

AHUKINI-LYDGATE BIKE & PEDESTRIAN PATH

Environmental Assessment Public Meeting #2

Monday August 22, 2005

7:00 PM to 9:00 PM

Lydgate Park Pavilion

MEETING NOTES

NOTE: THIS EVENT WAS FILMED BY HOIKE PUBLIC TELEVISION AND WILL BE AIRED ON CHANNEL 52. CONTACT HOIKE FOR THE SCHEDULE.

WELCOME AND MEETING OVERVIEW

Project Team Public Communications Consultant and meeting facilitator, Roxanne MacDougall opened the meeting and reviewed the agenda and objectives, which were:

- Provide information on potential path alignments
- Answer questions and receive input on proposed or new alignments, significant places and desired path amenities.

OVERALL MULTI-USE PATH HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Doug Haigh, Chief of the County Building Division and Project Manager for the Nawiliwili to Anahola Bil and Pedestrian Path Project provided background on the origins of the project. Details on this information may be found in the County of Kaua'i website, on a page devoted to the bike and pedestrian path project.

The page address is www.kauai.gov/bikepath/aspx.

AHUKINI-LYDGATE PATH PRESENTATION

Lead consultant, Merle Grimes, of Merle D. Grimes LLC, presented an extensive discussion of the options and issues related to this phase of the path. A PowerPoint slide show was used to illustrate the geography and simulate various ways the path might be designed. Six maps were taped to tables, so that participants could look at them and write comments during the presentation.

Several path alignment options were discussed, including:

- A totally coastal pathway, running from Ahukini Landing to the Kamalani Kai Bridge, along the ocean. This option will require beach restoration along the Wailua Golf Course, where erosion is a major problem.
- A route that moves inland to go around the golf course along the highway.
- A route that partially goes along the ocean side of the golf course and also goes along the highway, with a tunnel to move pedestrians and cyclists across the golf course, with minimal disturbance to golfers.
- A route that avoids the golf course entirely by going mauka of the highway.

During the presentation, four members of the consulting team provided additional information. Sara Simmons-Fife, Sweetgrass Design, described the complex permitting process requires as part of the environmental assessment. Charles Fletcher, PhD, University of Hawaii coastal expert, discussed the cause of beach erosion and the possibilities available for a win/win solution that protects the golf course while providing a coastal path. He stressed that beach erosion can not be stopped, but it can be delayed and reduced by periodic replenishing of the dunes.

Frank Sullivan, golf course designer, spoke about the use of tunnels in golf courses. He has implemented a tunnel at Pua Kea golf course.

Mike Dega, SCS Archeology, spoke about the historically and culturally significant sites along the ocean side path. There are numerous prehistoric sites, as well as plantation era sites. These would be protected and educational signage installed along the path.

Merle Grimes concluded the presentation, with a summation of the options. He then opened the floor to questions, answers and comments.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS:

C- If we don't restore the dunes, we will lose part of the golf course. This is the simple fact that we must recognize. We don't have a choice.

Q - What about the moving of boulders? Several years ago, the county had issues with this.

A - We will not be moving existing boulders. They will be buried in the sand.

Q - What are the options for connecting with the Kamalani Kai Bridge? Can we consider a cable bridge? What about the wheel chair area?

A - We are intending to design a bridge compatible with the existing bridge. We can consider a cable bridge and will ensure wheelchair access.

C - Please make the path accessible with dogs, and horses if possible. Allow dogs on leashes so people have a place to walk their dogs.

C - The Kapaa Business Association is in support of the path. The speaker had some concerns about putting the path along the golf course lower to the beach, in order not to block the view from the golf course. The tunnel is better than going along the dunes. There are safety issues with people potentially getting hit by golf balls. The fence and protection takes away golfers' view of the ocean. This is one of the top public golf courses in the country. We don't want to hurt this position.

C - I prefer the coastal route. I also prefer that you keep the signs low to the ground so they don't intrude upon the views and environment.

Q - Why would you consider any non-coastal options? Other options are not for pedestrians and not true to the "Beach access forever" slogan. Also, the county is overwhelmed now. How will they handle litter, vandals, unauthorized vehicles, etc?
Will there be a ranger?

A - A maintenance plan will be included with the environmental assessment. It is difficult to determine costs until the path alignment is selected. The issues you raise will be explored with County officials. Vehicles can be locked out. Other communities have formed non-profits to support the maintenance, safety and enjoyment of the pathways. Kaua'i could consider such a model.

C - "Undesirables" will be on and around the path at night, making it unsafe. It is hard to stop them.

Comment submitted in writing at the end of the meeting:

New TEA funding just passed. More money for cycle/pedestrian projects comes down to the state DOT in the millions. Use that money for the Kuhio Highway cycle/pedestrian improvements later (make the State DOT accountable). Use this money, the current TEA funds, for the coastal path.

Comment telephoned after the meeting:

Please address the issue of range golf balls which land on the beach. These balls would be a hazard for those using the path. Make sure the fence is high enough and the screen is in good repair.

SMALL GROUP EXERCISE

The participants were asked to break into small groups. Each group had one or more project team members with them. The groups worked with the black and white area maps taped to the tables. They were given colored markers. Their assignment:

- 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

There was active participation and a wealth of feedback provided. The consultants collected all maps and will process the feedback provided.

FINAL UNOFFICIAL “STRAW” VOTE

To get a sense of where people were in their preferences at the end of the meeting, the audience was polled on their choice of path options. The results were:

- Coast path only - 27 votes
- Tunnel options - 4 votes
- All highway option - 0 votes
- Mauka option - 0 votes.

CLOSE

Merle Grimes thanked the participants for their excellent feedback. The third and final meeting will be held in the late fall/early winter. The date will be announced through multiple media, including the web page www.kauai.gov/bikepath.aspx.