



WAILUA - KAPA'A
NEIGHBORHOOD
ASSOCIATION

December 14, 2011

VIA EMAIL

Mike Hunnemann
Principal, Vice President
KAI Hawaii, Inc.
31 N. Pauahi Street, 2nd Floor
Honolulu, HI 96817

RE: `Opaeka`a Bridge, Pu`uopae Bridge and Kapahi Bridge - Kawaihau District, Kaua`i

Aloha Mike:

The Wailua-Kapa`a Neighborhood Association (W-KNA) is submitting written comments herewith, to be included with the public input provided at the December 7 and 8, 2011 meetings concerning the `Opaeka`a and Pu`uopae Bridges and the Kapahi Bridge.

The W-KNA understands that action must be taken due to years of County "deferred maintenance" which have caused the bridges to deteriorate. We who live in the area are as dedicated to safety as are our county officials. However, the value of Kaua`i's one-lane, historic bridges must not be minimized and every option for preservation/restoration should be pursued.

The association is advocating to retain these bridges as one-lane. We want to see that every alternative for conservation is explored and discussed with the community. Above all, the historic value of `Opaeka`a Bridge in particular, is irreplaceable. Its beauty, charm, and sense of place are important values to these rural neighborhoods and in general, one-lane bridges engender neighborliness.

Regarding bridge condition and structural safety, one-lane bridges can be constructed to support the weight requirements for emergency vehicles and school buses.

Regarding traffic safety, statistics do not indicate that more accidents occur at, or on, one-lane bridges. Instead, we understand that accident frequency on rural roads is due to other factors including excessive speed.

The choice is not preservation versus safety because these two goals are not mutually exclusive for one-lane bridges.

We are disappointed that meeting attendees were not provided information about the necessity and importance of federal and state legal protocols related to historic bridges – their status and protection was not explained.

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"We treasure our rural community"

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The frustration expressed by residents at the Wednesday meeting could have been minimized by providing an overview to-date of the county's "deferred maintenance" of these bridges and information from previous bridge assessments, inspection reports and public meetings.

We encourage the county, the consultant and sub-consultants to pursue every possible avenue for restoration of these one-lane bridges. The W-KNA supports minimal change to the defining characteristics of these historic bridges and their site, and supports the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

Preservation efforts are crucial before we lose these heirloom landmarks that contribute to Kaua'i's rural lifestyle.

Sincerely,



Rayne Regush
W-KNA Board Chair

cc: Mayor Bernard Carvalho
Larry Dill, Chief Engineer, County Public Works
Puaalaokalani Aiu, State Historic Preservation Division
David Helder, Chair, Kaua'i Historic Preservation Review Commission