



# **Transportation Agency**

**Fiscal Year 2025 Annual Report**

**July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025**

**Celia Mahikoa**  
Executive

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## TRANSPORTATION AGENCY

### I. MISSION STATEMENT

To provide the Kaua'i community accessible transportation services with professionalism and the Aloha spirit.

### II. AGENCY GOAL

#### A. Duties/Functions

To operate a transit bus system that offers an alternative means of mobility for Kaua'i's rural community and a paratransit bus system that effectively serves the elderly and persons with disabilities.

### III. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

#### A. Program Objectives

- To provide leadership and administrative support to effectively accomplish agency goals and responsibilities.
- To provide a safe and reliable transport from bus stop to bus stop and door to door by managing daily transit operations including personnel, fleet repair and maintenance, routes, schedules, dispatching and adhering to all Federal, State, and County rules and regulations.
- To formulate fixed-route bus schedules by addressing community needs.
- To manage independent mobility for transit dependent individuals by assessing travel needs, arranging travel requests, and providing travel training.

#### B. Program Highlights



#### *Our Mobility*

#### Progressive Investments in Customer Conveniences

This past year marked a period of meaningful progress and forward-thinking investment to improve the Kaua'i Bus customer experience. While our commitment to providing reliable, accessible transportation remains unchanged, we have taken important steps toward modernizing our services through the adoption of new digital initiatives. In addition to the recently implemented improved scheduling tools and real-time bus tracking, the new electronic fare payment system was activated in January 2025, which has resulted in \$76,997 in bus fares paid electronically, therefore reducing the amount of cash handling required. These enhancements are designed to better serve our riders—making transit more convenient, efficient,

and responsive to the evolving needs of our community. As we reflect on the year’s achievements and challenges, we remain focused on our mission: connecting people, strengthening communities and the economy, and building a smarter, more sustainable future for public transit on Kaua’i.

### Overcoming Staffing Challenges

Staffing for transit agencies across the United States has been a significant challenge in a post-COVID world. The County of Kaua’i Transportation Agency (also known as The Kaua’i Bus) is one of many struggling to overcome staffing obstacles. Fiscal Year 2024 saw some progress toward hiring and training bus drivers. That momentum has accelerated into FY 2025.

As of June 1, 2025, fifty-one (51) full-time drivers were employed with the Transportation Agency. That is the highest number of drivers since August 2023, when service reduction became necessary, with bus service on Sundays being cut.



*Our Home...*

### Community Engagement

The Kaua’i Bus was honored to participate in multiple events within our community. A few of the highlights are included below:

#### National Rural Transit Day

On July 16, 2024, the Transportation Agency participated in a country-wide event to recognize public transit providers. 35 employees signed the Rural Transit Day pledge, which affirms commitment to effective passenger interactions and support of the community. An online survey for riders was also a part of the event. Of the one-hundred and nine (109) responses, service from bus drivers was rated at 4.5 out of 5, service from dispatchers at 4.3, cleanliness of vehicles and facilities 4.5, and overall Kaua’i Bus service as a 4.3.

Survey respondents shared input on their priorities for bus service. More shuttle routes ranked highly among riders, followed by less wait time between route connections, more bus stops in residential areas, and increased mainline bus service during commuter hours ranking last of the four options. Riders felt that ridership could be improved primarily through extended service hours, followed by more bus frequency, and more bus stops. A common request from riders was also to bring back service on Sundays.

#### East Kaua’i Community and Circulation Plan Open House

On July 25, 2024, the Transportation Agency was invited to the EKCCP East Kaua’i Community and Circulation Plan Open House event. This important meeting allowed community input on areas that impact the East Kaua’i community. The open house was a great opportunity to promote public transportation and receive feedback from those who use it.

### Senior Groups

On August 6, 2024, Transportation Agency representatives met with the senior group at the Kekaha Neighborhood Center. The informal discussion led to an interchange of questions and answers regarding public transportation and paratransit (bus service for individuals with disabilities and seniors who may otherwise be limited in transportation access).

A similar discussion was held with the Foster Grandparents group on August 12, 2024. The Senior Foster Grandparents program involves senior volunteers who provide support to children with special needs.

### Touch-a-Truck

The Kaua'i Bus was proud to have a vehicle present at the 2025 Touch-a-Truck event held on June 21, 2025. Families toured the inside and outside of a bus, as well as experiencing the wheelchair lift. This was a unique hands-on experience, building community support for public transportation.



## Kaua'i Disability and Kupuna Resource Fair

This free-to-attend event at Kukui Grove Shopping Center on June 28, 2025, allowed open access to service providers and programs designed to aid individuals with disabilities and seniors. The Kaua'i Bus was in attendance, ready to answer questions and promote public transit.



### *Our Connections...*

#### Reaching out to the Next Generation

The Kaua'i Bus continues to reach out to the next generation, encouraging career paths. The listed events took place within the 2025 fiscal year:

#### Building Student Interest in Transit

A special effort was made to share information about The Kaua'i Bus to encourage interest in a career with our agency. On November 27, 2024, a career day event was held at Ele'ele Elementary School. Children heard from Transportation Agency staff about careers as a bus driver, mechanic, dispatcher, and more. Additionally, a similar effort was made at Kaua'i High School on April 25, 2025. Staff from The Kaua'i Bus engaged with students preparing for entering the workforce, sharing the great satisfaction and fulfillment that comes from choosing a career in public service.



