

Chee, Howard (Puni)

From: Bonnie Tokita <bonniet1970@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, August 24, 2019 9:22 AM
To: Chee, Howard (Puni)
Subject: rail rates

As a strong supporter of the rail and of public transportation in general, here are my thoughts on rail rates.

- I would like to see the bus and rail as one integrated system, meaning if you have to catch the bus to get to/from the rail line, you shouldn't have to pay an extra fare to transfer.
- I prefer a flat rate; otherwise you will be discriminating against all the people in west Oahu, who are already at a disadvantage for having to commute so far to/from work.
- I like the current set of categories (youth, adult, senior).
- I really, really like the current Holo card system, where you are capped at \$5.50 per day. I like this because I don't have to decide when I first get on the bus if I want a day pass or not. A monthly cap could work the same way. It would be cheaper for people who aren't sure if they ride the bus/rail enough to warrant a monthly pass, but revenue and ridership may go down.
- I used to buy my daughter a monthly pass even though she rode the bus just a few times a month. It was easier for her to have a pass rather than have cash for each ride. When we switched to the Holo card, that's less revenue for The Bus because she is paying for actual use only. In addition, ridership may go down if you do a monthly cap vs. monthly pass. If I paid for a monthly pass, I am more likely to use the bus/rail because it has already been paid for and I would feel like I'm wasting my money if I didn't use it.
- It never occurred to me to have free rail rides in the beginning, but now that you mention it, that's a great idea. I would say a month or two is good.
- The rates should be the same as the bus for the interim period and afterward.
- I don't think seniors should ride for free. It should be the same as the bus fare.

Thank you for soliciting public comments.

Bonnie Tokita
Pearl City, HI

To Whom It May Concern,

Hello my name is Harry Newhart. I was born and raised in Hawaii. I took The Bus to school since 2nd grade. When I was older I went to Chicago in 2002 and saw that they had a special pass for University students which we now have in Hawaii as the U-pass. In 2006 I went to London in which they have the Oyster card, which was so easy to pay with, and now we have the Holo Card. And I went to Seoul in 2013 in which they have an interconnected network of buses and trains, which made it much faster to get around then in London for the same distance.

- 1) Don't make it harder to use Public Transportation. Don't treat the train different then the Bus. Make using public transportation as easy as possible, 1 fare for use of a the whole system for at least a 1 way trip
- 2) Don't make it harder to use Public Transportation by getting rid of monthly and annual passes. Knowing you won't be charged more helps to just tap and get on versus trying to figure out if this is going to cost me. (if you guys know that the system is being abused, then on the other hand just charging a fee each time you ride sounds good, but less and less people nowadays have a 9-5 job, what if they need to make multiple trips in a day in the new gig economy?).
- 3) Don't make it harder to use Public Transportation. If you cap the rides on the Holo card then what is the point in having it, it's less convenient and more restrictive.
- 4) I guess you could make the rail free for a bit to get people to use it. But maybe not treat it different then the Bus too long, want to see how the system will do without the free incentive. You might create unintended confusion.
- 5) This might be separate and irrelevant, but I noticed in Seoul that there was a base rate, plus an added fee for the distance you covered. How they figured out how far you traveled, was that you had tap in to get on a train or bus, then you had to tap out when you got off. And if you didn't you had to waste the time and find an attendant who would validate the card so you could ride again. While I am against this distance charging method because it makes it harder to ride the Bus or the Train, I think having the tap on and tap off system would be a huge benefit to route planners.
- 6) You should keep all the special fares intact on the Holo card. Unless I am missing something, isn't easier now with the electronic system to this, then with the old pen paper system?
- 7) If you do have to make a rate increase in the near future, better to do it now. A quarter does add up over time, but there are many people who are kind of annoyed trying to find quarters at \$2.75 If you aren't going to waste the money on frivolous things, but to keep up driver benefits, upkeep the buses, make the bus service more robust, why wait?

Thank you for reading my testimony. I know you have the best interests of our city in your hearts, and whatever your recommendations will be for the good of all of us.

