

STIP Public Meeting, Round 1
Keaau Community Center
May 16, 2007
6:00 pm – 8:45 pm

Attendees:

Tim Keller	Jennifer Perry	Paul Andrade	Lawrence Pedro
Nancy Leopold	Jack Lockwood	Cindy Andrade	Martha Lockwood
Werner Leopold	Larry Brown	Del Pranke	Roger Evans
Jon Olson	David Fukumoto	Keola Downing	John Burnett
Yen Chin	Kale Gumapae	Stephanie Bath	Gyongyi Sziron
Shirley Pedro	Tom Brown	Arnold Okamura	Prema Qadir
Melissa Fleming	Malia DeFay-Brown	Manu Spaur	Patrick McGuire
Masahiro Nishida	Carol Johnson	Jeff Spaur	Frances K. Stapleton
Leah Craft	Faye Hanohano	Denyse Temple	Hunter Bishop
Tom Lache	Norm Muntner	Steve Sparks	Brian Ingalls

- David Fukumoto: Puna is the fastest growing part of the State. Within two years, Puna as a district will be larger than Hilo. Only project on the STIP is the Keaau-Pahoa Road. Puna is worse than a third world country. There is only one road from Keaau to Pahoa, Keaau to Volcano, and Keaau to Puna. Puna is getting screwed. Puna expects major rapid growth. Need alternate road between Keaau and Hilo. Need an alternate corridor, also known as Puna Makai Alternate Route (PMAR).
 - Glenn: Projects may not be on the list because it is not ready to go. There is a current contract to study improvements on the current road from Hilo to Pahoa and the Puna Circulation Plan. HDOT encourages public to attend meeting for the development of the Puna Circulation Plan. Agree, that many single roads, if disturbed, has great impact on many. Alternate roads are expensive. An example is the North-South Road in Ewa on Oahu that cost over \$100 million.
- Malia Brown from Weed and Seed: An alternate road is not just a matter of convenience, but also life and death. Many (20,000) people reside in a cul-de-sac who live 2.5 miles from a fire station. An accident can close the road for many hours. There is no other route to get to medical care. Need 24-7 medical care routes. Need PMAR. Thank you for trimming trees.
 - Glenn: Long range plan (LRP) looks at 25 years. Long-range plan should also address public access and safety.
- Del Pranke from Hawaiian Beaches: At previous ad hoc meeting with HDOT, HS25 was not mentioned and no plans existed for this project. Why, how, and when did the traffic signal at Kahakai Blvd get into the STIP? We want a roundabout instead. We need traffic crash data.
 - Glenn: HDOT gets input and some projects from the State Highway Safety Program. The project was mandated a priority from this safety program. Program looks at traffic crash statistics. Traffic crash data is now available to anyone, upon request.
 - Del: Is Road A (“chicane”) at Malama Market a State or County road?
 - Stanley Tamura: State.
 - Del: Within the last month, changes were made to this road. “Idiot sticks” or plastic sticks were added, that have already been broken. How do we get Road A closed and have only Kahakai Blvd used? Road A has changed the dynamics of

- the community and once the market opened, it has become more dangerous. Drivers fail to yield to those who have the right-of-way. Need close Road A and open Kahakai across Highway 130, using a roundabout.
- Glenn: Wrong-way movements are an issue. HDOT will take a look at this.
 - Robert Taira: HDOT can take a look at closing Road A and re-opening Kahakai. Possible to negotiate with Market. We understand the concerns. We know it's a problem. Pahoa Police Department put Kahakai intersection at the top of its hit list.
 - If a post office is ever built, Kahakai would need to be re-opened anyway.
 - Carol Johnson: How do we add a project to the list?
 - Glenn: Add comments, or describe the project as best as possible to the bottom of the survey. Simple projects that do not use federal funds would not show up on the list. Instead, all local money would be used.
 - Carol: The three most dangerous intersections are all in Pahoa. 1. Intersection at Kahakai. 2. Intersection at Kapoho, near the high school. 3. Intersection outside of Malama Market.
 - Stan: 1. Kahakai intersection is programmed in the STIP for FFY 09. 2. Kapoho intersection has been worked on; a traffic signal system has been installed.
 - Why are there no crosswalks at any intersections except at Puna Road?
 - Glenn: A crosswalk needs to be warranted. HDOT will look into crosswalks.
 - Stephanie Bath: What are HDOT's top three priorities?
 - Glenn: Mandated projects, safety projects, and congestion projects.
 - Stephanie: What are the three main goals for Puna? The Puna Community Development Plan lists safety as one of its goals.
 - Glenn: Hawaii Statewide Transportation Plan (STP) includes broad, general principles. Long-range land transportation plan includes more specific goals in a local jurisdiction. The STP can be found on the HDOT website.
 - Stephanie: How is HDOT working on a sustainability plan?
 - Glenn: A Long Range Land Transportation Plan for the Big Island was last completed in 1998.
 - Stephanie: Currently developing a Puna Community Plan. There needs to be a connection with HDOT. Is HDOT ready to work with Hawaii County? There are drivers speeding on the open shoulder from Shower Drive to the Humane Society. Connectivity issue should be addressed by HDOT, County and Puna residents.
 - Glenn: Honolulu has a process for Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). Puna should develop a comprehensive CAC to interface with government. Also, the request for proposal (RFP) to update the 10-year-old LRP will be going out at the end May. We expect coordination with the County's and other plans.
 - Larry Brown: County-wide transportation planning comes out of the Mayor's Office.
 - Lawrence Pedro: Does Puna always get their fair share? If HDOT can afford money to pay for transportation consultants, then why can't it fund Puna projects? The collector lane at Orchidland and Highway 130 is too narrow and too short. There are too many crashes occurring there.
 - Glenn: HDOT will look at openings near Orchid Road.
 - Larry Brown: What about an EIS for the shoulder lane conversion?
 - Stan: Shoulder lane conversion received an exemption from Shower to Bypass. Widening is to relieve congestion.

