



PURPOSE & NEED

Honolulu already is a great city for bicycles — and it has the potential to be one of the best! Its physical beauty, mild year-round climate, relatively flat coastal plain, and compact form make Honolulu ideal for bicycle transportation. This *Honolulu Bicycle Master Plan* outlines a set of projects, policies, and programs to incorporate bicycles into the City's future transportation system.

Honolulu is at an important crossroads in its growth and development. It is faced with significant choices about its future. Will this City continue to grow and prosper, or will it follow the path of many Mainland cities facing decline and disinvestment? To prosper, the City must continue to attract O'ahu residents and visitors to live, work, and play. The present residential areas must remain vibrant.

One hallmark of a livable city is that its public spaces are actively used, that it has places to walk and ride, and that the outdoors can be enjoyed. Like many U.S. cities, Honolulu has matured as a city dominated by the automobile, to the detriment of alternative travel modes such as walking, bicycling, and transit. Increasingly, this auto-dependence is affecting the quality of life in our City.

While the auto provides an important means to move about the City, increasing congestion is making it difficult, time consuming, and expensive to use. Favorite destinations, such as beaches, parks, shopping centers, schools, and work places, are becoming harder to get to because of traffic congestion and limited parking. Our streets are designed more to accommodate the rapid flow of automobiles than for pedestrians and bicyclists. Traffic noise and the physical barriers imposed by our streets provide those not in autos a constant reminder of our auto-dependency.

Concern over automobiles speeding through neighborhood streets is a common agenda item at Neighborhood Board and community meetings. Excessive speeds and the danger imposed by these speeds, have fundamentally changed the way our children are permitted to enjoy their neighborhood streets. Many parents must prohibit their children from riding bicycles to school due to fears about safety on the streets.

The economics of owning an automobile are significant and consume an increasing portion of the family budget. The often times hidden environmental costs of our auto-dominated culture include total dependence on nonrenewable fossil fuels, the potential environmental damage of petroleum leaks into our streams, groundwater and coastal ar-

eas, and of course, the personal tragedy and public health costs associated with automobile accidents. The impact automobiles have on the quality of life within the City is important not only to residents, but also to visitors and the visitor industry, our economic mainstay.

As Honolulu looks to the 21st Century, we have to ask how to enhance the appealing qualities of our City for future generations. The *Honolulu Bicycle Master Plan* suggests that we should invest in sensible alternative transportation modes that are sustainable, that tread lightly on our natural environment, and which yield significant health benefits. There is, however, no single panacea. The investment strategy must be built on several, well-integrated legs including public transit, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and the automobile. The strategy must also institutionalize the commitment, at all levels of government, to move toward the post-automobile era, where several viable alternative transportation modes are available to serve the mobility needs of our residents and visitors.

The *Honolulu Bicycle Master Plan* provides a strategy for the bicycle component of our future transportation system. It identifies an integrated network of on-road bike lanes and off-road shared-use paths that will link people with their favorite destinations. It also provides an array of important policy and program recommendations to institutionalize the commitment in all levels of government.

The potential is great for bicycles to become a significant transportation mode within urban Honolulu. Already, more than three times as many commuters use bicycles to get to work as the national average, despite a scarcity of well located bikeways and sufficient end-of-trip facilities (secure



Riding a bicycle is no longer just a recreational activity taken up by children. It has emerged as a viable mode of transportation for people of all ages for a variety of trip purposes.

bike lockers, showers, etc.). Since 1995, the Department of Transportation Services (DTS) has retrofitted all its buses with bike racks. Bike loadings on buses have increased dramatically from 526 per month in July 1995 to 10,370 in June 1998.

More can be done. West Coast cities, including Seattle and Portland, have been recognized for their successful bicycle transportation programs and boast even higher proportions of bicycle commuters — despite their wet climates and cold winters.

Bicycling is a very popular form of recreation for Honolulu residents. This is evidenced by the popular support of the

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Hawaii Bicycling League's annual "Century Ride," the island's third largest participative sporting event. Numerous triathlons and bicycle events appeal to a broad base of residents and a growing number of visitors.

A recent telephone survey determined that 23% of O'ahu residents had ridden a bicycle within the last month. Based on other jurisdictions' experiences, and in light of the popularity of bicycling already enjoyed here, investment in well planned facilities will significantly increase the use of bicycles as a means of transportation.

Formal bicycle planning in Hawai'i began, and has matured over the past two decades, as congestion on roadways increased and policy makers looked for alternate transportation modes. In 1977, the Hawai'i State Department of Transportation prepared *Bike Plan Hawai'i* for the State's roadway system. This plan was later updated in 1994. The

State and the Counties have used the plan to guide implementation of bicycle facilities, including bike racks, showers, bike lanes, routes and shared-use paths.

