MISC. COMM. 486

*INFRASTRUCTURE, TRANSPORTATION & TECHNOLOGY (ITT)

BUS OPERATIONS, INCLUDING THE BUS-RAIL INTEGRATION PLAN, THEBUS ROUTE MODIFICATIONS TO COINCIDE WITH THE LAUNCH OF SKYLINE SEGMENT 2, AND THE POTENTIAL FOR FUTURE FARE ADJUSTMENTS – DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Testimony

***INFRASTRUCTURE, TRANSPORTATION & TECHNOLOGY (ITT) Meeting**

Meeting Date: Sep 24, 2025 @ 09:00 AM

Support: 1

Oppose: 3

I wish to comment: 2

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Michael Deleon	el_mariachi38@yahoo.com	96817
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Sep 21, 2025 @ 01:33 AM

Testimony:

I am Michael Deleon and I live in Chinatown; I oppose the elimination of Rte. 20 as it will disrupt the travel habits and needs of too many who live in this area; we depend on its service greatly and to have it eliminated would be disastrous for many of us.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Jared Tsuchiyama-Sando	Jaredtsuchiyama@gmail.com	96818
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	I wish to comment	Sep 21, 2025 @ 11:34 PM

Testimony:

Aloha council members,

I just wanted to testify that while I think that the some of the released route changes are ideal they for some reason lack any bus circulator for Aliamanu to get to Ahua Station. While I understand as the penultimate station in segment 2 perhaps DTS was skeptical of any ridership as Middle Street station is one stop down I would urge to remind that these changes reroute numerous routes through Ahua station while skipping Middle Street Transit center altogether. Pearlridge and Aiea received circulator routes when segment 1opened even if they were just hourly and it seems strange to not even adjust route 32 to stop at Ahua station when the HART website highlights Ahua station will provide access to outlying neighborhoods. The newly created W, A, U and rerouted 40, 42, and 51 will service Ahua- a station meant for Salt lake resident circulation yet Aliamanu and Salt Lake residents mauka of the station will have no bus access to the station. In summary keeping Aliamanu residents access to rail limited to the 1L does not improve transit access and keeps residents from accessing rapid bus lines just makai of them at a station that will be a major bus transfer hub until 2031 making it a missed opportunity. Thank you.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Ross Isokane	isokane@gmail.com	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Sep 22, 2025 @ 09:45 AM

Testimony:

I'm a member of the Downtown-Chinatown Neighborhood Board (submitting as an individual) who advocates strongly for improving/maintaining public transportation. I oppose the DTS plans to eliminate/truncate routes for TheBus in advance of Skyline Phase 2 because I believe (focusing on Downtown-Chinatown riders) it will significantly deteriorate the commuter experience.

I understand the tradeoffs that DTS must consider and the constraints in terms of rising operating costs (although such

rising costs, I believe, should be covered by appropriate increases to allocations from the general fund) and struggles in filling driver vacancies. I've heard DTS statements in the past suggesting they can't please everyone + that they can't be everywhere. Well, to clarify, I'm not expecting TheBus will please everyone or be everywhere. But given our City's transit-oriented priorities continuously promoted in the Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization, my expectation is that our City embraces and demonstrates a "Rider-First Mentality."

Specifically, the proposed change that I oppose the most is the elimination of Route 20 (that provides local service to a densely populated Beretania St and the workforce area of Iwilei) to be replaced by a new W Line (that will run along Nimitz Highway). Realize that for residents that live on (or mauka of) Beretania St, this proposed change shifting riders to board on Nimitz Highway results in an incremental 0.5 mile walk to the new bus stop. Imagine adding a half mile walk to your daily commute (especially during Hawai'i's hot summer days). And what about our kupuna? For further context/detail, feel free to check out the recently adopted Downtown-Chinatown Neighborhood Board No. 13 Resolution 2025-03 "Urging DTS to Reconsider Planned Oct Eliminations of TheBus Routes for Skyline Phase 2" that should be posted as part of submitted communications attached to this Informational Briefing on the agenda.

