

KEA‘AU-PĀHOA ROAD IMPROVEMENTS
KEA‘AU TO PĀHOA
Project No. STP-0130(27)
Public Informational Meeting No. 2

Thursday, April 30, 2009 – 5:30 p.m.
Keaau Elementary School
Keaau, Hawai‘i

PURPOSE:

- Inform the public about the Keaau-Pahoia Advisory Group’s effort.
- Identify those who have specific input or a particular perspective on the value of our planning process.
- Receive input and recommendations on our evaluations and development of this project.
- Find out which alternatives the community would like to have studied in greater detail by Environmental Assessment (EA) process.

PROJECT TEAM ATTENDEES:

Hawaii State Department of Transportation:

Mr. Jiro Sumada, Deputy Director; Nelson Sagum and Dina Lau, Highways Planning; Stanley Tamura, and Sal Panem, Hawaii District.

SSFM International:

Cheryl Soon, Project Manager; Jo-Anna Herkes, Communication Specialist; Doug Zang, Senior Planner; Heather Forester and Andrew McKenzie, Planners; Genevieve Runningwind and Michelle Agbigay, Project Coordinators; Robin Barnes, Project Engineer; Hugh Ono, Vice President; Robert Lee, Construction Manager; Stephen Yee, Project Manager

KPAG MEMBER ATTENDEES:

Hunter Bishop, Jennifer Perry, Oliver English, Manny Mattos, Jon Olson, Wesley Owens, Susan Cordell, and Tom Brown

FRIENDS OF THE KPAG:

Alan	Gerald Akana Darlene	Rob Tucker
Andrea Miday	Gyongyi (Momi) Syirom	Ron Terry
Barbara Lively	Hardwin Blanchard	Ruth Mizuba
Bill Ferreirat	Inge Misaion	Sae Bennet
Bob Rechtman	J. Yoshimoto	Shawndra Holmberg
Charles Magee	Jennifer Atkins	Stan
Cryshal Atrins	John Demeno	Steve Parker
Danny L.	Joseph Janto	Steve Sparks
Diane Gentry	K.T. Cannon-Eger	Susan Kaneshiro
Donn Mende	Kana Couingtr	Teruko Yamada
Duke Hulluey	Liz Weatherford	Time Rees
Eddie Macomber	Marlent Floyd Lurdqurst	Trisha Macomber
Ellison Ancheta	Meiling Okimoto	Virginia Asle
Erhard Carl Autram	Michael Lipham	Walter
Ernie M	Morishige	Walter H
Esther Kottle	Patrick Reilly	Webber
Estis	Rachelle Ley	Wesson Tuares
Frank Castahnetti	Randrup	Randrup Gabriela

SUMMARY OF MEETING:

I. Open House Period

Approximately 80 people were present and intently reviewed the exhibits, which included a map of the project corridor for participants to write their comments on.

II. Introduction

Mr. Jiro Sumada, HDOT Highways Deputy Director, opened the formal part of the program, welcomed everyone, introduced the elected official, HDOT staff and other government representatives present, and described the purpose of the meeting.

Ms. Cheryl Soon, SSFM International, Inc., began presenting the project PowerPoint presentation by introducing the Context Sensitive Solutions as well as introduced two members of the Keaau-Pahoa Advisory Group.

It was explained that presentation boards are displayed around the room and each station has a project team member to answer any questions one may have.

Upon conclusion of the formal PowerPoint Presentation, a question and answer period ensued.

Questions and Answers

Jiro Sumada facilitated the Q&A period.

1. Are you planning on putting in a left turn pocket at Pohaku Circle? If so, when?

Cheryl Soon: It is one of the key intersections we'll be looking at. We are not only look at left turn pockets but also a way to line up the streets.

2. Why can't we start road widening earlier than Sept. 2010? Tomorrow is not too soon.

Robert Taira: April of last year we did a tour for quick fixes. An Interim project called the Shoulder Lane Conversion Project will start construction in September 2010.

Robert Taira elaborated on the quick fix, low cost, no cost solutions and additional information regarding the project area.

- *Speed Reductions: Pahoa-bypass will be reduced from 55 to 45. Pahoa-bypass to Keaau rubbish dump speed limit will probably not be reduced to what the public has expressed (45mph). Design speeds are based on geometrics and are requirements.*
- *Striping: Will be done in two weeks weather permitting.*
- *Crosswalks: There are no net safety benefits to putting a crosswalk in a mid block location. Based on studies, this creates many accidents.*
- *Bus stops: We will look into controlling where bus drivers drop off the riders and getting the riders to exit the back of the bus instead of the front. We will see if it is suitable to put in crosswalks at bus stop locations. County's studies on recommendations will come in July 2009.*
- *Pahoa-bypass, Pahoa-Kapoho Road, Kahakai Blvd, and Pahoa Market intersections: Will be taking recommendations on what to do with the particular intersections under Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Program. May need to be folded into environmental study.*
- *Interagency Coordination: We are trying to integrate all programs within the same area.*

3. Is there any coordination between the highways?

Cheryl Soon: Many features are involved in the plan that are not just congestion related. The top priority was safety.

4. If they put a light at Shower Drive, what would be the impact?

It will be part of Shoulder Lane Conversion Project and will improve traffic safety and flow.

5. The afternoon merge at end of Keaau bypass has room to continue the two lanes until the top of the hill. Merging on the hill creates problems.

Jiro Sumada: We will look into creating an extended merge lane.

6. If you put a light at Shower Drive it will stop traffic. It takes a long time for stopped traffic to get up to speed. More lanes need to be put in because of delay.

Comment noted.

7. Where is second lane going to begin for the shoulder lane widening?

Jiro Sumada, The shoulder land widening will start at the intersection by Keaau High School and will continue across bridge and end at Shower Drive.

8. There should only be one lane from the Keaau-bypass intersection and volcano highway to the bottle neck.

Comment noted.

9. There needs to be proper signage and increase the merge length.

Comment noted.

10. Is any special stimulus money coming in for the Puna roads?

Jiro Sumada: No, not for the Puna District. This project is funded from the normal federal funds. For stimulus money, projects need to be almost complete with design.

11. Even with the shoulder lane widening there will still be a bottle neck at Shower Drive. Why didn't we have the foresight to lose the merge down to at least Orchidland Boulevard?

Comment noted.

12. Will there be any updates for the EA?

Yes.

13. Change speed to 35 at bottle neck.

Comment noted.

14. We need a straight road to Paradise Park.

Comment noted.

15. Railroad should be opened again, if we widen one road it will be an issue if there is an accident.

Comment noted.

16. How is the PMAR project progressing?

Paperwork has been submitted by the County to add the project to the County Capital Improvements Program for the next 6 year period. It will be a county road and they will need to go through the process to get money to build the road.

17. How will Village Centers affect area traffic?

They will bring services to Puna and will assist in the traffic flow.

18. Does Railroad Avenue have enough right-of-way to avoid people's property?

Railroad Avenue is densely populated. There are ownership issues on both the Puna and Hilo side of railroad. It is designated as a pedestrian bikeway.

19. Who decides alternatives? Is there any further input?

Cheryl Soon: The EA Process will take approximately 9 months. Updates on EA status will be posted on website: www.keaau-pahoa.com. The Draft EA will come out in 2010 and another public meeting will follow. KPAG will recommend an alternative to HDOT. HDOT will make the final decision.