



A L O H A

from
**Councilmember
Todd K. Apo**

With 2008 underway, my overall legislative priority for this year will continue to be to ensure that the city maintains its focus on bringing the necessary infrastructure to West Oahu. This means: making sure that mass transit is effectively and properly implemented on time; district roads, parks and other Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects are monitored and funded; and that the budget is critically handled with current real property assessments down, thus further prioritizing city spending and projects.

Waste management and landfill closure will also continue to be a top priority. As the city administration embarks on curbside recycling, increasing H-Power capacity, and shipping waste, the Council and I continue to work with the city to ensure that a firm plan and timeline to close the Waimanalo Gulch Landfill can and will be executed. As always, my staff and I will also continue to work with residents and the community at large on the day-to-day issues we face.

Right now, the Council is gearing up for the budget season. Your input is an important part of the process, and I ask the neighborhood boards to put forward their suggestions and priorities for the upcoming fiscal year.

I always welcome your comments, questions and concerns. You can call my office at 547-7001, or email me at tapo@honolulu.gov. To read updates on the web or receive a monthly electronic newsletter, please visit my City website at www.toddapo.org. Additionally, you may watch "Westside Solutions" on Olelo Channel 54, every Thursday at 8:30 p.m. Mahalo!

Update on Mass Transit

There was a very good response to the City's recent Request for Information (RFI) from transit technology suppliers. Twelve manufacturers submitted information to the city, and among the dozen, each of the four types of technology previously discussed by Council are represented. They are: 1) steel wheel on steel rail; 2) rubber tire on concrete; 3) monorail; 4) and magnetic levitation. Image references on this technology are available on the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project website at www.honolulutransit.org.

In January, the Council passed Resolution 07-376,CD1, FD1(B), creating a technical expert panel that will evaluate these proposals and submit their recommendation to the Council. To clarify this issue, the technical panel provides the Council with the best information and resources about transit technology. The Council has the ultimate decision on selecting the type of technology, which is stipulated by Ordinance 07-001, and that cannot be changed by a resolution. The process based on the resolution will have the panel, after conducting its analysis, make a presentation to the Council. The Council will then have the opportunity to review the panel's process and recommendation, and at that point, the Council will either approve the panel's recommendation or choose otherwise.

Waianae Emergency Access Road

December's barrage of disruptive events -- namely the windstorms and water main break -- hindered the commuting and daily lives of leeward residents. This publicly shared our infrastructural strain with the rest of Oahu. The benefit of this series of unfortunate events was the comprehensive actions taken by several state and local authorities to actively mitigate any similar complications in the future. Our office has maintained a concurrent voice with the community that the need to develop an alternative

route out of the Waianae Coastal Region is a crucial factor to the community's vitality. It was with this understanding that the Governor's Office accelerated the ongoing investigation and planning if an access route for Leeward residents.

On Friday, December 21, 2007, the Governor's Chief of Staff, Barry Fukunaga, hosted an aerial tour of the proposed access route, attended by approximately 27 staff members, elected officials, and department heads. Using Wheeler Army Air Base as the port of departure, the tour attendees gained an appreciated aerial perspective of several access options that could be utilized in the event of an emergency, namely Kolekole Pass as well as the proposed evacuation route. The debriefing portion of the tour highlighted that the most feasible evacuation plan would involve the Kolekole Pass.

Military sources informed the attendees that Kolekole Pass could feasibly require only a thirty minute turn-around time before it could be opened for public use. Further discussion clarified that all appropriate and necessary civilian identification and vehicular mandates are required for those who utilize the pass; this would include current safety check, vehicular insurance, and current registration of the vehicle. The issue of over-sized vehicles gaining safe access through the pass was discussed; however the details were not solidified at this meeting.

Although the Kolekole Pass was discussed at some length as a reasonable alternative to the proposed emergency evacuation route the discussion should not be taken out of context. The State of Hawaii is still in the developmental process of defining an absolute route. However, while the wake of destruction left by December's events clearly renewed the much needed attention to our infrastructural needs, this issue's urgency has been effectively conveyed.

Undergrounding utility lines along Farrington

On January 9, Senate President Colleen Hanabusa and Hawaiian Electric Company announced plans to move towards placing underground utility lines along the Waianae Coast. This is definitely a significant project that is long overdue for the health and safety of the Coast. However, it will take a lot of community input and planning before this can come to fruition. Since cost issues remain, and construction for such a project will impact residential properties, as well as daily commutes, HECO will hold a series of community meetings to discuss proposals and listen to concerns. The schedule for these meetings is not yet announced, but the information will be on the District 1 website when it is available.

Ulehawa Beach Park closure Feb 11-15

Ulehawa Beach Park will undergo major cleaning and renovation from February 11-15. Two portions of the park will be closed beginning at 10 pm on Sunday, February 10 and reopen after 3 pm on Friday, February 15. The Department of Parks and Recreation will close the Nani Kai and Surfer's beach areas of the park.

All comfort stations will be cleaned, repaired, and painted; picnic tables will be painted and repaired; park benches and the irrigation system will be repaired; the parking lot will be cleaned and re-striped; parking curbs will be painted; and landscaping improvement work orders will be completed.

When the park re-opens, the City will enforce nightly park closures at Nani Kai and Surfer's beach areas, from 10 pm to 5 am. This will be effective beginning Friday, February 15, at 10 pm.