- Larry: Highway 130 shoulder lane conversion is a bad idea. For a 2-mile stretch of highway with no driveways (45 mph posted speed limit), driving in the shoulder lane creates intersection hazards when traffic piles up from cars taking 28th Road as a detour from Highway 130. Drivers on 28th Road are speeding at 45 mph. Stop sign at Shower Drive is ignored. No enforcement because there are no shoulders to pull over violators. Nowhere to pull over with the conversion, either. Shoulder lane conversion is consistent with widening Highway 130, which negates PMAR. Don't need shoulder lane conversion, need PMAR.
- Jon Olson: HDOT needs to be sure consultant for LRP is not on the payroll of a large landowner. Don't need Waianae solution cause it's killing more people. After widening that single road, more people will get killed trying to cross it. We don't have emergency evacuation route, no alternative access. Emergency services get tied up with single traffic crash incidents. We need HDOT to present us with more options instead of narrow, limited choices. Consider redesign of Highway 130 intersections instead of widening Highway 130 to four lanes. STIP list has only one of the three dangerous intersections. Is widening the only option for Highway 130? Is there no integration with the County? The state-only funded project list is not publicized. How much money is really out there? We are forced to choose between less than honest solutions. The process and possibilities need to be made public before people can comment on the STIP.
 - Glenn: There are many different projects fully funded by State. There are special maintenance projects and improvement projects coming from special legislation. If you want to add a project, you need to take one out. Also, federal money requires a State match. HDOT is in a bind because State gas tax has not increased in several years.
 - Jon: What is available revenue? Based on population, does Puna get their fair share?
 - Glenn: Based on vehicle miles traveled, population...Honolulu would receive 60%-70% of everything. Honolulu is a donor-county.
 - Jon: Filed an environmental justice complaint and won. HDOT has not fully addressed complaint. Feds say did not get their fair share. Pending on upcoming round of LRP.
- Frances Stapleton: At the intersection of Highway 130 and Highway 132 or 137 near Pahoa HS, right-turn lanes should be in place as a standard procedure. There are only two lanes going across the dominant portion of the highway. If someone is making a left-turn, the cars behind have to wait even if they want to turn right. Some drivers create their own right-turn lane, but it is illegal and unsafe, and causes crashes.
 - Also, traffic counts were taken during spring break. There are only public schools, not private schools. HDOT needs to look at the calendar when taking traffic counts.
 - Response: In addition to our regular traffic counting program, the DOT often requests that seasonal counts be taken to get a picture of the traffic differences of off season flow.
 - Endorses the idea of fixing intersection near Kahakai and Malama Market. Possibly implement a roundabout.
- Tom Lache: Why is HDOT adamant on not putting in a roundabout and in favor of traffic signals? Why is HDOT going against the will of the residents of Puna? You can put in a test roundabout.
 - Glenn: Roundabouts only work in certain places. Roundabouts have a 15-25 mph operational speed.

