

Mamalahoa Hwy.-Kawaihae Rd. Connector Project

NOTES, PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING – 9/29/2005

1 Introductions

The Public Information Meeting was held Thursday, September 29, 2005, at the YMCA's Kahilu Hall, Waimea, Island of Hawaii, from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m.

Attendance:

County of Hawaii Department of Public Works (DPW): Bruce McClure, Director; and Galen Kuba, Chief of the Engineering Division

Belt Collins: Jane Dewell, Project Manager

Millie Kim, Meeting Facilitator

See Sign-in Sheets (Attachment 1)

Introductory remarks and background: Bruce McClure

The purpose of the meeting was to solicit public comment related to the Mamalahoa Highway-Kawaihae Road connector project alternatives as part of an environmental review process.

Ground rules and meeting format: Millie Kim

Presentation: Jane Dewell

Handouts: Attachment 2, Agenda; Attachment 3, Purpose of Meeting and Proposed Action; Attachment 4, map of project area.

2 Presentation

The meeting briefly reviewed:

- Environmental review process
- Project alternatives
- Other regional transportation projects
- Take comments from the audience (also provided forms for written comments)

2.1 Environmental Review Process

1) Environmental Assessment (EA)

a) Provide connectivity between Mamalahoa Highway and Kawaihae Road to alleviate traffic congestion in Waimea as part of larger transportation plans

b) EA under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Hawaii State Chapter 343 – initial stage of work

- i) Identify feasible alternatives – land use, physical characteristics, coordination with other transit routes
- ii) Involve public and agencies in process – not formal hearings but voluntary public information meetings
- iii) Draft EA –
 - (1) review existing conditions,
 - (2) evaluate potential impacts associated with all feasible alternatives, and
 - (3) determined if impacts are significant
- iv) Public comment period w/ second public information meeting
 - (1) Approximately spring or summer 2006
 - (2) Respond to written comments
 - (3) 30-day comment period
- v) Final EA and determination
- c) EA and special studies
 - i) Field work to map alternate alignments
 - ii) Right-of-entry for properties – allow access for personnel to conduct studies along routes (mailed out)
 - iii) Belt Collins – engineering and geographic positioning system (GPS) of two alternative routes, and aerial topography
 - iv) Subconsultants – traffic (Kaku and Associates), noise (Y. Ebisu), flora (Art Whistler), fauna (Reggie David), stream (John Ford at SWCA), archaeology (Paul Rosendahl at PHRI), socio-economic (John Knox)
- d) Preliminary Engineering Report
 - i) Alternative alignments
 - ii) Aerial topographic survey
 - iii) Waikoloa Stream hydrologic study and bridge evaluation
 - iv) Costs

2.2 Project Alternatives

- 1) Proposed Action, Alternative Alignment A – Existing Bypass Easement
 - a) Proposed Waimea Bypass Highway easement
 - b) Bridge across Waikoloa Stream
 - c) Intersections with Kawaihae and Mamalahoa – across Parker Ranch mini-bypass
- 2) Alternative Alignment B – Lalamilo Farm Road
 - a) Lalamilo Farm Road, Kamala Road, South Kohala Distribution Road + other lands

- b) Bridge across Waikoloa Stream
- c) Intersections with Kawaihae and Mamalahoa
- 3) No Action Alternative - baseline against which others are evaluated
- 4) Other Potential Alternatives
 - a) Options closer in to Waimea – conflict with existing land uses, including residential
 - b) Options further out from Waimea – conflict with other transportation plans

2.3 Other Regional Transportation Projects

- 1) Kawaihae Bypass – Hawaii Department of Transportation (DOT)
 - a) Alignment – from Kawaihae Harbor to Mamalahoa Highway
 - b) Schedule for environmental review – scoping meetings to be held in December 2005
- 2) Waimea Bypass – Hawaii DOT
 - a) Alignment – from Mamalahoa Highway to Mud Lane
 - b) Schedule – draft EIS to be published but date is unknown
- 3) Mini-bypass – Parker Ranch
 - a) Alignment – from Mamalahoa Highway, links with Connector Road Alignment A, to area near North Hawaii Community Hospital
 - b) Schedule is unknown

3 Public Comments

3.1 Sandalwood / Waikoloa Stream Area (Alignment A)

- Flooding concerns were raised. In major gulch area (Waikoloa Stream) flooding occurred in Sandalwood in 2002 and 2004 causing damming and debris backup
- Need a flood impact study
- Building costs involved would be high with Alternative A due to gulch, narrowness
- Sight distance problem (hill on Kawaihae Road)
- Noise and light pollution (24-hour trucks and other traffic)
- Conflict with nature park bypass (biking and walking)
- Decrease property values; loss of value of home
- Traffic flow is not in the area of the connector
- Oppose Alternative A
- Map doesn't show Sandalwood

