

AHUKINI-LYDGATE BIKE & PEDESTRIAN PATH

Environmental Assessment Public Meeting #4

**Monday, February 26, 2007
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. NOTES WILL ALSO BE POSTED ON THE COUNTY WEBSITE AT WWW.KAUAI.GOV/BIKEPATH

WELCOME AND MEETING OVERVIEW

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

- REVIEW the Ahukini-Lydgate Bike & Pedestrian Path Environmental Assessment process, alignment options and preferred alignment selection
- FOCUS on the Wailua Golf Course alignment and design alternatives
- RESPOND to community questions and comments

SPEAKERS

Merle Grimes, Merle D. Grimes LLC, lead project consultant
Steve Kyono, Hawaii Department of Transportation
Ed Okamoto, Wailua Golf Course Manager
Pat Phung, Federal Highway Administration
Thomas Noyes, Na Ala Hele Makalae committee chairman

AHUKINI-LYDGATE BIKE & PEDESTRIAN PATH ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROJECT

Merle Grimes, supported by a PowerPoint presentation, provided background on the scope of the overall project, including the potential path alignments that were considered in the Draft EA. This document was created over several months of research and comment from government agencies and the general public.

Three path alignment options were evaluated in the Draft EA:

- A coastal pathway, running from Ahukini Landing to the Kamalani Kai Bridge in Lydgate Park. 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 and shoreline experts.

- 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. This position was supported by comments from Steve Kyono of HDOT.

Merle Grimes then reviewed the rationale for the recommended preferred alignment, which is in the Draft EA. This draft may be seen in the County website on page www.kauai.gov/bikepath.

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 Final EA will be accompanied by approximately 30% plan drawings, as well as a maintenance plan. The design and engineering phase of the project will be completed by an engineering firm during the next phase of the project. Design and engineering is not within the scope of work for the Environmental phase that is being completed by Merle D. Grimes, llc. The future engineering firm will be tasked with providing a specific alignment plan, based on specific site conditions and guidelines included in the Final Environmental Assessment and 30% complete plans.

The basic description of the Preferred Alignment for the Ahukini to Lydgate Path follows:

The path will move from the Ahukini fishing pier, around Hanama`ulu Bay, and cross the existing concrete cane haul bridge over the Hanamaulu Stream, then continue on the abandoned cane haul rail road alignment above Hanamaulu Beach Park and onto the property known as the Moody Property and along ocean bluffs to lands south of the Hilton Hotel, again, following abandoned cane haul roads when appropriate. The path continues along the mauka edge of Hilton Lane to the Wailua Golf Course where it will follow along the existing drainage canal and Kuhio Highway all of the way to Leho Drive. The path continues makai on Leho to Nehe Road where it will follow on the south edge of the road until it connects with the existing path at Lydgate Park.

Merle Grimes provided considerable detail on how this route can best be accomplished. He also showed where beach access and public amenities might be located.

WAILUA GOLF COURSE REACH

Project ideals that guide decision making were reviewed by Merle Grimes:

- Safety concerns
- Provide alternative form of transportation
- Build community bonds
- Meet community needs
- Americans with Disabilities Act compliance
- Compatible with other path phases
- Durable and high quality materials
- Low maintenance design
- Create first-rate public amenity
- Improve and/or sustain the coastal environment
- Cultural education
- Compatible with Wailua Golf Course
- Maximized existing amenities, such as the Hanama`ulu Beach Park and railroad bridge
- Compatible with existing path amenities, such as Lydgate Park pathways

Merle Grimes then reviewed the elements of the golf course reach that the EA will include. He also drew upon the expertise of Steve Kyono, Hawaii Department of Transportation and Ed Okamoto, Wailua Golf Course manager, in support of the analysis and decision-making, which resulted in the selection of the preferred alignment. Mr. Kyono stated that the mauka alignment would be much too costly, the relocating of the golf course entrance across from KCCC's entrance would be beneficial and safe (no traffic light is planned at this time) and any future highway widening would have to occur on the mauka side. Mr. Okamoto said that golf course impacts would not reduce the course quality and that locating the path along the highway to Leho Drive would eliminate a number of potential concerns.

