



www.SalvageTheRail.org

FAQs

What is Salvage the Rail proposing?

Modify the HART rail project to allow street level operation from Middle Street through Downtown Honolulu.

Why?

Modifying the HART project to allow street level operation through Downtown will save money (\$3B or more), will save time (completed in 2021 vs. 2025) and will provide a much more environmentally acceptable system Downtown that can be more easily extended (such as to Waikiki and UH Manoa).

Running street level rail from Middle Street through Downtown can be done with the \$6.8 Billion in existing funding. There is no need for a GET surcharge extension to complete rail. Rail can be completed 4 years faster, with far less construction impacts, and lower operating and maintenance costs in the future if the elevated route connects to street level rail for the final section through Downtown. This is not wishful thinking. It is based on current data from the 38 other cities in the U.S. using light rail.

Where would the street level stations go?

Anywhere. A street level station is no bigger in size than a bus stop. A street level system is highly flexible, requiring only a canopy for rain shelter and small ticket machine on an existing sidewalk. Stops can also be moved or added at very little expense.

What about Accessibility?

All trains would be ADA compliant and would not need elevators, which are prone to breaking down in Honolulu's tropical climate.

Would a two level system be slowed to the speed of automobile traffic?

No. The Middle Street-to-Downtown segment would be slower by 2-3 minutes (depending on length of final route). Signal synchronization can be used so that the street level trains can maintain 30-mile-per-hour speed through downtown, nearly the same speed



as elevated rail. Managed lanes (for trains and busses only) keep trains running independent of automobile traffic speeds, and also greatly increase safety.

What about ridership capacity?

Making a technical change to car design to have 3 instead of 4 cars per train can be made up for by increasing frequency at peak times to every 5 instead of 6 minutes.

A route through downtown Honolulu would deliver riders to their places of work. Instead of just a commuter rail, it would be a true urban transit system, attracting additional riders who want to travel through the city center's intense employment areas. Very few commuters from West Oahu have an end destination of the few stops planned along Nimitz Highway or Ala Moana Center.

Isn't it too late? Have all the contracts been awarded?

No. The contract for the trains and running them for 20 years has been awarded to Ansaldo. Those trains can be modified to run on both elevated and street level. In terms of construction, only the guideway and stations up to Middle Street have been awarded.

Will we lose federal funding by making a change to street level through Downtown?

No. The FTA has already listed street level rail as an acceptable option to complete the route to downtown. The Recovery Plan sent to HART officials by the FTA in June 2016 lists six options for completion in order to receive \$1.55B in federal funding. The FTA does not dictate what rail technology is used. Option 2A in the Recovery Plan reads, "Build to Middle Street as planned and continue with at-grade rail system." In September 2016 the FTA clarified that the route could extend to Downtown (Aloha Tower) at a minimum in order to qualify for federal funding.

With any major change in route, a supplement to the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is needed. However, this does not take the same amount of time as a full EIS. For example, in March 2010, the city changed the route of the rail at the airport because it was too close to the runways. The EIS was modified in a matter of 3 months and the revised EIS was submitted in June.

Even taking the time to make technical adjustments and put new plans in place, **the project could be completed 4 years faster** because of the speed with which street level rail tracks can be laid.

Will street level rail have more construction impacts downtown?

No, the construction impacts would be far less. To lay a set of tracks construction would be 14 inches deep by 8 feet wide, which is the **same depth as normal road construction**. This would not require purchase of any additional land. Existing streets could be used. Because these streets have already been excavated, the issue of new archeological finds is not applicable. Street level rail stations are not bigger than a bus stop, requiring only a canopy for rain shelter and small ticket machine on an existing sidewalk.



In contrast, building elevated rail through downtown Honolulu would create enormous construction impacts since entire roadways will need to be cut open to pour underground spread foundations to support the weight of the elevated guideway. Constructing the football-field sized stations planned for elevated rail would create immense disruption to nearby structures, traffic and businesses downtown.

Why can't elevated rail be extended beyond Ala Moana Center?

The cost would be too prohibitive. Current HART plans call for the elevated rail to dead end at Kona Street. An extension would require an overpass 90 feet in the air over the old Nordstrom building in the mall.

What about impacts on traffic and existing roads?

Minimal. The impact would be no different than the current bike lane on King Street—the lane would be highlighted, and you would still have cross traffic. The routes can be split onto adjacent streets—only a single lane used on King and Beretania Streets, for example. Busses could also share the same lane.

Is it safe?

Light rail is used safely throughout the world. It is not a new technology. 38 cities are using street level rail in the US alone.

Unfortunately, all transit types carry some risk – including walking, biking, personal automobiles and bus transit. Trains are as predictable as it gets in urban transportation. They're large, don't swerve, meet carefully designed safety standards, and they're all driven by trained professional drivers. A lot of time and thought goes into light rail station design and safety procedures. Light-rail transit is safe—as long as everyone obeys warning signs and complies with barriers.



Seamless transition from street level to elevated (Waipahu)

For more information: www.SalvageTheRail.org