Best Regards,



Harry Newhart

Chee, Howard (Puni)

From: Audrey Lum <audreylum108@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2019 4:01 PM
To: Chee, Howard (Puni)
Subject: Rail Fares

Hello Honolulu Rate Commission,

In deciding the rail fares, please provide several options that riders can choose from. Bus only and a bus and rail combined fare. For bus riders who live and work in the Honolulu area and rarely go to the West side there should be a bus only fare option.

Mahalo
Audrey

Chee, Howard (Puni)

From: Audrey Lum <audreylum108@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, September 6, 2019 2:04 PM
To: Chee, Howard (Puni)
Subject: Additional comments for Rates

Hello Howard

I realize that my earlier email was too brief.

Please pass on my additional comments.

As the commission determines the rates for bus and rail please keep the rates economical for riders to encourage ridership. With that in mind please continue with the discounted monthly and annual passes. The rides on the holocard should not be capped. The categories for the rates should be as follows: combo bus and rail monthly rate, bus only monthly rate, daily bus and rail combo rate, bus daily rate, daily rail rate (as an added rate to passengers who already have the bus only pass). No charges for transfers. Rates should be flat rate and not distance based.

Will the commission post for the public their proposal on the different rate categories and rates before it is finalized? If so would you please let me know where it can be found.

Mahalo
Audrey

On Wed, Sep 4, 2019, 3:37 PM Chee, Howard (Puni) <hchee@honolulu.gov> wrote:

Aloha Ms. Lum!

Thank you for taking the time to share your comments with the Rate Commission. I will forward your response to Chair Soon to assist in the Rate Commission's deliberations and decision making process.

Mahalo!

Puni

From: Audrey Lum [mailto:audreylum108@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2019 4:01 PM

To: Chee, Howard (Puni) <hchee@honolulu.gov>
Subject: Rail Fares

Hello Honolulu Rate Commission,

In deciding the rail fares, please provide several options that riders can choose from. Bus only and a bus and rail combined fare. For bus riders who live and work in the Honolulu area and rarely go to the West side there should be a bus only fare option.

Mahalo

Audrey

Chee, Howard (Puni)

From: kobayashiw@aol.com
Sent: Saturday, September 7, 2019 1:43 PM
To: Chee, Howard (Puni)
Subject: Honolulu Rate Commission

Suggestion for rail opening. I used to live in Kailua and am now in downtown Honolulu. Although I don't think I would be able to use the rail, I still support it. For us elderly seniors, we've contributed financially over the years, but may never get to ride it.

To attract ridership, I suggest a reduced fare, like 50% off for a few months or so, or maybe free for a shorter period. And for us seniors, how about free rides for a year. 

Wayne Kobayashi
ph. 550-3155

Chee, Howard (Puni)

From: Patricia Shields <starshiplass@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 8, 2019 1:24 PM
To: Chee, Howard (Puni)
Subject: Testimony Questioning the Logic of Proposed Transit Fares

Aloha Mr Chee and Committee:

I am a resident of O'ahu - Waikiki specifically. I have taking the bus most of my life, not only in Honolulu, but in cities where the transit system is substantially bigger and more complex than it is here.

In Vancouver, the bus system is broken down into zones because the areas covered by transit is so large and connected by bridges because Vancouver itself is an island. The rates are logically different for each zone. O'ahu is an island and The Bus only serves this Island, so there is no logical reason to split the island into zones so you can charge more and ultimately, help fund rail, right? I did see something on the internet that showed this proposed fare structure based on breaking the island of Oahu into zones.

I have been following the various proposed rate increases for adults, students, handicapped and seniors (Bill 77). The first set of rates laid the heaviest burden on seniors - almost quadrupling the cost of a yearly pass, compared to adult and student passes. The next round of changes cut down the yearly cost substantially, but as per Bill 77 the yearly cost of a Senior Pass jumps from \$35.00 to \$120.00! Adults and Youth fares increase as well but when those passes are purchased, they are done so per month, so the sting of the increase doesn't hit as hard as for seniors, who don't all have the luxury of having pay raises or employers who cover the cost of their passes.

Please, please consider not implementing rate increases - especially since it's obvious that the whole point is to help fund the overpriced rail project. The cost of housing and living here in Hawaii is already a huge financial burden for us all, but forcing us to help fund rail is just not right.

Mahalo.