At present, the City is served by a series of ad hoc bikeways that are not linked systematically, although there are a few notable exceptions such as the Pearl Harbor Bike Path and the recently constructed Kalaniana'ole Highway Bikeway. What facilities exist generally suffer from infrequent maintenance. In 1994, City Council member Andy Mirikitani introduced Ordinance 94-39 to address this problem. The Ordinance directs that a bikeway system master plan be prepared and updated every five years. This ordinance was adopted by the Mayor and the City Council. The preparation of the *Honolulu Bicycle Master Plan* is a significant step towards making Honolulu a bicycle-friendly City.

The *Honolulu Bicycle Master Plan* provides recommendations for the development of a regional network of almost 100 miles of new bicycle routes, stretching from Kāhala to Pearl City. This 20-mile long urban corridor houses a residential population in excess of 450,000. Most of the recommended bikeways are within existing street rights-of-way, a choice necessitated by limited land area within the City and predicated on the legal right of bicycles to operate on public roadways. The recommended bikeways connect primary employment centers, and commercial and recreational destinations with urban Honolulu's major residential areas. The routes are direct and continuous, important characteristics of popular bikeways.

High-priority projects include construction of a "Lei of Parks," a network of primarily off-road paths linking the City's regional parks and attractions — from Diamond Head to Aloha



An attractive signing system should be created to highlight the Lei of Parks and to guide bicyclists riding along it.

Tower. The Lei provides residents and visitors the opportunity to move between beautiful parks in a comfortable, off-road setting. Waikīkī, near the center of the Lei, will benefit by an exciting new recreational amenity for visitors.

Another high-priority project is a continuous bikeway across the City, providing a direct connection between Pearl City and Kāhala. This bikeway, referred to as “Bike-Friendly Route 1,” will promote bicycle commuting in the City. A third high-priority project would improve bike-access to the City’s colleges and universities. Many other projects are recommended that would ultimately result in an integrated network of bikeways that would give residents a viable transportation alternative to the automobile.



Tens of millions of dollars are spent every year to operate and maintain Honolulu’s roadways, with a large share of the funds coming from the federal government through the federal gasoline tax. The recent reauthorization of the federal highways spending program (now called the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st century or “TEA21”) ensures the eligibility of 80% federal matching funds to complement local funds for recommended bikeway projects.

If all of the projects in this master plan were built today, the projected costs to design and build the entire network are about \$77 million. In reality, however, the projects will be constructed over a 10-20 year period and much of the funding can come from normal budgets for roadway repair, maintenance, and improvement. A large portion of the project work involves State roads (about \$30 million). This work would need to be programmed and funded by the State Department of Transportation. Of the remaining \$47 million of potential City projects, a significant portion can be funded from regular line agency maintenance and capital improvement budgets, coinciding with other park and roadway improvements.

In addition to projects, the plan includes important recommendations to institutionalize bicycle transportation features in the routine working of all levels of government agencies and, in some instances, the private sector. An essential recommendation is that every street in the City should be designed and maintained to accommodate shared use by bicycles and motor vehicles. Finally, specific benchmarks are provided to measure progress in achieving the long-term vision for a bicycle-friendly Honolulu.

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The draft *Honolulu Bicycle Master Plan* was circulated to the 17 Neighborhood Boards within the study area, to relevant government agencies, and interested parties. Presentations were made to each Board to describe the recommendations.

The draft plan was well received. Several Boards had specific concerns. Examples of comments range from Nu‘uanu-Punchbowl’s (Board #12) request for additional routes to Wai‘alae-Kāhala’s (Board #3) request for removal of proposed routes from the plan. All review comments were evaluated, and where appropriate, incorporated into this, the final *Honolulu Bicycle Master Plan*.

If Honolulu is to maintain its character and prestige as a great place to live and visit, we should commit the resources to transform our auto-centric transportation system into one that reinforces the qualities that make our City livable. Nothing less than a fundamental shift in emphasis from the automobile to alternative transportation modes is required to achieve this. The *Honolulu Bicycle Master Plan* is an important step in that process.

To fully realize Honolulu’s potential as a great place for bicycles, the *Honolulu Bicycle Master Plan* must lead to physical changes in facilities measured in miles of bike lanes, yards of concrete, numbers of bike parking stalls, and the like. It must also change the way we currently consider bicycles within the City’s overall transportation system. These changes, in turn, will lead to greater use of bicycles as alternatives to autos.

The design, financing, and implementation of the recommended system and the institutionalization of recommended



policies and programs are challenging efforts. Successful implementation of the *Honolulu Bicycle Master Plan* will require a dedicated staff, coupled with strong administrative, legislative, and community support over a sustained period. This is a challenge of yet another nature, but one entirely worth meeting.