

Report of Public Input Received During
Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL)
Meeting #3 held March 6, 2019

Waimea Regional Safety Study

Prepared for
State of Hawaii
Department of Transportation



Prepared by
SSFM International, Inc.
March 2019

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Introduction

The State of Hawaii Department of Transportation (HDOT), Highways Division is currently conducting a Planning and Environmental Linkage (PEL) study for the Waimea Regional Safety Project. PEL is a community involved process for identifying issues and then incorporating them into the environmental process (i.e., compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act [NEPA]). In a PEL study, the community helps to identify the purpose and need, which will be used to guide the identification of alternatives to be analyzed in the NEPA document. The end product of the PEL process is a PEL Document.

Tasks in the PEL process include the following:

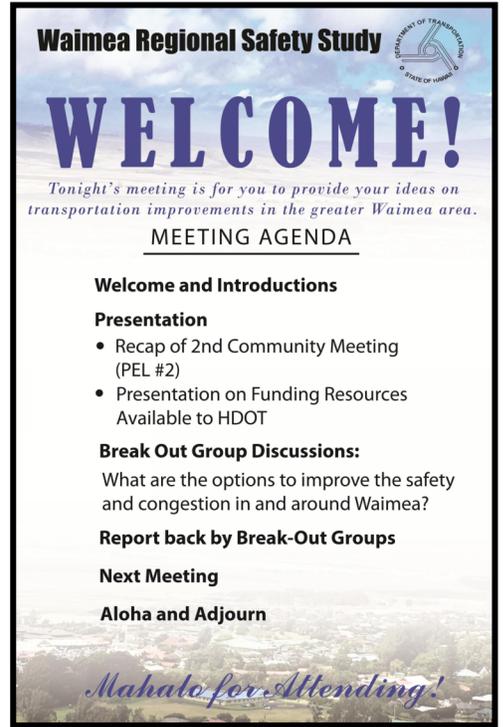
- Identify the problems that “Need” to be addressed.
- Document those “Needs” with data.
- Meet with federal, state, and county regulatory agencies, including but not necessarily limited to the following:
 - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 - State of Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources
 - State of Hawaii Department of Health
 - State Historic Preservation Division
 - County of Hawaii Planning Department
 - County of Hawaii Department of Public Works
 - County of Hawaii Mass Transit Agency
- Develop the “Purpose and Need” statement and gain community and agency consensus.
- Identify “Alternatives” that meet the Purpose and Need.
- Narrow Alternatives to a reasonable number (typically no more than three build alternatives).

Initially, the topics identified for the first community meetings are planned to complete the PEL process. Additional meetings will be scheduled as needed.

- Meeting 1: Introduction to PEL and Discussion of Regional Setting and Needs
- Meeting 2: Development of the Purpose and Need Statement
- **Meeting 3: Continue discussion on Community Needs and discuss ways to address those Needs with the resources and funding available**
- Meeting 4: Identify Alternatives
- Meeting 5: Narrow Alternatives to no more than three

This report documents the third community meeting that was held on March 6, 2019 at the Waimea School Cafeteria. The report is divided into four parts:

- Part One: Open House
- Part Two: Presentation
- Part Three: Breakout Groups
- Part Four: Written Comments



The poster is titled "Waimea Regional Safety Study" and features the Department of Transportation of the State of Hawaii logo. The word "WELCOME!" is written in large, bold, blue letters. Below it, a message reads: "Tonight's meeting is for you to provide your ideas on transportation improvements in the greater Waimea area." The agenda is titled "MEETING AGENDA" and includes sections for "Welcome and Introductions", "Presentation" (with sub-points: Recap of 2nd Community Meeting (PEL #2) and Presentation on Funding Resources Available to HDOT), "Break Out Group Discussions:" (with the question: What are the options to improve the safety and congestion in and around Waimea?), "Report back by Break-Out Groups", "Next Meeting", and "Aloha and Adjourn". At the bottom, it says "Mahalo for Attending!" over a background image of a coastal town.

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Part One: Open House

The third PEL Meeting started with an Open House to allow attendees to meet with HDOT representatives, the consultant team, and each other.

At the sign-in table, attendees were asked to note whether they had attended either or both of the first two PEL meetings. Those that had not attended either meeting or had only been to PEL #1 were directed to Cheryl Soon or Jared Chang of SSFM International, Inc., the consultant for the project, to be provided a recap of the first two meetings and the PEL process. Summary reports for PEL #1 and PEL #2 were also provided if requested.