Merle Grimes reviewed the following conditions and guidelines will be included in the Final Environmental Assessment:

- Golf Course personnel will be consulted during all phases of the design process.
- The public will be provided opportunity to review and comment on proposed design solutions.
- There will be no loss of fairways.
- Safety will be improved for automobiles turning into and out of the golf course parking lot.
- Aesthetics of the golf course entrance will be improved by a new entrance sign and lower parking lot, plus new landscaping, paving, and fencing
- Signs will be placed that state that the golf course is not a parking access location for the path
- There will be no net loss of parking stalls
- Overflow parking will be provided for
- There will be a buffer around the internment site
- Visual and noise pollution from Kuhio Highway will be reduced
- A designer with golf course experience will be part of the design team
- A guardrail will be placed along Kuhio Highway where appropriate to prevent autos from driving onto the path and golf course
- Measures will be taken to prevent people from accessing the golf course

- Horses will be banned from the golf course reach of the path
- Trees will be moved when necessary, not removed.
- Landscaping buffers, where appropriate, will be placed on the golf course side of fencing
- Construction fencing, and an approved construction staging and phasing plan, will minimize the negative impact during construction

In concluding his presentation, after reviewing general maintenance recommendations based on volunteer assistance for county parks employees, Merle Grimes opened the floor for discussion.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, WITH RESPONSES (PARAPHRASED)

- C: As a person who walks and occasionally bicycles this route, my option now is to be near cars going 50-60 mph. I am in complete support of this project, since now we have nothing but the highway.
- C: I am a golfer at this course several times a week. The 7th fairway goes to the out-of-bounds marker. You are taking part of the golf course at the 7th. At the 10th, golfers hit balls into the trees every day. You will take away the playability and quality of the golf course by making the 7th easier and negatively affecting the 10th. Golfers won't like it. We have the best municipal golf course in the whole country now. Public links tournaments have come here twice. You should go mauka with the path.
- R: Ed Okamoto
The path will infringe on the out-of-bounds for 7th and 10th. 7th is a par 3. We will still maintain the OB on 7 and 10. It will be tougher since narrower by 15-16 feet. My position is that the path has to be put as close to the highway as possible, even in the areas that are sloped. I am trying to preserve golf course integrity as much as possible. I don't think it will greatly impact our course. It is good that the decision was made to run along the highway to Leho Drive vs going around the 12th.
- Q: Is this path a county facility? If so, you will have problems with the union for using volunteer labor.
- R: Merle Grimes
Volunteers will only assist county workers, as they do at Lydgate Park right now.
- C: I am also a big walker and am very happy that this is happening.
- Q: What about fishing access, such as at Marine Camp?
- R: Merle Grimes
Nothing in this reach requires driving over the path. It goes along the side of Marine Camp Road. Fishing will not be adversely affected. We hope to improve the park there.
- Q: What about the path attracting homeless people, as we have now in the park?

- R: Merle Grimes
Kahalani condos had a problem with the homeless until the path went in. Generally, the homeless do not want to be beside a public path.
- Q: Why build on the drainage canal from the golf course? It floods regularly, now due to a fence under the bridge.
- R: Merle Grimes
This reach does not cross that canal. Drainage has always been a problem there.
- Q: Why do you always talk about the view of the ocean? Why not go mauka?
- R: Merle Grimes: As we just showed in the presentation, there is no safe way to cross the highway twice. We tried to find a safe, affordable way and failed. In addition, HDOT did not support any highway crossings.
- Q: Cars could drive on the path at the 7th fairway, yes?
- R: Merle Grimes: There will be a guardrail installed for safety.
- Q: What about 11th green access?
- R: Ed Okamoto: We will add a fence and gate, which will be open during the day.
- C: I have walked this area for 20 years. I appreciate that we are preserving this forever. This is a good compromise. May bring some good for the golf course. I am highly in favor.
- Q: I am not against the path, just against the highway route. What happens if the DOT decides to widen the highway?
- R: Steve Kyono:
Good question. In this area all alternatives are mauka, since we can not use public recreation lands.
- Q: Turn lanes for the golf course and KCCC, if aligned, will cause chaos. What happens to contra flow?
- R: Steve Kyono: This is an engineering issue. When it is warranted, we will consider this.
- Q: What is an EIS, vs an EA? Why no EIS required?
- R: Pat Phung, Federal Highways Administration:
An EA gauges significant impact. If warranted, an EIS would be done. This meeting tonight will help us decide what is next.