- Tom: What is wrong with 25 mph speed? We need traffic calming. We do not need a super highway or speed highway. Listen to the residents. Install a temporary roundabout (can be made of water-filled barricades) in Puna near Pahoia.
- Twelve years ago HDOT says they will turn highway into a four lanes. Puna does not want two lanes widened to four lanes. Why is HDOT ignoring the people? We need more roads.
 - Glenn: Give input on LRP.
- Children cannot cross the street to get to school. Parents are driving them to school instead.
- Want a second route, not widen two to four lanes.
 - Glenn: Second route will not be implemented for a while.
- Jack Lockwood: Seems as HDOT's goal is to transport cars. Gas prices will drive change. In what ways are HDOT addressing the future? Cannot sustain one person per car? What about mass transit, park/ride?
 - Glenn: This is part of the planning process. The LRP will look at all alternative modes of transportation—car pool, rideshare, bike ride—not just highways.
- Keola Downing: Is anyone recording this meeting? No tape recorder. No audio and written transcript. How can HDOT consider out concerns if you don't record or document community input?
 - The \$7 million for the corridor should go to temporary roundabouts rather than shoulder lane conversions. Decisions should be made by Puna residents. Warrants are based on fatalities, not injuries. HDOT should bring a recorder to record every word. Take input home. For years, residents have said they don't want four-lane widening. Brennon's meeting had a line outside of the market. Community needs a clear record of what is said. In the future, HDOT needs to keep a record of input. HDOT needs to consider roundabouts. The entire corridor from Pahoia to Keaau would be much safer with roundabouts, not traffic signals. Federal government provides 100% financing for roundabouts in rural areas. Use the money for widening Highway 130 to improve intersection safety. There are too many crashes on Highway 130.
 - Glenn: We will do our best to respond to every question and comment.
 - Shirley Pedro: The exchange of information between HDOT and public via the survey is a response from the Puna residents. Puna residents are given choices on what has already been decided. STIP list does not include projects that we know are more important.
- Jeff Spaur, resident for 11-12 years, broker: Based on statistical data, has issuance of building permits decreased?
 - Larry Brown: No.
 - Jeff: HDOT needs to use the data and spend the money right, wisely. Let the people make the choices.
- Patrick McGuire, resident for 5 years: Built roads on the mainland. It is much easier to build on dirt than lava. Don't widen Highway 130. If you widen the highway, it will still get clogged. We need a second route.
 - Glenn: A new road is an alternative in our Keaau Pahoia Road Improvements project, which is in the planning process.
- Prema Qadir, worked on Puna Development:

- Glenn: Will discuss within the Administration to allow viewing of minutes/notes on website. Comments will be tabulated. Will consider putting comments on the website.
- Prema: Would like to offer notes to help. HDOT should consider roundabouts as a standard procedure. Posted speed limit should be reduced on Highway 130 from 55 to 45 mph. HS21 and HS22 should be eliminated and replaced with improvements at intersection the following intersections—Shower/Pohaku, Kaloli, Paradise, Orchidland, Ainaloa, Makuu, Kahakai, Leilani, and Pahoa HS. Highway 130 should be “no left-turn zone”, supported by roundabouts.
- Glenn: Don’t know what is in the Puna Transportation Circulation Plan.
- Prema: State should also facilitate tele-work. People shop and work in Hilo, but reside in Puna. Need to reverse this. State should research or look into using federal money for tele-work in rural areas to decrease traffic on Highway 130 and Highway 11. Federal, State, and County employees should be able to work from home.
- Prema: Eliminate HS20 to widen Highway 130, HS24 for shoulder lane conversion, and HS25 for traffic signal at Kahakai. Instead, add to the STIP—PMAR (not Railroad Avenue which is good for bikes and pedestrians, not Government Beach Road), Roundabout at Kahakai, extend Kahakai across Highway 130.
- Prema: HDOT should look into HC13. What is that? Is it for more buses?
- Tom Brown: Line item shows federal grant. It will be amended later on. Money is actually higher. Expecting \$450,000. SSFM is doing the plan. County has been awarded \$200 million for park/ride around the island. Current grants for purchase of buses is still unsure. It is dependent on federal money. Federal Transit Administration has allocated \$430 million for all transit systems to compete for. Hawaii has requested for \$2 million. As for the LRP, there is a new team. Two guys are heading the team. One is from originally from the Big Island. The other guy was managing the rural transportation plan. Predicts there will be a heavy emphasis on transit in the LRP. Really excited about these guys, coming from a different point of view. Especially good for Puna and Kona, which are priorities for the (transit) department.
- Don’t complain about lack of documentation. People should take notes. Submit their own testimony or opinions to HDOT.
- Larry Brown: Offer to post comments on the Planning Department’s website.
- Roger Evans: You can’t come to Puna and tell us what we have and what we want. The road plan in 1990 shows what Puna wanted. We met in Hilo to discuss/develop a comprehensive plan. The state land use map in the 2020 plan shows nobody lives here in Puna. Need to come to Puna and ask Puna what they want. The money used to build H-3 equaled the same money needed to build every road and bridge that Big Island and Puna wanted.
 - HDOT pooh poohs roundabouts. Bad attitude. Found 107 newspaper articles about roundabouts. Only found one negative comment about roundabouts, but that was only until the author actually used a roundabout. Endorses a roundabout on Highway 130. The intersection at Kahakai/Pahoa is a 3-way intersection, not 4-way so implementing a roundabout there would be easy. Need to go back to Oahu and tell HDOT what we want.
- Brian Ingalls, HPD: The top priorities in Puna are the PMAR and roundabouts, which are both not considered by Honolulu. There is no way to get out of lower Puna Road if

