



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATE OF HAWAII
STATE CAPITOL
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

September 07, 2021

Commissioner Jonathan Likeke Scheuer,
Chair
Commissioner Edmund Aczon, Vice Chair
Commissioner Dan Giovanni, Vice Chair

Commissioner Dawn N. S. Chang
Commissioner Lee Ohigashi
Commissioner Gary Y. Okuda
Commissioner Nancy Cabral
Commissioner Arnold Wong

Re: OPPOSITION to Agenda September 8, 2021 Item V: ACTION

A11-794 STATE OF HAWAII, DEPT. OF EDUCATION – (Kihei High School) (Maui)

- To Consider Petitioner's Motion to Amend the LUC's Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Decision and Order Filed July 29, 2013.
- To Consider Petitioner's Request for the Issuance of Written Findings as to its Aug 20, 2020 Motion to Amend the Land Use Commission's Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Decision and Order filed July 29, 2013.

Aloha Chair Scheuer, Vice Chair Aczon, Vice Chair Giovanni, and honorable Commissioners,

I continue to stand with the South Maui community, who has been advocating for an underpass at Waipu'ilani Gulch since at least 2010, if not earlier. This area would provide safe passage for the students and staff of Kīhei High School, and nearby Kīhei Charter School, as well as the broader community when connected to a community-wide network of bike paths and walkways.

This longstanding community request is supported by:

1. The 2012 Environmental Impact Statement

http://oeqc2.doh.hawaii.gov/EA_EIS_Library/2012-09-08-MA-FEIS-Kihei-High-School.pdf

- a. P. 104 of the PDF: "A more appropriate grade separation treatment may be the development of a greenbelt bikeway and recreational trail that would follow the watercourse that passes under Pi'ilani Highway south of the intersection. This would be a facility appropriate for consideration in evaluating plans for a bikeway network west of Pi'ilani Highway for the entire community, and is a community-wide planning issue."

2. The 2014 walking audit titled "Safe Routes to Kīhei High School: Pedestrian Routes Study" https://gokihei.org/wp-content/uploads/WALC-Institute_Kihei-High-School-

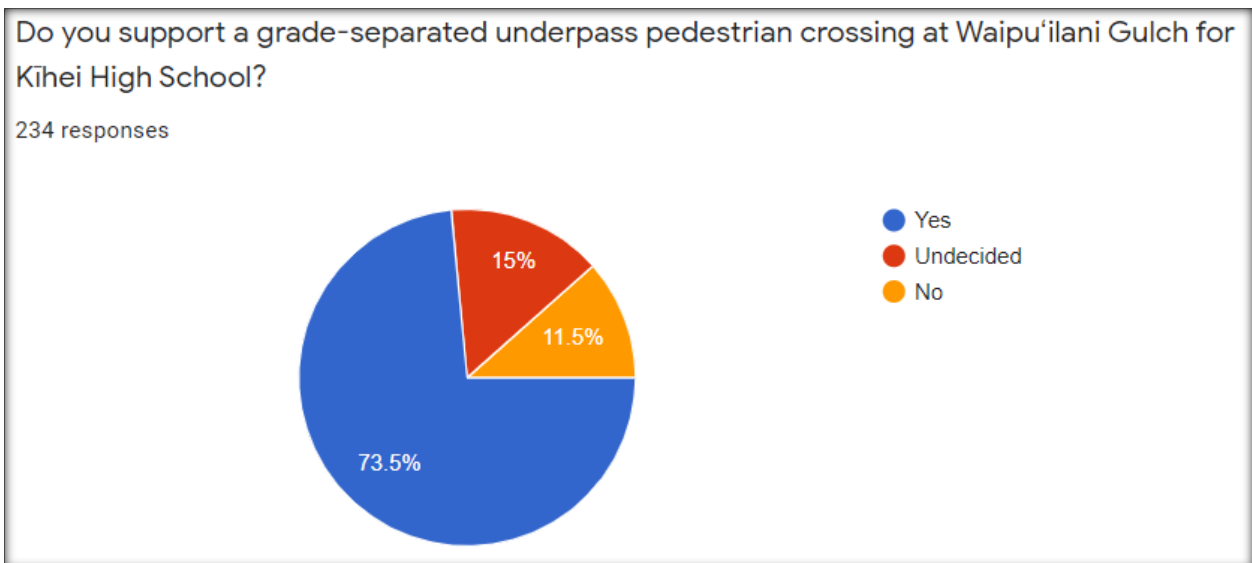
[Pedestrian-Route-Report_Draft-June-2014_High-Resolution_Packaged_sm.pdf](#)

conducted in Kīhei as a part of the state's complete streets policy, commissioned by Act 100 (2009), p.7 & 8 of the PDF says “Due to the local topography and community input this report also recommends an underpass.”

