

honolulutraffic.com

March 31, 2006.

Mr. Gordon G. W. Lum
Executive Director
Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization
707 Richards Street, Suite 200
Honolulu Hawaii 96813

Dear Mr. Lum:

Comments on the Draft 2030 Oahu Regional Transportation Plan Modifications:

Among the modifications listed under “Illustrative Projects” in the Draft 2030 Oahu Regional Transportation Plan Modifications (Draft) is #120, a reversible HOT lanes project from Waiawa to the Keehi Interchange with an estimated cost of \$2.5 billion. This project is less than 10 miles long, depending on the route taken. Therefore, the cost per mile would be in excess of \$250 million.



In our own investigations, we have spoken with Braden “Brady” Smith, Chief Financial Officer of Tampa-Hillsborough Expressway Authority (813) 272-6740, who provided the financial data. The Authority is the public entity that administers the new Lee Roy Selmon Crosstown Expressway.

We also talked with Dave Whaley, of PCL Civil Constructors Inc, which is in the process of completing construction of the project and who was

able to give us more background.

We also spoke yesterday with Jose Rodriguez, of Figg Bridge Engineers, who designed the elevated portion of the highway.

Brady Smith tells us that if the recommendations of Figg Engineering had been followed, the total cost for the 5.5-mile “bridge” section — the elevated section of the expressway — would have been \$155 million exclusive of right of way costs. Longer lengths would reduce the per mile costs because the set up time for the pre-cast work would be amortized over more pourings.

However, URS Construction Services rejected the advice of Figg Engineering to send the supports deeper at a cost only \$1.8 million and that was an error that is taking close to \$100 million to fix.

URS designed the supports as though they were to sit on Georgia granite rather than the porous lime rock prevalent in the Tampa area. This error should have been caught, but sailed through with unsupervised, inexperienced engineers doing the design.

The total cost, before remedial work, is \$155 million divided by 5.5-miles, which equals \$28 million a mile. With the additional remedial work necessary to fix the support problems, it will cost \$255 million divided by 5.5 miles or \$46.4 million per mile

Bear in mind that our proposed 10-mile HOT lanes highway for Honolulu would be only two lanes whereas the Tampa expressway is three lanes.

We can only conclude from this that our estimate of \$100 million a mile is clearly overstated, even allowing for Hawaii's high costs and having more complicated exit/entrances than does the Tampa Expressway.

In addition, OMPO has made no attempt to even approximate the impact on bus ridership or the traffic congestion relief that would result from this HOT lanes project let alone a financial plan. All of these OMPO is required to estimate, however roughly, for its efforts at systems planning (see our earlier comments of March 15, 2006).

The lack of data to support OMPO's capital cost estimates for the HOT lanes project, the lack of any data on traffic congestion effects or projected bus ridership supports the conclusion in our March 15 comments:

"Had full information been supplied to the public it would have been obvious to them that a HOT lanes alternative would meet their needs better than a rail transit line. OMPO must produce a new and more accurate draft ORTP with full disclosure of the financial and environmental issues and allow the public to comment on it."

Sincerely,

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Cliff Slater
Chair

cc:

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