

To: County Planning Department Att: Bruce McClure, Dir. of Public Works  
Re: Mamalahoa Highway-Kawaihae Connector Road

Suggestions made by Margaret Wille,  
Resident of Waimea

**KEY POINTS:**

**--IMMEDIATELY COMMENCE THE MAMALAHOA HIGHWAY-KAWAIHAE ROAD CONNECTOR PROJECT WITH ALL FUNDS NOW AVAILABLE**

**-- DO NOT DIVERT THE AVAILABLE FUNDS TO OTHER PROJECTS**

**--AS TO LOCATION, SELECT ALIGNMENT A, EXCEPT IN THE AREA OF KAWAIHAE ROAD, WHERE ENGINEERING FACTORS SHOULD DETERMINE THE SPECIFIC LOCATION**

**A. LEADERSHIP IS NEEDED TO GET AROUND EXISTING OBSTACLES**

1. Bogged Down in Studies: The need for rerouting traffic around Waimea has been the goal and topic of studies for decades. Residents has become discouraged that those in charge get bogged down in these studies and in the politics involved in getting any major project accomplished. Many are so disillusioned that they are no longer willing to participate in any further traffic studies or community planning. Residents are concerned that this meeting will be just one more meeting that will be part of one more study, that will erode the available 10 million dollar project funding, and eventually the project will be shelved for lack of funds.

2. Wrong Impression about Ability to Immediately Commence Mamalahoa Highway-Kawaihae Connector Road (hereafter referred to as the M-K Connector Road). Most residents who proposed in-town changes assumed to do so was the only available use of the County funds. These residents have the impression that this M-K connector bypass can not be constructed at this time because all of the necessary funds are not in hand, and that therefore the 10 million now available should be spent on less costly changes – such as construction of additional lanes in the center of town. That impression is wrong, unquestionably wrong. The M-K Connector road can be started now. The best way to obtain additional funding is to commence a project. By taking action and starting the project, those with the potential funding have confidence that additional funds will in fact be used for the needed project, and the additional funds are more easily secure.

3. More Downtown Construction Would be a Shortsighted And Inadequate Answer to the Waimea Traffic Bottleneck. The traffic volume in Waimea is increasing too rapidly for modifications to the existing roads in town to make any substantial difference. A wider highway through Waimea with more “suicide” traffic turning lanes and faster moving traffic is a shortsighted answer. Other towns have made this choice, only to find that bypass connector is still needed. Once the bypass was in, those other towns found the excess traffic lanes were no longer needed and no longer desirable. There can be no justification for further disruption of in town traffic to provide a shortsighted answer to a long-term traffic problem.

4. A Loan or Gift to Parker Ranch of the County's Funding Is a Bad Alternative. As part of Parker Ranch's 1996 and 2002 Development Agreements with the County, the Ranch is required to construct the Waimea Town Center Connector Road (hereafter referred to as the P-R Connector Road). That road, which would continue the M-K Connector bypass around the center of Town, is to be completed in three phases, as Parker Ranch builds out its high density residential development southeast of the Parker Ranch Center. The position of Parker Ranch appears to be that if the County were to give or loan these County funds to Parker Ranch, then the Ranch would be in a better position to proceed with the P-R connector road in a speedier manner. It is unclear that PR would be required to build the PR Connector any quicker (with these County funds), than it would otherwise. However, even assuming the PR Connector Road project conceivably could be completed sooner with the use of the County funds, it is wrong to divert these funds to a private entity that is already required to undertake this project in the very near future [unless, of course, the County has no other use for the money]. Parker Ranch should act in good faith under its development agreements with the County and proceed with the PR Connector Road as expeditiously as possible.

5. Opposition to the M-K Connector Road by Adjoining Lot Owners is Understandable. . The inevitability of some negative impact on the adjoining parcels of land, should however not blind the County to the need to construct this connector bypass as quickly as possible. Instead, as part of the project, every effort should be made to mitigate the adverse impact on those landowners. The longer the County delays commencement of this project, opposition to the project will only increase as these areas of town are further developed. Other than Parker Ranch and its new subdivision developments, the primary landowners who will be immediately affected are approximately eight Lalamilo Farm lots and several lots on the makai end of the Sandalwood Subdivision. The affected Lalamilo farm lots are generally twenty acres in size and were conveyed specifically subject to State acquisition of an eighty foot strip along the edge of these lots -- to provide a location for this connector road.

