



AIA HONOLULU STATEMENT ON TRANSIT

The American Institute of Architects supports funding, planning, design and implementation to integrate all transportation modes – including mass transit, pedestrian walkways, bicycle paths and water transit – so that each region and neighborhood will be served by the most effective and efficient combination of modes to meet its own needs.

AIA encourages the use of social, environment and aesthetic criteria – as well as economic efficiency – in the design of routes and supporting facilities for all transit modes. Transportation system routes and facilities should support land use objectives – including urban growth management and efficient transit mode linkages – and respect significant human, cultural and natural environments.

AIA Honolulu (the Honolulu chapter of The American Institute of Architects) strongly supports the concept and implementation of a fixed guideway transit system as an integral part of the future plans to meet the needs our growing island communities.

At the same time, there are serious concerns about urban design issues and visual impacts on the surrounding neighborhoods. Our greatest concerns with the City's current plan are the elevated rail along Nimitz Highway through the Downtown core and historic Chinatown that will isolate the city from Honolulu's extraordinary waterfront, as well as elevated spurs to the University of Hawaii at Manoa and Waikiki.

AIA Honolulu strongly believes that we must implement a plan that protects the mauka-makai view corridors that are outlined by the City & County of Honolulu in its own Primary Urban Center Development Plan and Land Use Ordinance.

We believe that the ultimate solution is not just about the best engineering solution, but that priority needs to be placed on the planning and design of the overall transit system to sensitively serve the needs of the residents of Oahu and its visitors, while protecting the beauty of the unique environment in which we live, work and play. Moreover, we believe that good design, combined with comprehensive urban planning, is a critical investment in our future and that of our children. By degrading our island's visual environment with an overhead system through our Downtown and historic core, we would significantly decrease Honolulu's visual appeal as a place to live. In addition, as a resort destination, an elevated rail system through the Downtown corridor and into Waikiki could negatively impact our visitor appeal for the next century.

AIA Honolulu has enjoyed greater dialogue with the City on transit issues in recent months and hopes to assume an even greater role in collaborating with the Mayor, his administration, its consultants and the Honolulu City Council to insure critical design issues are addressed as this historic project moves forward.

At this juncture, we look forward to continuing to work with the City to examine alternatives to the elevated rail through the Downtown corridor along Nimitz Highway. In particular, AIA Honolulu asks that the City consider an at-grade (street-level) or below-grade (underground) fixed guideway system, or that the alignment through Downtown be shifted so that mauka-makai view corridors are preserved for future generations.

Approved by AIA Honolulu Board of Directors on 10/24/2008