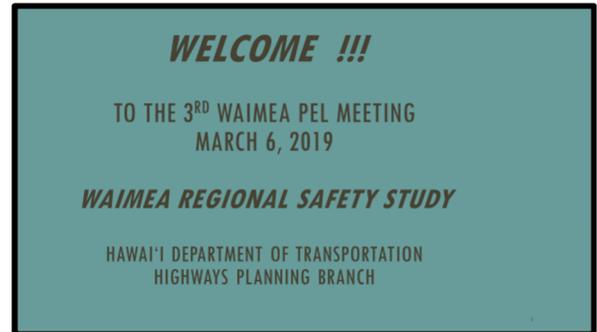


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Part Two: Presentation

Prior to the presentation, Ken Tatsuguchi of HDOT introduced the project team, including representatives from HDOT and the consultant team. The presentation included four distinct parts:

1. Re-cap of the previous PEL meetings
2. Description of meeting purpose and ground rules
3. Presentation by HDOT on Financial Resources
4. Instructions for the Breakout Groups

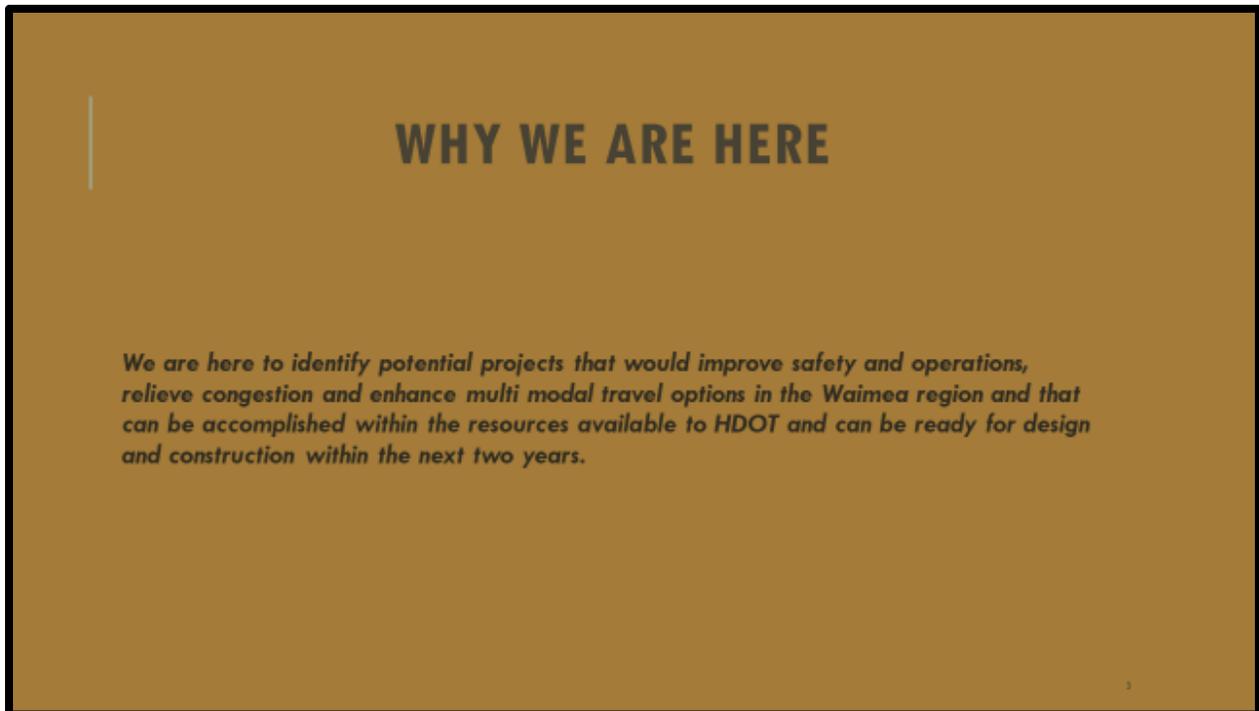


Re-Cap of PEL Meetings 1 and 2

Cheryl Soon (SSFM International, Inc.) provided a re-cap of the first two PEL meetings held on October 10, 2018 and December 5, 2018. For 11 of the 32 attendees, this was their first PEL meeting; a total of 14 attendees had not attended PEL #2. The re-cap included a brief description of what was discussed at the first two PEL meetings and referred to the Summary Reports for each meeting that were available at the sign-in table and on the website. The re-cap also included a description of the Purpose and Need statement that had been developed based on community input.

