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Waimānalo Bay Beach Park Master Plan and Phase 1

The current work underway at Waimānalo Bay Beach Park represents the first phase of the master plan for the area that has been more than 10 years in the making. The first few years were devoted to having the Waimānalo community, led by its Neighborhood Board, to determine what the plan should contain, how it would improve the area and facilities, and protect against harming any endangered species or sites of archaeological or cultural importance. The next few years were spent conducting and finalizing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to address the community's concerns, including traffic impacts. The entire project was then divided into phases and submitted to the City Council for funding. After receiving funding for the first phase, the project was included in the City budget and the funds released by the Caldwell Administration. At that point, the project was subject to State procurement law, which ensures transparency through a public bid process that identifies, selects and awards the contract to a qualified bidder. Projects like these typically take years before construction begins because the EA and procurement components often take between 4-5 years to complete. The following are some of the more frequent questions being asked about this project.

What is the Waimānalo Bay Beach Park Master Plan?

The final Waimānalo Bay Beach Park Master Plan, dated June 25, 2012, is a planning document put together by Waimānalo community leaders and kupūna that guides the phased development and improvement of about 75 acres the City owns in Waimānalo. The areas within the Master Plan include Waimānalo Bay Beach Park, often referred to as Sherwood, and is adjacent to Bellows Air Field, which lies to the north.

What does the current work involve?

The City Council has approved funding for Phase 1 of the project only, which includes a new sports/recreation field, an 11-stall parking lot and keiki playground equipment, which will cover approximately four acres. The \$1.4 million contract was awarded to Kaikor Construction Co., Inc., and is scheduled to be completed in the spring of 2020.

What does the Master Plan call for?

The total scope of the project includes redevelopment and improvements to the current park facilities and the addition of multi-purpose sports fields, more parking stalls, new playground equipment, and additional campsites. It will be done in phases and follow the approved EA.

See the full plan at: http://oegc2.doh.hawaii.gov/EA_EIS_Library/2012-07-08-OA-FEA-Waimanalo-Beach-Park-Master-Plan.pdf

When will the remainder of the Master Plan be implemented?

Future phases of the Master Plan will require funding from the City Council. That has not yet occurred. Mayor Kirk Caldwell and his administration decided to allow this first phase to be completed. Should the community desire to make changes to the approved Master Plan, it could trigger the need for a new EA.

Why can't the project be stopped now and the funds be used to address other needs in the community?

Cancelling the contract and stopping the project will result in a cost to taxpayers – as much as \$300,000 in this case. Because this project is part of the 2017 Capital Improvements Budget, transferring the funds is not permitted.

Isn't it true that Waimānalo has an existing sports field? Why is it necessary to build another one?

Yes, Azevedo Field at Waimānalo District Park currently exists. However, due to the clay composition of Azevedo Field's soil, the Caldwell Administration has concluded that the complete rehabilitation of the field would be too costly. The fact that such repairs have no guarantee of success due to the field's clay soil factored into the Administration's decision.

There has been a significant amount of analysis done to see if Azevedo Field can be reinvigorated because it is undeniably an underutilized portion of the Waimānalo District Park Complex. However, the increased financial costs, concerns over the flood plain, and uncertainty about whether it would make lasting improvements to the problematic clay soil repeatedly conclude that repair and rehabilitation is impractical. In the end, making a new field to provide a safe and serviceable recreational asset for our *keiki* and keeping it in character with the community was determined by the Administration to be the best course of action.

Will these additional sports fields be a huge drain on Waimānalo's drinking water?

Not for irrigation. The plan calls for the fields to be irrigated using reused treated water from the Waimanalo Wastewater Treatment Plant. The added benefit of this plan will be to make upgrades to bring WWTP to R-1 compliance. R-1 water, based on the State Health Department standards, is wastewater suitable for irrigation purposes because it has significantly reduced the levels of viral and bacterial pathogens. Use of the recycled water for these purposes is spelled out in the Master Plan.

Will this project result in the destruction of the forest and habitat?

According to the EA, the forested areas are mainly invasive plants, such as koa haole, and do not provide primary habitat for native birds or other Hawaiian fauna. Selective removal of aging ironwood trees, which pose a public safety and liability concern to the City, may occur at the discretion of City arborists as detailed in the EA.

The plan also cut back on the number of sports/recreational fields which could have been accommodated in acknowledgement of the community's desire to retain as many large ironwoods and other quality trees as possible, as well as a number of forested areas near Aloiloi Street.

This will only aggravate our already congested traffic problems, especially on weekends and holidays.

Traffic studies were conducted as part of the EA submitted in 2012. It is not possible to conduct a current traffic analysis and apply it to the 2012 EA. The State Department of Transportation's estimates concluded that an increase in traffic is inevitable due to population growth and Hawaii's economy – a 1.2 percent increase annually that will result in a 25 percent total increase in traffic by 2031 along this particular corridor. This project gives us some opportunity to improve some of the road infrastructure and redistribute traffic flow to reduce congestion. Heavy traffic is already assured on weekends and holidays, but the community felt that sports and other recreational activities for youth should not be penalized.

What happens if you find sites of historical and archaeological significance? And what if 'iwi (bones) are discovered?

There is currently an archaeologist on site whenever work is going on as required by the plan. The discovery of any 'iwi will follow the protocols established by the Native Hawaiian Burial Council and codified in state law.

Will the community have any further opportunities to make changes to the plan?

Council Chair Ikaika Anderson, who represents the area and is a Waimānalo resident, is open to discussing changes with community members, with the understanding that if any parts of the current plan are amended, it may require a new EA. A new EA, as mentioned above, will likely take years to complete.

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