Patricia Shields
Waikiki resident

Chee, Howard (Puni)

From: Leslie Hokyo <leshokyo@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 10, 2019 8:43 AM
To: Chee, Howard (Puni)
Subject: Comments for the Rate Commission

Thank you for letting the public to weigh in on this topic.

As part of the process to determine a rate structure, there should be a serious look at the subsidized pass (currently the blue bus pass). A large percentage of bus riders have the blue bus pass. My recommendation is that there should be a time limit:

- A lifetime limit, e.g. three total years, or
- A set limit for each issuance, e.g. six months.

Hawaii has such a generous welfare system, that many are able to live here without having to work. There needs to be sufficient noose tightening to light a fire under people's feet.

Secondly, seniors are not paying their fare share (I am a senior, who currently enjoys the \$35 annual bus pass). There should be a ratio, e.g. if the mean senior annual income is 30% of the mean non-senior annual income, then the senior pass should be 30% of the price of a regular pass. This would be a lot fairer for the majority of bus riders.

By implementing the above two items, the final rate structure would not only be lower, but fairer.

Leslie Hokyo
Honolulu

Chee, Howard (Puni)

From: Joey Katzen <jkatzen@pobox.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 10, 2019 3:33 PM
To: Chee, Howard (Puni)
Subject: Comments on rail fares

Aloha,

I saw that I could submit comments to you re: proposed rail fares.

Things I generally would like to see: a flat-fare model at same price as bus, no bus transfer fees, and a capped monthly cost (rather than requiring pre-purchased passes)

Special idea: I think it would make a lot of sense to charge passengers entering or exiting the system at the airport an additional \$0.50 or \$1.00 surcharge. This would shoulder a bit more of the cost on visitors, and the rail would still be considerably cheaper than parking. The small surcharge won't discourage anyone who otherwise would use the Airport station, but it'll bring in a lot of extra cash. Discounted/capped fares/passes could be exempt.

Thank you.

--Joey Katzen, Waikiki

Chee, Howard (Puni)

From: Jefferson, Candi N
Sent: Wednesday, September 11, 2019 1:57 PM
To: Chee, Howard (Puni)
Subject: Honolulu Rail Transit - public comments

Aloha, Howard "Puni" Chee!

Please accept the following comments for your public record:

- Should bus and rail fares be the same with no charge for transfers?

Rail fares are typically more expensive than bus fares. One method of ticket purchase (HOLO card) should consolidate both rail and bus fares, such that there is no need to purchase separate transfer tickets and no charge to transfer between bus and rail routes.

- Should there be flat rates or distance-based rates?

One day single trip or round trip fares should be distance-based rates. However, frequent transit riders should have an option to pay for an advance purchase ticket price of a daily pass, weekly pass or monthly pass at a flat rate.

- Should there be just a few categories for rates, such as Adult, Youth, and Discounted Eligible (seniors, disabled, low-income)?

The grouping categories should mirror those of TheBus riders. Similarly, while the cost for rail travel may be more expensive, the percentage discount for each group should match TheBus rider discounts for the same groups.

- Should discounted monthly and annual passes continue? Or, as an alternative, should rides on the Holo Card be "capped" and all rides beyond any cap be free?

Of course, discounted monthly passes are needed and often preferred. Monthly passes best serve the local transit rider population. Frequent daily and weekly commuters for work and business purposes need the affordable discounted monthly pass option. However, annual transit passes are not practical. If lost, a significant financial investment may not be retrievable or is nonrefundable.

There should not be any "capped" rides. Alternatively, the rider can purchase advance trips which do not expire for up to a calendar year. For example, South Florida, and specifically in the City of Miami, the Metrorail and the TriRail offer 12-trip advance purchase tickets which are distance-based, and do not expire for up to one calendar year. These 12-trip advance purchase tickets also serve the tourists visiting short-term weekly.

- Should rates at the beginning of rail be free, and if so, for how long?

That makes no sense at all. In this economy, and with the cost of the rail system, why should it open with complimentary rides? The rail system will become defunct after only a few months of operation, because there will be no revenue to pay for its operation. The City and County of Honolulu does not need to impose any additional taxes to cover rail operation costs. The users of the rail system should cover the cost of its operation.

- What is the appropriate fare for the two year interim rail period?

