

STIP Public Meeting, Round 2  
Keaau Community Center  
August 8, 2007  
6:00 pm – 7:45 pm

- Does the shortfall in federal funds have anything to do with the war in Iraq?
  - HDOT response: No. The last Federal gas tax increase was in 1993. Although revenues have increased, it is not proportionate to the inflation rate for steel, cement, labor cost, etc. The average inflation rate for the last two years was about 47% and we did not see an equal 47% increase in revenue nationally. Due to the anticipated shortfall in federal funds, the STIP will need to be adjusted.
- The government is looking at ways to increase funding by privatizing roads. However, he would not like to see this happen.
  - HDOT response: Public-Private Partnerships have been discussed and involve a private industry operating and maintaining a public highway on a commercial basis. In other words, they could charge you to use the road. This is not allowed in Hawaii, because tolling requires legislation and the bill for this did not pass the Committee.
- Stephanie Bath: HDOT should reallocate funds for the shoulder lane conversion to intersection safety improvements.
  - HDOT response: Safety improvements need to be warranted, then scoped and estimated. Some of the smaller intersection improvement projects are funded with all State funds and thus would not appear on the STIP.
- Jon Olson: Nothing on the STIP addresses the three worst intersections in the State.
  - HDOT response: The report listed two intersections that have already been addressed. One was the Pahoia and Kapoho intersection and the other was an intersection in Waikoloa. The other intersection is Kahakai which is currently using all State money.
  - The whole (all-State) funding process is not made aware of to the public. There is no public input. His sense of frustration has not been alleviated at all.
  - HDOT response: The budget process for all-State funded projects goes through the legislation. For more information, contact your local legislature or check the legislature website.
- Due to the bleak budget and increase in costs, HDOT should rethink cost management and procurement methods. HDOT should look into the world market and look at how to deal with cost issues. There is no discussion on this topic.
  - HDOT response: HDOT is governed by procurement code. Procurement code does not allow HDOT to utilize sole sourcing. Logistics is a factor in cost.
- Intersection improvements on Paradise Park Drive is not listed on the STIP. Is it listed on the State-only funded list? What about acceleration and deceleration lanes on Kaloli?
  - HDOT response: Kaloli, Orchid Land and Makuu intersections are using all State funds. HDOT will put in a channelized intersection at Makuu Farmers Market.
- Cory Harden: There is a Harbors EIS that says no federal funds will be used on Pier 4. Teri from Superferry also said there were no federal funds used for Pier 4 improvements.
  - HDOT response: HDOT needs to determine if money comes from ferry boat discretionary funds. For a project to be eligible for federal funds, it needs to be related to ferry operations. HDOT Harbors Division would apply for the funds.
  - A thorough evaluation of the broad impacts on the Pier as a result of the frequent usage by the Superferry needs to be done on Pier 4. According to Ian Bernie, the

Hilo Harbor Master, he was not aware of the project being listed on the STIP. Her main concern is that an EIS should be done before any work is done to Pier 4. HDOT needs to forward Cory's contact information to Harbors Division so she can get more information.

