

CHAPTER ONE

Toward Our Path Forward

Introduction

The O'ahu Metropolitan Planning Organization (OahuMPO) is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the island of O'ahu. An MPO is a federally mandated and federally funded transportation policy-making body composed of representatives from local government and public agencies. MPOs were first introduced in the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962, which required the formation of an MPO for any urbanized area (UZA) with a population greater than 50,000 to ensure that federal transportation funding is spent based on a planning process that meets regional and national goals. OahuMPO was established based on two UZAs, Honolulu and Kāne'ohe-Kailua, though the MPO serves the entire island. Honolulu is also recognized as a Transportation Management Area (TMA), which means that the MPO serves an urbanized population of more than 200,000 people. In recognition of the greater complexity of transportation issues in large urban areas, TMAs are also responsible for additional planning products, such as an in-depth congestion evaluation and analysis, called a Congestion Management Process.

While OahuMPO does not implement or construct transportation projects, it provides oversight in prioritizing funding for transportation projects – especially those receiving federal funds.

The OahuMPO is responsible for coordinating transportation planning on O‘ahu. As required for all MPO’s, the OahuMPO manages the continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (“3-C”) planning process. It does this in conjunction with its primary partner agencies: The State of Hawai‘i Department of Transportation, City and County of Honolulu Department of Transportation Services, and the Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation. Among its required work products are the island’s Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), referred to as the O‘ahu Regional Transportation Plan (ORTP), and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), of which both identify and prioritize transportation projects for funding in the mid and long-range, and short-range timeframes, respectively. The 2045 ORTP lists \$26.92 billion in transportation projects and programs and in federal fiscal years 2015-2018, the TIP programmed a yearly median of over \$92

million in Federal Highway, and a yearly median of over \$44 million in Federal Transit funds for projects and programs.

The MPO is the policy framework designated to carry out the metropolitan transportation planning process that guides and approves the use of federal transportation funds for pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and highway projects. While the MPO does not implement or carry out the construction of transportation projects, it provides oversight in prioritizing funding for transportation projects – especially those receiving federal funds.

The theme of this plan is Ke Ala I Mua, “the path forward.” This theme was developed in collaboration with our partners and committee members. When we look at our “path forward,” how will we increase safety for all people in our transportation system? How will we rise to

VISION



In 2045, O‘ahu’s path forward is multimodal and safe. All people on O‘ahu can reach their destinations through a variety of transportation choices, which are reliable, equitable, healthy, environmentally sustainable, and resilient in the face of climate change.

meet the challenges of climate change, sea-level rise, flooding, and other issues related to the environment and resiliency? How will we improve and enhance all modes of our transportation system, especially active transportation, transit and other high-occupancy vehicles? This plan lays out the foundation for O‘ahu’s path forward.

Supporting the theme, Ke Ala I Mua, OahuMPO developed a vision for the island’s transportation future using feedback from phase one of its public engagement process, its technical working group, Technical Advisory Committee, Citizen Advisory Committee, and Policy Board. The vision was then translated into a set of goals and objectives that helped to guide the development of transportation improvement projects and programs. The vision, goals, and objectives are described in further detail in Chapter 2.

Federal Background

The ORTP is shaped by federal legislation. Federal transportation bills establish the basic planning factors that the plan must address. Planning requirements and funding are described in each surface transportation bill.

In 2015, Congress passed the “Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act” (FAST Act), which is the current surface transportation funding and authorization bill. The FAST Act added new planning factors that MPO’s must address in their MTP, including:

- 1 Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- 2 Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and state and local planned growth and economic development patterns;
- 3 Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight;
- 4 Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
- 5 Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- 6 Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight;
- 7 Promote efficient system management and operation;
- 8 Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system;
- 9 Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation; and
- 10 Enhance travel and tourism.



