

# PA'IA RELIEF ROUTE PROJECT

## Statement of Purpose and Need

May 1, 2009

### Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the proposed project is to improve the east-west flow of traffic through the Pa'ia – Haiku region that will:

- *Adequately and safely accommodate current and future traffic demand*
- *Improve safety for all modes of travel, including conventionally and alternatively powered vehicles, public transit, bicycles, and walking.*
- Reduce vehicle travel times
- Alleviate traffic congestion at Pa'ia
- Provide improved, more *reliable and* convenient access to the towns of Pa'ia, Ha'iku, and adjacent areas
- *Support desirable aspects of Pa'ia's lifestyles, as defined by its residents, that can be achieved through transportation improvements*

### Project Objectives that Should be Met to Facilitate a Successful Solution

- Support a regional circulation system which avoids or minimizes conflicts between leisure, commuter, and agricultural traffic
- Expedite the safe flow of resident, commuter, and business traffic throughout the region with a minimum of user conflicts
- Facilitate the development of a circulation system which provides safe and convenient visitor and recreational vehicular routes to the resources and locations which attract them.
- Consider existing roadway resources *as well as previous and current alignment proposals* in identifying alternative relief routes.
- Support County land use and directed growth policies
- Avoid disturbance, disruption, or degradation of significant natural or cultural resources
- Avoid or adequately mitigate existing or potentially hazardous conditions
- Maintain and protect the region's rural character and the lifestyle choices that this supports

- Maintain Pa‘ia Town rural character; facilitate its further evolution as a safe, well-landscaped, walkable community with accommodations for ample parking and convenient coastal access, and *facilities which adequately support various transportation choices, including public transit, electric vehicles, bicycles, running, and walking.*
- Support rural neighborhood rural character
- Maintain P‘ia’s historic character, including streetscape and building scale and style of design
- Maintain or enhance Pa‘ia business opportunities.
- Avoid the creation or perpetuation of traffic or resident lifestyle disruptions or traffic-related hazards at Pa‘ia.
- Emphasize roadway improvements which safely accommodate a range of transportation choices, including public transit, electric vehicles, bicycles, walking, and running
- Emphasize the use of regionally appropriate native plant material in landscaping and shading proposed roadway facilities
- Incorporate community input in the selection and planning of alternative relief route solutions
- Expedite this effort to take advantage of existing and future funding programs

## **Statements of Need**

### **1. Conditions Need to be Improved for Pedestrians, Bicyclists, Transit Users and Motorists**

Traffic volumes and speeds pose street crossing safety concerns for pedestrians in Pa‘ia Town and elsewhere along Hāna Highway. Within town, there is heavy pedestrian activity, but pedestrians experience difficulty in crossing streets because of the traffic volumes and speeds. Outside of town, the undivided two-lane Hāna Highway poses safety concerns for motorists, since there are limited opportunities for passing maneuvers. Furthermore, high numbers of visitors bring an element of less-focused traffic, contributing to potential safety concerns.

Existing Hāna Highway does not provide continuity for bicyclists. While areas outside of Pa‘ia town offer shoulder areas for bicycle travel, there is no such provision for safe bicycle travel within town.

## **2. Motorists are Burdened by Excessive Delays from Existing Congestion**

Traffic along the study portion of Hāna Highway is frequently congested and results in lengthy travel times. Congestion is observed not only during the morning and afternoon peak periods, but also throughout the day. Traffic congestion specifically caused by roadway capacity constraints includes queuing formed by those making left turns and inability to maneuver around traffic accidents or lane blockages. Enhanced roadway capacity is needed now to reduce the delays caused by turning movements and such incidents. Enhanced capacity would improve the reliability of travel on the roadway.

## **3. Signalized Intersections in Pa‘ia Town are Congested and Will Become More Congested in the Future**

Several traffic movements at intersections are experiencing long or very long traffic delays with poor Levels of Service (LOS). During the AM peak hour, the intersection of Hāna Highway and Baldwin Avenue operates at LOS E (“very long traffic delays”) for its westbound left turn and its makai-bound left turn operates at LOS D (“long traffic delays”). The mauka-bound Kala Road operates at LOS E (“very long traffic delays”).

During the PM peak hour, the intersection of Hana Highway and Baldwin Avenue operates at LOS D (“long traffic delays”) and its makai-bound approach and westbound left turn experiences serious queuing. The makai-bound Kupuno Street, makai-bound Lae Place, and the mauka-bound Kala Road all operate at LOS E (“very long traffic delays”).

Existing plans project further growth and development in the Pa‘ia-Ha‘ikū area, which would correspondingly increase travel demand. Even with modest growth projected, considering existing congestion in the study area, this additional demand cannot be accommodated by the current transportation infrastructure.

## **3. The Existing Roadway System Limits Travel Options to and from the Area**

Hāna Highway is currently the only practical connection between study area communities and business/employment centers in Wailuku, Kahului, and Kihei. With no other options for travel to areas beyond the Study Area, the existing corridor takes on great importance, both in terms of serving daily commute patterns and providing access to Emergency Providers and Civil Defense.

A variety of incidents have forced closure of the Hāna Highway within the study area. Improvements are needed to reliable and safe access to the study area. Furthermore, the current alignment of Hāna Highway places it within the Tsunami Inundation Zone, defined by Maui Civil Defense and Stream and Coastal Flood Zone AE, defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Therefore, a stated need of Maui Civil Defense, FEMA, and Maui Department of Planning is to have an alternative evacuation route outside of the tsunami inundation and flood plain zones.

## **4. Pa‘ia’s Quality of Life is Adversely Affected by Congestion**

The business environment for commercial properties in Pa‘ia Town is highly affected by traffic that discourages visits to the area and poor conditions for safe pedestrian travel. Furthermore, residents’ and commuters’ quality of life are affected by their expenditure of time and resources due to congestion.

To address all the needs listed above, the purpose of the project is to address these needs through alternatives that would either improve the existing roadway alignment, construct a new roadway alignment around Pā'ia, or potentially implement a combination of the two.