BILL027(26)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 155

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Apr 15, 2026 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 0

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 1

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Leelynn Brady	systemsadvocacy@alohailhawaii.org	96782
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Aloha Independent Living Hawaii	I wish to comment	Apr 14, 2026 @ 08:58 AM

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Apr 15, 2026

The Honorable Tommy Waters, Chair
Honolulu City Council
20th Session
Honolulu Hale
State of Hawaii
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

SUBJECT: Bill 27 (2026) — Relating to the Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation Capital Budget for FY 2026-2027

Chair and Members of the Honolulu City Council:

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony on Bill 27 (2026), relating to the Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation Capital Budget for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027.

Aloha Independent Living Hawaii (AILH) is a federally recognized Center for Independent Living that supports people with disabilities across rural Oahu and all neighbor islands. We recognize the tremendous amount of work that has gone into building and advancing Skyline, and we appreciate the Council's role in overseeing how capital funds are invested in this system. Our comments below are offered in a spirit of collaboration, with the shared goal of ensuring that Skyline is not only operational, but truly accessible, reliable, and equitable for disabled riders.

1. **Capital investments should strengthen rail accessibility and universal design**

We support continued capital investment in stations, guideway, and systems that make Skyline usable for riders with disabilities. As you consider the capital projects included in Bill 27, we respectfully ask that the City and HART:

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- Prioritize funding for elevators, level boarding, accessible fare gates, tactile and visual wayfinding, and clear audio/visual announcements at all stations.

- Ensure that accessibility features are treated as core system elements, not optional add-ons, and that they are planned into every stage of design and construction.

- Incorporate universal design principles so that stations, platforms, and surrounding areas are safer and easier to use for everyone, including kupuna, families with strollers, and people with temporary mobility limitations.

When these features are robustly funded and well-implemented, Skyline becomes a truly transformative option for disabled residents who currently face significant barriers in moving around the island.

2. **Station area design and connections must support real-world access**

For many disabled riders, the challenge is not only what happens inside the station, but also how to get there.

We encourage the Council and HART to ensure that the capital program:

- Includes improvements to accessible paths of travel to and from stations, such as sidewalks, curb ramps, safe crossings, and lighting in the immediate station areas.

- Coordinates closely with the bus system and Handi-Van so that transfers are physically and operationally feasible—for example, by locating bus stops and paratransit zones where they can be reached via step-free routes and clear signage.

- Accounts for the needs of riders with mobility, sensory, and cognitive disabilities when designing wayfinding, signage, and station layouts.

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Accessible station environments are what make the difference between a system that looks good on paper and a system that disabled riders can actually use every day.

3. **Equity and neighborhood priorities in the rail build-out**

We understand that the capital budget also reflects decisions about which segments, stations, and improvements are prioritized in the coming year.

From an equity perspective, we ask that:

- Rail capital investments continue to consider which neighborhoods house higher numbers of disabled residents and low-income households, so those communities are not last to benefit from fully functioning, accessible stations.

- Decisions about station area improvements take into account the presence of affordable and supportive housing, clinics, and social service hubs, so that the people who most need accessible transit can reach it.

Aligning capital decisions with where disabled and low-income residents actually live and access services will help ensure Skyline fulfills its promise as a tool for inclusion and opportunity.

4. **Rail as part of emergency preparedness and resilience**

As severe weather events and other emergencies become more frequent, we see Skyline as an increasingly important part of emergency preparedness and response.

In this context, we ask that the capital budget for Skyline:

- Support infrastructure that enhances system resilience, including features that help maintain safe station access, communications, and critical systems during and after storms or other emergencies.

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- Integrate planning for how stations and trains can be used to support evacuation or access to safer areas for residents with disabilities, in coordination with the City's broader emergency management efforts.

Investing in resilient, accessible rail infrastructure now can reduce harm and save lives later, particularly for community members who have fewer transportation options during emergencies.

5. **Ongoing engagement and accountability**

Finally, we encourage HART and the City to continue and expand structured engagement with the disability community around rail capital projects, and to:

- Provide clear public information on accessibility features included in major capital projects funded by Bill 27.

- Continue to draw on the work of accessibility advisory bodies and community stakeholders to identify design issues early, when they are easier and less costly to address.

Our organization is committed to being a constructive partner in this work.

Conclusion

Mahalo again for your attention to accessibility and equity as you consider Bill 27 (2026). We respectfully support advancing the HART Capital Budget with a strong, ongoing commitment to:

- Accessible station and system design,

- Safe and usable connections to bus, Handi-Van, and surrounding neighborhoods, and

- Resilient infrastructure that serves disabled residents in both everyday travel and emergencies.

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We would welcome the opportunity to meet with Councilmembers and HART staff to discuss how specific capital projects can better support disabled riders and the broader community.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,



Roxanne Bolden

Executive Director

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