The fare should be permanently established upfront, and unchanged regardless of the two-year interim rail period. There will be no means to effectively monitor the cost effectiveness of the new rail system and transit ridership, unless realistic fares, ridership and operation costs are established and monitored during the first two years of operation.

There can be special promotional events where transit riders can ride the new rail system for one day or no more than one week free. This will capture those who may not have otherwise considered the rail system as a viable means of transportation.

- In the past, the city has set the goal of having fares cover about 30 percent of the cost of operations and maintenance. Should this practice continue?

Yes, this practice should continue, if it has proven effective to date.

- Should cost of riding TheBus and Handi-Van be the same for a single ride?

I'm not sure why this question is here. How does it affect the new rail system? If the Handi-Van serves the handicap transit riders (implied by the name "Handi"), then it should be discounted the same as TheBus ridership for the disabled.

- Should seniors ride for free? During all hours or just in non-commute hours?

The ridership fare for seniors on the new rail system, should mirror the ridership fares for seniors on TheBus. The rail fare should match TheBus, if seniors currently ride for free, or currently have varying fare costs for all hours or just during non-commute hours.

Mahalo,

Candi N. Jefferson

City and County of Honolulu
Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP)
650 South King Street, 7th Floor
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Phone: (808) 768-8022
Fax: (808) 768-6743
Email: candi.jefferson@honolulu.gov

Chee, Howard (Puni)

From: antyjudy2@aol.com
Sent: Friday, September 13, 2019 10:34 AM
To: Chee, Howard (Puni)
Subject: bus fares

I was unable to attend the public meeting regarding bus/rail fares, but my input is simply this: I hope you are not planning to raise bus fares to subsidize the disruptive, unwanted, unsafe, BOONDOGGLE that is the *RAIL*. Nobody is going to ride that thing, and the current bus fare system works well for the many, many actual busriders who use monthly passes. As a "senior", I wouldn't mind paying a little more for the "senior" pass. And I know many people who depend on the Handivan. Please don't let us down in favor of the *Rail*. !!!

Chee, Howard (Puni)

From: Paul Matsuo <pgmatsuo2016@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, September 14, 2019 3:47 PM
To: Chee, Howard (Puni)
Cc: Ethel Fleming; Ava Kridler
Subject: Honolulu Rate Commission

Hello Mr. Chee,

I am a retired State retiree, who is a member of the HGEA Oahu Retires Chapter. Our Chapter is composed of State and County retirees and we have 6,000+ members on Oahu. Most of our members are elderly (over 70) and have disabilities. I have been using the Bus system for the past 15 years and finding it very convenient and economical.

In setting the fare for the combined Rail/Bus system please consider discount fares for seniors. I have googled other Mass Transit Systems (Los Angeles Metro, San Francisco BART, Washington D.C. Metro, Chicago Transit Authority and Boston MBTA systems).

All these systems have discount fares for seniors generally in the 50%-65% range. They also provided monthly and yearly incentive cards or permits which are purchased at very low rates (in BART at 62% discounted rate others at a flat dollar amount).

In setting the fares for the Bus it would be least disruptive if the current fares for seniors are incorporated into the new fares. And it would be beneficial as everyone is already familiar with the existing fares system.

In dealing with the recovery of operation cost thru fares it should not be the sole purpose. Some consideration must be given to first provide incentives to make the public adopt and use the system and to increase ridership over a certain period. Once the system has

been accepted and establishes a core ridership then reconsider fares to recover operating costs.

One good example is the Los Angeles Metro, which is in the State where the automobile is the most popular means of transportation,

but that system has been very successful in getting riders to give up their cars to use the metro, in fact so popular that the system

is expanding into outlying districts.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my testimony.