Meeting Purpose and Ground Rules

Donna Ching, the meeting Facilitator, provided the purpose of the meeting (i.e., “Why we are here”) and described the Ground Rules for the meeting. Ground rules included working together respectfully, and acknowledging that “Silence means you can live with and support the decision/agreement.”



Financial Resources

Ken Tatsuguchi (HDOT) gave a brief presentation on funding resources available to HDOT. He explained that Hawaii Island gets an average of \$25 million (M) per year to split between HDOT Hawaii District projects (\$13M) and Hawaii County projects (\$12M) and showed what projects had been constructed with federal funds on Hawaii Island between 2014 and 2018, as well as the Hawaii Island projects included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) for 2019 through 2022. Lastly, Ken explained that an additional stream of funding had been made available through the passage of the Car Rental Fees, which would be available to be spent on capacity projects. It is estimated that \$65M to \$70M could be raised through car rental fees on Hawaii Island.

During the Financial Resources presentation, it was explained that although the STIP covers a four-year period, for the purposes of this meeting a two-year period is being considered. The two-year period focuses the conversation on projects that could get to the design phase within the next two years. It was also explained that federal funds are distributed to the states based on a formula established by Congress. In certain instances, such as the emergency repairs to roadways on Kauai caused by flooding and on Hawaii Island from the volcanic eruption, additional funding may be provided.

Instructions for Breakout Groups

Donna Ching explained that attendees would be divided into three groups based on the color dot on their name tag. She explained that the purpose of the groups is to brainstorm a list of potential projects and then proceed to cluster the projects based on similarities and discuss the merits of the clusters of projects. Through the small group discussions, the top three clusters should be identified.

Part Three: Breakout Groups

Breakout Group 1

Breakout Group 1 was facilitated by Jared Chang of SSFM International, Inc. The group identified a total of 16 projects during their brainstorming session:

- Kawaihae and Queen Kahanamanu intersection
- Multi-modal transit center
- Connect Kawaihae to Mamalahoa with a connector to Waikaloa in the next phase
- Lindsey Road/Kawaihae/Mamalahoa intersection improvements
- Mud Lane to Kawaihae bypass
- Start of portion of the bypass (phased approach)
- Where to connect bypass to Kawaihae?
- Bike/Ped improvements Laelae Road to Kamamalu
- Take care of traffic at Waiaka Bridge
- Connect Mud Lane bypass to Puako
- Off-highway trails for alternative modes (e.g., bike and pedestrian)
- Saddle Road Extension to Queen Kahanamanu Highway
- Kawaihae bypass at harbor
- Shoulders for bikes and pedestrians at Kawaihae Bridge and Akone Pule



These projects were combined into seven clusters. The top cluster was made up of six (6) individual projects that all were related to a bypass project around Waimea town. The group voted for three (3) more clusters as important but not as important as the top cluster. The second top cluster, with 3 votes, included intersection improvement projects at Lindsey Road/Kawaihae Road intersection, and bike and pedestrian improvements between Laelae Road and Kamamalu. The third top cluster, with 2 votes, included improvements at the Waikoloa Road/Mamalahoa intersection. The fourth top cluster, with one vote covered adding a multi-modal transit center in Waimea town. Due to time constraints, the group did not have enough time to discuss specific merits of each cluster.

Breakout Group 2

Breakout Group 2 was facilitated by Austen Drake of SSFM International, Inc. The group identified a total of 13 projects during their brainstorming session:

- Saddle Road extension
- Waiaka Bridge replacement
- Bypass from Mahua Road to Highway 190
- In-town intersection improvements to address congestion (e.g., roundabout or signal at Kawaihae and Lindsey Road and signal timing through town.
- Complete Waimea Streamside Trail all the way to Ouli Park
- Bypass from Waiemi to Church Road
- Kamamalu to Pokulani Stables connection
- Bus service to Kona (i.e., commuter bus)

- Lindsey Road extension
- Concepts from Vision Zero (e.g., intersection cameras)
- Bike lanes through parks, in school zones, and to Church Road
- Bypass from Lakeland
- Kawaihae Bypass



These projects were combined into seven clusters. The top cluster identified included all of the bypass projects. The merits identified included protecting/retaining the character of Waimea, alleviate traffic in school zones, and relieve impacts to Waiaka Bridge. The second cluster only included one project: Waiaka Bridge replacement. It was mentioned that the project had been funded at one point. Other notable comments included concerns about the lack of safe places to ride bikes and that more bike and pedestrian infrastructure would result in less cars on the road.

