

To: Mr. Stacy Higa, Chairman  
Hawaii County Council

Chronology For Waimea Bypass Highway  
South Kohala, County of Hawaii

Late 1940's thru late 1950's: As the completion of the newly reestablished/rerouted (post 1946 tsunami) Hawaii Belt Highway along the Hilo-Hamakua Coast was approaching, it must have become apparently clear to these early visionaries that extensive plans for transportation access throughout the West Side of the County of Hawaii would be prudent. Improved and expanded linkage for the Hilo-Hamakua, North and South Kohala with the North and South Kona districts would be imperative. Thus, a concerted plan of action was developed by the State of Hawaii that would focus on the three (3) specific corridors that would fulfill this access and connect with the soon-to-be constructed Kawaihae Harbor/Port facilities and potential distant resort developments. The three focus points consisted of the following corridors:

1. Construction of the Waimea Community Bypass highway that would route the anticipated increased traffic flow between the Hilo-Hamakua Coast and the soon-to-be constructed Kawaihae Harbor/Port facilities. The original routing "Proposed" for this bypass was envisioned to begin on the east of Waimea at the Kamamalu Road Mamalahoa Highway intersection area, proceed in a south-westerly direction skirting what was then the "fringe" boundaries of the Waimea Community, rejoin the Mamalahoa Highway outside the south-west side of Waimea, with an intersection at the North boundary of the newly established Lalamilo Farm Lots/South boundary of the Parker Ranch Puupelu lands then continue in a westerly direction along the north boundary of the Lalamilo Farm Lots "(via an 80' easement identified as the "Proposed Waimea Bypass Highway)", before crossing the Waikoloa Stream and joining the Kawaihae Road, adjacent to the Hilo Electric, State and County base yards just above the Waiaka, Highway #19/#250 juncture. This bypass corridor was never pursued and in-fact was abandoned as an option in the mid-late 1970's in favor of an expanded new corridor, which was identified as the Mud Lane to Waimea/Waimea to Kawaihae Bypass Road. This linkage has never been built. (See Exhibits A-B-C&D 1,2,3).
2. Construction of the Akoni Pule Highway (#270) linking Hawi in North Kohala to Kawaihae in South Kohala. This approximately twenty (20) mile highway was opened in the 1972/73 time-frame.
3. Expansion of Queen Kaahumanu Highway (#19) linking the newly completed Keahole Airport/North and South Kona districts to South and North Kohala districts at Hapuna Beach. This approximately twenty-five (25) mile highway was opened in the 1975/76 time-frame.

Abandonment of the original Waimea Community Bypass highway corridor, described above 1., freed-up the 80' easement along the north boundary of the Lalamilo Farm Lots and farmers holding title to the eight (8) lots on this boundary were advised by the State of Hawaii of this abandonment and utilization of their respective 40' portions to this easement would not be contested at a future date. Thus, these 40' portions contained within these eight (8) farm lots were developed as primary windbreaks, irrigation transmission, cultivatable farmland, green houses, residences and workman housing areas, henceforth with the understanding that the easement would never be reactivated. As the 40' easement is contained within the rightful ownership of each of these respective Lalamilo Farm Lot owners, each has faithfully compensated all annual property taxes on these lands since taking possession of their properties, in most cases over forty (40) years ago. (See West Hawaii November 10, 2005 article, Exhibit E, Lalamilo Farmer's Submitted Material, "Concerning the Proposed Kawaihae Road-Mamalahoa Highway Connector Road Exhibit F", presented to Mayor Kim's office on January 5, 2006.)

Being the good natured-honest-hard-working individuals that they were/are, unfortunately the Lalamilo Farmers affected by the easement trusted the advise of abandonment they had received from the State of Hawaii in verbal delivery and had never considered the necessity for any documentation. Clearly a result of the open dialogue, good close working relationships and common mutual respect that the Lalamilo farmers shared with State of Department of Agriculture and Department of Land and Natural Resources at the time.

Naturally, The Lalamilo farmers are cognizant of and sympathetic to the traffic crisis the Waimea community is immersed in. They too live in the community and are also being adversely affected in many ways. Several have farms on both sides of town, within Puu Kapu on the east and Lalamilo on the west, and now have to carefully plan their movement between both areas so as to prevent the lost of valuable time sitting in traffic that should be used productively on their farms. Shuttling farm equipment between the two farm areas has almost become an impossible farm management tool in Waimea because of the dangerous condition the traffic congestion presents. Delivery of freshly harvested product to market is now equally challenging and time consuming beyond feasibility during vital periods of the day. Several farms experiencing urban and commercial encroachment to their Puu Kapu farms have already "shuttered" their operations in an excelled manner due to the newest frustrations presented by the traffic congestion.

West Hawaii is experiencing unprecedented growth that shows no sign of abating. The wealth of opportunity presented for job security within this growth has been a welcome relief for many who reside within the communities of North, West as well as East Hawaii. However, access to these opportunities is now being strangled and will only continue to deepen in severity. It is "staggering" to reflect back to the "vision for linkage" with the County of Hawaii that was foreseen by our planning predecessors back in the late 1940's through late 1950's, and now see how well this has born true. At the same time, its equally "staggering" to realize that these original "three focal points of access" could not have been fulfilled as the growth and expansion of West Hawaii became so obvious.

The Waimea Community is naturally benefiting from the growth and expansion of West Hawaii, however the traffic crisis they are incurring as directly attributable to this growth is becoming a burden that can only be sustainable for so long. The foundations of transit through Waimea can trace it's origins directly to the early foot and horse trails of the first inhabitants/settlers that evolved to horse and buggy paths that became modest automobile roads connecting the ranching and farming community which today is, "the vital artery" connecting East and West Hawaii. This small country road and community was never envisioned as the vital artery of transit that it has become and the continued growth and further demand exerted on both, will most certainly someday soon present insurmountable challenges if not acknowledged and addressed.

The Lalamilo farmers are but one segment of the diverse demographics adversely affected by the Waimea Community traffic crisis. However, they do have a deep commitment and significant interest in the community and are anxious to participate within the "formula of resolve", so a strategically-sound plan that is acceptable to all can be satisfactorily achieved in a timely manner.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lalamilo/Waimea Farmers  
January 18, 2006