

SECTION 9 – SIGNIFICANCE DETERMINATION

9.1 Significance Determination

According to the Department of Health Rules (HAR 11-200-12), an applicant or agency must determine whether an action may have a significant impact on the environment, including all phases of the project, it's expected consequences, both primary and secondary, it's cumulative impact with other projects, and it's short and long term effects. In making the determination, the Rules establish "Significance Criteria" to be applied as a basis for identifying whether significant impact environmental impact will occur. According to the Rules, an action shall be determined to have a significant impact on the environment if it meets any one of the following criteria:

1. Involves an irrevocable commitment to loss or destruction of any natural or cultural resources;

The proposed project will not cause any irrevocable loss of natural or cultural resources. The park features on the corridor have been historically used socially for park use, recreation and fishing. View corridors from inside the path to the ocean will not be impacted with the construction of the trail, and the comfort station will be located on the mauka side of the path. As previously noted, no significant archaeological or historical sites are visible on the corridor. Should any archaeologically significant artifacts, or other indicators of previous on-site activity be uncovered during the construction phase, their treatment will be conducted in strict compliance with the requirements of the Department of Land and natural Resources.

2. Curtails the range of beneficial uses of the environment;

The proposed path system will result in irrevocable use of the physical environment occupied by the improvements, however the use of the path will improve public access along the shoreline thereby enhancing the range of beneficial uses of the coastal environment. Benefits include preservation of coastal access and open space in perpetuity, preservation of access to fishing sites, provision of a new public resource for recreation, fitness activities, and socializing, and opportunities for public education through exposure to the natural, historic and scenic resources along the path and related interpretive and informational signage. The path and related amenities occupy a very small amount of space within the larger landscape, leaving extensive tracts of coastal land open for other uses.

3. Conflicts with the State’s long term environmental policies and guidelines as expressed in Chapter 344 HRS; and any revisions thereof and amendments thereto, court decisions, or executive orders;

The proposed bike-pedestrian path project is consistent with the Environmental Policies established in Chapter 344, HRS, and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

4. Substantially affects the economic or social welfare of the community or state;

The proposed project will provide a significant and positive impact on the Kaua’i community in the short term with employment opportunities, and in the long term with enhanced and improved recreational opportunities.

5. Substantially affects public health;

During construction, there will be minor impacts to air quality and noise levels. After completion of the construction work, these will be insignificant or undetectable. The positive aspects of the proposed project in the areas of economic and social benefits of the community are greater than the “No Action” alternative.

6. Involves substantial secondary impacts, such as population changes or effects on public facilities;

Impacts on public facilities will not be an issue. It is expected that the bike path project will provide greater recreation opportunities for the people of Kaua’i, but it is not expected that the bike path project will bring an increase in population to live in Kaua’i.

7. Involves a substantial degradation of environmental quality;

The bike path project will not degrade the environment either by its construction or by its use.

8. Is individually limited but cumulatively has considerable effect on the environment, or involves a commitment for larger action;

The Ahukini Point-Civic Center-Nāwiliwili Bike and Pedestrian Path will make the parks usable and will be sited away from environmentally sensitive areas, and does not commit resources or energy for a larger action.

9. Substantially affects are rare, threatened or endangered species or it’s habitat;

No endangered plant or animal species will be affected by the project. Mitigation measures developed by specialists in biology, zoology and botany, in consultation with the state federal

regulatory authorities will be implemented to prevent adverse impacts to protected birds and mammals known to inhabit the project area.

10. Detrimentially affects air or water quality or ambient noise levels;

There are no air quality or noise issues surrounding this project. All measures will be taken during construction to prevent runoff from entering the ocean or streams.

11. Affects or is likely to suffer damage by being located in an environmentally sensitive area, such as a flood plain, tsunami zone, beach, erosion prone areas, geologically hazardous land, estuary, freshwater or coastal areas;

Although some segments of the path are located along the oceanfront, the path will be built away from areas subject to erosion, wave inundation, or other hazardous conditions and will not affect erosion or bank stabilization.

12. Substantially affects scenic vistas and view planes identified in county or state plans or studies;

The views into or out of the project corridor will not be affected by the path.

13. Requires substantial energy consumption;

The construction of the path and/or comfort station will not require substantial consumption of energy or resources, nor will use of the path following project completion.