

AHUKINI-LYDGATE BIKE & PEDESTRIAN PATH

Environmental Assessment Public Meeting #3

Tuesday, May 23, 2006

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:

- Overview and update the Nawiliwili-Anahola Bike & Pedestrian Path
- Review the Ahukini-Lydgate Bike & Pedestrian Path Draft Environmental Assessment
- Present a visual tour of the Ahukini-Lydgate preferred alignment
- Receive public comment and answer questions

NAWILIWILI-ANAHOLA BIKE & PEDESTRIAN PATH

Doug Haigh, Chief of the County Building Division and Project Manager for the Nawiliwili to Anahola Bike and Pedestrian Path Project provided background on the origins and scope of the overall project. He gave an update on progress on the various segments of the path. An overview article about the project may be found in the County Kaua'i website, on a page devoted to the bike and pedestrian path project. The page address is www.kauai.gov/bikepath/asp.

AHUKINI-LYDGATE BIKE & PEDESTRIAN PATH DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Lead consultant, Merle Grimes, of Merle D. Grimes LLC, reviewed the Ahukini-Lydgate project and the Draft Environmental Assessment, which is published on the website listed above. This document was created over several months of research and comment from government agencies and the general public. A PowerPoint slide show was used to illustrate the path alignment options, and their pros and cons.

Three path alignment options were evaluated in the Draft EA:

- A totally coastal pathway, running from Ahukini Landing to the Kamalani Kai Bridge, along the ocean. This option would require beach restoration along the Wailua Golf Course, where erosion is a major problem. This option is not viable, due to environmental and economic concerns expressed by a number of agencies.
- A route that moves inland to go around the golf course along the highway. Portions of this route are included in the preferred alignment, to be discussed below.
- A route that avoids the golf course entirely by going “mauka” of the highway, across the highway toward the mountains. This route is not viable due to safety concerns related to crossing a very busy road with fast-moving traffic.

AHUKINI-LYDGATE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PREFERRED ALIGNMENT

Merle Grimes went on to describe the preferred alignment which has emerged from consultant research and extensive input from governmental agencies and the general public. He took the audience on a visual tour of the path. The exact path and design details have not been determined at this time. The final EA will be accompanied by 30% design drawings, as well as a maintenance plan.

The path will move from the Ahukini fishing pier, around Hanama`ulu Bay, across the restored old haul cane bridge, along ocean bluffs to lands south of the Hilton Hotel. It will then move inland and run along the ocean side of the Kuhio Highway all the way to Lydgate Park. Grimes provided considerable detail on how this route can best be accomplished. He also showed where beach access and public amenities might be located.

He ended his presentation with a brief discussion on a maintenance plan to accompany the Final Environmental Assessment.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS

Primarily fielded by Merle Grimes

Comment:

This is a good compromise. I support it. I want to clarify some details. It is possible to go over or under the highway. It can be done well, as in other areas of the country. You could use the high ground on the mauka side to help the grade. At Hilton Road, you could go under the highway, via a trench. The mauka route does have advantages, including scenery. I also think you are underestimating the difficulty of the 10th hole bottleneck. But, all in all, this is a good solution. It does not go through wetlands.

Answer:

Yes, we intentionally bypass wetlands. We will do a grade elevation to go above the wetlands.

Question:

Why couldn't you run the path from Marine Camp along the coast to the golf course?

Answer:

There are concerns. This is a monk seal area. We got a lot of agency comments on this. It is a known wetland. The resort will give us the land to go around it. This is the best option.

Question:

What about night use of the path? Is it allowed? Will there be lights? I am concerned about the shearwater birds and the lights.

Answer:

There will be no lights, except at previously existing comfort stations. Any lights will be shielded for birds.

Question:

There are shearwater colonies near the path. Who enforces the dog leash law?

Answer:

Most paths run on self-enforcement by users, with cell phones. This will not be the role of the ranger. The Draft EA went to the police and fire departments for comment. The design phase will deal with access for them to the path.

Doug Haigh, Department of Public Works, Project Manager:

The County ordinance allows dogs in public parks only by permit and on leash. The Department of Community Assistance, which governs parks, is currently establishing policy regarding the path system.

Question:

For safety purposes, will there be any location signs or mile markers, so that people who need assistance can be located?

Answer:

Now that the path system is growing, mile markers will make sense. This is a design decision. There will be public meetings related to design where this could be suggested.

Comment from Thomas Noyes, head of Ke Ala Hele Makalae bike and pedestrian path committee:

I invite all of you are interested in being on our contact list to provide me with your email address. My address is thomasnoyes@hawaiiantel.net.

Comment from Mimi Ulry, DLNR and NOAH monk seal coordinator:

I am concerned about the Nukoli`I access. This is a big seal haul out area. Bikers will more easily be attracted to the seals. What will be done? Also, the old comfort station is in great disrepair.

Answer:

We would love to work with you to do whatever is appropriate. Signs can actually be an attractive nuisance, encouraging people to go to the seals. The comfort station is privately owned.

Question:

What assurance do we have that native plants will be protected?

Answer:

It is the rule of thumb to avoid native plants. The design phase will have a more specific alignment where we would know which plants will be affected. We do have experts to assist us, including Kaua`i Nursery and NTBG.

Doug Haigh:

We are committed to use native plants and to preserve those there.

Question;

Who is liable for accidents from golf balls hitting people?

Answer:

There will be a special fence, minimum 10 feet high, designed based on the play of the ball. We will work with the golf course management and staff on this.

Question:

What will be done about flooding in the low area near the 12th fairway?

Answer:

We were there during the floods and know the problem. This will also be a design issue.

Question:

Why are you hugging the road right up to the park?

Answer;

We need to go around the property of the Department of Hawaiian Homelands.

CLOSE

Merle Grimes and Doug Haigh thanked the participants for their excellent feedback. The next step will be the completion of the Final Environmental Assessment, which will be submitted to the County to assist the decision-making of elected officials.