something happens. If road gets cut off, there is no way out. Ambulance service is a 45-minute ride to south-end from Hilo. Need alternative route for emergency services and critical evacuation. There is traffic in the morning and evening. There is no alternative. Highway 130 is not a real highway. There are driveways along the highway. Driveways in Puna have become intersections. Cannot put traffic signals or roundabouts at each driveway. Cannot get across Highway 130. Need an alternative for the highway for safety reasons. Alternate route is in the planning stages—what does that mean?

- Glenn: A contract has been executed last year. Consultant is currently doing traffic studies. Will come out to the community. Will need to determine the scope of the environmental document. Produce a draft EA, then a final EA with public hearings and informational meetings. A ROD will then be issued to finalize and commit the State on decided route. The national average for an environmental document is five years. So there is still 4.5 years to go. Queen Kaahumanu, Waimea Bypass, Kawaihae Bypass environmental documents have begun in the 1970s. Opposition, funds, endangered species (Hawaii has the most endangered species on the list in the whole nation) has prolonged the environmental process.
 - Brian: How long does it take to take something off the STIP?
 - Glenn: Notate “remove” or “delete” on the survey.
- Stephanie Bath: The STIP list of projects is not a vision for the future. For discussion purposes, say want to utilize resources for improvements of 130. Maybe put up dividers for blinding lights or three roundabouts. Really don’t want a light at Kahakai, but will put a “H” (for high priority) next to that project because we don’t want the money to go to Honolulu. Or if we don’t put a “H” next to that project we lose the money. This is not fair to Puna. How do we keep allocated money for projects we don’t deem a high priority, and used for projects that we want on the STIP? Money is used for sustainability, but is money used for people to stay in their cars? How do we get to keep the money in Puna?
 - Glenn: There is no allocation process. HDOT has a responsibility for the public’s health and safety. There is no safe account.
 - Stephanie: We need greenscaped buffer on Highway 130 to reduce night glare from oncoming headlights. If we enable cars, we’ll stay in cars. We need to reduce the number of cars on our highways.
- Lawrence Pedro: Hawaiian Home Farmers voted against the bypass at Mud Lane. Why is it on the STIP? The expansion of four lanes cannot happen due to the market place and homes. How does HDOT plan to widen Highway 130 on the section of roadway in Hawaiian home lands, and against the will of the people of Puna.
 - Glenn: Similarly to the Waimea Bypass, Alii Highway may or may not be implemented because of controversy, but it still must be programmed if something is to go forward.
- Robert Taira, HWY-H, Design Engineer: Puna Community Development Plan is extremely important. Disappointed with the plan that fell apart due to the 9-mile road, geothermal identified as a resource, Red Road listed for improvements. Those three issues shot the plan down. Puna Community Development Plan is a valuable document. Your input here is heard. It will be considered. I guarantee we will investigate the possibilities. It is possible. With the Keahole and Kailua to Kona master plans, the State, County and developers tie-in together. I am looking forward to the K to K plan being done. It is effective. It does work.

- David Fukumoto: Need more commercial zoning closer to Pahoia. 100 acres above Pahoia. There is not enough economic opportunity in Puna. Request same amount per capita of commercial zoning as Hilo. First request is the designation of 1,000 acres to create an industrial park to keep traffic in Puna. Second request is don't want one road from Keaau to Pahoia, one road from Keaau to Volcano, and one road from Keaau to Puna. Keaau to Hilo has the heaviest traffic. This should be the number one priority. Think as a community. We don't want to be a third world country any longer. The number one priority is an alternate road between Puna and Hilo. The Puna Mauka Alternative Road (PMAR) used to be on the STIP, but it is not now. Why was it removed? Senator Inouye chairs the Senate's Transportation Committee. Mazie Hirono also chairs the Congress Transportation Committee.
- Lawrence Pedro: Federal government will fund 90% of a road beginning and within 10 miles of the airport. Such as airport in Hilo and old airport near Pahoia. Can do it legislatively through earmarks. Not subject to budgetary constraints.
- David Fukumoto: Number one priority is PMAR. Begins at start of airport, inland of Railroad Avenue (near macadamia nut farms) and come out to Keaau and PP, cuts into Kurtistown. This will funnel HPP off 130. Need alternative route from Hilo Hospital to Volcano. Need industrial and job creation in Keaau-Pahoia.
 - Glenn: We will work on distributing these comments.