**B. BUILD THE M-K CONNECTOR ROAD AT ALIGNMENT "A" SUBJECT TO ENGINEERING CONSIDERATIONS.** The attached plan shows the location of the two alternate alignments for the M-K Connector Road: Alignment A and Alignment B.

**1. IN THE AREA OF MAMLAHOA HIGHWAY, ALIGNMENT A IS PREFERABLE:** Alignment A intersects with Mamalahoa Highway directly across from the future intersection with the P-R Connector Road, north of the rodeo grounds, by the Kamuela Vacuum Cooling Plant. In contrast, Alignment B intersects the Mamalahoa Highway south of the P-R Connector Road in front of the Rodeo grounds at the Lalamilo Farm Road intersection. Alignment B would therefore require two intersections on Mamalahoa Highway, and would require that the connector road traffic merge with the highway traffic between the two intersections. Alignment A is clearly the better choice.

**2. ADJACENT TO THE LALAMILO FARM LOTS, ALIGNMENT A IS PREFERABLE** The State already has the right to use the 80 foot strip of land along the northerly edge of those Lalamilo farm lots that lie between the Parker Ranch Land and the Lalamilo Farm Road (generally about 20 acres in size). Alignment A would run from the best location on Mamalahoa Highway, then on this already acquired 80 foot strip along side undeveloped Parker Ranch Land. Alignment A could be kept separate from the local Lalamilo farm traffic. Others have suggested Alignment B – which would merge the M-K Connector Road with the existing Lalamilo Farm Road. Alignment B’s location would impact all of the Lalamilo Farms, in that it would interfere with access to all of these lots and would be entangled with all slow local Lalamilo farm traffic. This “mixed” traffic location would be unsafe for the local farm traffic and would likewise be much less desirable for through traffic, thereby undermining the purpose and utility of this connector road. Furthermore, to take additional land and rights along the Lalamilo Farm Road, when the State already has the right to an 80 foot wide right of way for this purpose, would be very wrong. Any possible financial savings afforded by selecting Alignment B would not justify this clearly unworkable location for the M-K Connector Road. (It is also debatable whether there would in fact be a financial advantage to Alignment B.)

**3. FROM THE KAWAIHAE ROAD TO THE 80 RIGHT-OF-WAY ON THE LALAMILO FARM LOTS, THE LOCATION OF THE M-K CONNECTOR ROAD SHOULD BE DETERMINED BASED ON ENGINEERING NEEDS.** Without more engineering information available regarding the Alignments A and B (or something in between), all of the factors necessary to best locate the M-K Connector Road in the area of the Kawaihae Road can not be assessed. Once the engineering and sight line issues are addressed, the M-K Connector Road should be located in such as manner as to minimize the adverse impact on adjoining residential properties.

**SUMMARY: CONSTRUCT ALIGNMENT A, SUBJECT TO ENGINEERING CONSIDERATIONS IN THE AREA OF THE KAIWAIHAE ROAD. AT THE SAME TIME, DETERMINE HOW THE ADVERSE IMPACT ON THE LALAMILO LOTS, SANDALWOOD, AND OTHER ADJOINING PROPERTIES CAN BE MINIMIZED OR ELIMINATED, SUCH AS BY WAY OF BERMS, FENCING, OR VEGETATION.**

OTHER IMPORTANT RELATED ISSUES:

- how to provide a path for pedestrian/bicycle traffic along this route;
- how to coordinate with the Lalamilo Housing Project now underway just west of the Connector Road intersection with the Kawaihae Road;
- how to address the traffic congestion in Waimea while the M-K Connector Road is under construction (e.g. request that Waimea residents avoid non-essential driving through town during critical periods; work with Parker School and HPA to provide bus service to the HPA Upper Campus for pickup and also to the rear of Parker Ranch Center (near the Little Juice Shack), where parents could pick up children without going through the center of Waimea; promote more car-pooling, lobby the Postal Service and in town banks to extend their hours).

