

# Public Workshop Summary

August 16-24, 2011

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## Overview:

Five public workshops were held on Kaua'i between August 16 and 24, 2011 as part of the Kaua'i Multimodal Land Transportation Plan. The workshops were intended to give the transportation planning team, County staff and the public an opportunity to discuss the issues and concerns residents of Kaua'i were experiencing related to the island transportation system.

The workshops all followed the same format, although some modifications were made over the two week period based on experience with the earlier workshops. To provide a factual, non-hypothetical basis for the conversation, attendees at each workshop began by filling out mini travel diaries. The diaries allowed attendees to record a recent day of travel, trip by trip, noting start location, end location, mode of travel, length of trip and so forth. Then, attendees participated in break-out group discussions based on the diaries, with a focus on whether transit, bicycling or walking might have been feasible for some of the trips. The groups were asked to describe what the specific barriers were to non-auto travel. Finally the groups described what they envisioned for 2030: what should be different? How should these travel patterns change?

Over 125 people attended the five workshops, with average attendance of about 27 each evening. This allowed three breakout groups each evening, which resulted in a spirited and interesting, but cordial and productive dialogue.

## Workshop Locations and Dates:

- West Side: Waimea Neighborhood Center, August 16, 2011 6-8pm
- Kōloa-Poi'pū-Kalāheo: Kōloa Neighborhood Center, August 17, 2011 6-8pm
- Līhu'e: Līhu'e Neighborhood Center, August 18, 2011 6-8pm
- East Side: Kapa'a Neighborhood Center, August 23, 2011 6-8pm
- North Shore: Kīlauea Neighborhood Center, August 24, 2011 6-8pm

## Outcomes:

A workshop summary has been prepared for each workshop, available at [www.movekauai.net](http://www.movekauai.net). This overall summary of the events provides an analysis of key outcomes and takeaways from the five workshops, arranged by major topic. Workshop outcomes are summarized below in five categories: safety, transit, bicycling, pedestrians and local roads and streets. Next steps are described at the end of the document.

## Safety

Although safety is always a public priority, these workshops revealed an unusually high degree of concern about the safety of state and local highways and streets on Kaua'i. This concern relates primarily to pedestrian and bicycle safety and is especially focused on safety of children. While there have not been a large number of bicycle or

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pedestrian collisions with motor vehicles in Kaua‘i, attendees felt the lack of safe facilities was causing people to drive, even for relatively short trips. This issue is examined further under the bicycle and pedestrian sections below, but it is clear that safety should be a broad and prominent theme of the county’s multimodal land transportation plan.

## **Transit**

With a relatively small population, Kaua‘i County’s transit system historically has been limited in scope. However, County transit service – The Kaua‘i Bus (TKB) – has grown rapidly over the past decade and now offers a full range of modern public transit services – commuter routes, local circulators and paratransit services. It was clear from these workshops that residents have not kept up with these changes and are generally unaware of the level or type of transit services that are available.

It is common for transit agencies to grow services without fully developing associated marketing and information campaigns. This represents a significant opportunity for the County. With a carefully targeted marketing/public information outreach, TKB could increase patronage on existing services, which would increase revenues and reduce cost per passenger. At the same time the County could initiate a dialogue with the public about “next steps” in transit system development that would reveal residents’ unmet travel needs and support an evaluation of potential markets for improved services.

It was also clear from the workshops that an expanded pass program (building on the commuter pass already in effect for County employees and the student pass currently being tested with Kaua‘i Community College students) offers further potential for managing costs while growing service levels. In particular, the County could consider implementing a commuter pass program administered through employers using the “U-Pass” (Seattle) and “EcoPass” (Denver) pass systems as possible models.

Another subject that came up at all the workshops was the need for passenger shelters at bus stops. Residents feel that having protection from the sun and rain while waiting for a bus would increase the feasibility of using transit services. (Mayor Carvalho had previously announced an initiative to add shelters at bus stops, as part of the Holo Holo 2020 program, and the input received at the workshops indicates that this ongoing effort is on target with respect to actual needs.)

Finally, there were numerous comments about additional features desired on buses. A number of people noted that the bike racks currently in place on county buses only allow two bicycles at a time and there often is more demand than that. People would also like to see provisions for carrying surf boards and other larger items. Finally, there was interest in having access to wi-fi service both on buses and at bus stops.

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In summary, these workshops indicated these potential priorities for the Kaua'i Bus:

1. expanded marketing of existing services and provision of route information;
2. expanded commuter pass program;
3. passenger shelters at bus stops; and,
4. enhanced amenities and features on board buses and at bus stops.

## **Bicycling**

Workshop attendees were asked to address the potential for bicycling as part of daily travel on Kaua'i. However, it was clear at all the workshops that there is considerable pent up demand for safe, convenient bicycle facilities on Kaua'i and that bicycling would have been a major topic of discussion even without the prompting.

Generally, attendees felt that there is almost no provision for safe bicycling on Kaua'i. The safety issue was the focus of the bicycling discussion and people were especially concerned about safety for children on bicycles. There appear to be two distinct parts of this subject: people feel children should be able to bicycle to school and elsewhere because this supports independence and healthy levels of physical activity; and people feel this will only be feasible with safe facilities because parents will not allow children to ride bikes where that is unsafe.

