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Agenda Item: C. 3. A Complete, Balanced and Connected Transportation System

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Testimony for December 14, 2022 CPAC Meeting

Comments on Transportation

Since the adoption of the Kihei-Makena Community plan in 1998, traffic congestion on Pi'ilani Highway and South Kihei Road has increased significantly. The South Maui Community Plan update needs to address this head-on. The two and only roadways in and out of south Maui are currently inadequate to accommodate existing traffic volume not to mention expected future traffic growth. As stated in the current Kihei-Makena Community Plan (KMCP) "Upon adoption of this plan, *it shall be required* that adequate facilities and infrastructure will be built concurrent with further development." (See page 15.).

Kihei Sub-Area Transportation Plan

The March 2021 Kihei Sub-Area Transportation Plan (KSATP) developed by a consulting firm for the County of Maui Department of Public Works, Department of Engineering, covers transportation issues from the intersection of North Kihei Road and Pi'ilani Highway in the north to Kilohana Road in the south. It *excludes* Wailea and Makena.

The mayor's cover letter to the Plan reads:

"Growth is a part of every healthy community and the County of Maui understands the importance of planning for that growth, especially to its transportation system as it is central to a community's overall well-being. When our roadways fail to keep up with everyone who depends on it, eventually the effects begin to touch our resident's quality of life. "

The Current Situation

The KSATP includes a section defining HDOT highway service level gradations, followed by application of these grades to Pi'ilani Highway and South Kihei Road within the sub-area. (See pages 3.26 - 3.27; <https://www.mauicounty.gov/DocumentCenter/View/128106/Kihei-Sub-Area-Transportation-Plan>)

Different grades for highway level of service are divided into six grades: "A" to "F" with "A" being the best and "F" being the worst. They are:

"A" "Free flow operations."

"B" "Reasonably unimpeded operations."

"C" "Stable operations."

"D" "Freedom to maneuver within the traffic stream is noticeably restricted. Drivers may experience reduced comfort."

"E" "Vehicles are closely spaced, leaving little room to maneuver within the traffic stream. Significant delays occur."

"F" "Breakdowns in traffic flow. Vehicles experience high delays and slow speeds."

The map on page 3.26 designates several segments of Pi'ilani Highway currently at services levels "D," "E," and "F." South Kihei Road is similarly designated in parts.

In addition, the KSATP notes that parts of South Kihei Road are in flood zones and are subject to sea level rise. (See pages 3.1.1 and Exhibits 3.22 a. and b. and 3.23 a. and b.)

The Plan goes on to discuss estimated resident growth in detail without discussing tourist numbers or tourism growth, using 2015 census data (see page 3.3). It fails to include in any meaningful way the existence and effect of a predictable number of tourists in the area, and Wailea and Makena are **explicitly excluded from consideration and analysis; this is a major shortcoming**. Only a passing reference is made to visitors at page 3-11. (Also see "Material Data Gap" below.)

Transportation and Mobility Resource Paper

Unlike the KSATP the April 2021 Transportation and Mobility Resource Paper (TMRP; see https://southmaui.wearemaui.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Final_South_Maui_Mobility_Resource_Paper.pdf) acknowledges significant presence of tourists in the area. Figure 1 on page 1 notes the roughly 1:1 ratio of tourists to residents as follows: 28,700 residents to 26,500 tourists in 2020; and 34,800 residents to 36,200 tourists in 2045.

However, unlike the KSATP, the TMRP is devoid of specific actions to be taken to remedy current and projected highway demand.

Material Data Gap (Derailing Analysis)

Much significant information is entirely missing from the transportation resources referenced above. For instance:

A December 10, 2022, article in the *Maui News* reported that Ledcor, a real estate development company, is proposing to build 1,000 residential units within and adjacent to Wailea Resort. Buildout is said to be accomplished within 15-20 years (within the scope of the community plan update timeframe).

This is in addition to continued buildout of Makena Resort, Honua'ula (Wailea 670), expansion of existing Wailea hotel properties, buildout of the R&T Park, opening of the new high school with multiple trips associated with students, teachers, staff and maintenance personnel (presumably with many commuting back and forth from Central Maui), etc.

