the electrified third rail. It was heavily subsidized and paid for by the Canadian government and the Province, not the citizens of Vancouver City. When Bombardier

developed this new automated technology years ago, they thought that they would sell a lot of their new (at that time) system, but they did not have many City/takers, as it was too expensive and all elevated. Many of the older and larger US cities have taken down their old elevated rail tracks due to the noise, homeless, drug, graffiti and blight problems, e.g. Boston and New York.

"The Miami Metrorail is the only all elevated rail system in the US, built in the mid-1980's. It also uses a similar elevated rail system as Vancouver, and has been plagued with low ridership and high maintenance and operating costs. Their elevated concrete guideways and stations need constant repair and maintenance, and the train cars are deteriorating in the Miami sun and salt air. It sometimes is called the Miami rail folly.

"The vast majority of the US cities have gone to true light rail technology with low floor cars. Recent new light rail systems have been used in Portland, Sacramento, Salt Lake City, Denver, Charlotte, Houston, Phoenix, and Seattle. These are all at-grade with only short portions going elevated where needed."

The coalition currently includes:
Hawai'i Advocates For Consumer Rights
Hawai'i Independent Democrats
Hawaii's 1000 Friends
The League of Women Voters of Honolulu
Mr. Randy Ching
Mr. Geoffrey Paterson, AIA Emeritus

Pearl Johnson