

# Puna Parkway An Alternative Route

A limited access,  
moderate speed,  
scenic route for a  
more sustainable  
future.



The parkway proposed here is a lower speed, scenic route which would provide Puna with an emergency evacuation route, less traffic congestion and would further the goals of passenger safety, sustainability and lower dependence on fossil fuels.

In approaching the subject of a new route through Puna Makai and consulting with authors of other proposals I was presented with the monolithic and fierce opposition to any route passing through Hawaiian Paradise Park. When I consider the cement trucks, containers, SUVs, flatbeds, sedans and overloaded Ford rangers jostling at speed for position on Highway 130 the thought of such a road passing near my home would be appalling. In talking with some HPP residents however I find that the opposition is not monolithic and is more toward the nature and manner of such a new route. If the worst fears of the residents could be addressed in some manner then acceptance by most, but likely not all, HPP property owners might be possible.

This is an honest attempt to address those fears and to meet the goals of our Community Development Plan to think forward and look for solutions that contribute to broad based community hopes and goals.

Methods and locations for transiting HPP and Kahakai Blvd. are shown and the impact on property owners has been minimized as much as possible. This parkway is buildable and would have minimum impact on residents during the course of construction. It also has features intended to serve future generations.

Aloha,

Rob Tucker  
Box 644  
Pahoa HI 96778  
Jan. 9., 2006

Draft 1.3

## **What is a Parkway?**

A parkway is a general designation of a special type of limited-access highway in some parts of the U.S. and Canada. Like all limited-access highways, parkways are designed particularly for through traffic. Many parkways are restricted to noncommercial traffic and cars. Trucks, trailers, and the like are banned.

Historically, the term "parkway" has often implied that the road was designed specifically with a naturalistic or manicured landscaping of the median and adjacent land areas meant to suggest a pastoral driving experience, isolated from the manifestations of commerce and advertising, even when the road passes through populated areas; for this reason commercial traffic is excluded. Many parkways have signature road signs with special emblems that suggest a thematic driving experience and increase the sense of isolation from civilization in the vicinity of the road.

## **General features of the Puna Parkway**

- No Commercial traffic allowed.
- 45 mph speed limit.
- Heavy passenger vehicles are restricted.
- Bus and emergency vehicle access.
- High efficiency passenger vehicles preferred.
- Bike & scooter paths. Walking & riding trails.
- No additional roadside development.
- Simple roundabout interchanges w/ HPP (3).
- Simple roundabout interchange w/ HS-HB (1).
- No loss of existing roads in HPP.
- Minimal to no disruption during construction.
- Minimal taking of land. 12 lots lost.
- No power poles or transmission lines.
- Lower cost of construction.
- Terminus to Puainako and airport and Pahoā.
- Adequate space to add light rail someday.
- Scenic views of Puna coast, Ag and forest land.
- Improved emergency response

## **How could a Parkway affect sustainability?**

"Hawaii has one of the highest rates of per capita oil consumption in the world. Our rate in Hawaii is twice that of the U.S. average; four times the average of Europe and 28 times that of China. Moreover, oil not only fuels our transportation and electricity-generating plants, it also fuels the airplanes that fuel our tourist-based economy and the ships that bring in almost all of our food and consumer goods. Un- or insufficiently mitigated oil supply shortfalls will hit Hawaii much harder than almost any other place in the world."

<http://starbulletin.com/2006/12/10/editorial/special3.html>

A parkway can be a specialized instrument for developing and encouraging more efficiency and alternatives in transportation. It is not difficult to assume that the V-8 gasoline engine may not be practical or common in 20 years. Hybrid and alternatively fueled vehicles are entering the market and finding acceptance. We are entering a period of transition for the American transportation model. Our planning for a new route into Puna should plan on that. Is it smart, or sustainable, to continue building roads for larger and faster vehicles?