- Will the purchase of new land near Parker Ranch affect the new Saddle Road alignment? Will this delay the project?
  - HDOT response: The Army has asked HDOT to relocate the alignment. Work on a supplemental EIS has just started in late July. It will not delay the design and construction because we currently do not have funds for that right now. There are only planning funds available. The new alignment will be further south of Kona. The connection from Route 190 to Queen Kaahumanu will also move further south. It will not go to the Keamoku area and will not be entering forest lands. The different alternatives will be presented at the first public, scoping meeting.
- Prema Qadir: HS25 only shows a total of ten votes. It seems that public testimony was not reflected in the numbers because there were about twenty people at the first round meeting.
  - HDOT response: Votes on the survey reflect only the votes taken from the surveys submitted. Comments have been posted on the website, as requested by those who attended. Votes just give a sense of priorities in the region. Another survey will not be used.
  - Were roundabouts considered?
  - HDOT response: State design policy says we need to carefully warrant a roundabout. On a principal arterial, a roundabout is functional, but it slows traffic, reduces capacity and uses a lot of land. Recent roundabouts that were designed have not been built. Since the design speed is 25 mph and a posted speed limit of 15 mph needs to be enforced, we would need to put in successive reduction speed zones.
  - Kahakai has the necessary land area and we need to slow people down. We also need to slow people down at entrance to Pahoia and Malama Market.
- Keola Downing: There was a request that HDOT consult and partner with the Puna CDP. The speed limit should be reduced to 45 mph from Keaau to Pahoia. He would like to ensure the \$400,000 is worth it to provide a safe intersection. HDOT needs to consider roundabouts.
  - HDOT response: Roundabouts produce increased travel times and increased congestion.
  - The problem with HDOT is that capacity of Highway 130 is not the issue past the end of the bypass. It is not as much of a problem compared to the section between Pahoia and Keaau.
  - HDOT response: HDOT can take a look at it.
- Prema Qadir: There are many accidents at Kahakai and Pahoia entrance. Those areas need to be studied.
- Stephanie Bath: At the last meeting, HDOT said they are willing to work with the County and the public. Yet, there is still some kind of disconnect. HDOT needs to work better in conjunction with Public Works and the County. HDOT shouldn't utilize the money and then redo things.
  - HDOT response: The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the list of projects. The process you are referring to is a cooperative countywide transportation planning process in which the long range plan is maintained. HDOT has met with

the County to be sure that the progress of the CDP, the long range planning that we are doing and the STIP are being coordinated.

- Prema Qadir: At the last meeting, we were told that public testimony would be given some amount of weight. There were people at the meeting who did not fill out the survey. Two to three times the amount of people than the number reflected in the report were opposed to the traffic signal at Kahakai.
  - HDOT response: There is no small-dimension roundabout in Hawaii on the State Highway system due to approach speeds, capacity considerations, and safety concerns.
- Keola Downing: Glenn promised to look into roundabouts. Roundabouts can deal with the capacity (for 1800 vehicles or less) and provide greater safety. There is an abundance of space at the Kahakai intersection. Please look at roundabouts this time.
  - HDOT response: We have looked at it, but no formal study has been done on that intersection. HDOT is not opposed to roundabouts. HDOT does not reject roundabouts outright. Comments and concerns regarding Kahakai intersection improvements should be mentioned at the informational meeting in the future.
- Prema Qadir: HDOT should at least consider a traffic light at the Pahoia entrance at Road “A”.
  - HDOT response: HDOT has not looked at that alternative. HDOT is looking at closing the entrance and making a cross intersection at Kahakai instead.
  - That is a better alternative than only putting a traffic signal at Kahakai.
- Bob Jacobson: HDOT should look at implementing a modern roundabout at the Volcano intersection at Kulani Road. He has spent staff time, state money and his own time looking into studies. Modern roundabouts slow down traffic, but there could be worse things. If people want to complain, they can complain to him if it takes 15-20 minutes longer to arrive at their destination. He would really like HDOT to make an effort to study and implement roundabouts. He also recommends putting in a roundabout at Kulani Road and Pahoia.
- Rob Tucker: He requested that HDOT compile a list of positive and negative attributes of implementing a roundabout and a traffic signal at the Kahakai intersection.
  - HDOT response: HDOT will more than likely look at both alternatives. HDOT will develop a list of positives and negatives for implementing a signal and roundabout at Kahakai.
- Keola Downing: We want HDOT to understand that the life of humans is far more important than the capacity of an intersection. If a small reduction in speed for a small period of time saves lives, we want to vote for the life, not for the time.
  - HDOT response: We vote for saving a life or preventing injuries.
  - HDOT should have described HS25 as a roundabout or signalized intersection. We have to fight to get a roundabout.
  - HDOT response: We will look at both alternatives. Again, residents should attend the meeting on Kahakai.
- If no underpasses or overpasses are planned, HDOT needs to look at the alternatives and at least listen to the comments and the work of the community.
- It is obvious that the Puna CDP is frustrated about roundabouts. They are in favor of showing more emphasis on what the community wants. He thinks roundabouts depreciated the commercial value of an intersection.
  - HDOT response: There are a few roundabouts on Oahu. Driver behavior could pose problems if a roundabout is implemented.

