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March 14, 2025 BLNR Hearing

Item K-2:

Conservation District Use Application (CDUA) OA-3950 by the State of Hawaii Department of Transportation for the Realignment of Kamehameha Highway at Laniakea Beach; Located at Kawailoa, Waialua, Oahu, Tax Map Keys (TMKs): (1) 6-1009:021, 022 & (1) 6-1-010:019, 20.

Aloha Chair Chang and Members of the Board,

Mahalo for considering the following comments on the State DOT CDUA OA-3950 for the Laniākea Beach Kamehameha Highway Realignment Project.

Before outlining my comments, I want to say that I support this realignment project as a whole, and I'm glad to see that DOT is finally making it happen.

I also want to express my appreciation to DOT staff for responding to my comments in writing with new attachments and to OCCL staff for providing me helpful information about the CDUA application.

That said, I do have serious concerns about the project's proposed use of State conservation lands – and I have some proposed conditions that I hope the Board will consider in reviewing this application.

1. Project Status.

Please note that this project **started five months ago**. Work commenced in November 2024, the groundbreaking ceremony (which I attended as a representative of the North Shore Neighborhood Board) was in January 2025, and construction has been ongoing at a good pace now for five months.

Although I am not sure that (or how much) State conservation land has been disturbed at this point, as the contractor's work is primarily on the mauka area, it is surprising that neither DOT nor OCCL have informed the Board in the materials that actual construction of this \$16 million project is **well underway**. I am not sure why construction was allowed to commence without the CDUP in place. In my view, this timing unfairly limits the ability of the Board to exercise its discretion in reviewing the application and possible conditions on use of conservation land.

Please ask questions about this timing disconnect so that the public has answers on the record.

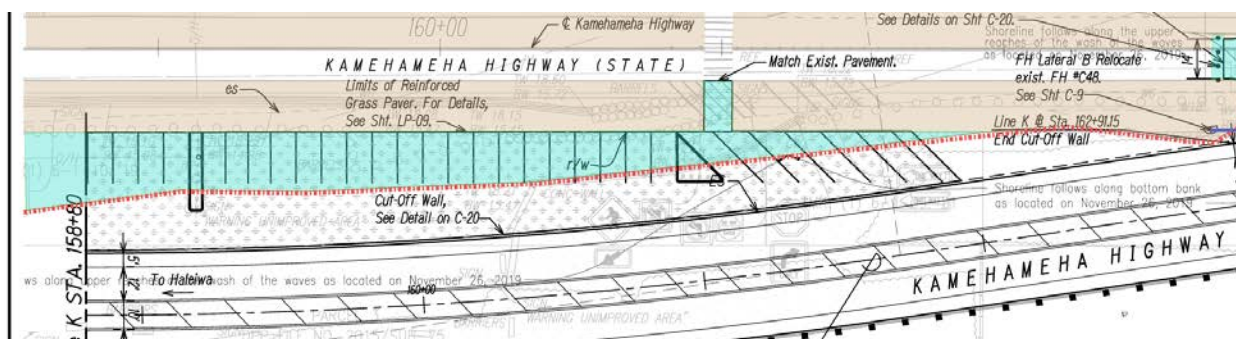
2. Makai Parking Lot plan and design is essential to reducing traffic congestion and cannot be bumped to future unfunded phases.

My understanding, from over a decade of engaging in community discussions about this issue and debate over various project options, is that the community broadly supports the mauka realignment because it **promises to reduce highway traffic congestion**.

However, if the “makai parking lot” is not properly planned and designed by DOT as requested by the community and directed by the City Council (SMA Condition E), the congestion (of cars and people) will continue and may even increase, which would have an adverse impact on traffic, community, wildlife, and other coastal resources.

E. The Applicant shall plan and design a parking lot that includes parking for a minimum of 50 vehicles and managed ingress and egress, and that is located on the makai side of Kamehameha Highway in the expanded shoreline area that will be created by relocating the highway further mauka to improve recreational access, traffic along the highway, and pedestrian safety and to protect the area from any further development that may obstruct views of the ocean from the coastal highway.

In DOT’s response to my November 25, 2024 comments, the DOT does not show how the design of the makai parking lot will have a **restricted or managed ingress or egress**. In fact, the design shows **unrestricted** ingress and egress directly off the Kamehameha Highway shoulder into the makai area.



The “cut off wall,” I now understand from the additional information provided by DOT is an underground or ground level barrier (essentially) to protect the roadway and, unless I have misread the plans, **there is no above-ground barrier that constraints vehicles from pulling into or out of the parking lot directly from the highway (apparently from either direction)**. With the unmarked (?) “stalls” and space for about 50 vehicles, tourists constantly visiting the area for relatively short periods of time, this amounts to thousands of vehicles pulling in “wherever” and backing out “wherever” onto the highway daily. That is the problem we have had for years.