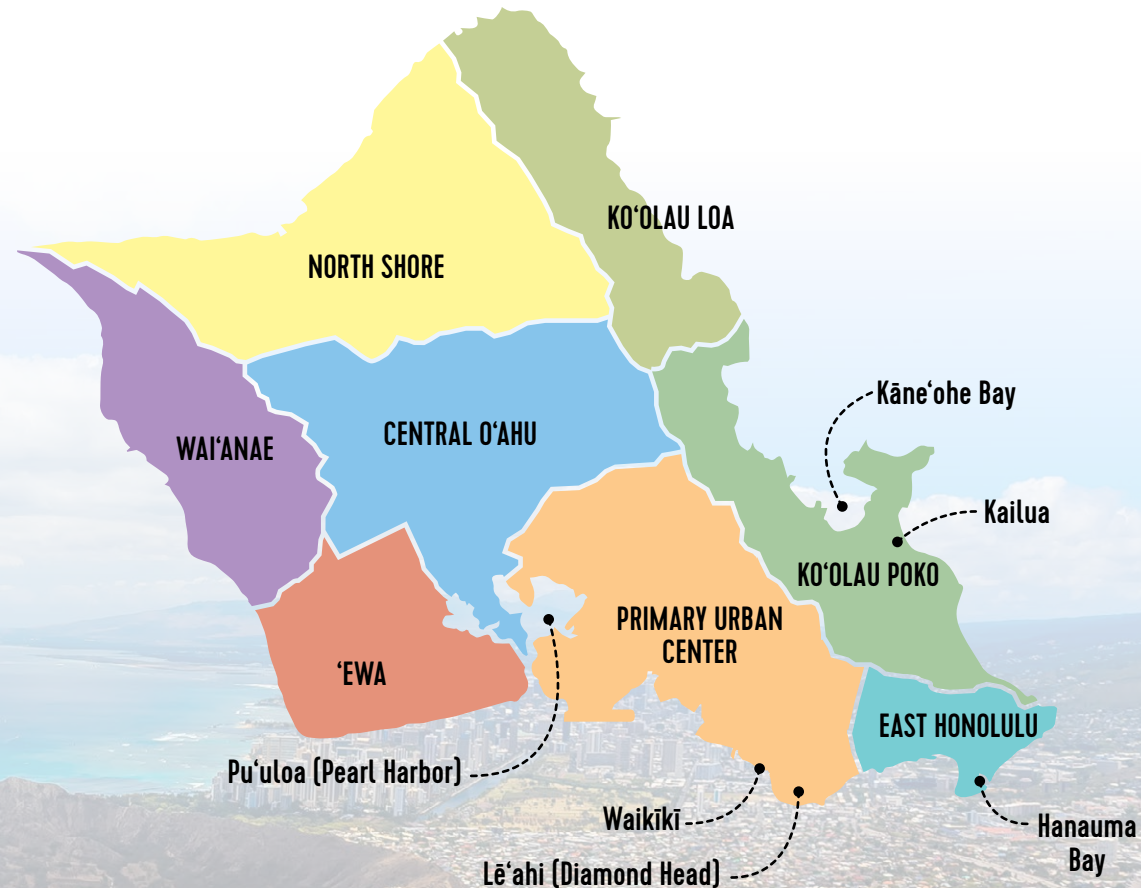
On December 4, 2015, President Obama signed the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act (Pub. L. No. 114-94) into law—the first federal law in over a decade to provide long-term funding certainty for surface transportation infrastructure planning and investment. The FAST Act authorizes \$305 billion over fiscal years 2016 through 2020 for highway, highway and motor vehicle safety, public transportation, motor carrier safety, hazardous materials safety, rail, and research, technology, and statistics programs. The FAST Act maintains the federal government’s focus on safety, keeps intact the established structure of the various highway-related programs, continues efforts to streamline project delivery, and, for the first time, provides a dedicated source of federal dollars for freight projects.