The new vehicle designs are smaller, lighter weight and travel most efficiently at lower speeds than current average vehicles. In crash tests they are at a serious disadvantage. People are afraid to drive them at high speeds in heavy traffic. That is one reason why a limited access parkway can be an incentive for citizens to invest in more fuel efficient and alternatively fueled vehicles. The Puna Parkway would also include a separate two lane roadway for bicycles and small cc scooters as well as sufficient space for addition of a future light rail system. Within living memory the citizens of Pahoia primarily traveled to Hilo by rail. If gas prices get high enough we may well do so again. The parkway concept would provide a much higher degree of passenger safety than current roads provide.

### **How would access be limited / regulated?**

I propose that access be limited beyond a ban on commercial vehicles. All trailers and open trucks with exposed cargo should be disallowed. Overladen vehicles and poorly secured cargo are a hazard to be avoided on a parkway. All vehicles over a specific gross weight should be disallowed. I would suggest 6,000 lb. gw. A parkway is not a highway or truck route.

To provide an incentive for fuel efficiency and carpooling a system of fuel rating stickers could be used where high efficiency and alternative fuel vehicles would be allowed with a single driver (a "P1" sticker on the bumper). Less efficient vehicles would require vehicle occupancy of 2, 3 or 4 depending on how gas guzzling they are rated by their manufacturers. If the goal was to be 30 mpg many new cars could meet that. A car with 16 mpg would require 2 occupants ( "P2" ).

## **Regarding Hawaiian Paradise Park.....**

### **Why between 10th & 11th?**

If there is need for such a parkway it has to go somewhere. 15th Ave. has been suggested a number of times because it intersects various potential village center acreage. However a parkway would consume sufficient land to reduce the village centers to half their current size. Any village center developments should be proximate to but separate from the parkway. Park & ride areas should be provided adjacent to the village centers and bus routes could access them via the roundabouts.

A parkway location of mid block between 10th & 11th would result in all residents of HPP being no more than 11 blocks from a thoroughfare. This location also creates the potential for 100% of HPP residents to be a maximum of 1.5 miles of a bus route - a distance that can be covered by walking, bicycling or motor scooter fairly easily. HPP residents would no longer be completely dependent on automobiles.

### **How to compensate property owners?**

Federal highway moneys are, at this moment, engaged in numerous enlargements and additions to the nation's transportation system in every state. In many or most mainland instances every expanding mile is in fully developed cityscape. Acquisition of land is a huge expense.

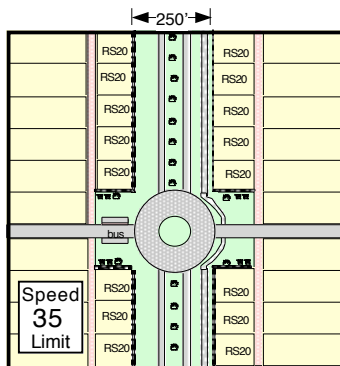
A Puna Parkway would have less costly land acquisition because over half the route is currently in undeveloped agricultural or state lands. For this reason the potential for the rate of compensation to be "good" to developed landowners is substantially enhanced. Compensation should be paid for all affected land and structures, permitted or not.

The path of the Puna Parkway through HPP directly impacts approx. 250 of 8,800 property owners. Only twelve lots would be completely acquired for construction of the roundabouts. The other 238 +/- properties would retain their avenue frontage, driveways and front half of their land. Many of these lots are undeveloped. Some of the developed lots have their homes near their avenue and would retain their homes. Other property owners, with homes located on the rear half would relocate or replace their homes.

Is this a major impact on HPP? You bet it is. Has the shear impact been minimized? It has. Should the affected property owners be compensated fully and completely? Of course they should. Might they even benefit financially from this. I hope they do. Some landowners might actually better be able to afford building a nice home on 1/2+ acre than they could otherwise. Will other owners be affected? Yes. A case could be made that improved, controlled transportation might even improve property values for all. Those more distant from the parkway would likely not be as affected except for having improved choices on how to come and go.

