
Ray McCormick (Hawaii DOT), Celia Mahikoa (Kauai County Transportation), Tommy Noyes (Hawaii Department of Health), Jim Charlier (Consultant to Kauai County) – at HDOT offices, August 26, 2011

- Purpose of meeting was to talk about lack of bike lanes on the multi-laning project along Kaumualii Highway through Puhi
- Project is already under construction
- In the Hawaii Bicycle Plan, completed in 2003, this corridor is shown as a “bike route”
- The meeting did not address how the 2003 Bicycle Plan happened to designate this key corridor (providing access to shopping, restaurants, residential districts and the Kauai Community College campus) as only a bicycle route
- From today’s perspective this seems like an error, but perhaps this appeared to be the right choice at the time (before “complete streets” policies were adopted by the Hawaii Legislature and the Kauai County Council
- Bike routes are corridors where the only provision for bicyclists is on the paved shoulders; no other improvements are made; the resulting corridor is marked with “Bike Route” signs
- Kaumualii Highway through this section is currently designated as a bike route, although the bike route connects to nothing at either end, running from a rural location west of Puhi to the bridge near the Lihue Mill site
- The key issue with a bike route in this area is the fact that the project, as designed, would include accel and decel lanes at intersections that bicycles would have to cross
- This would be dangerous for bicyclists; there would be no safe way to get through intersections
- The new highway will be posted with speeds of 30 and 35mph, which is faster than bicyclists can go, so bikes would be in conflict with motor vehicles in the same lanes at intersections
- Charlier Associates, Inc. (CAI) prepared drawings showing how 6’ “bike lanes” could be incorporated into the multi-laning project, given that design has been completed and the project is under construction
- The key benefit of upgrading to bike lanes is that bikes could be carried safely through intersections and the merge across the accel/decel lanes could be designed into the street, using pavement markings and signs; bicyclists would be able to proceed safely through the intersection in a dedicated bike lane
- The CAI drawings were mark-ups of the HDOT design plans, provided to CAI by Tommy Noyes from the full plan set that had been provided by HDOT
- The CAI drawings show that 6’ bike lanes could be accommodated on both sides of the new street with minor changes to the layout of the street
- All of the changes could be accomplished within the right of way boundaries established for the reconstruction
- Most of the changes could be made with paint – marking narrower (11’ instead of 12’) through lanes, along with other minor adjustments
- 12’ general purpose lanes are no longer standard urban design practice; the industry is moving toward narrower lanes in urban, lower speed locations; 12’ is a rural standard
- There is a possibility that the loop detectors already embedded in the new paved intersections would not be in the right place if vehicle lanes were restriped to make room for bike lanes



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- There would also have to be some changes in the location of the landscaped median; that would require shifting some of the paving; this could result in joints that would become a maintenance issue in the future
 - The DOT’s reconstruction project is building a new PCC (Portland Concrete Cement) roadway; PCC is strong, inflexible pavement that gains its strength through chemical bonding of the paving materials, including re-bar laid into the pavement
 - The advantage of PCC paving is its long life and reduced maintenance costs because regular resurfacing is not required as often, if at all; the disadvantage is its higher initial cost
 - Making changes to the sections already paved could create joints that would be weak spots in the pavement
 - Celia Mahikoa conveyed the strong interest that the Mayor and Council have in complete streets and provision of safe facilities for all modes
 - Kauai County has adopted a complete streets policy
 - Ray McCormick indicated he would take information from this meeting and work with the designers (at headquarters in Honolulu) to determine what changes would be possible
 - The issue will be the cost of changes to the design
 - The group considered whether it might, none-the-less, be less expensive to make the changes now, than to come back in later and try to retrofit bike lanes into the corridor
 - CAI also provided drawings showing how the project could be redesigned with minor changes to increase pedestrian safety
 - Hawaii DOT has made an effort to provide a good pedestrian environment, including 8’ sidewalks through the corridor, although not on both sides of the street in all sections
 - However, with current design, the sidewalk would be attached to the curb, so cars and trucks moving at speeds over 30 – 35mph would be passing only a couple of feet away
 - Also, the project includes accel and decel lanes (turn lanes) at intersections; pedestrians would have to cross these lanes to get to islands in the intersection, from which they would cross the rest of the intersection in cross walks
 - The CAI drawings show how additional changes in the cross section would allow installation of a planting strip between the sidewalk and the street, buffering pedestrians from traffic, increasing safety and encouraging walking
 - The CAI drawings also show how the DOT could elevate the pedestrian crossings of the turn lanes up to curb height, effectively turning the cross walks into speed tables that would slow vehicles down and provide a safer way for pedestrians to get across the turn lanes
 - Ray McCormick was interested in the raised cross walk idea and indicated he would convey this to the designers in Honolulu to determine if this could be done
 - The conversation also covered what citizens had been saying at the five public workshops conducted around Kauai over the past two weeks (Ray McCormick had attended and participated in the Lihue workshop)
 - The discussion also addressed the need to expand transit services on the island and the opportunity to incorporate the state’s “Long Range Land Transportation Plan” and the County’s “Multimodal Land Transportation Plan” into a single, coordinated transportation element in the upcoming update of the Kauai General Plan

