

NAWILIWILI-CIVIC CENTER-AHUKINI BIKE & PEDESTRIAN PATH

Meeting Minutes

Environmental Assessment Public Meeting #1

Tuesday, June 26, 2007

7:00 PM to 9:00 PM

Kaua`i War Memorial Convention Hall

MEETING OVERVIEW

Facilitator Roxanne MacDougall called the meeting to order and welcomed the group of over 50 attendees. She reviewed the meeting objectives, agenda and guidelines, as follows:

Objectives

- Review the project scope and process
- Present a visual tour of the potential alignments for the Nawiliwili-Civic Center-Ahukini path and related opportunities/challenges.
- Generate public input via questions and comments, as well as a small group exercise using maps

Agenda

- Meeting overview
- Update on the overall Nawiliwili-Anahola bike and pedestrian path project
- Presentation/visual tour for Nawiliwili-Civic Center-Ahukini
- Questions, answers, comments
- Group activity with maps
- Close, next steps

Meeting Guidelines

- Focus on Nawilwili-Civic Center-Ahukini phase only
- One speaker at a time, to facilitate listening and respect for others.

- Use the microphone for questions and comments, so that all can be heard and Hoike Public Television can record the meeting
- Get to the point in questions and comments, for time efficiency
- Send written input to:
Roxanne MacDougall
Box 328
Kapaa, HI 96746

Roxanne MacDougall introduced R. M. Towill Corporation (RMTC) consultant Jim Niermann, who then introduced consultants Chester Koga and Mike Okamoto from RMTC. Jim invited Doug Haigh, Chief of the Building Division in the Kaua`i Department of Public Works, to provide an update on the overall bike and pedestrian path project.

PRESENTATION ON NAWILIWILI-ANAHOLA BIKE AND PEDSTRIAN PATH

Before starting his presentation, Doug Haigh welcomed Councilman Tim Bynum and noted that Mayor Brian Baptiste was off-island and unable to attend. He expressed that the path project was a high priority for the Mayor.

Haigh, supported by a PowerPoint presentation, made the following points:

The Nawiliwili-Anahola path vision was first identified in the 1980's and was incorporated into the Hawai`i bike plan in the 1990's. Mayor Baptiste stresses that Kaua`i's path project is in part driven by the need for preserving and protecting shoreline access forever. Lands that had been open to the public during the days of the plantations had been sold and many were being closed off. Haigh showed several photos of the beautiful and varied terrain along Kaua`i's eastern shore.

Haigh gave a synopsis of the phases of the Kaua`i project:

- Phase I Lydgate Park, 2.5 miles. The community effort in building the Kamalani Bridge served to provide the first path funding, via a match for volunteer labor. An abused area was restored and access for fishermen was preserved.
- Phase II Kapa`a to Kealia, 4.3 miles, including bridges and road amenities. Today the Planning Commission approved all 5 rest areas under controversy, so the project can be completed, hopefully this year.
- Phase III Lydgate Park to Lihi Boat Ramp, 2 miles. The Environmental Assessment was completed April of this year. SMA permit requests will be submitted soon, after the completion of the Findings Of No Significant Impact (FONSI). This phase will include a connector path up Kawaihau Road.
- Phase IV Ahukini Landing to Lydgate Park, 5 miles. The Environmental Assessment is ongoing. Permitting will follow. A special fourth public meeting addressed issues related to the preferred alignment along the Wailua Golf Course, next to Kuhio Highway.
- Phase V Kuna Bay to Anahola, 3 miles. The Environmental Assessment started in 2006. A first public meeting was held in 2006, which raised community concerns.

Department of Hawaiian Homelands incorporated public comment in their planning and is preparing for a second public meeting.

Phase VI Nawiliwili Park-Lihue Civic Center – Ahukini Landing, 8 miles. The Environmental Assessment process has begun. This meeting is part of that process.

Haigh pointed out that although this meeting is focused on phase VI, he is available to answer any questions on the overall project.