## How the Puna Parkway would transit various areas

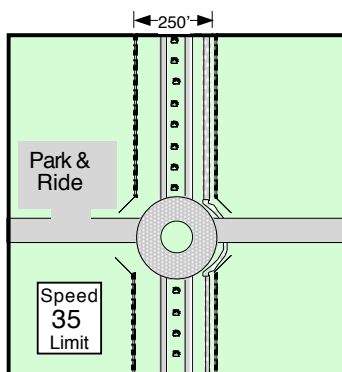
### HPP Transit (between 10th & 11th)



Transiting Hawaiian Paradise Park mid block would result in minimal removal of existing homes. The rear half of each lot would become parkway resulting in RS20 zoned lots. The location between 10th & 11th would mean that no street in HPP would be more than 11 blocks from main road access.

Three intersections would be required. Four full lots at each intersection would be lost to the parkway - a total of twelve. During construction 100% of HPP driveways would be unaffected. Parkway would have high stone wall barriers the full length of transit through HPP for aesthetics, sound barrier and security.

### Kahakai Transit

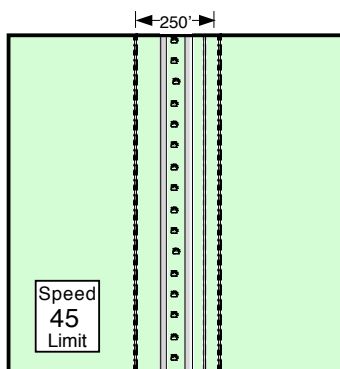


Transiting Kahakai Blvd. would require no loss of homes. Some Ag land and the simple roundabout intersection could be constructed with minimal disruption.

A Park & Ride area would be adjacent to the interchange. Parkway would have stone wall barriers the full length of transit to allow views of forest and agricultural fields and to prevent agricultural theft.

No side road access would be permitted.

### State Land / Shipman Transit



Transiting Shipman Ag lands and state forest land would provide spectacular rural and natural views. This is what a parkway is about. An appreciation of Puna open space would be enhanced.

Puna Parkway would have stone wall barriers the full length of transit to allow views of forest and agricultural fields and to prevent agricultural theft.

No side road access would be permitted.

## **Why so wide a corridor?**

A Puna Parkway would be serving the area 100 years or more into the future. The potential is for Puna to have a quarter million residents someday. There is also potential for oil to be a much more expensive fuel. We are now trying to unravel a serious lack of planning from 50 years ago. We need to avoid a lack of planning which now would be overcome again by development. The 250' wide corridor provides future generations with options we do not now enjoy. Could it be 200' wide? Perhaps.

## **Why now?**

It could easily take fifteen to twenty years to accomplish this or any other route. The current rate of growth shows our current transportation system being overwhelmed in the approaching future. At this time there are fewer residents to impact than there will be a few years from now. The longer we wait the more costly and disruptive road building will become.

## **How many homes would be replaced or relocated?**

A simple survey of the proposed route shows that approx. 85% of the existing homes could remain. They are built relatively close to the avenues. Approximately ten existing homes appear to be in the proposed parkway right of way or roundabout intersections. These could be moved fairly easily. Approximately fifty would remain on smaller lots with minimal disruption.

## **Why not a mauka route?**

A mauka route through Puna might also be necessary or desirable.

## **How to interchange with Hilo?**

It would be advisable for the Puna Parkway to branch into more than one terminus in Hilo. I would suggest Puainako and the Airport. This proposal is, however, part of the Puna Community Development Plan and the Hilo area would best be addressed by Hilo.

## **How to interchange with Pahoa?**

It would be advisable for the Puna Parkway to intersect Highway 130 at or near the Pahoa traffic light. This would serve both Pahoa and the communities from the Kapoho route and Kalapana route.

## **What happens with Highway 130?**

Highway 130 would remain the primary state and truck route into Puna.

## **What happens in emergency evacuations?**

The Puna Parkway would be open to all traffic in an emergency or to divert traffic in the event Highway 130 was closed. The Puna Parkway would operate without traffic lights and would not be disabled in a power outage. At all times the parkway would be available to ambulance, fire, police and other emergency services. In a serious tsunami event it could even function as an emergency runway for aircraft.