### *Our Freedom...*

#### Freedom through Mobility

The Transportation Agency received \$170,000 in its budget to be utilized for a community support initiative helping outreach programs provide bus passes to their clients in need of assistance with transportation services. Bus pass benefits were awarded to a total of twenty-one non-profit agencies on Kaua'i that submitted applications describing how they serve the needs of the disadvantaged members of our community and provided reports on the effective use of their awards.

The outreach program funding provided the 21 non-profit agencies with the following transportation benefits to support the transportation needs of the disadvantaged members of our community:

One-Day Bus Passes: 3,404  
Monthly Bus Passes: 985  
Paratransit Vouchers: 2,007  
Annual Bus Passes: 4



*Our Heart...*

Minimizing Impact to Riders Where Service Reduction is Required

In early August 2023 public notice was provided of service suspension for Sundays due to the lack of staffing. The removal of Sunday bus service started on August 20, 2023.

The impact of this service reduction to the community is not taken lightly and the heart of the Kaua'i Bus team continues to be with all who are affected. We are working continuously to fill all the vacancies with qualified drivers and dispatchers to return the staffing levels required to support the return of Sunday bus service. Improvements have been made in both recruitment and driver training, gradually increasing staffing levels, so we are hopeful that with continued success, Sunday service can be returned within the next year.

In this time of challenge, the Kaua'i Bus team continues to consider the needs of the community, always keeping in mind the mission statement, "Holomua Me Ke Aloha, Moving Kaua'i with Aloha."

Public School Express Program Support

The Transportation Agency continues to communicate with the Hawai'i Department of Education (HDOE) and assist with coordinating HDOE's purchase of Kaua'i Bus passes as the shortage of public school bus drivers continues to impact students' ability to travel to and from school. This year, HDOE purchased 385 passes to distribute through their Express program.



*Our Money...*

Electronic Fare Payment System

The Transportation Agency successfully implemented its electronic fare payment system with mobile ticketing in January 2025, providing a significant expansion of fare payment options available for Kaua'i Bus riders. The Kaua'i Bus efare apps are available in Google Play Store and Apple App Store.

In May 2025, account-based ticketing with fare capping and the "Holomua" Smart card was introduced, which guarantees riders the lowest possible fare. The table below summarizes the growth in the number of payment transactions and sales value occurring during the first six months since the electronic fare payment options became available:

Month	# of Transactions	Ticket Sales
January	695	\$2,676
February	1,231	\$4,318
March	1,652	\$6,050
April	1,805	\$6,839

May	1,879	\$7,161
June	2,012	\$8,047
Total January-June 2025	9,274	\$35,091

Statewide Holo Card Fare Payment Initiative

The Transportation Agency also continues in the collaborative Statewide efare payment initiative led by the City & County of Honolulu’s Department of Transportation Services (DTS). This program will allow bus riders statewide to use the same payment card which will be accepted by all public transit operators in the State of Hawai’i. Statewide implementation is anticipated by 2030.

**IV. BUDGET**

Funds Expended for Transit Operations in Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2025:

Funding Source	Total Expenses
County General Fund	\$0
County Highway Fund	\$4,883,942
County General Excise Tax Fund	\$9,015,303
FTA Section 5311 Program (Rural Operations)	\$1,132,215
FTA Section 5311 Program (CARES/CRRSAA)	\$520,762
FTA Section 5339 Program (Capital)	\$1,824,384
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$17,376,606</b>

(FTA = Federal Transit Administration)

Revenue sources for Transit Operations in Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2025:

Fixed Route & Paratransit Demand Response Services	\$975,032
Paratransit Contract Services (Kupuna Care)	\$99,392
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,074,424</b>

**V. ACCOMPLISHMENTS/EVALUATION**

**A. Fixed Route Service**

Fixed Route Ridership: July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025

In FY 2025, 570,215 passengers were transported for an increase of 9% over the previous fiscal year.

**B. Paratransit Service**

Paratransit service continues to serve the needs of those with mobility challenges that prevent them from utilizing fixed route service. There are various types of service for which individuals apply and qualify for as is noted below:

Demand-Response (ADA-qualified & Seniors) Transportation Service

This transportation service offers door to door or curb to curb service for certified ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) and senior riders registered for service, and call ahead to reserve a time for being transported. All trips requested including medical or agency appointments, employment, shopping, training, etc. are provided. Revenue collection is based on a per trip fare or ticket.

Kupuna Care Contract Transportation Service

This service is provided to seniors, certified by the Agency on Elderly Affairs for a variety of trip purposes including medical appointments, dialysis treatment, essential shopping and day programs. Revenues are based on a contract agreement with the Agency on Elderly Affairs and client donations.

Total Reservations Accepted (including trips that were cancelled, no-show, or deleted)	58,463
Total Passenger Trips (not including cancellations, no-shows, or deleted trips)	52,080
Clients Served	591
Riders enrolled under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Seniors (65+)	200
Riders enrolled through the Agency on Elderly Affairs (Kupuna Care)	33
Average Unit Cost per Trip	\$76.32

**C. General Accomplishments**

Team Training and Development

Sunday Closures continue to provide the unique chance to bring all Kaua’i Bus team members together for ongoing training session, which is an opportunity not available when the system is fully functioning 365 days per year. Team training continues to emphasize driver safety, customer service excellence and strategic direction as we move into the future. These initiatives aim to strengthen our service quality and align with our long-term expansion goals.