PRESENTATION ON THE NAWILIWILI-CIVIC CENTER-AHUKINI BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN PATH ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SCOPE, PROCESS AND VISUAL TOUR

Jim Niermann reviewed an aerial map showing the entire path project and where the Nawiliwili-Civic Center- Ahukini path will fit in. He then reviewed a close-up map of that section, with the three destination points highlighted. The following background information was provided:

The consultant role is:

- Coordinate with project participants and guide project progress
- Provide technical expertise
- Serve as a tool for the County and Kaua`i community
- Foster community participation and input

The consultants are neutral in that they focus on what is best for the path planning from a technical standpoint, but they are not neutral in that they view bike and pedestrian paths as being beneficial to the community and support their development.

The scope of work is:

- Select path alignment and amenities
- Prepare an Environmental Assessment
- Prepare applications for land use approvals
- Prepare a scope of work for the design phase

The basis for selection of a preferred alignment and amenities includes:

- Site opportunities and constraints
- Public input and preferences
- Land owner participation (private, county, state, federal) – very important
- Draft EA assessment of environmental inputs of route alternatives
- Regulatory considerations and land use approvals

The purpose and need for an environmental assessment (EA) are driven by:

- Hawai`i Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 343
- National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA)

Use of public funds and lands (federal and County funding) triggers the EA requirement. Several of the required environmental permits (Special Management Area permit, Conservation District Use Application) also trigger the EA requirement.

The tasks related to preparing the Environmental Assessment are:

- Data collection and mapping
- Special studies: archaeology, flora, fauna
- Evaluation of project impacts
- Statutory clearances: CWA Section 401, 404, DOT Section 4(f), CZM, ESA, NHPA Section 106
- Responses to comments from the community, public agencies, and private organizations

Land use approvals required:

- Special Management Area permit (SMA)
- Shoreline Certification
- Shoreline Setback Variance (SSV)
- Conservation District Use Application (CDUA)

RMTC prepares the applications, but can not guarantee the approvals.

Tasks for Design Phase scope of work, to be included in the Environmental Assessment:

- Prepare conceptual plans for engineering work.
- Prepare a map of the preferred path route(s) with existing conditions and constraints
- Prepare a maintenance and management plan report

Chart of project process: See **Attachment 1**.

There will be a 30 day comment period between the draft Environmental Assessment and the final Environmental Assessment. Public meeting #2 will be in late August, to review the draft. Public meeting #3 will be in October or November, to review the final. Permits will take 4-6 months after attaining the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The project is scheduled for completion March 2008.

Mr. Niermann then reviewed several aerial maps showing a variety of potential routes, adding the following comments:

- Alternatives to consider include routes on or along existing streets, through undeveloped areas such as the lands makai of the airport, and the Nawiliwili stream valley.
- One objective of the plan is to ensure that the path meets accessibility standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) which allows a maximum slope of 8.33%.
- The alignment from the Ninini Point lighthouse to Ahukini Landing appears simple to achieve, but there are many issues that require consideration, including four major landowners: DLNR, DOT, Kaua'i Lagoons, and the Coast Guard; and existing uses, including fishing, grazing, construction activities, off-roading, ATV and motorcycle use, illegal dumping, and other activities.
- The path from the lighthouse to Nawiliwili Park will present challenges, including a steep grade and traffic, as well as landowner participation.
- Rice Street is problematic due to the steep grades and narrow corridor.

- A master plan is currently being developed by the County for the Lihue Civic Center. A separate project is also being undertaken to develop urban design guidelines. The path project will be coordinated with these efforts.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS, COMMENTS (some quoted, some paraphrased)

Q/C I am glad we have the ability to provide early input. Regarding Ka`ana Road and the Gulch, who owns them? What are the issues? The gulch looks like a nice option.

A Ka`ana Road is on Grove Farm land. The design standards are already in an ordinance. The bike and pedestrian pathways will be governed by that. We initially envisioned extending the path along the street, with a four foot sidewalk, but the Grove Farm section has a different design proposal. That road is going through and will be a logical extension of the path. Nawiliwili Gulch has several landowners and we are now contacting them.

Q/C There is an old railroad line through the gulch. Is the plan to follow that line?

A The plan has not progressed to that level. We are aware of the railroad easement and grade. From the mill we can trace it back to Kalena Street. Rails to trails is a good concept.