Breakout Group 3

Breakout Group 3 was facilitated by Jiro Sumada of SSFM International, Inc. The group identified a total of 14 projects during their brainstorming session:

- Connector road between Mamalahoa to Kawaihae Road within extents of study area (e.g., Puu Pa – Power Line Road)
- Improvements along Kawaihae Road, such as acceleration lanes, merge lanes, and left turn pockets
- Improvements in town and at Lindsey Road
- Lindsey Road bridge widening
- Accommodations for bicycles on all roads
- Improvements at Parker School intersection
- Original Waimea Bypass
- Waiaka Bridge
- Rotary/roundabout at Lindsey Road and Mamalahoa
- Traffic signal synchronization
- Complete Streets for new projects
- More crosswalks along Kawaihae Road (i.e., mid-block crosswalks)
- Mini-bypass (airport to Kawaihae) avoiding Lalamilo Farm Lots
- Traffic calming and bike lanes within Lindsey Road intersection



These projects were combined into six clusters. The top cluster identified included the bypass projects. Merits identified for this cluster included relieves congestion, improves safety, and provides an alternative route through town, although a larger project would be harder to execute in two years. The second top

cluster were the projects associated with Lindsey Road. The merits identified included that the projects are smaller and can be executed in two years, and they would be improving safety and traffic congestion.

Summary of Breakout Groups

All three breakout groups identified a bypass project as their highest priority to improve safety and relieve congestion in Waimea. The groups were also consistent with concerns expressed about the lack of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in Waimea.

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Part Four: Comments Received

A comment form was handed to all attendees when they entered the meeting. The comment form stated, “Please provide input on community needs and alternatives to address those needs and/or any environmental, economic, or community issues.” A total of four comment forms were handed in at the end of the meeting. In addition, an information sheet regarding Ouli Park was provided to the consultant team at the end of the meeting. The following comments were provided.

Comments Received at the PEL Meeting

Comment Form 1

Do connector road from Kawaihae Road to Mamalahoa – depending on amount of funds.

Make a larger quarter circle – less money. Start closer to town, e.g., start at:

1. Kamuela Estates
2. Transfer station or Opelo Road

Alternative ends:

1. Parker Ranch land town side of farmland
2. Immediately Kona side of town
3. Out further on Mamalahoa

Comment Form 2

While a true bypass would relieve east-west Mamalahoa traffic around Waimea, the internal community needs relief from “thru town” congestions. Two relief values merit consideration:

- Lindsey/Kawaihae intersection would be enhanced via a roundabout
- Waiaka Bridge requires construction relief in combination with the Lindsey/Kawaihae roundabout

Comment Form 3

You can drive through the CFH crosswalk and see how crazy traffic can be between 7am-8am and 2pm-3pm. That is when I am there.

- School Crossing Guard at Waimea Elementary and Middle School

Comment Form 4

More focus is needed for pinch points on highways.

Comments Received After the PEL Meeting

Mailed Comment Form (received March 14, 2019)

- Connector road between Mamalahoa Highway and Kawaihae Road
- Improvements along Kawaihae Road (widening, sidewalks, bike lanes, merge lanes, acceleration lanes)
- Lindsey Road extension
- Waiaka Bridge
- Lindsey Road/Kawaihae intersection (roundabout)
- Alternative transit (trails, bikeways, pedestrian lanes)

- Secondary road/bridge across Waikoloa Stream (Kawaihae Road or Opelu Road)
- Ala Ohia extension

Emailed Comment (received March 13, 2019)

Thank you for the invite. I must say that other than satisfying the procedural checklist, that last meeting was a total waste of time and I will no longer attend another meeting like that.

With that said, I would like to advocate for the completion of the Waimea Trails and Greenways and advocate for the inclusion of complete streets for any repaving or new road projects within the State. I would also like to see more dedicated bicycle paths separated from cars – that would keep bikers safe and give people a healthy alternative to getting places in cars alone. It would also reduce pollution and make the commuting experience more beautiful.

