

Writing the book on transit

By A. Kam Napier

In this column, I often urge business leaders and owners who complain about the way things are run in Hawaii to get involved and get vocal. I can't think of a local business leader who has done this better than Cliff Slater, chairman of Maui Divers of Hawaii, who has – for decades – been a fearless critic on mass transit issues.

Slater has a book out now, “Transit: Its growth, decline and pending demise,” that should be required reading for policy makers, and the citizens taxed to fund their mass transit dreams. Exhaustively researched (nearly 800 footnotes over 342 pages), the book details the Industrial Revolution origins of mass transit and its development through the 20th century.

Slater is especially focused on the 1970s takeover, by government at all levels, of what had been a “largely private and profitable transit bus industry” up to that point.

The book ends on a glimpse of the new vehicles and technologies currently poised to be the final rebuttal to the idea of government-run trains on tracks, as well as the social forces underway – such as the rise of ridesharing apps and remote work – that have accelerated the decline in transit ridership.

Visit cliffslater.com for more information and to order a copy.