C Some of it still has old tracks, or new tracks have been added. The rails are there.

Q/C When you follow an existing public road that doesn't have a lot of space on it, what would the plan be? Would you actually look to widen the road and add a bike lane or is it going to be one of those little lines with signs, going through what is now parking?

A There are a lot of different possible treatments and it comes down to choices that are very apparent, such as Rice Street. The only way to put a real bike path on that road is to condemn land and widen the right way. But consider the intense development along there. Just putting up signage is not an effective route. We have to take all of this into consideration when picking a route. We need to look at creative alternatives on other streets. We also need to be realistic when there is only so much space.

Q/C I am curious about widening the road. Is that considered ADA compliant for wheel chairs to go on a road?

A No. Not to go on the road. They would be on sidewalks or a path only. Then you are talking about grades, certain minimum width, to allow for wheelchairs and two way Traffic.

Q/C After you start developing the plans, please indicate the areas for comfort stations and hales. Then the public would know ahead of time where you are going to have it and would not be surprised. Put it on your maps.

A We would like you to help us put it on the maps tonight and then the subsequent maps will show it. Absolutely yes, we can learn from past issues.

C My family are longtime residents of this area and I am very concerned about it.

Q/C From Thomas Noyes, Chairman of the Kaua'i Path Committee Related to the build out of Phase II and the shoreline permit issues, there is a window of opportunity between shoreline permitting and building. Is this in your scope of work?

A Shoreline certification is good for one year. Then you need to re-certify. Within that window you have to get a shoreline setback variance for improvements within 40 feet of the shoreline. Building permits are not within our scope, but would also have to happen within that time period.

C From Doug Haigh, Chief of the Building Division
Shoreline certification is necessary for a Special Management Area permit, which is managed by the Planning Department and Planning Commission. They put conditions on it and it is up to them as to whether shoreline is to be recertified during the building process. We rely on them to make those conditions. So the permit that specifically triggered the shoreline survey is the SMA use permit. It is the conditions put on the use permit which will trigger whether or not we re-certify prior to actual building permits. (at this time, Haigh introduced Patrick Kaihara, Department of Public Works construction manager who will be very much involved in this phase of the path.)

Q/C In regard to the Gulch, I think it would be helpful to get maps from the Kaua'i Historical Society. I would be willing to help with this. They have a lot of old maps.

A That would be great. It would show us old routes. We'll exchange contact information.

Q/C The gulch route sounds like a really cool and beautiful recreational path, but I live right on Rice Street and I think it is more practical or useful for all of us right there in the center of Lihue to be connected to the path, like is being done with Kawaihau Road. The sidewalks on Rice street are too small, narrow. Parking lanes are on both sides. Let shoppers park in parking lots. Would you consider using the street better, on one side?

A Absolutely. We have right of way. It is a tradeoff. A collective decision. A viable Treatment alternative.

Q/C Go further to Chiefs Middle School, the shopping area. Roads are wide and workable.

A The larger vision for the overall path is that it would continue to link all sides of Lihue and form networks that meet transportation needs.

Q/C From the airport to the Civic Center, have you considered going through that neighborhood in back?

A Yes, we looked at it. It is on our map. Please add your comments. We need your input.

Q/C Get it done now! A 1990 National Geographic magazine has a good article about bike paths. I recommend it to all doubters. This path is going to be one of the most wonderful things that have ever happened to this island, bar none. Our young people will go “wow, those folks had vision. They did the right thing.” Get it done.

Q/C There are a lot of fishermen at Ahukini. Will this path eliminate vehicular access for them? If the path is multi use for animals and not vehicles, what will be the impact? Was thought given the a route by the Menehune Fish Pond? I live in Nawiliwili Gulch. The road barely has room for one vehicle, no parking, a challenge. If you follow the stream, you are in a flood plain. Have you considered these costs?

A Fishing access is important to preserve. We will address use conflicts. In shared use, different segments will have different users, maybe separate paths in places. Safety is the priority, along with liability, health and wellness. These are all very important elements. The narrow road is an issue. It may not work. We will look at it.