Emailed Comment (received March 15, 2019)

Having attended for the first time, PEL Meeting #3, 7th Mar. at the Waimea School Cafeteria, I offer the following observations;

The Meeting was run by facilitators from SSFM and with WCA, local groups and residents in attendance

The organization and structure of the meeting, intro, scope, group activity in three groups, with proposals and comments from the groups presented at the final session for evaluation.

The final objective being limited to three proposals from each of the three groups addressing the issues identified at the previous meetings.

The overwhelming consensus of all three groups was first and foremost a BYPASS ROAD.

Other suggestions were;-

WAIAKA BRIDGE replacement, Kawaihae road upgrade and traffic remediation in the town.

The bypass road concept apparently is so old that its inclusion is a given. Its appeal is that it will both improve road safety, reduce congestion and create a much improved Waimea. Other benefits accruing from a bypass would be a healthier environment and better access to the town amenities as well as reducing stress on existing infrastructure.

The reasons as to why progress on its construction has been repeatedly delayed include.

Lack of money in the budget, project too big to fit into project time frames, i.e., a two year limit on planning and commencement of construction. Also objections and concern over native Hawaiian lands encroachment, possible burial and archaeological site disturbances coming from DHHL etal.

I would like to point out that there is already a precedent in the existence of a service road up to the windmill generators south of the Hawaiian homesteads. This might serve as a basis for a route from Queen Ka'ahumanu highway, rt19, adjacent to Puako, up to Mamalahoa highway, rt190. This route could possibly be used to link up to Waikaloa Village providing a second access route to the village.

The bypass solution is a major project, far exceeding the budgetary and time scales mentioned in this study. But..... it would solve the majority of the problems identified and ultimately have to be put right.

The Waiaka Bridge replacement would be the next most pressing need, irrespective of the bypass. This bridge is a disaster waiting to happen and the consequences could be far reaching in terms of injury and subsequent costs. A vital road bridge, built circa 1930's, with a current DOT rating of < 27 out of a 100, adjacent to a school, carrying a significant amount of heavy goods traffic and a major cross island link road deserves immediate attention.

A third area in need of attention with regard to traffic safety is Kawaihae road. Upgrades include;-

Curve straightening, shoulder upgrades, roadside safety barriers and provision of a truck emergency run-off ramp.

As to costs and budget constraints, it's my personal opinion, that in general, money is not the problem, it's how it is distributed and spent, determined usually by the old principle, 'He who shouts loudest gets the attention'. Thank you for consideration of my comments.

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Next Steps

The next Community meeting is scheduled for March 27, 2019 and will continue discussions on Alternatives. The objective is to identify potential alternatives that would improve safety and operations, relieve congestion, and enhance multi-modal travel options in the Waimea region that can be accomplished within the resources (e.g., funding) available to HDOT within the next two years.

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List of Attendees at PEL 3

Table 1 provides a list of the attendees at the third PEL meeting held on March 6, 2019 at Waimea Elementary School Cafeteria. There were 32 people in attendance at the meeting.

Table 1. Attendees at PEL #3

ATTENDEE	AFFILIATION
Steve Cotton	Friends of Ouli Park
Nell Achtmeyer	Parker Ranch
Jonathan Mitchell	Parker Ranch
Tim McCullough	T.R. McCollough Farm
Nani Barrett	Friends of Ouli Park
James Kong	Resident
Eliza Pond	Resident
Margaret Wille	Resident
Kamuela Plunkett	E Mau Na Ala Hale
Patti Cook	Waimea Community Association
Jojo Tanimoto	Kailapa Association
Leningrad Eloring (sp.)	Retired Cop
Carol Buck	South Kohala Traffic Safety Committee
Roger Wehrsig	Waikoloa Village
Leonard Librizzi	Hawaiian Modular
Julia Alos	Waikoloa Community Leadership Council
Bill Simonsma	Waimea Preservation Association
Janet Lam	Resident
Jim DuPont	Department of Hawaiian Home Lands
G.T. Foulkes	Resident
Jada Rifo	Resident
Aaron Stene	Resident
James Hustace	South Kohala Traffic Safety Committee
David Greenwell	Resident
Terri Greenwell	Resident
John Buck	Resident
Clemson Lam	WT&G
Billy Bergin	PPS
Julia Simnow	Resident
Natasha Soriano	County of Hawaii Department of Planning
David Yamamoto	County of Hawaii Department of Public Works
Sue LeeLoy	County of Hawaii Council Member

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