Paul T. Matsuo

Chee, Howard (Puni)

From: hawaiian poi dog <alvin_okubo@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 16, 2019 8:41 PM
To: Chee, Howard (Puni)
Subject: ** SPAM ** Rate commision testimony

To Whom It May Concern,

Hi my name is Alvin Okubo I live in Mililani. I am a SSI disabled recipient who is also low income. What you make in a month is more than what I am allotted for the year so you have no idea what it is like to scrape and claw for extra funds to use on trips to supermarket. My point is how can you tax the disabled and Handivan riders to cover for poor participation. Being that I do not live near any rail line means I am being focused on to pay to support the rail when it does not come anywhere near me to use it. Beside that there is the matter of when the rail loses power and with no power you cannot bring up emergency train to unload the disabled and handicapped onto spare train. And if there is no emergency train that means walking on tracks to next station on raised railway. Is the walkway wide enough for wheelchairs and rollators or even scooters to get on platform safely. And since there is no money for the 13 power shunts to avoid a power failure the rate commission is going to make the disabled and handicapped pay for the rail. People that live from Waipio Gentry to Central Oahu to North Shore to Kaneohe and Kailua over half of the island that cannot access rail without having to pay a second or third fare to ride it going 1-way only. I would have come down in person to present this to you but I couldn't scrounge up enough to make the trip without giving up a trip to the market for food versus rate commission. Please do not raise the Handivan rate as I cannot afford paying for something I may never be able to fully use as it does not bring me anywhere close to my hometown. I wonder if it is fair by ACLU for to be charged for something that I cannot access taxation without representation. This raise is not fair to those from Gentry to Kailua as we will arrive miles from nearest connection point to continue home. DO NOT shrink categories and turn us into 1 mold fits all. I for 1 will never ride the rail as it doesn't help me to any of my doctors or important visits and I don't trust the answer given for emergency breakdowns. Only guidelines but nothing to prove it works or if it will be a failure when it is really needed. Loved the letter given to me with lot of double talk of what is planned but nothing to say it works and that it has never been tested to see if it is safe for emergency situations.

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TO: Honolulu Rate Commission

FROM: Natalie Iwasa
395-3233

DATE: September 17, 2019

RE: Bus and Rail Fares

Aloha Commissioners,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony for today's meeting.

Please **maintain separate fares for TheBus and rail**. If the same rates are used, my concern is that either the fares will need to be much higher and the people who ride TheBus only will switch to taking their cars, or the fares will be too low for rail and taxpayer subsidies will have to be increased.

My other positions are as follows:

- Free fares for rail -- I think a free pass for **one ride** during the first week of operations would be okay;
- Monthly and annual passes -- support;
- Categories and fare simplification -- please **remove the "U.S. Medicare Fare."** Anyone who is over 65 or disabled qualifies for Medicare. It is not based on income;
- **Handi-Van fares -- support increase for the annual pass.** While I understand some riders are on fixed incomes, the current fare of \$35 *for an entire year* is just half the adult fare for TheBus for one month. In addition, the Handi-Van receives a much higher taxpayer subsidy than TheBus; and
- Cash fares -- continue to support this option.

As far as I am aware, HART has not publicly discussed proposed fares, but \$7 or \$7.50 was mentioned at one of the legislative hearings in 2017. It would be nice for the public to know what the base fare was that was included as part of the planning for rail.

Chee, Howard (Puni)

From: volkswagonbug102@cs.com
Sent: Tuesday, September 17, 2019 11:15 AM
To: Chee, Howard (Puni)
Subject: Testimony

Aloha Mr. Chee,

I was a City & County employee and I've been retired since 2010 with 35 years of service. I worked at the Honolulu Police Department as a Shift Supervisor in the Communication Division-911 section. I have been driving from the age of 16 to present and hardly ever used our public transportation to get from point A to point B.

I'd like to speak on behalf of those who do use our Bus system as well as our Handi-van system especially our seniors, that in setting the fares for the Bus and Handi-van that it would be least disruptive if the current fares for seniors are incorporated into the new fares. It would be beneficial as everyone is already familiar with the existing fares system.

I'd also like to add that for those who uses our transportation system most of them are on a fixed monthly income and may not be able to pay more for their pass as they do now.

I don't think that having the (Bus pass/Handi-van/Rail) package together for one price is a good idea. Each should have their own cost and allow us to decide which one would best suit our needs, and the price should be made yearly.

Those who were behind adding Rail to the equation made a bad decision. How many of those decision makers will use the Rail everyday instead of driving or being driven from point A to point B (my answer is: NONE.) It's sad that the decision makers refuse to listen to their constituents because eventually we will have a "White Elephant" to look at and not many people in it.

Like everything else, we the consumers are the ones to carry the burden. We're the ones that get's penalized for the faults of others

I like to submit this as my testimony,

Ava P. Kridler