Q/C Thomas Noyes
At a Phase III meeting, Wailua Houselots residents voiced concerns about not being informed early enough. Councilman Rapozo recommended mailing to all residences and businesses within 500 feet of any potential alignment.

A We are aware of this. For this meeting we mailed out over 100 letters to addresses within 300 feet. We will work with the County on this. The goal is to get as many people out as soon as possible. Please tell people you know.

Q/C I am an advocate of the gulch route. I walked the whole trail. Building in flood plains is common. There is an opportunity to go through wonderful 12 foot culverts. Low cost, with drop dead beauty. An attraction for community and visitors.

A There definitely are examples of working with floodways. There are additional costs. Safety is the main concern, as well as not exacerbating more flooding.

Q/C What is the mileage from the lighthouse to Ahukini? Will each end be accessible for Parking?

A It's about 2 miles. There is parking at Ahukini. The lighthouse is controlled by the Coast Guard, so we would need to discuss this with them.

Q/C Is Kaua'i Lagoons on board to allow parking?

A It is too early to say. We have had only general discussions with them.

Q/C Please consider providing dog waste bags and trash cans.

A This is certainly something to consider. We have not gotten that far yet. Please add it to the amenities on the maps. There are maintenance considerations.

SMALL GROUP MAPPING EXERCISE

Attendees broke into self-selected groups at tables provided with large color aerial maps, colored markers and Post-it notes. The assignment was:

- Mark special and significant places in green
- Mark preferred trail alignments in blue
- Mark desired amenities and locations in red
- Use post-it notes to provide more detail

Approximately 45 minutes were provided for this exercise. Consultants worked with table groups to get input and answer questions. The maps were collected and will be used in developing the Environmental Assessment.

CLOSE, ADJOURNMENT

An announcement was made thanking attendees for their active participation and valuable input. They were reminded of the contact information for RMTC and Roxanne MacDougall, via a PowerPoint slide.

CONTACTS:

Prime Consultant:

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Public Communication Project Consultant:

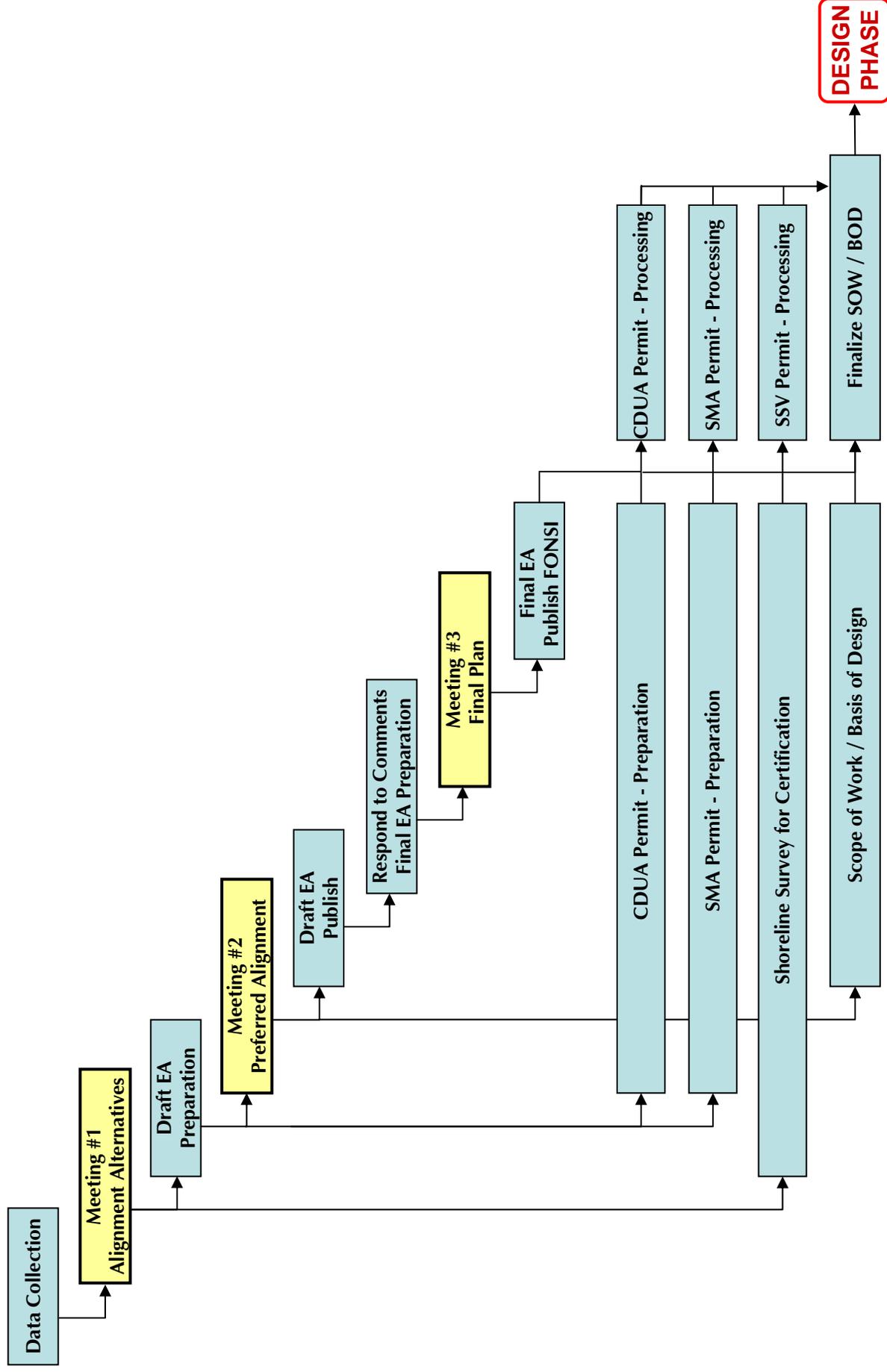
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PROJECT PROCESS