Then there are all the construction workers and tradesmen who will necessarily be driving into and out of the area to bring these major developments into being. Again, presumably many of them will be commuting from Central Maui, all of which will be additive to local area traffic and **none of which is accounted for in either the KSATP the TMRP** (e.g., the TMRP only references resident and visitor numbers).

Furthermore, once these projects are constructed, **each new housing unit will generate multiple vehicle trips by owners, guests and visitors, mail delivery, garbage pick up, grocery shopping and errand running, pool service personnel, gardeners, housekeepers, delivery trucks, etc.**

There is one exception to the above. Specific to the R&T Park, the KSATP says:

“The Maui Island Plan noted that the sizable planned growth area would need enhanced north south mobility *mauka* of Pi’ilani Highway to ensure efficient intra- and inter-regional connectivity. (See page 3-10.).

In this context, see the KMCP at page 17 which states unequivocally, **“Upon adoption of this plan, allow no further development unless infrastructure, public facilities, and services needed to service new development are available prior to or concurrent with the impacts of new development.”** Is there any doubt as to what these plainly written words mean?

What is true for the R&T Park is necessarily and logically true for all other major projects listed above, whether within or without the planned growth area because the effect is the same if efficient intra- and inter-regional connectivity is to be assured - as Mayor Victorino so correctly states in his cover letter to the KSATP.

Pi’ilani Promenade

The comments immediately above also provide guidance for the property commonly known as Pi’ilani Promenade which has been preliminarily designated on the Draft Plan’s land use map for retail use in the front and housing in the rear - even though the current KMPC explicitly restricts retail development to land *makai* of the highway. (See KMCP at pages 17-18, paragraph h.)

Aside from this, why would the south Maui community want to perpetuate retail and commercial development perched atop Pi’ilani Highway? Take a look at the eyesore commercial and retail development just to the north for a preview. Envision fast food restaurants and other kindred businesses located at this contentious location, which was the subject of 8 years of administrative proceedings before the state LUC resulting in a finding that the owner’s proposed shopping center plans violated the Commission’s 1995 Order.

Also note the proscription in the KCMP to “Limit commercial services to neighborhood business uses or other low-key business activities with a residential scale on those properties which abut single-family residential areas.” So, if housing is to be built on the Pi’ilani Promenade site, commercial services should be low-key and nested within the neighborhood, not perched on the highway with all the additional traffic that would entail.

Consider these traffic implications. If low-key retail and commercial services are located away from the highway such that they would serve local residents, impact on traffic could be net positive by providing everyday services near at hand. No so with retail and commercial services perched on the highway. Retail and commercial real estate experts know that the value of this kind of property is enhanced by the volume of vehicle traffic driving by, because traffic = potential customers, exactly what the community does not need. As the traffic expert for the Pi’ilani Promenade Shopping Center testified at the LUC contested case hearing, this kind of traffic generates increased burden on highways due to customer comings and goings during all hours of the day and into the evening. All of this would be additive to the current situation which, as indicated above, will demand even more of an already overly-burdened Pi’ilani Highway and South Kihei Road. Right now the section of roadway fronting the property is graded “D” in the northbound direction and “E” in the southbound.

Suggestion: Require retail and business services to be nested in newly created residential neighborhoods; do not allow access to the front of the property off Pi'ilani Highway. (Note: more access roads (intersections) will create more traffic stops and delays.). All access to the 88 acre parcel should be restricted to the eastern extension of Kaonoula Street. Apply the same approach to all other development in the planned growth area. Take a page from the R&T Park plan in this regard.

Lack of Decision-Making Data and Analysis

The KSATP identifies a number of possible projects and actions that could be taken to potentially alleviate current and expected roadway stress. In the next breath, however, and even while paying lip service to the need for the updated plan to identify explicit performance outcomes ("targets") to be achieved with each possible action, it is devoid of any data or information that would enable CPAC to do so. Why? Because none of the various options listed in the Plan are tied to specific, measurable expected levels of service improvements. There is no "If you this, then x will be achieved."

Without possessing this critical information, I don't see how CPAC can carry out its duty to craft a plan that will align our two key roadways with a desirable state. South Maui has grown for too long without adequate infrastructure, broadly defined. **We need a plan that means something and that works.** Let the past serve as a grim reminder. Our precious community has been a rag doll for development without attention to transportation capacity. It's time for discipline, which is the whole purpose of the current planning process.

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