

Opening the Māmalahoa Highway Bypass, Northern Section Fact Sheet January 2008

What is the bypass?

The Māmalahoa Highway bypass is a north-south, two-lane roadway under construction in Kona midway between the shoreline and Māmalahoa Highway. It is intended to give motorists an alternate route between North and South Kona.

Where is the bypass?

The bypass starts at the end of Ali'i Drive in Keauhou and will run approximately 5.4 miles to the Napo'opo'o Junction in South Kona.

What is the northern portion of the bypass?

The northern portion of the Māmalahoa bypass starts at the end of Ali'i Drive and runs approximately three miles to the bottom of Haleki'i Street in Kealakekua's Kona Scenic subdivision.

When will the bypass open?

The County plans to open the northern portion of the bypass in summer 2008 on a trial basis. Traffic would be restricted to one-way travel for southbound traffic between the hours of 3:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. weekdays only, except holidays.

What needs to happen before the bypass can open?

The County must amend two County ordinances to allow a portion of the bypass to open prior to the completion of the project.

How does the County propose to address safety concerns from residents at both ends of the bypass' northern stretch?

The County proposes a number of improvements prior to the opening of the northern portion of the bypass. Estimated to take six to eight months to complete, at an estimated cost of \$500,000, improvements include:

- Speed humps before Mamao and Muli streets in Kona Scenic Subdivision, appropriately spaced to reduce noise, and maintain the 25 mph speed limit. And 3-D speed humps between Mamao and Muli Streets.
- Construct a raised intersection with a mini-traffic circle at Mamao and Muli Streets.
- Add a pedestrian signal above Mamao at Haleki'i Street.
- Install a smart sign at the steeper sections of Haleki'i. A smart sign informs the drivers of their speed and records it so the police can determine the time of day if speeding occurs.
- Lengthen the existing right and left turn lanes at the intersection of Haleki'i and Māmalahoa Highway.
- Special duty officers will be stationed at the entrance to Kaleiopapa Street in Keauhou and at the Haleki'i Street and Māmalahoa bypass intersection in Kealakekua during the same hours the bypass is open.

- Adjusting the timing of the traffic signal at Kuakini Highway and Kamehameha III to move more cars from Kamehameha III onto Kuakini Highway (scheduled for the first quarter of 2008).
- Three-way stops at three intersections along Ali`i Drive – Lunapule, Royal Poinciana and Kaleiopapa. This is a prelude to installing traffic signals.
- Re-stripe a center lane along sections of Ali`i Drive from Kamehameha III Road at Kona County Club to 500 feet beyond Kaleiopapa. One section along this road isn't wide enough for a left turn center lane.
- Pave an eight-foot wide pathway for pedestrian and biker use on the makai side of Ali`i drive.
- Two speed tables will be placed at each golf cart crossing on Kaleiopapa this summer. Speed tables slow traffic by creating a vertical deflection in the roadway. Generally, speed tables provide a gentler ride and are preferred by emergency response providers.
- Public Works will ask Hawai`i County Council to consider a request that construction trucks not be permitted within the Kona Scenic Subdivision; instead they would use Yamagata Road.

Other proposed long-term safety measures, estimated to cost \$5 million include:

- Traffic signals at Lunapule, Royal Poinciana and Kaleiopapa.
- A fourth traffic signal and crosswalks in all directions are planned at Hualālai Road and Ali`i Drive.
- Smart signs may be installed along key locations between Kailua and Keauhou.

How will traffic flow be affected by opening the northern portion of the bypass?

The County anticipates 20 percent of the current traffic flowing through Kainaliu Town (or approximately 150 vehicles) will divert to Haleki`i for the first several months, between the hours of 3:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Once motorists experience the good and bad points of using Haleki`i Street as an alternate route, some will revert back to using Māmalahoa Highway through Kainaliu and the traffic on Haleki`i Street will level off.

Has the County been working to improve traffic flow on Māmalahoa Highway in South Kona?

Yes, the County has been working to improve the roadway to allow for better traffic flow during peak hours. Improvements were done between Kīloa Road and Captain Cook Road along Māmalahoa Highway. These improvements—left turn lanes, sheltered left turn pocket lanes, drywells, Americans with disabilities Act-approved (ADA) ramps at existing and new sidewalks and new street lights between Kinue and Captain Cook Roads—are aimed at improving the flow of traffic for residents living in North and South Kona.

Here's a roundup of improvements for Kealakekua and Kainaliu:

- The Oshima Public Parking Lot in Kainaliu, with 15-stall parking, is open to the public.
- The Takeshi Kamigaki Public Parking Lot with 12 stalls, located between Orchid Isle Café and Hawai'i Community Federal Credit Union in Kealakekua, is open.
- Traffic restrictions at Honalo Junction continue during 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. travel hours.
- A bus stop is now located fronting Kona Hongwanji Mission in Kealakekua.
- A two-way, left-turn center lane provides a refuge lane for left turns in and out of Nani Kupuna Place and Ke`eKe`e Street.
- Repainted five crosswalks, along with the construction of ADA accessible ramps, at Nani Kupuna Place, Ke`eKe`e Street, Waenaohana Loop, Haleki`i Street and Haukapila Street.
- A new streetlight, crosswalk and a sheltered island on Māmalahoa Highway provide added safety for pedestrians crossing from Central Kona Union Church to the Sunshine Preschool in Kealakekua.
- New sidewalk from the entrance of the Kamigaki Market to First Hawaiian Bank; Americans with Disabilities Act-approved (ADA) ramps at existing and new sidewalks.
- Two-way left-turn center lane extends from Kamigaki Market to First Hawaiian Bank and extension of the existing sidewalk from the entrance of Central Kona Union Church to the entrance of Kealakekua Public Library. No Parking signs installed on the mauka and makai sides of Māmalahoa Highway—fronting Kealakekua Public Library, Kamigaki Market and the Central Kona Union Church office.

Next Improvement for Kainaliu is:

- Constructing a third parking lot at Aloha Theatre and two turnarounds; one at each end of Kainaliu town to prevent “U turns” in the middle of the road. This is part of the extended improvements to Kainaliu that include upgrading the sidewalks to be ADA compliant.