For more information about the FAST Act, visit
www.fhwa.dot.gov/fastact

About the Planning Area

O'ahu, known as "The Gathering Place," is the third largest island in the state of Hawai'i. The state capital, Honolulu, is on O'ahu and about two-thirds of the state's population lives there. O'ahu has two large parallel mountain ranges, the Wai'anae and Ko'olau, which stretch across the island from the southeast to northwest. Most of the development on O'ahu is thus limited to the coastal areas and the central plain which separates the two mountain ranges. Approximately 6 million people visit O'ahu each year. Visitors enjoy Waikiki, Pu'uloa (Pearl Harbor), Lē'ahi (Diamond Head), Hanauma Bay, Kāne'ohe Bay, Kailua, North Shore, and several other popular destinations.



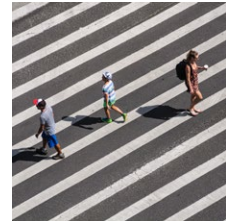
The Metropolitan Transportation Plan

The O'ahu Regional Transportation Plan (ORTP) is a planning document that describes the vision and goals for the future transportation network and the transportation projects and programs to achieve them. As established by federal regulation, the ORTP “shall include both long-range and short-range strategies/actions that provide for the development of an integrated multimodal transportation system (including accessible pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities) to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in addressing current and future transportation demand” (23 CFR 450.324(b)).

Updated every five years, the plan outlines a financially constrained transportation investment plan that is based on the needs of the region. The plan must be financially constrained, meaning that projects can only be implemented if there are available funds to pay for them. No transportation project can receive federal funding unless it is

in the ORTP. The 2045 ORTP is an update to its predecessor - 2040 ORTP. The updated plan focuses on strategies to be executed over a twenty-year planning horizon.

The purpose of the ORTP is to anticipate the transportation needs for O'ahu predicated on demographic and economic assumptions and forecasts for the entire region. It identifies various elements of the desired transportation system for the island and the interrelationship of various modes of transportation. To ensure financial feasibility, the ORTP summarizes implementation costs and presents practicable funding scenarios. The ORTP will serve as a guide for the investment of local, state and federal funding, and will become a component of the Hawai'i Statewide Transportation Plan. In addition, the ORTP meets the requirements of federal law authorizing the adoption of a metropolitan transportation plan for the expenditure of federal transportation funding in the future.



**Transportation impacts our lives
EVERY DAY**



Planning Process

The 2045 ORTP is the culmination of years of collaboration and community involvement that relied on technical analysis, community visioning, and public engagement.

OahuMPO staff collaborated with government agency partners, the ORTP technical working group, Citizen Advisory Committee, Technical Advisory Committee, Policy Board, and the public during key points in the development of the ORTP, including:

*Indicates key public involvement opportunities

- 1 Developing the vision statement, goals and objectives*
- 2 Updating socio-economic data
- 3 Developing a public involvement plan
- 4 Updating the travel demand forecasting model
- 5 Updating the land-use and travel demand forecasting models
- 6 Reviewing the Congestion Management Process and congestion analysis
- 7 Reviewing a draft project and program list*
- 8 Reviewing a financially constrained project and program list
- 9 Reviewing and providing feedback on draft and final documents*



CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC):

The CAC provides public input to OahuMPO's planning process. The CAC advises the Policy Board and OahuMPO staff and ensures that the planning process includes public input.



POLICY BOARD:

The Policy Board is the decision-making body of the OahuMPO. It determines the direction of OahuMPO planning efforts, considers and approves transportation planning documents, including the ORTP.



TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC):

The TAC provides technical input to OahuMPO's planning process. The TAC advises the Policy Board and OahuMPO staff and ensures the technical competence of the planning process.