Although there have been news articles (for example, Hawaii News Now: https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2025/08/06/transportation-officials-clear-up-confusion-over-bus-route-changes-ahead-rail-line-openings/) with DTS statements suggesting there is 'confusion' in the public around this change, during the August 6, 2025 City Council meeting (discussing City Council Resolution 25-210), Director Roger Morton confirmed DTS proposed changes included the addition of the new W Line, which would replace the Route 20, that would provide express services from the Airport to the Ala Moana and Waikiki area. Director Morton described this as a "premier" service that would accommodate more luggage.
Realizing that TheBus is heavily subsidized by Honolulu taxes, it seems perplexing that our City Administration would eliminate the local-service Route 20 (a route heavily utilized by residents and the workforce of Honolulu such that it is regularly standing-room only) and replace it with a "premier" service that provides a straighter shot from the Airport to Waikiki. This appears to be a nice windfall to the Waikiki tourism industry at the expense/loss of local Honolulu riders.

For emphasis, I encourage the City to take a fresh look at this from the perspective of a "Rider-First Mentality"

Lastly, from a budget-agnostic perspective (because I'm a public transit advocate who believes TheBus promotes the public welfare and should be adequately funded to achieve optimal commuter experience), I'm not even sure why this needs to be an either/or situation. I've lived and used the bus system in Los Angeles and San Francisco and they both had similar bus routes that were 'Local' and 'Express' that largely ran along the same path (often back-to-back). It gave their residents choices/options to select the route that best served their needs (encouraging and promoting ridership)...isn't that the whole concept behind the goal of multimodal transportation?

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Ernest Caravalho	ecaravalho17@gmail.com	96817

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Sep 22, 2025 @ 09:54 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Luca Cuniberti	Lcuniberti8002@gmail.com	96712-9501

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	I wish to comment	Sep 23, 2025 @ 03:31 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Councilmembers,

My name is Luca Cuniberti, a resident of the North Shore and a member of the Hawaii Youth Transportation Council. As a North Shore resident, I am a strong supporter of Rail in Hawaii and adding connections from bus to Rail. However, I am appalled at the extent to which DTS has ignored the North Shore. I have spoken with the director and deputy director before and have seen no example of when reasonable connections to Rail may be available. As it stands now, there is a 3-4 seat ride to get to a Skyline station. This connection improves marginally with the addition of the rerouted 51 line and the proposed E Line, but the 3-seat ride curse persists. I want to see Skyline utilized by North Shore residents, but having 3-4 seat rides for us is borderline unacceptable. I want to hear A. when and if the E line or 51 will be extended to Haleiwa, and B. why it is not happening now.

Mahalo.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Angela Melody Young	Alohadivinedesign@gmail.com	96817

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
CARES | Community Advocacy Research Education Services	Support	Sep 24, 2025 @ 08:44 AM

Testimony:

Support.

Written Testimony
Re: Opposition to the Elimination of Bus Route 20

Chair and Members of the Honolulu City Council:

My name is **Ernest Caravalho**, a resident of Downtown–Chinatown. For transparency, I currently serve as the Chair of the Downtown–Chinatown Neighborhood Board No. 13; however, I submit this testimony today strictly as a private individual and community member, not in my capacity as Chair.

I am writing in strong opposition to the elimination of **Bus Route 20**, which serves as a vital lifeline for our community.

This past Saturday at 10:15 a.m., I personally rode Route 20. The bus was full, with people standing — clear evidence that this route is heavily used, not just during peak hours but throughout the day. Many of these riders were kupuna, workers, and everyday residents who depend on Route 20 as their direct and reliable connection to work, medical care, shopping, and essential services.

Eliminating Route 20 before rail service even reaches Downtown–Chinatown is putting the cart before the horse. The rail is not yet here, and until it is fully operational and serving our area, residents will be left stranded without a realistic alternative.

For Downtown–Chinatown, this route is more than just a bus — it is a social and economic necessity. It ensures that our elders and working families can continue to move safely and affordably. Removing it now creates a service gap that rail cannot yet fill.

I respectfully urge the Council and the Department of Transportation Services to:

1. **Preserve Route 20 service until rail is fully operational in Downtown–Chinatown.**
2. **Engage directly with the affected communities**, especially kupuna, to understand the daily reliance on this route.
3. **Prioritize the needs of existing riders** before implementing system changes that assume rail will cover gaps.

Route 20 is not redundant; it is essential. On behalf of the residents who rely on this service daily, I respectfully ask that you delay or reconsider the elimination of this route until fair and reliable alternatives are in place.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
Ernest Caravalho
Resident, Downtown–Chinatown