

MASS TRANSIT AGENCY

The Mass Transit Agency has a staff of five County employees. Bus drivers are provided through contract with a private firm, Hawaii Tran-Zit.

The agency is responsible for the operation of the County's bus system, popularly known as the Hele-On bus, and the County's shared-ride taxi service.

The agency operates a total of 35 buses and vans. Users of the transit system include workers, students, senior citizens, and disabled individuals.

In Fiscal Year 2000-01, a total of 318,542 passenger trips were recorded, an 8 percent increase from Fiscal 1999-2000. Increases in the intra-Kona route, South Kohala route, and shared-ride taxi program accounted for the higher ridership total.

In November 2000, the agency received five new buses, manufactured by the Gillig Corporation. These are 45-passenger, accessible buses, and were obtained through a Federal grant.

The transit agency has also initiated a contract with the Hilo Downtown Improvement Association to provide management services at the Mooheau bus terminal. Their duties will include providing bus schedule information, selling bus tickets, and establishing a Visitor's Information Center to promote businesses in Hilo. In addition, they will assist the County in the maintenance and upgrading of the facility.