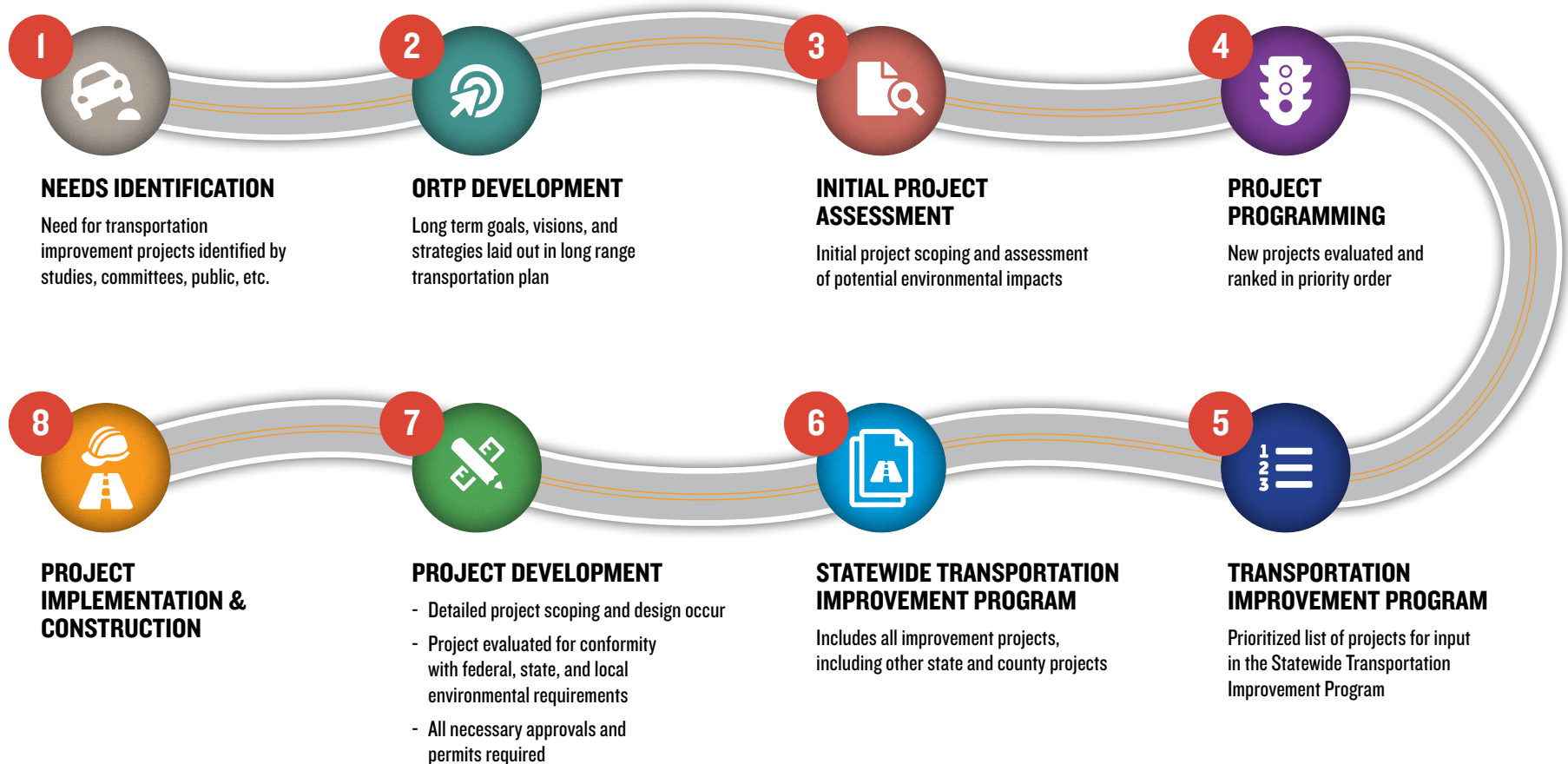
ORTP TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP:

The ORTP technical working group is made up of technical experts in transportation and planning. The group provides OahuMPO staff feedback and input on key ORTP work products.

