



**Position Statement of the  
American Planning Association Hawai'i Chapter  
on Rail Transit**

**September 21, 2008**

*hawai'i chapter*

*of the*

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The American Planning Association (APA) is committed to planning excellence. APA and its affiliate, the American Institute of Certified Planners, advance the art and science of planning from a multidisciplinary perspective. APA's national organization of 43,000 members and its Hawaii chapter of over 300 members are committed to "making great communities happen."

***Making great communities happen.*** People make great communities happen. Great communities have transportation systems that provide mobility, access, and economic opportunity. Because of their impact on the built, natural, and human environments, transportation systems must be sustainable and facilitate compact urban form. Well designed transit protects the environment, efficiently allocates resources, and creates a sound balance of housing and employment centers in a community. With transit as an organizing element, affordable, livable communities near stations can become reality.

***Rail transit is a necessary component for O'ahu to have a multi-modal transportation system that supports the making of great communities.*** Transit improves mobility for all. Rail transit offers more rapid mobility and more choices as to where people live, work, and play. Sustaining a second urban center at Kapolei requires easy mobility between the 'Ewa region and the core of Honolulu. The major highway spine has been completed. Rail transit is the next essential spine to rationally organize future development decisions and assure connectivity between housing, public facilities, and commercial and industrial land uses.

***Building rail transit is fiscally responsible.*** All forms of transportation require subsidy. Cost per passenger is lower for rail than bus. With rail, capacity can be expanded by adding trains and shortening headways to match demand without affecting surface road capacity. Rail has less negative impact on the environment than automobiles. The GET tax surcharge, a sound local source, will cover a large portion of the capital costs of the project. With the local source in place, and with completion of the environmental review, our civic leaders can responsibly request federal government assistance.

***The APA Hawai'i Chapter has stayed informed and involved in the transit planning process.*** Over the past two years, the Hawai'i Chapter has actively participated in the mass transit debate, submitting testimony to the City Council and its committees. The Chapter's Transit Committee prepared an issue paper on transit and transit oriented development. Our members may not unanimously support all aspect of the project, and we have spoken up to identify ways to improve the project. However, this diversity of opinion does not detract from our strong stand that rail transit is important for the island's future.

**The APA Hawai'i Chapter strongly supports rail transit and urges a "YES" vote on the referendum to move forward with a steel wheel rail system.**

*founded in 1962, the  
hawai'i chapter has over  
300 members, including  
planning officials, public  
and private sector planners,  
and community advocates,  
on the major islands  
across the state*

***e mālama pono i ka 'āina;  
nānā mai ke ola***  
*take good care of the land;  
it grants you life*