I’m sorry to say this - because I want the project to succeed - but **this new unmanaged area is going to be utter chaos**. The congestion will either be the same as before the project or worse,

defeating the point. It is exactly the reason why the Sunset Beach Community Association, the North Shore Neighborhood Board, and the City Council made it clear that a “**managed ingress and egress**” **MUST be planned and designed** by DOT. What DOT has presented is not a plan, and not a workable design. Oddly, DOT even takes a step backward from a previous design - that had a decent design for managed ingress and egress – it shared that design with Representative Quinlan and community members months ago. What happened?

The Board should ask how the DOT plan provides a “managed ingress and egress.” A “conceptual plan” and stating management will be done in the “future” is not sufficient.

3. Proposed Conditions.

The Board should not accept the CDUA until DOT provides and commits to a plan and design that complies with SMA Condition E.

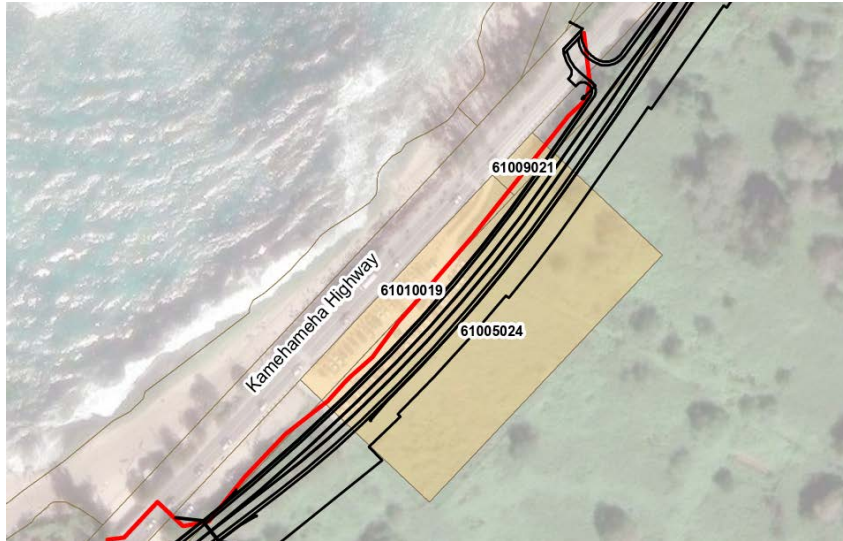
If the Board approves the CDUA -- because it is hard to say “no” to a \$16 million project that is already well underway, right? -- I suggest adding the following conditions:

A. By April 15, 2025, provide to the Board, OCCL, elected area officials, and the community a **detailed plan and design of the makai parking lot showing the system for managed ingress and egress**. This could be as simple as a guardrail barrier along the length of the parking lot along the highway shoulder, with a properly angled and guard-railed ingress from the Waimea side and egress on the Haleiwa side. The current temporary parking lot by DOT accomplishes this with yellow plastic barriers – and bollards – and it seems to work. Something similar can be done on a permanent basis.

B. By July 15, 2025, DOT should make **presentations** to the Sunset Beach Community Association and the North Shore Neighborhood Board on the project and specifically the makai parking lot. Allow for public review and feedback on long-term management options.

C. By September 15, 2025, convene a **Laniākea Makai Working Group** consisting of relevant agencies – City DPR, City DLM, DLNR – Land Division, OCCL, and DOFAW – elected area officials, and community members to finalize management authority and plans for the future **managed** makai parking lot. Who will own it? Who will manage it? Who will ensure appropriate signage, landscaping, Lifeguard, ADA access, and security? How can fees be charged to non-resident visitors to generate revenue through which agency to help with management of the area? DOT must be part of the solution and not just walk away from its public trust responsibilities for this area.

In addition, this Working Group should address and resolve -- in favor of the public trust -- the issue of the substantial loss of City Park land, some of which is in the Conservation zone – as shown in the map below (provided to me in response to my comments) (yellow is City DPR-owned).



This is big loss of City land, with unclear plans for compensation. DOT says that it is negotiating this issue – but this cannot happen behind closed doors - the Board and the public should be fully informed about those negotiations over precious beachfront property that is owned by the public and was purchased specifically to support public access of this spectacular and vibrant coastline.

Mahalo for allowing me to share my comments.

Sincerely,

Denise Antolini