3. **The 2016 Kīhei Sub-Area Transportation Plan**

<https://www.mauicounty.gov/DocumentCenter/View/128106/Kihei-Sub-Area-Transportation-Plan>

- a. P. 121 of the PDF: “Construct a diversion channel to direct the flow from Upper Waipu‘ilani Gulch to Kulanihako‘i Gulch mauka of Pi‘ilani Highway” (this would alleviate any flooding concerns anyone may have)
 - b. P. 168 of the PDF: “Construct an overpass or underpass to allow pedestrians to safely cross Pi‘ilani Highway at Kūlanihāko‘i Street to reach Kīhei High School and prevent traffic build up on the highway during peak hour.”
4. **KCA's September 2020 petition** supporting an underpass received over 400 electronic signatures in support.
 5. **73% of South Maui respondents to my 2021 end-of-session poll** indicated that they support a grade-separated underpass pedestrian crossing at Waipu‘ilani Gulch for Kīhei High School, pictured below:



The bottom line is: I have seen zero studies showing that an underpass at Waipu‘ilani Gulch would be ill-advised, but the 5 items listed above are all in strong support.

Below, I have included for the record a photo of students spilling out into Pi'ilani Highway at the crosswalk near Kīhei Charter School (just a mile south of the Kīhei High School location), which shows the dire necessity of better pedestrian safety measures in our community. This extremely dangerous proximity of minors and high-speed traffic happens every school day:



I am also very concerned about how this will affect traffic. During peak hours, it can take half an hour to get out of Kīhei from Wailea. Kīhei will not be traversable if there are hundreds of schoolchildren stopping traffic to cross the roads four hours every weekday during both shift changes at the hotels in Wailea. Any decisions made using outdated & erroneous traffic data will result in the “Oahu-fication” of South Maui, it will trash our commutes.

I agree with the points brought up in the August 05, 2020 letter from the DOT:

1. An overpass would go widely unused
2. Kulanihako'i Gulch is not a good location for an underpass (it is too narrow for drainage in the event of a storm)

Those are precisely the reasons why the Kīhei community has chosen Waipu'ilani Gulch, to the South of Kīhei High School (see map, below.)



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Kihei Community Association members have partnered with GoodFellow Brothers to survey the area and found ample height & breadth for both a raised walkway/bike path, as well as a drainage ditch in the rare event of heavy rainfall (photo below.)