The ORTP is adopted by the Policy Board. Adoption of the ORTP is the first step towards the implementation of a transportation project. Following formal adoption of the plan, a project can use federal transportation funding for design, right-of-way acquisition, or construction in the short-range

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which identifies funding sources and the estimated amount of funding to be used. The TIP is a management tool for implementing the projects programmed in the ORTP. The projects in the TIP move towards implementation once the funds are authorized and obligated.

Figure I.I: The Transportation Planning Process

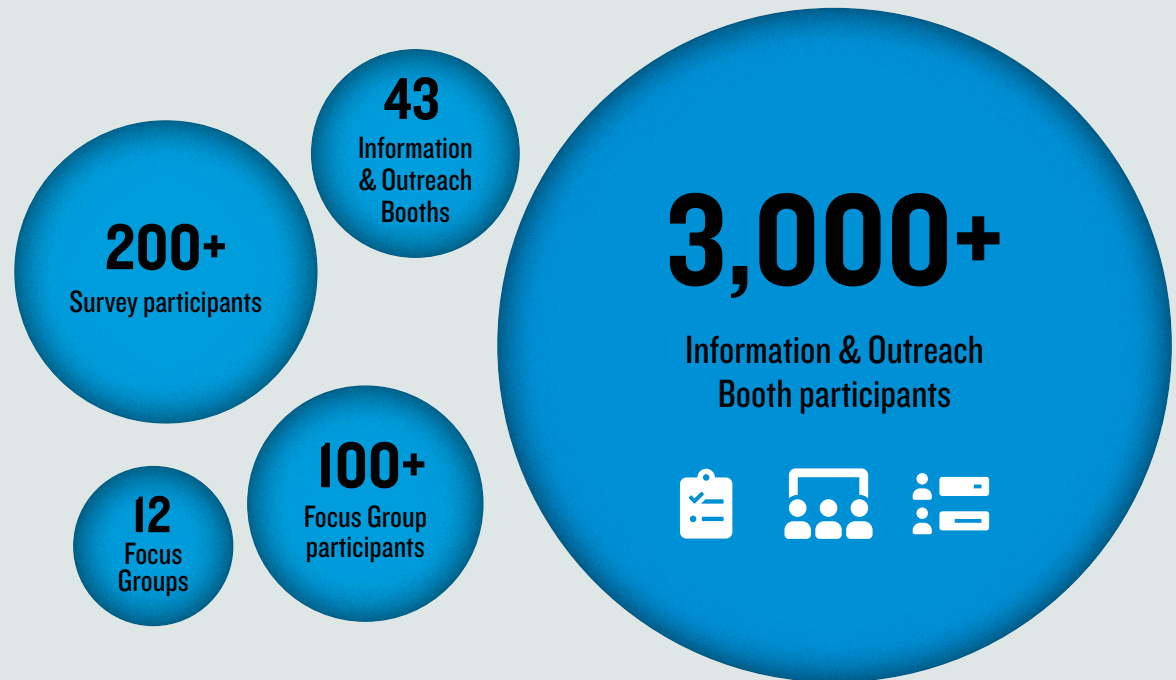


Public Participation

The OahuMPO actively sought public input throughout the development of the 2045 ORTP. OahuMPO used online and hard copy surveys, focus groups, information and outreach booths, open houses, presentations at committee and Policy Board meetings, social media, and online comment forms in order to provide a variety of ways in which members of the community could participate in plan development. OahuMPO also made all of the 2045 ORTP information available on the OahuMPO's website to ensure opportunities for the public to learn and be informed about the island's transportation plan. Major efforts to solicit public input for the plan occurred in three phases: Phase 1: Vision and Goals Prioritization; Phase 2: Proposed Projects and Programs Review and Phase 3: Intergovernmental and Public Review of the Draft Plan.

PHASE I: Vision and Goal Prioritization

(January 2019-May 2019)



The purpose of the first phase of involvement was to determine what the transportation vision and goals were for residents through 2045. In order to craft the ORTP's vision and goals, staff conducted outreach through information and outreach booths, online surveys, focus groups, OahuMPO committee meetings, and website and Facebook engagement. In total, over 3,000 people provided feedback at the information and outreach booths, over 200 people took the survey, and over 100 people participated in the focus groups, during this phase.

