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DOWNTOWN-CHINATOWN NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD NO. 13
NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION • 925 DILLINGHAM BLVD, SUITE 160 • HONOLULU, HAWAIʻI 96817
PHONE (808) 768-3710 • FAX (808) 768-3711 • WEBSITE http:///www.honolulu.gov/nco

Resolution 2025-03

Urging the Honolulu Department of Transportation Services to Reconsider Planned October 1st Eliminations/Truncations of Highly-Utilized Routes for TheBus in Advance of Skyline Phase 2

WHEREAS, the Downtown-Chinatown Neighborhood Board No. 13 ("NB 13") operates under the Neighborhood Plan ("NP") of the City & County of Honolulu (the "City" or "Honolulu") to represent the residents in its area ("Downtown-Chinatown"); and

WHEREAS, the purpose of NB 13 under NP §2-13-101 is to increase and assure effective citizen participation in the decisions of government; and

WHEREAS, the duties and functions of NB 13 under NP §2-13-102 include taking actions that reflect the needs, wants, and interests of the neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, the second segment of the City's Skyline (i.e., elevated rail) project is scheduled to open on October 1, 2025, which will extend Skyline service from the current Hālawa (Aloha Stadium) station to the Kahauiki (Middle Street) station ("Phase 2"); and

WHEREAS, in anticipation of Phase 2, the Honolulu Department of Transportation Services ("DTS") released their Proposed Bus Service Changes for Opening 2nd Phase of Skyline; and

WHEREAS, the proposal describes multiple changes to existing routes of TheBus that will significantly impact the experience of public transportation commuters to/from Downtown-Chinatown; and

WHEREAS, one particularly concerning proposed change (on PDF page 12 of 22) eliminates the heavily utilized Route 20[1] and replaces it with a new W Line[2] (such proposed change, the "Route 20/W Line Replacement"); and

WHEREAS, this proposed change will force regular commuters on Route 20 to walk an additional 0.5 miles (from the current stops on Beretania St to the proposed W Line stops on Nimitz Highway); and

WHEREAS, for able-bodied commuters, forcing this additional 0.5 mile walk will materially degrade the commuter experience on TheBus; and

[1] Which includes Beretania St/King St service
[2] Which travels on Nimitz Highway rather than Beretania St/King St

DEPT. COM. 722 ITT

WHEREAS, for kupuna (elderly) commuters, forcing this additional 0.5 mile walk may pose physical hardship and is not pono (righteous); and

WHEREAS, this Route 20/W Line Replacement impacts a high concentration of Downtown-Chinatown residents who live adjacent to or mauka of Beretania St, including:

- Over fifteen (15) multi-story residential towers (at least two of which provide apartments exclusively for elderly residents)[3] and
- Numerous walk-up style apartment-zoned buildings (for example, those mauka of Vineyard adjacent to the H-1 and Punchbowl[4]); and

WHEREAS, in addition to the concerning Route 20/W Line Replacement, other notable proposed route changes in the DTS proposal result in truncations of other heavily utilized routes serving Downtown-Chinatown such as:

- Truncation of A Line (see PDF pages 8 and 9),[5]
- Elimination of the town portion of C Line (see PDF page 20),[6] and
- Elimination of the town portion of E Line (see PDF page 21);[7] and

WHEREAS, such truncation proposals have been perceived to be an effort by the City to promote ridership of Skyline by limiting options on TheBus for commuters to/from Downtown-Chinatown (for example, a KHON2 news story, "TheBus considering pushing West Oahu riders to use Skyline to get to town"); and

WHEREAS, the 2045 O'ahu Regional Transportation Plan produced by the O'ahu Metropolitan Planning Organization describes what should be the guiding vision of transportation in Honolulu and states, "In 2045, O'ahu's path forward is multimodal and safe. All people on O'ahu can reach their destinations through a variety of transportation choices, which are reliable, equitable, healthy, environmentally sustainable, and resilient in the face of climate change;" now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that NB 13 urges the Honolulu Department of Transportation Services to reconsider planned eliminations/truncations of highly-utilized routes for TheBus in advance of Skyline Phase 2; and

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[3] Including the following residential communities with 1 or 2 towers: Halewai'olu Senior Residences, Hale Pauahi Towers, Maunakea Tower, Kukui Tower, Honolulu Tower, Park Place, Smith-Beretania Apartments, Kukui Plaza, Queen Emma Gardens, Capitol Place, Pinnacle Honolulu, Kokua Hale, Queen Emma Apartments, and Royal Queen Emma.

[4] An area with multiple affordable housing projects being constructed/proposed under ROH Chapter 32 (a.k.a. Bill 7) with existing neighborhood challenges including limited on-street parking and limited availability of viable public-transit options for residents.

[5] Currently providing City Express, transfer-free service to/from Aiea/Pearlridge Center

[6] Currently providing Country Express, transfer-free service to/from the west side of O'ahu

[7] Currently providing Country Express, transfer-free service to/from Waipahu

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in accordance with the 2045 O‘ahu Regional Transportation Plan, NB 13 believes DTS and the City should be committed to a goal of promoting and increasing public transportation ridership; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that to achieve this goal, NB 13 believes DTS should be biased toward policy changes that will enhance the commuter experience (including changes that result in less walking distance to stops, more frequent service, and minimal transfers) and avoid policy changes that will discourage ridership; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution, upon adoption, is intended to be distributed to the Office of the Mayor, the Honolulu Department of Transportation Services, the Honolulu City Council, and the Neighborhood Board Chairs of Honolulu; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that NB 13 requests that a representative from the Office of the Mayor or the Honolulu Department of Transportation Services provide their response to this resolution (through written correspondence or through attendance at a future meeting of NB 13) describing the City’s reaction and intended action.

INTRODUCED BY: Ross Isokane
DATE OF INTRODUCTION: September 4, 2025

The Downtown-Chinatown Neighborhood Board No. 13 ADOPTED this resolution on September 4, 2025; 6-0-1 (AYE: Caravalho, Fitzsimmons, Isokane, Lye, Mestas, Shintani; NAY: None; ABSTAIN: Armstrong).

Chair: Ernest Caravalho

