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From: oahumpo@oahumpo.org
Sent: Wednesday, March 2, 2016 6:22 PM
To: OahuMPO
Subject: New submission from March 2016 Public Review

Name (required)

Christopher Goody

Which document are you commenting on?

Oahu Regional Transportation Plan 2040

General Comments

Dear Committee Members,

I am respectfully writing to strongly oppose future significant development such as that proposed in the changes to the Koolau Loa Sustainable Communities Plan, or Bill 47 (2013) as well as loopholes in the ORTP. These two plans are intrinsically connected because what effects one effects the other.

These documents were meant to be sound planning documents, but in some cases appear to be rewritten to benefit those with special interests and who stand to make a large sum of money with the changes, leaving the community members of Koolau Loa to deal with the increased traffic, noise, congestion, loss of natural beauty and open space, and loss of rural character for which this area is known and cherished. If these documents are allowed to be manipulated in order to allow significant development in the rural corridor of Koolau Loa, and more specifically from Laie to Kahuku, it would truly demonstrate that money trumps the interests of the majority of people.

What is the purpose of a zoning system, if not to keep and protect areas just such as this? If zoning can be bought and sold to the highest bidder, than what is the point? Do we want a system that is rigged for the 0.1% who have the money, connections and political power to do what they will? I emphatically do not.

In this case, the developer of Envision Laie has appeared to offer a certain amount of affordable housing to offset the many units of high-end or luxury units they wish to build, however, this is a clear example of honey-potting used to sweeten the deal and an attempt by them to appear charitable in the eyes of the community. This is a false appearance, and is used to mask their primary goal of making enormous profits and garnering more control over the community through favoritism.

Affordable housing is important, and needs to be addressed. There are many areas on Oahu that would be very suitable for housing projects, such as the already urbanized districts on the other side of the island. Oahu is already saturated with high-end and luxury homes, and there is absolutely no need for a project of this scale in Koolau Loa. Can the Planning Committee really justify changing the system so that the wealthy can pour into Koolau Loa at the cost of entire community? Don't you represent all of us, and not just those with lots of money, power, and influence?

Additionally, we all know there isn't just Envision Laie on the books—there is also the proposed large scale expansion at Turtle Bay. Neither of these proposed developments is currently being required to consider the combined effects if both went forward. This much development would be catastrophic for the current way of life. It is clear that existing infrastructure is not capable of handling such a massive change. Roads would be clogged, drainages overrun, sewerage overflowing, and auto, pedestrian and bicycling accidents would likely surge. Emergency evacuations for hurricanes or tsunami would be complete gridlock and a disaster waiting to happen. A predicted sea level rise of several feet by the end of this century will further exacerbate this problem. The recent multiple road closures due to shoreline erosion and subsequent roadway collapse from high tides and high surf are a case in point. The resulting traffic during closure and repair was astounding. This artery cannot and should not accommodate any further significant traffic flow. Collect data on traffic during peak rush hour and holiday/weekend traffic and you will see.

This is probably just fine with the developers however, because once they get their foot in the door by building their projects, they can then complain about the same things and get the tax payer to foot the bill. The logical progression would then be highway expansion to 2-lanes each way which would require the government to use eminent domain to condemn home-owner's land along Kamehameha Highway to build the new lanes. This would be a double-whammy for the citizens from Kualoa to Kahuku.

I invite you to come and observe rush hour and weekend traffic anywhere in Koolau Loa, and see for your self the amount of heavy vehicles, commuters, and construction vehicles already on the road. A development of the magnitude of Envision Laie's would likely require a ten-fold increase of the current amount of dump trucks and other heavy vehicles speeding down the narrow Kamehameha Highway. Come to Kaaawa and try to cross the highway on a sunny weekend. Then tell me we need more development here.

I am asking you to look at not just the "now" but also the future. Consider carefully the repercussions set in motion by these proposed changes to the Sustainability Plan. Please be on the right side of history and preserve what so many people come to see, and not pave it over by giving in to the allure of quick money for rapid and unjustified development. Be able to tell your grandkids you did the right thing.

In summary, the ORTP should NOT allow for any new major expansion in roadways in Koolau Loa, and in stead focus on fixing and protection our current roadways. It is a clear case of the special interests of a portion of a single community in Laie and Turtle Bay wanting to impose their vision upon the rest of Koolau Loa, while they make enormous personal profits, leaving the rest of us to pay for it in the form of lost natural resources, increased traffic, stressed infrastructure, and quite possibly a manmade disaster.

Thank you for your time.

Mahalo nui,

Christopher Goody

Kaaawa

Date of comment

03/02/2016