

MASS TRANSIT

The Transit Agency is headed by Transit Administrator Tom Brown, and has a total of five County employees. Bus drivers are provided through contract with a private firm, Hawaii Tran-Zit.

The transit agency is responsible for the operation of the County's bus system, also known as the Hele-On bus, and the County's shared-ride taxi service. The County operates 35 buses and vans. Users of the transit system include workers, students, senior citizens and disabled individuals.

In Fiscal Year 2001-02, a total of 320,309 passenger trips were recorded, a one percent increase from FY 2000-01. Ridership increased slightly even though one daily route between East Hawaii and South Kohala was suspended in October 2002, due to fewer riders traveling to the resorts.

The transit agency also received authorization to obtain eight handi-lift vans from the City and County of Honolulu for transportation for disabled individuals. These vehicles should arrive in Hilo by the end of calendar year 2002.

During the year, the transit agency began meeting with community groups from Hawaiian Ocean View Estates, Pahoia, and Kona. As a result of these meetings, the following changes to the route system were implemented:

- Ocean View estates to Kona bus service two days per week
- Pahoa afterschool service
- A once-a-month bus between Pahoa and Hilo on Saturdays
- The agency will continue working with Kona residents to revise the current intra Kona bus schedule to include transportation to Keahole Airport.