

Keawe Street Extension proceeding on schedule

BY LOUISE ROCKETT

LAHAINA — With a FONSI (Finding of No Significant Impact) issued on the Environmental Assessment for the project, the Keawe Street Extension (KE) is proceeding on target.

The proposed two-laner is the county's critical connection to the state's first phase of the long-awaited Lahaina Bypass.

"When KE and Phase 1A are completed, several very beneficial things will happen. There are three schools on Lahainaluna (Road), all starting and ending at approximately the same time. They will now have an easy alternate route in and out," said Bob Pure, volunteer project manager for Lahaina Bypass Now.

"Lahainaluna (Road)," Pure continued, "historically has been a major traffic bottleneck with more cars and buses than that intersection can handle. The new road will alleviate much of that, we hope..."

"It will also provide an evacuation route for traffic during emergency situations where people need to get to higher ground," West Side County Council-

woman Jo Anne Johnson commented, noting another advantage to the mauka extension.

An RFP (request for proposal) is the next step toward groundbreaking of the approximately 2,500 lineal foot, \$4 million roadway.

"We will probably bid the project out in September and probably start in December or January," reported Joe Krueger, project manager, county Department of Public Works and Environmental Management.

Construction is anticipated to take about 18 months, Krueger said, and he predicted the timing of the link to Phase 1A as "just before theirs is completed."

Pure was cautious in his projection.

"It is impossible to be precise as to the hour and minute of construction, but we

expect Phase 1A of the Lahaina Bypass to begin end of July/early August and to be completed by December 2008/January 2009 per all of the information we have at this time," he said.

"The county expects they will not have a problem completing the extension to meet 1A, so both roads should be completed at approximately the same time," he added.

Extension improvements include two 12-foot travel lanes with six-foot paved shoulders, street lights, landscaping and an added left turn lane at the intersection where Keawe meets Honoapiilani Highway.

Shared funding for the extension is in place, with contributions from the county and federal government as well as the private sector. ■