Nāwiliwili-Civic Center-Ahukini Bike and Pedestrian Path



ATTACHMENT 2

Map Mark-Up Comments – Transcription of comments recorded on maps:

Map 1

- Opposed to eliminating parking on Rice Street. Provide several off-street parking lots for Rice Street businesses before eliminating any street parking.
- Ninini Point is a popular fishing spot – allowing bike/peds to park in area will limit fisher's access.
- Keep bike/ped path on Mauka side of access roads – keep makai side for fishermen/vehicles (lands makai of airport).
- Keep access road between Ninini Point – Ahukini open to vehicular access.
- Provide restroom / trash receptacle at Ahukini Landing.

Map 2

- Selected Nawiliwili Stream route and partner with Grove Farm Homestead railway concept.
- Use existing Kauai Lagoons roads to Ninini Point then to Ahukini – allow fishermen access (share the road)
- Connect Civic Center via Kaana so there are more ways to the airport.
- Suggest all paths have plenty of trash cans and dog dropping bag dispensers.
- Art / poetry on pathway (e.g. Tacoma Parks, Sydney-Paramatta)
- Fruit trees along pathway.
- Create trail head / provide amenities at Ninini Point Lighthouse.
- Keep area between Ninini Point and Ahukini rural.
- No picnic pavilions along shore anywhere. (Response: “Why?” marked on map).
- Mauka gravel road for fishermen.
- Makai path for bike / pedestrian / vehicles cross (path) to fishing spots.
- No picnic pavilions.

Map 3

- Key is to work with Kauai Lagoons on integrating with their project.
- How to get up here? (Nawiliwili Stream alignment).
- Is Nawiliwili Road a safe route?
- Opportunity to improve Nawiliwili Park.
- (Re: coastal pedestrian path at Kauai Lagoons) Don't have to be right on the coast. Can be up higher so its easier. Make the path a condition of private permit.
- Kaana Road is preferred route between Ahukini / Airport and Civic Center.

Map 4

- Shut down one uphill lane on Rice Street.
- Avoid Rice Street. (Additional note of agreement)
- Consider accessing Nawiliwili Stream gulch through Kapena Street.

Map 5

- No comments.

Map 6 (Redline of various alternative routes)

- No Picnic pavilions on the shore.
- Keep bike/ped on mauka side of access road. Leave makai side for fishers/vehicles.