- Q: Why not reduce the speed limit to make the road safer and make it easier to negotiate that section?
- R: Merle Grimes: A traffic study would assess this and would be required before any action could be taken. This is part of the design phase.
- Q: What is the total mileage of this section and would it be possible to consider horses for the Marine Camp area? This has been a past use. I just want to get this request on the record.
- R: Merle Grimes: About 4.5 miles. Horses on the path would be dealt with in future work.
- C: By same participant shown in second comment: If you take away 7 and 10 rough, it does impact quality. Narrowness is not an improvement. Golfers hit balls over the trees. A wall will not be safe.
- R: Merle Grimes: In the design phase, canopies can be considered to protect users of the path in certain key areas.
- Q: Are there any plans for path access for Hanama`ulu residents? School?
- R: Merle Grimes: The best highway crossing is at Ahukini Road. This is a tough issue. The highway is a major problem. Better addressed in the design phase.
- C: I was disappointed that we could not go along the shoreline, but I like this and am excited. Let's build it.
- Q: I am excited about using the old train bridge. Can we keep the old pavilion design?
- R: Merle Grimes: Yes, this is the plan.
- C: I appreciate what you are doing. There are no kids here tonight. This is for them. It will be great to bring kids to the path.
- Q: I am really excited about the possibilities. This is an amazing process. How about a boardwalk on the shore for pedestrians?
- R: Merle Grimes: We looked at that with shoreline experts. Golfers were very opposed to an ocean side route. Shoreline erosion is an issue. It is an expensive option, with many challenges.
- Ed Okamoto: The coast route would create much loss for 1, 2 and 17, our signature hole. I was very much against it.

- C: My husband plays golf at Wailua. I enjoy seeing the golfers as I drive by. It is beautiful. Don't build a wall.
- C: I am impressed by effort to fin win/win. Put a top over for safety. Look for a pedestrian path along the shore. This is great. I am totally for it and looking forward.
- R: Merle Grimes: We can canopy, as mentioned. There is a type of "floating" boardwalk. This is preferable to social trails and ATV's on the dunes.
- Q: Could we do it without a boardwalk?
- R: Merle Grimes: It is possible, using signage. This will be important to study for a future walking-only path.
- C: Thanks, I voice my support. I am disappointed about the coast trail, but I understand why. I am afraid of the section along the highway, to bring my child there. I have been hit by a golf ball. Do cover the trail.
- R: Merle Grimes: The design phase criteria will include what types of fence, plus the requirement for a golf course designer.
- C: I commend you all. My wife and I drive here from Anahola everyday of the week, for years. Will leashed dogs be allowed?
- R: Thomas Noyes, Na Ala Hele Makalae Committee:
The path is a county park and currently dogs are not allowed in county parks. We are working on a permitting system for dogs and horses.
- C: I am in support of leashed dogs on the entire path.

NEXT STEPS

In closing the meeting, Merle Grimes reiterated that all comments will be included in the Final EA, to be submitted to the county and to the Federal Highways Administration. These entities will determine whether any further work will be needed. Once a Final EA is approved, it will be used to guide the design and engineering phase of the project. The design phase will determine the best way to implement the preferred alignment as presented at this meeting and in the Final EA, and will include more study and public input.

