

Middle Street-to-Ala Moana phase of rail project moving ahead

By [Gordon Y.K. Pang](#)

September 17, 2018

Updated September 17, 2018 10:52pm



DENNIS ODA/DODA@STARADVERTISER.COM

These are the first guideway support columns being built along Kamehameha Highway.

ADVERTISING

The roughly 100 people attending tonight's Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation meeting heard the message loud and clear from rail officials and their contractors: "We're coming."

After several years of site work and construction on the west end of the 20-mile rail line, HART is commencing with the Middle Street-to-Ala Moana phase of the \$8 billion, 20-mile project starting with a utilities relocation project that began recently along Kamehameha Highway between Middle Street and Puuhale Road in front of the Oahu Community Correctional Center.

Nan Inc. was awarded the \$400 million final utilities relocation contract which is expected to run 47 months into 2022.

The work will run through the path of the final eight rail stations along the Dillingham Boulevard corridor past the Kalihi, Kapalama and Iwilei stations, head onto Nimitz Highway to the Chinatown and Downtown stations, then veer toward Halekauwila Street through the Civic Center and Ward Center stations, and finally along Kona Street to the final station fronting Ala Moana.

The work will include relocation of about 4,000 linear feet of drainage, 6,000 feet of sewer, 9,000 feet of water, 40,000 feet of electrical and 67,000 feet of electrical lines "all underground or above ground," HART communications director Bill Brennan said.

He described utility relocation as "some of the most disruptive work that's going to happen on the project."

But Brennan said "we learned some lessons and we learned them the hard way" during construction of the west segment and that HART will try to be more attentive to the needs of residents and businesses that inevitably will be disrupted.

Instead of taking one large segment of ground at a time, HART will take several smaller chunks along the path simultaneously, Brennan said. That

is expected to eliminate the need to close down a big portion of road for months, he said. So Nan may be doing work in smaller segments at both Kalihi and Kakaako simultaneously, he said.

“The idea is to not have Dillingham torn up like we have Kamehameha Highway torn up,” Brennan said. “We go in, we do the work, we cover it up, we get out and then we move to another smaller section of Dillingham and do that work so that we’re only impacting a smaller section at a time.”

Justin Barfield, Nan public involvement manager for the utilities relocation project, said next up is a section of Nimitz from Aawa Street (near Floradec) to Bishop Street starting Sept. 24 and is expected to take about a month. Preliminary “pot-holing,” the technical term for identifying the precise locations of water, sewer, gas and drain lines that need to be relocated, will run from 7 p.m. to 5 a.m. daily. Lanes will be closed off two blocks at a time, he said.

There will be added noise with saw-cutting, the noisiest part of the work, taking place mostly between 7 p.m. and 10 p.m., Barfield said. The residential towers along Nimitz have been notified, he said.

After that, Nan is expected to do pot-holing along a section of Queen Street between Ward Avenue and Kamakee Street. No start date, hours of work or traffic control measures have been determined for that segment, Barfield said.

Pot-holing already has been done along a segment of Dillingham between Alakawa and Kaahi streets, as well as Kaahi itself, and Nan is waiting for the go-ahead from HART to do actual utility relocation, he said.

To report an issue regarding the utilities relocation work, call HART’s 24-hour hotline at 566-2299 or email info@honolulutransit.org. For more on the project, go to the HART web site at www.honolulutransit.org.

HART is expected to decide soon on whether to proceed with a public-private partnership model of financing or the traditional design-build

mode for the remaining guideways, pillars and stations between Middle Street and Ala Moana. That contract likely won't be awarded for at least a year, Brennan said.