Some of the dominant themes that resulted from the three primary outreach strategies were:

- Safety was a top priority for participants at the information and outreach booths, those who took the survey, and those who participated in the focus groups.
- However, results differed for second and third top priorities, across the three primary strategies
- Participants at the information and outreach booths identified health and air quality and active transportation, as their second and third priorities, respectively.
- Survey participants identified reliability and efficiency and resiliency and environment, as their second and third priorities, respectively.
- Focus group participants identified reliability and efficiency and equity as their second and third priorities, respectively.

The first phase of public involvement provided a framework from which the 2045 ORTP vision, goals, objectives, and project and program prioritization process were developed, and proposed projects and programs evaluated.



Preliminary Goals

Prior to any engagement efforts, the staff of OahuMPO discussed preliminary transportation goals that would be useful to present to the public in efforts to start off the conversation in a meaningful, focused manner.



ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

safe, convenient, quality, ADA-accessible pedestrian and bicycle routes



ECONOMY & TECHNOLOGY

movement of goods and people as it relates to economic development including supporting technologies (e.g., autonomous/smart systems, operations)



EQUITY

all people on the island have access to quality, affordable multimodal routes (e.g., roads, transit, pedestrian paths/sidewalks, bikeways)



HEALTH & AIR QUALITY

better health and air quality from reduced emissions because of electric vehicles, transit expansion, and bicycle and pedestrian improvements



RELIABILITY & EFFICIENCY

transportation system is well-maintained, efficient and predictable regardless of travel mode



RESILIENCY & ENVIRONMENT

adaptation/mitigation for sea-level rise, flooding, storms; preparedness for extreme weather events; stormwater management and green infrastructure



SAFETY

zero deaths and serious injuries on our roads and paths



TheBUS / HANDIVAN / RAIL

safe, reliable, convenient and integrated transit service

PHASE 2: Proposed Projects and Programs Review

(October 2020 - January 2021)

The purpose of the second phase of public involvement was to provide the public an opportunity to learn more about and provide feedback on proposed projects and programs. The information gathered from engagement activities in this phase was shared with decision-makers so that they may consider public input in deciding which projects and programs should be funded.

Due to the constraints associated with COVID-19, the primary method used for collecting feedback about the proposed projects and programs was an online survey and webmap. The survey asked for feedback about newly proposed projects and programs, and the webmap asked participants to identify locations for safety, resiliency, maintenance, and congestion improvements, to help inform decision-makers about where improvements should be made using funding in the newly proposed programs. The online survey and map were distributed via newsletter, press release, and OahuMPO's Facebook. The online survey was completed by 85 participants and the web map received 99 comments.

PHASE 3: Intergovernmental and Public Review of the Draft Plan (March 2021)

The purpose of the third phase of public involvement was to seek feedback on the final draft of the 2045 ORTP. In this phase, OahuMPO distributed the draft plan via newsletter, HDOT press release, and the intergovernmental and public review mailing list. Comments received on the draft document were compiled, responded to, and presented to the OahuMPO committees and Policy Board for consideration when voting. Comments received can be viewed in Appendix A.

Another outreach method employed by OahuMPO staff was the coordination and facilitation of virtual community meetings to provide the public an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback regarding the proposed projects and programs, as well as the plan as a whole. These meetings consisted of a panel of project agency sponsors and elected city councilmembers. The staff coordinated and facilitated five community meetings in the following areas of Oahu: Central Oahu, West Honolulu, East Honolulu, North Shore/Ko'olau Loa, and Windward Oahu. For areas that were not covered, or for participants who were unable to make the community meetings, OahuMPO staff held a virtual open house, welcoming residents from all parts of the island.

For a more in-depth discussion of public involvement efforts of all phases, please read Appendix B.

