

MacDougall

and Associates

Nawiliwili to Anahola Bike/Pedestrian Path

In 1994, the Hawai`i Department of Transportation completed a statewide master plan. Based on public input at community meetings on Kaua`i, a 16-mile coastal bike and pedestrian trail from Nawiliwili to Anahola was included in the plan.

In 1999, with the impetus of the Lydgate Park Master Plan and with active support from Mayor Marianne Kusaka, the County was able to secure \$2.6 million of Federal Highway Administration funds for the first section of the trail. County funding and volunteer labor for the bridge construction provided a match for Federal funds. After completion of the project, the County was reimbursed for almost all of the costs.

This 2.5 mile, 10-foot wide concrete path runs from the Wailua River to the Kamalani Kai Bridge. In conjunction with this phase of the overall path project, additional amenities were added: landscaping, a campground, refurbishing of an old restroom facility, new restrooms with showers, and an arts pavilion. All are linked by the path and are key elements of the overall plan for expanding Lydgate Park.

Also in 1999, then Councilmember Bryan Baptiste chaired public meetings to get input for planning the coastal trail. The path was named Ala Hele Makalae, “the path to walk or to go along the coast”. An advisory group was formed and continues to meet. Today, Mayor Baptiste is a strong advocate for the project. The overall goals for the Nawiliwili to Anahola bike/pedestrian path are:

- Protect shoreline access for residents and visitors, including those with mobility impairments.
- Promote health and fitness.
- Enhance access to culturally significant areas.
- Preserve historic railroad corridors.
- Provide alternative transport routes.

In 2001, Kealia Makai Holdings, with Justin Hughes as manager, dedicated 7.23 acres of Kealia Beach lands to the County of Kaua`i, for the purposes of creating a public park. The County budgeted \$75,000 in Capital Improvement Funds for the bike/pedestrian path.

In 2002 the Kealia Makai Property Owners Association, with Tom McCloskey as manager, dedicated 59 acres along the old cane road from Kealia Beach to Ahihi Point near what is known as “Donkey Beach”. The County received a \$200,000 HUD grant for the planning of the Kapaa-Kealia path, with the support of Senator Daniel Inouye.

These land donations were valued at \$7.4 million and used in 2003 as a “soft match” for the approval of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funding for the entire trail. A soft match is the contribution a county makes to the overall cost of a project, which gives the government the incentive to then make federal funds available. The contributions may be in the form of land donations or community labor, as in the building of the Kamalani Kai bridge. The value of these donated lands were critical in giving impetus and funding to Kaua`i’s coastal trail project.

Also in 2003, FHWA approved a \$10 million budget for the Kapa`a to Kealia section of the trail and \$250,000 for the Lydgate to Kapa`a environmental assessment. In 2004, FHWA approved \$500,000 for the Ahukini Landing to Lydgate Park environmental assessment

FHWA provides what are called “Transportation Enhancement Funds”. These funds are to be used for providing facilities for pedestrians and bicycles, safety and educational activities for pedestrians and cyclists, acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites, scenic/historic highway programs, landscaping and historic preservation. The Nawiliwili to Anahola Bike/Pedestrian Path fits exactly into this category of federal funds. In addition, FHWA provides congestion mitigation and air quality improvement program funding.

The federal funds provided to the Kaua`i project are designated specifically for bike/pedestrian trails. They can not be used for other highway related needs. The County does not have the discretion to use these funds for any other purpose. The total cost of the entire trail system is anticipated to be in the range of \$30 million. This cost is based on the need for each segment of the trail to have an environmental assessment phase and a design/build phase. Each requires the expertise of numerous professionals in the fields of environmental science, Hawaiian culture, archeology, engineering, construction, bridge design, public communications and the complex permitting process. Kaua`i is fortunate to be among the communities selected to receive these targeted federal funds.

The County of Kaua`i will contribute capital improvement funds where needed and when available. It will also fund the on-going maintenance of the path system through the budget of the Parks Department. Design and construction specifications are for a highly cost-effective, low-maintenance path and related improvements.

The Kaua`i Coastal Path will be completed in **six sections**, each of which will require its own **environmental assessment report process** and **design/build process**, both offering a series of three public meetings. Therefore, **each section of the trail will have a total of six public meetings** during its development.

The environmental assessment project team will include public feedback in their research to determine **three alternate alignments** and amenities for the path. The County will then decide which recommendation to accept. It will hire a **design/build project team to finish the design and complete the construction**, also with public education and input.

Phase I, 2.5 miles through Lydgate Park, is now completed and being enjoyed by residents and visitors.

Phase II will run from Lihi Boat Ramp in Kapa`a to Ahihi Point at Kuna Bay, or Donkey Beach. This 4.3 mile stretch will include the improvement of the existing cane haul bridge and cane road, as well as addition of an equestrian trail from Kealia Beach to Kuna Bay. The environmental assessment has been completed, the County has selected an alignment option and the contract has been awarded for the design/build, which is expected to be completed in 2006 or early 2007. This section includes the improvement or replacement of four bridges.

Phase III will run 2 miles from Lydgate Park to Lihi Boat Ramp in Kapa`a. The environmental assessment is in process. Construction and land acquisition funds have been allocated for fiscal year 2005-2006. The design/build team has not yet been selected.

Phase IV covers 4 miles from Ahukini Landing to Lydgate Park. The environmental assessment process began in May 2005 and is expected to be completed by year end. Construction and land acquisition funds have been allocated for fiscal year 2005-2007. This section of the trail will include Hanama`ulu Beach Park, open lands between the park and the Radisson, and the Wailua Golf Course. The recommended alignments will be greatly dictated by the geographic features and terrain along the coast.

Phase V will be the 3 miles from Kuna Bay to Anahola. An environmental assessment will begin in 2005, with construction projected for 2006.

Phase VI will connect the path from Ahukini to Nawiliwili, 8 miles, the longest stretch of the overall project. The environmental assessment will begin 2006 and construction is projected for 2008.

The Nawiliwili to Anahola Bike/Pedestrian Path will be one-of-a-kind, not only in Hawaii, but throughout the world. It will provide coastal access, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and will offer scenic views, picnic pavilions and restroom facilities all along the way. It will be a treasure that Kaua`i residents and visitors will be able to enjoy for many years to come.