Planning Commission renders decision on the Landfill

The Planning Commission convened on January 16 to make a decision on the city's request to extend the Wai-manalo Gulch land use period for an additional two years. The current permit expires on May 1, 2008. After much deliberation, the Commission expressed its frustration over the city's timing to address the issue, but nonetheless, the Commission approved the 2-year permit extension.

However, a final determination of the permit extension will be done by the Hawaii State Land Use Commission over the next few months. Councilmember Apo continues his efforts to insure that no new landfill is located on the Leeward Coast and that the Commission place appropriate conditions on the City for any allowed time extension, so that the City is required to continue its efforts towards a goal of managing its waste without a landfill.

Managing our waste and reducing the island's landfill usage requires the use of multiple methods such as recycling, increasing H-Power, and shipping waste, simultaneously. The Council has passed legislation to make sure this can happen, and will continue to push expanded curbside recycling, and other ways to handle our island's waste. The good news is that the Mayor recently announced his commitment that the city will begin shipping waste and will expand H-Power's waste-to-energy production. These are steps in the right direction. The Council passed a resolution last year, creating a policy of waste-to-energy conversion, recycling, and exportation of waste as preferred methods of waste management over continued landfilling into any section of our island. Please continue to support these efforts.

Affordable housing project in Waianae currently being reviewed by DPP

The proposed Hale Wai Vista affordable housing project's application for 201H exemption has been accepted by the Department of Planning and Permitting for review. When DPP's review is complete, the department's recommendation will be submitted to the City Council for consideration. Community concerns should be addressed to the DPP Director and the Mayor, as they need to make their recommendation before the Council can address the issue.

Councilmember Apo fully understands the objections to the currently proposed seven story heights. While there is a very big need for affordable housing in the district, Councilmember Apo has informed the developers that he cannot support the present plan because of the proposed heights. The supply of affordable housing must be increased, but it must be done in a way that preserves the characteristics of the surrounding neighborhood. Hopefully a dialog can be opened to see if a plan can be created that meets the community needs and is economically feasible so that affordable housing solutions can continue to be provided.

TheBus adds new express route from Ewa

This past December, TheBus started its newest rapid route from Ewa. The commuter "CountryExpress! Route E" runs along H1 from Waipahu to Downtown, then onto Waikiki. The Route E schedule operates seven days a week. Monday through Fridays, the first bus arrives in Waikiki before 6 am, and the last bus arrives in Ewa Beach by 11:19 pm. For the complete weekday and weekend schedule, please visit on the web <http://www.thebus.org> or call 848-5555.

Community Benefits awardees and park projects

Just after Christmas, Mayor Mufi Hannemann announced the non-profit recipients of the Community Benefits organization grants and highlighted the planned project expenditures for park facilities along the Waianae Coast.

\$1 million in Community Benefit grant money was awarded to 25 non-profit community organizations for programs that will serve Leeward residents. This includes: Big Brothers Big Sisters; Boys and Girls Club; Catholic Charities; Valley of the Rainbows; Victory Outreach; Waianae Coast Coalition; Waianae Coast Christian Women's Job Corps; Waimanalo Construction Coalition; and Westside Athletics Foundation.

\$1.5 million of the Community Benefits money will be used to improve 37 parks and upgrade nine recreation buildings and 15 ball fields on the Leeward Coast. This includes turf management for playing fields throughout the district, and expansion of the Waianae District parking lot and the district park's gym floor repairs.

Ewa Transportation Coalition Report

The Ewa Transportation Coalition (ETC) meets quarterly to discuss the transportation needs of West Oahu and the Ewa Plain. The coalition is an informal assembly of area stakeholders and decision-makers that includes project representatives, various elected officials and government.

The December 11 Ewa Transportation Coalition meeting was well received by area leaders as D.R. Horton's Schuler Division presented clarifying plans on the new Hoopili community. The group was privy to a comprehensive vision of how and what the effective plans would bring to our area. Through a Community inspired and pedestrian-friendly design, Hoopili will be the first of many homestays to actively incorporate a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Plan. This design plan aims to decrease private and individual vehicular use by increasing the availability of efficient and reliable public transportation pedestrian malls, and bicycle friendly paths.

Coalition members also toured the sites for the forthcoming North-South Road, which is currently under construction. The North-South Road will connect near Ewa Villages with Kapolei Parkway. The \$136 million, 2.5-mile, Hawaii State Department of Transportation project is primarily funded with federal monies. Phase I is expected to be complete by the end of 2009. The next ETC meeting is tentatively planned for late March 2008.

District schools participate in National Give Kids a Smile

On February 1, volunteer dentists from the Hawaii Dental Samaritans visited a total of nearly 800 District 1 elementary students to administer free dental screening as part of the National Give Kids a Smile Day. Keiki at Ewa Elementary, Pohakea Elementary, and Nanakuli Elementary participated in fun oral-healthcare lessons and received a bag of donated smile care goodies that included toothpaste, floss, and a toothbrush.

Special thanks to Dr. Russell Masunaga, Dr. Edmund Casella, Dr. Brian Kim, Dr. Chris Yamada, Dr. Glenn Kaneda, Dr. Cecile Sebastian, Dr. Mark Greer, Kim Koga, and all of the dental assistants and staff who volunteered their time and services for this annual event.