3.2 Alternative Connector Routes and Functions

- Create a third alternative by combining B and A, between transfer station to easement
- If Waimea bypass is built, why is connector road necessary?
- Combination of Alternative A and B should be used. Intersect with Kawaihae Road near transfer station and coordinate with Department of Hawaiian Homelands (DHHL)
- Support alternative paths through and around town
- Bottleneck will be moved to stream and fire station; connector does solve these
- Alternative A would run next to warehouse and berm that protects from flooding (attendee provided Natural Resources Conservation Service [NRCS] runoff calculations); road and buildings could be wiped out during flooding; Mud Lane and Mamalahoa Road would solve problem
- Connector road is not in place of larger bypass? *[No]*
- People want mauka - makai connectors; connector won't take town traffic pressure off; need to look at getting around town
- Alternative A comes out at neighbors house on Kamamalo Street, very congested, will make matters worse
- Use of easement? Not projected to be used according to State DOT
- Alleviate traffic – doesn't seem to be main purpose of connector road
- Connector project is necessary and overdue
- Evaluation of alternatives: what are details of alternatives eliminated? *[Provided brief summary of alternatives closer in and further out from propose alternatives, and conflicts with residential development and bypass routes]*
- Connector road alignments need to go further south and off stream crossing, otherwise will incur severe engineering limitations
- Only alleviates traffic from Kawaihae Road to Waikoloa
- Rate of town growth for connector is not outside of town
- How will connector help move traffic away from town? It actually would create more

3.3 Funding and Coordination

- County money should be used for connector road
- We are in a crisis, so need to go ahead quickly with bypass (connector)
- Is \$400K for EA for Lalamilo? Will it proceed even if majority is against it?
- How to do the roads tie together? We need to see how roads connect *[showed different alignments on large regional map]*

- Seems like the cart before the horse. What is the order of the projects? After the State Mud Lane bypass? *[The EA needs to be completed before project can proceed]*
- Need to coordinate with Waimea bypass, and provide backdoor for transport
- Kawaihae bypass should be built farther away
- People from north side won't go through town. Should use "windfall" \$ (county) to get (state) road started
- Keep allowing urbanization but need to do work first.
- Is \$10M county money? *[Yes]* Can the county money be given to State? *[No]*
- Need bypass road; begin and end at Mamalahoa Highway. Take bypass all the way across town
- Put county \$10M to Waimea bypass
- DHHL needs alternative to get into town
- Request information on other routes: Parker Ranch and DOT roads; probability of roads; time line on all these projects?
- Plans for roads in Waimea: the Waimea Community Development Plan meetings are ongoing to help address this
- Use county money for EA to evaluate, combine with state alternatives, connect to Waimea bypass road *[state has own funds and timetable]*
- State appropriation: should ask for Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) matching funds
- People want main bypass road; should combine county and state funds to support state bypass
- Waimea bypass (half project): use county money to support state bypass
- Want to see state bypasses as soon as possible; need traffic improvements; need to spend county \$10M on developing solutions
- State bypass delay is not due to money, but due to DHHL and alignment issues

3.4 Parker Ranch Connector Road

- Connect with Park Ranch mini bypass; use state right of way (Alternative A)
- Connection across stream, let engineers decide
- Traffic congestion won't be alleviated unless there is a Parker Ranch bypass first
- What is Parker Ranch estimate on timeframe? *[Plans are not yet set]*
- Parker Ranch must develop mini bypass with residential development; helps to create inner loop (DHHL and Parker residential development)

3.5 Safety and Trucks

- Take into consideration demographics and accidents, and young people speeding
- Safety issues with this connector road, trucks and children
- With traffic on connector road near fire station, how will fire trucks and ambulances get on the road?
- Accidents above Waiaka Ridge and transfer station, blind hill, concerned about ambulance and fire vehicle movement
- What is route for trucks? Need to clarify truck use
- Will truckers be forced to go on bypass; how far will they go out of their way?
- Top of hill at Kawaihae Road intersection problems for trucks (rubbish trucks and eventual logging trucks) have grade problems, starting and stopping, sight distance issues
- Why do container trucks go from Kawaihae Harbor to Hilo? Why don't they just offload in Hilo?

3.6 Traffic Studies

- Last traffic study (2002-2003) showed 50 percent of traffic associated with Waimea residents, so we need internal connector roads
- Have we counted traffic from Mamalahoa Highway to Kawaihae Road and back? Should do that and then determine route preference [*A traffic analysis will be done as part of this EA*]

3.7 Environmental Assessment

- EA should consider planned development regarding runoff.
- It should include a big picture plan with other planned connectors and bypasses
- How long is an EIS good for? [*We are working on an EA for the project. There is not a set time limit, but if there are significant changes between the time the EA is finalized to the time the project is initiated a supplemental EA must be developed*]
- Need to mitigate impacts
- Land Use Commission (LUC) (Hapuna Beach Hotel); should consider affordable housing in EA

3.8 Miscellaneous

- The EIS should examine archaeology and unexploded ordnance (UXO); impacts Council District 1
- What about Waimea Trails and Greenways plan, and compatibility issues? Will there be over or under passes?