- Brad Kurokawa: Continue with DPW. Looking for ways to integrate our designers, DPW. Any possibilities to continue design exchange and collaboration, he would like to see that. Besides the community meetings, in which by that time, it is too late to make changes.
- Emily Naeole: Is HDOT doing anything about the bottleneck at Keaau HS? People on left-hand lane refuse to let merging lane in.
  - HDOT response: Driver education is needed. HDOT has received many requests to put a stop sign the on merging lane. HDOT will have its traffic branch look at the merge just past the high school at the old Keaau-Pahoa Road and Highway 130. We cannot control driver behavior.
  - If we need driver education, put signage on the road. For example, pictures depicting how to merge. Possibly put a green light to signify when you can go so drivers will take turns. Put “Drive Aloha” signs along the road. At this merge, three lanes are going into one. Driver education is warranted throughout the State.
- With the increase in commercial development, is the condition of the bridges at risk?
  - HDOT response: Bridge inspections are done every two years, which looks at the weight capacity and design standards. In the case of a bridge closure and the road was closed, from Kahakai to KTA Puainako, the county has emergency access through Orchid Land. Part of CDP development is local traffic circulation plan. How traffic will be accommodated in event of an incidence—Incidence Management—is addressed. Lahaina and Oahu’s North Shore have no alternate routes.
  - Prefer looking at alternate route than widen Highway 130.
  - HDOT response: HDOT is starting the planning study to look at an alternate route.
- Are there any efforts to keep building development down and cars from coming in until we catch up with the plan?
  - HDOT response: Land use development is not within State authority. Land Use Commission is involved with re-zoning. HDOT does not issue permits. Often times HDOT does not receive funds in advance to improve the infrastructure needed to support the development, but even if we were to get the money, some would see the early improvements as encouraging or stimulating commercial development. Thus, HDOT is sometimes wedged in the middle.
  - The County does have a concurrency policy, which has been used on Queen Kaahumanu Highway. A zone changing has been denied for that highway because the road has reached its capacity. The problem is that there is no change in zoning in Kona. There is no land-use change request to come before anyone to address. The same problem exists with Puna and parts of South Kona.
- The backup on Keaau Bypass, Pahoa-bound, occurs more and more frequently all the way to Volcano Highway due to the three lanes merging to one lane near the high school. Motorists use the shoulder from Milo Street on the Hilo side of the football field. Maybe HDOT should close the intersection and have three lanes merge into two.
  - HDOT response: One possibility is to look at that intersection. Another possibility is to do short-term traffic operational improvements.
- Emily Naeole: Traffic usually starts at Makuu, and there is no traffic when school is not in session. It is possible that many parents are dropping their children off and not using the bus system.

- Keola Downing: When dealing with crisis situations, we all need to work together. One part that is not working together is DOE by having everyone go to one high school. DOE is not helping the traffic situation. There needs to be another educational facility for Pahoia. There needs to be a task force for all agencies to participate in. Perhaps the community needs to talk to the Governor and insist on creating a task force.
- One safety factor that is most effective is to install center and side reflectors. There is a problem of seeing the road at night, especially with the frequent rain. Also, shield street lights downward at the intersections.
- There should be a slow-down on building permits until the infrastructure can catch up.
  - HDOT response: The Mayor has taken a big step in placing a moratorium on development until the infrastructure keeps up. HDOT does its best to accommodate the demand although our resources are not plentiful. Many other communities share the same sentiments regarding capacity and alternate routes. System preservation is also important. Priorities may be shifted to maintain what we have now instead of implementing capacity projects. HDOT needs to keep what we have safe, even if it is congested. Some say the safest highway is one that is congested because no one can speed. Public safety should be of the highest priority.
- Does Government Beach Road belong to the government?
  - HDOT response: That road may be in limbo and if so, it is supposed to be transferred to the County.
- HDOT will have representation at Wayne's presentation to the Steering Committee next week Thursday at 5:30 pm.
- HDOT will check on when the public meeting for Kahakai intersection will take place.