



Mr. Ford Fuchigami
Interim Director
State of Hawaii Department of Transportation
Punchbowl and Halekauwila Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

June 19, 2014

RE: QUESTIONS & CONCERNS ABOUT KALANIANAOLE HWY REPAVING PROJECT

Dear Mr. Fuchigami,

Thank you and the Department for giving the public, particularly the Hawaii Kai community an early heads up about the repaving project to commence on Kalanianaole Highway from Aina Haina to Hanauma Bay on June 23, 2014. You have been given some excellent coverage by the local media, but there are still some unanswered questions about this project. My questions and concerns are as follows:

- **LANE CLOSURES:** According to your department's plans, two lanes will be closed from 9 am to 3 pm for the purpose of accommodating rush hour traffic. Are the two closed lanes in the same or opposite directions? If in the same direction, I am concerned that the closing 2 of 3 lanes going or coming in the same direction could be traumatic for our residents in East Honolulu. While these closures appear to be the biggest hardship for our seniors with medical appointments during the daytime, I am concerned that the lane closures are subject to change without public input. On your Department of Transportation's website for example, it notes upfront in its Lane Closures section it warns: *Lane closure schedules may change at any time without further notice.* That is a bit scary given what our community went through with highway improvements over the past 20 years.
- **LENGTH OF PROJECT:** It took 4 years to add 2 lanes to the old 4-lane Kalanianaole Highway while at the same time paving 6 lanes, acquiring land, moving and relocating underground utilities, rebuilding sidewalks and bike lanes and host of other related electrical, telephone, and sewer arrangements. This same 5-mile stretch of road is now said to take almost 2 years (20 months) to just resurface. Is this an accurate calculation? Does this number include anticipated delays, or is this the actual build time to be used by the contractor? While we were warned about these lane closures ahead of time, there had been no previous timeline announcements that this repaving project will take this long to complete. Again, this is reminiscent of the Kalanianaole Highway Widening project of the 1990's that took over 4 years to complete, and was cruel and unusual punishment for our community, and this one appears to be too long of a project for just repaving. Please explain.
- **COMMUNITY MONITORING OF PROJECT:** Lastly I am concerned that history is going to repeat itself between the DOT and the Hawaii Kai community and communications are going to break down in the midst of a barrage of complaints. The solution to this problem would be to do what we did under DOT Director, Rex Johnson, and formed the Kalanianaole Highway Task Force comprised of **elected officials from East Honolulu, the DOT and its contractors.**

Some of the good things that came out of the Task Force's monthly meetings included:

1. **An informed public who had a hotline to voice their suggestions and complaints;**
2. **An informed elected and DOT leadership that kept the be no trees planted and watered on the medial strip between Aina Haina and Hawaii Kai on Kalanianaole Highway as they are now.**
3. **It created a contra flow near the end of the project that appeared to be impossible at the beginning of the project.**
4. **Lastly, the Task Force can be attributed to have improved the quality of the highway paving by its complaints about the rough and undulating Dillingham paving by between Aina Haina and Niu Valley and the smoother later phase completed by Kiewit between Niu Valley and Hawaii Kai.**

Do you concur we establish another task force? Thank you for your attention to these concerns.

Sincerely,

Rep. Gene Ward, District 17

Cc: Senators Slom and Thielen; Rep. Hashem, Councilman Chang, HKNB Chair Knudsen