Workshop attendees felt there should be bike lanes on Kaua'i's roads and streets, and also felt that this should be an investment priority for Kaua'i County and the state DOT. There was general discussion of, and support for, the County's efforts to develop an East Side trail along the coast (parts of which have been completed).

There was also general criticism of the current "bike route" designations used along some sections of state highways on Kaua'i. Under current state DOT practices, bike routes are indicated with signs on some state highways where there are paved shoulders. However, the start and end points of these route markings are not based on connections to other facilities, so bike routes begin and end wherever the shoulders begin or end. These do not seem logical since there is nowhere for the bicyclist to go when the route ends, and attendees felt these could have the effect of stranding new bicyclists or visitors at unsafe locations, such as in rural areas with high traffic speeds.

Based on the discussion at these workshops, there appear to be four components of demand for safe bicycling on Kaua'i, each of which would be associated with a specific element of an island bicycling network:

1. Off-street trails or paths connecting pairs of towns that are close to each other (e.g., Kekaha – Waimea; Kōloa – Poi'pū; Hanama'ulu – Līhu'e – Puhi; Wailua – Kapa'a; and Kilauea – Princeville – Hanalei);

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2. Bicycle lanes on streets and some separated pathways within towns and villages to support local bicycle circulation and to provide safer routes for children on bicycles;
  3. Bicycle lanes and separated pathways along the state highway “ring roads” to support longer distance bicycle trips, including especially commuting; and,
  4. Coastal trails that residents and visitors could use for recreation and exercise.

These categories overlap, with some facilities potentially meeting more than one need.

## **Pedestrians**

Another major topic of discussion at all of the workshops was walking and the need for safe pedestrian facilities. Again, this subject was built into breakout group assignments, but attendees came to the workshops wanting to talk about this.

As with bicycling, considerable concern was expressed about the safety of walking and specifically the safety of children. The “safe routes to school” program that the County and the State of Hawai‘i have been promoting has highlighted for many people the lack of provision for safe walking. In many of the smaller towns and villages on Kaua‘i, there are almost no sidewalks or crosswalks on local streets, even in areas around schools.

An interesting issue that came up at most of the workshops was the relationship between transit and walking. People feel that the lack of safe pedestrian access to bus stops is a significant deterrent to using transit. Many bus stops are not connected to sidewalks and at many bus stop locations there are no crosswalks. (Crosswalks are important because most, but not all, bus stops require pedestrian access from both sides of the street.)

The workshop discussions indicated the following potential priorities for improving the walk environment on Kaua‘i:

1. Investment in safe sidewalks and crosswalks on local streets around schools;
2. Updated street standards that would result in “complete streets” whenever new streets are built or existing streets are reconstructed;
3. Investment in sidewalks and crosswalks providing safe access to bus stops; and,
4. Addressing other missing sidewalk/pathway/crosswalk links in local networks.

## **Local Roads and Streets**

As a county that has been (and remains) primarily rural with relatively low traffic volumes, Kaua‘i has not had a major investment program for local roads and streets. Most trips of more than a mile or two use the state highways for most of the trip. New mileage on the local road system over the past couple of decades has come primarily in connection with new development, with those roads and streets built by developers.

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Attendees at the workshops felt that the rural character of Kaua'i is important and should be preserved. People generally do not advocate or support multi-lane facilities (on either the state or local system) and appreciate the contribution to the island's unique character that small, low-speed streets make. However, they also are concerned about the lack of bicycle lanes and sidewalks. The term "complete streets" was in general and frequent use at the workshops and this concept seems to be widely accepted as an appropriate strategy, both for the County and for the state DOT.

There also was concern at each of the workshops about speeding cars and the safety implications of higher speeds – for pedestrians and bicyclists, but also for other vehicles. The subject of "traffic calming" came up at a couple of the workshops, resulting in conversations about the potential for speed humps, chicanes, traffic circles and other potential physical improvements that might slow traffic.

Another topic of conversation (particularly at the East Side workshop) was the lack of connectivity in the local street network and how that tends to force traffic onto state highways, even for relatively short trips. Attendees felt that new development in the future should be connected to surrounding neighborhoods and areas, and that the County should build key missing links in the network. Finally, there was interest in the potential of using former "haul roads" from plantation days that still exist in some locations as parallel relievers or as emergency access/evacuation corridors.

Based on these workshops, the following potential priorities for the County should be considered:

1. Updating County road design standards to address connectivity and "complete streets" issues;
2. Developing a toolkit of "traffic calming" measures and a decision making process for where traffic calming improvements are installed and which kinds of traffic calming features would be used in different situations; and,
3. Planning, designing and building key missing links in the existing street network, including potential parallel routes as relievers and emergency corridors.

## Next Steps:

The Multimodal Land Transportation Plan is moving into the stage where plan objectives will be used to guide development of specific potential plan elements. County Council will receive a briefing on the workshops in October, 2011, as part of a general update on the status of plan development. Another round of public workshops will be held at the draft plan stage, currently scheduled for February, 2012.