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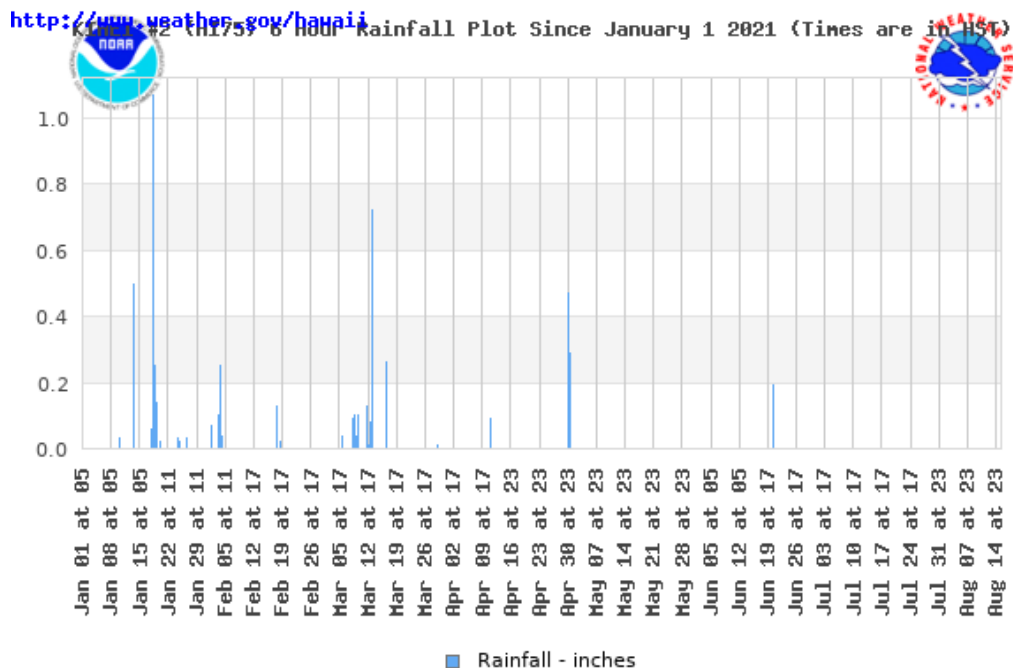
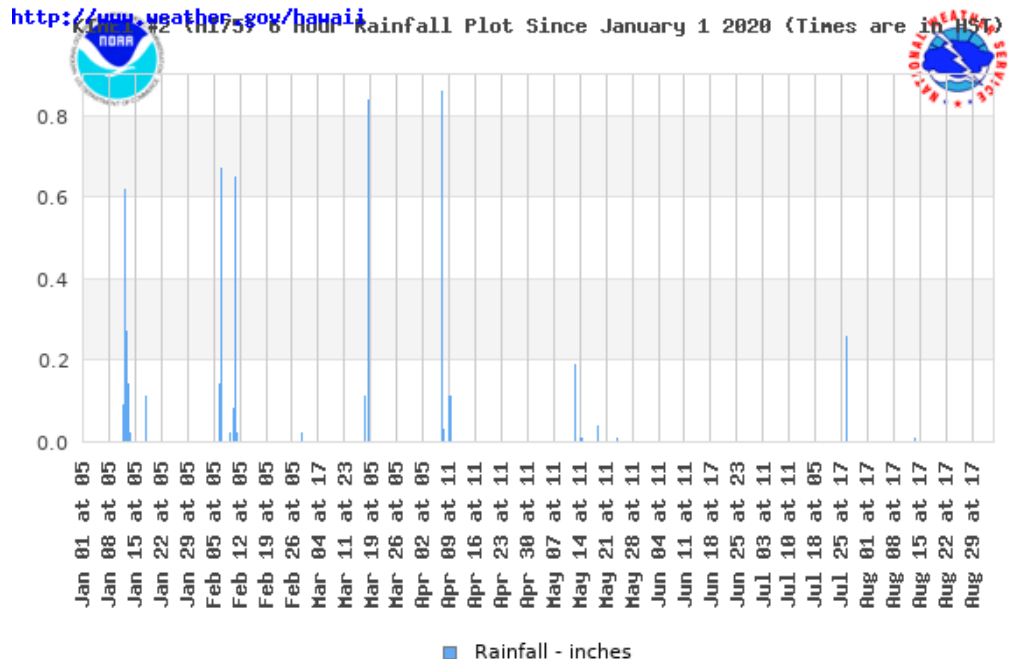
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Kīhei has a very arid climate. Please find below a photo I took of Waipu'ilani Gulch during our last major rainfall event: Hurricane Douglas on July 28, 2020. Despite a designated hurricane warning and precipitation upcountry, the gulch remained dry.



These graphs from the National Weather Service shows Kihei has received a maximum of roughly 0.8-1.2 inches of rainfall only three times from January 2020 until now:



Source: https://www.weather.gov/hfo/rra_graphs

I understand that some people may have security concerns, and I suspect that the bridge over Waipu'ilani Gulch will be a common location for mischievous high school students to break rules regardless of whether or not a formal walkway/bikeway is built there. However, if a formal bikeway/pathway is built there & opened at the same time as the school opening, it logically follows that the frequent presence of other pedestrians would actually serve as a crime deterrent rather than a crime incentive. If the school wanted to install and maintain security cameras under the bridge area, the risk of criminal activity would decrease even further, and any illegal activity could be easily tracked & addressed by calling the police as needed. Below, I have included photo of an example of another underpass on Maui that was built by the Hawai'i DOT, complete with bicycle parking:



Commissioners, I beseech you to uphold your 2013 & 2019 requirements for a grade-separated pedestrian crossing, our community has repeatedly voiced their need for this underpass.

Mahalo,

Handwritten signature of Tina Wildberger.

Representative Tina Wildberger
House District 11 - South Maui
Kihei · Wailea · Mākena

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