

I have heard some Ewa residents say that they are against the proposed rail transit system because it does not go into Ewa Beach. That is a fair statement; however, although it will not go directly into Ewa Beach or down Fort Weaver Road, the rail alignment will be along the perimeter of our district. More specifically, the area of Fort Weaver Road and Farrington Highway near Waipahu Longs will have a rail transit station. This will allow commuters from Ewa to exit Fort Weaver at Waipahu and ride the rail. I have been lobbying for a park and ride facility at this station so commuters may park their vehicles at this location or ride the bus to get there. This location will be about one block from West Loch Estates, 3 miles from Ewa by Gentry and 5 miles from older Ewa Beach.

A second rail transit station is planned for the North-South Road next to the Ray Kroc Community Center. This community center will be the largest in the state of Hawaii. This location is about 1 mile from Ewa Villages and 3-4 miles from older Ewa Beach. Commuters will be able to access this location via Kapolei Parkway and Geiger Road.

Thus, as one can see, even though the rail line will not go directly into Ewa Beach, residents will have at least 2 options from Ewa town. Feeder buses will accommodate those riding the rail, and it is being discussed that one ticket would allow a commuter to ride the bus and transfer to the rail.

In the long-term (after 2020), the rail transit line is expected to go into Kalaeloa on to Ko Olina. When this happens, a transit station could be built 1 mile west of Ocean Pointe. Ewa Beach residents would have easy access to this site, and it would be extremely beneficial for our community.

Most of the transit stations will become TODs (transit-oriented developments). They will have an assortment of facilities to cater to the rail user. These developments will be an important tool as policymakers plan for the future growth of our island. With the scarcity in land, older neighborhoods can be revitalized or rehabilitated as TODs. In new areas with vacant land, the possibilities are many.

A rail transit system will allow landowners to review their parcels of land and see how they can be incorporated into a master plan for Oahu. It is imperative that government take the lead in assisting and providing incentives for landowners and developers to create communities which will become active urban neighborhoods providing a quality lifestyle for our diverse island population.

Transit-oriented developments will have a range of establishments and services to benefit Oahu commuters and residents. Affordable housing will be a top priority near stations with high density housing allowing more homes per acre. With the proximity to the rail line, ownership of a car would not be necessary. It is likely that parking spaces per housing project would be less, lowering the cost for builders. These savings should be passed on to consumers.

Elderly housing and childcare should also be available in TODs. Healthcare offices, social services, and government offices are likely to have a presence as well. Restaurants,

cafes, and retail stores will certainly be built for rail passengers and residents alike. TODS will be communities with a wide range of amenities for rail users to conveniently access and utilize. Residents will be able to travel from one station to the next in a safe, clean, inexpensive way.

Transit-oriented developments will use smart growth development practices; less use of vehicles, more pedestrian walkways, safe bikeways, convenient connectivity for residents; useful establishments, institutions, and facilities which will improve the quality of life for residents. From shopping to housing, social services and healthcare, education and recreation, TODs along the rail transit line will be valuable as planners, developers, and government officials create communities of the future. These developments will not happen overnight, but as a transit line matures and ridership increases, new TODs surrounding rail stations will make sense practically and economically. If done properly, TODs will help to keep more land in agriculture and conservation, thus leaving more open space for all of us to enjoy.

Ewa Beach will benefit and positively develop with a rail transit system on Oahu. Land and home values near rail will increase. Future generations will thank us for providing another transportation alternative for our community. If you would like more information about the rail transit system, visit [Honolulutransit.org](http://Honolulutransit.org) or feel free to phone my office at 586-6360.