
REPORT TO THE 2002 HAWAII STATE LEGISLATURE



*On the Status of Waianae Coast
Transportation Studies and
Projects
(In response to House Resolution
160 House Draft 1- 2000)*

*Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization
707 Richards Street, Suite 200
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813*

Background

During the 2000 State Legislative session, House Resolution House Draft 1 (Appendix A) was passed requesting the Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization (OMPO) to “*include in their current study, or to conduct a comprehensive updated study which would offer several solutions to the traffic problems on the Waianae Coast, taking into account the changes on the Waianae Coast since the last comprehensive study over twenty years ago.*” It further said that “*the study should determine the feasibility of each proposed solution and address several issues specifically, including: an alternate route to the Waianae Coast; an emergency route to and from the Waianae Coast to be used in times of emergency; speeding and unsafe driving; pedestrian safety; and increasing traffic flow on Farrington Highway due to a growing population on the Leeward side of Oahu.*”

The impetus for this resolution arose from traffic problems plaguing the Waianae coast. The 1982 Hurricane Iwa, traffic accidents, and police and fire emergencies are some examples that have caused hardship to the residents and generated a fear of more serious consequences.

This paper will focus on OMPO’s response to HR160, HD1 and briefly touch upon some related activities aimed at improving traffic conditions in the Waianae area.

OMPO Process

Regional Transportation Plan — OMPO is responsible for developing a regional transportation plan for Oahu that will serve as a long-range blueprint for surface transportation development. The regional transportation plan is important in that projects must be consistent with this plan to be eligible for federal funding. In April 2001, the OMPO Policy Committee endorsed the *Transportation for Oahu Plan 2025 (TOP 2025)*. It is now Oahu’s most current regional transportation plan.

In developing the *TOP 2025*, OMPO was required to maintain a balance between projected funds and the cost of the *TOP 2025* projects. Based on this constraint, many projects were eliminated from the list of projects initially proposed for the plan.

Federal regulations regarding regional transportation plans allow for the inclusion of “illustrative” projects. They are not eligible for federal funding, but are included in the list of illustrative projects to identify major projects that are

outside the plan's time period or projects that may be considered for inclusion into the plan should additional funds become available. Illustrative projects are not eligible for federal funding until several conditions are met, including identifying a funding source, and having the project included in the regional transportation plan.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) — another document produced by OMPO is the TIP. The TIP is a three-year document which programs federal funds for City and State surface transportation projects. Projects identified in the TIP must be consistent with Oahu's regional transportation plan. Generally speaking, projects not included in the TIP are not eligible for federal funding.

Waianae Emergency Access Road

OMPO Action: The Waianae Emergency Access Road is included in Oahu's regional transportation plan (*TOP 2025*).

Other Actions: The City Department of Transportation Services (DTS) has conducted a planning study for a Waianae emergency access route. This route will connect existing roads mauka of Farrington Highway from Nanakuli to Makaha so that a continuous travel way will be available in times of emergency. Impacted communities were involved in developing the alignment. Maps of the latest alignment are attached (Appendix B).

The preliminary planning study should be completed and out for public review in January 2002. Presently, DTS is in the procurement stage for environmental assessment and design.

Approximately five million dollars were included in the FY 2002 City budget. Of this, four million dollars was to be used to begin construction of this road. Since this amount will not be sufficient to complete the project, additional funding will be requested in the FY 2003 City budget. Since primarily local roads are involved in this effort and federal standards will not be used, federal monies are not anticipated for this project.

Waianae Second Access Road

OMPO Action: The Waianae Second Access Road across the Waianae Range was included in the *TOP 2025* only as an "illustrative" project. As noted earlier, "illustrative" projects are not eligible for federal funding until additional funds become available and the regional transportation plan is amended to include this project.

During the development of the *TOP 2025*, the Waianae second access project received public support from the OMPO Citizen Advisory Committee and a

number of Waianae Coast residents. The Policy Committee agonized over whether or not to include this project, with the estimated cost of \$515 million, into the *TOP 2025* when measured against the priority of other projects. When the Policy Committee placed this project in the “illustrative” category, they also designated it as the top priority for inclusion into the *TOP 2025* should additional funds become available.

Other Actions: The State DOT has looked at alternate routes for the Waianae Coast. In 1967, they proposed a road around Kaena Point; during the early 1970's, planning studies for this alignment were conducted. However, there was considerable public opposition to the road and strong support for preserving the natural character of the Kaena Point. The proposed road was dropped from further consideration.

In 1996, the Legislature appropriated funds to study an alternative route from the Waianae Coast. After consulting with various community leaders and Legislators, the Mauka Highway alignment was developed, connecting Farrington Highway to Kunia Road. After conducting a preliminary feasibility study on two alignments, the DOT determined the cost for either alignment would be between \$370 and \$520 million, without adding the cost of preliminary engineering, rights-of-way acquisition, or environmental costs. The DOT decided not to pursue this project because of possible environmental impacts, the high cost due to the steep terrain, and the lack of funds.

Recognizing the Policy Committee's support for a second access road across the Waianae Range and the need to answer questions regarding the true cost, route, and environmental impacts of such a project, the Policy Committee Chair convened a meeting with several State Legislators, City Councilmembers, and City and State transportation department representatives to set parameters for a feasibility study to answer these questions. This group identified an alignment that began on Farrington Highway, proceeded up Lualualei Naval Road (Naval Ammunition Depot Road), branched off to Pohakea Pass, and connected to Kunia Road. They believed that this alignment would significantly reduce the cost as well as reduce some of the negative environmental impacts associated with the road. DTS agreed to pursue a feasibility study of the alignment.

In mid-2001, the DTS hired a consultant to conduct this City-funded study. The preliminary feasibility study has been completed. DTS will request \$250,000 in planning money in the FY 2003 City budget. This money would be used to advance the additional preliminary planning recommendations needed to identify potential issues and concerns that may prevent ultimate implementation.

The development of a second access road in and out of the Waianae Coast is still under consideration. Whether or not it actually gets built will depend on a number of major factors. These include: cost, environmental impacts, terrain, cooperation of the landowners, and support from the community. These factors will be addressed in a study that is being done by the City. The study will identify

any fatal flaws so that a decision on whether or not to proceed to additional planning and design can be made.

Other Traffic Solutions

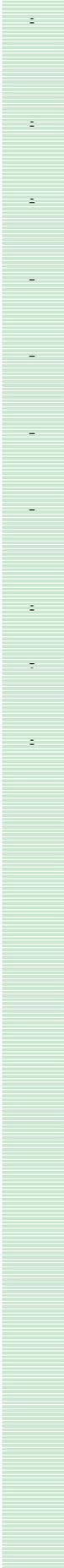
OMPO Action: Included in the *TOP 2025* are two projects aimed at increasing the safety of Waianae roadways. The first is a \$25 million effort to improve safety along Farrington Highway with such efforts as intersection improvements. Part of this project has been programmed in the FY 2002-2004 TIP.

The second project will realign Farrington Highway around the Makaha Beach Park area at a cost of approximately \$35.1 million.

Other Actions: In the early 1970's the State Department of Transportation (DOT) proposed a realignment of the existing Farrington Highway. At that time, residents strongly opposed this realignment, and the project was dropped in favor of widening the existing road in phases.

Since then, a number of projects that focused on the traffic congestion and safety issues on Farrington Highway have been programmed in the TIP and are now in place. DOT has completed the widening of Farrington Highway between Waianae and Makaha. In addition to the widening, a number of adjustments were made to intersections to improve operations. However, many problems still exist.

A comprehensive study to look at Waianae Coast traffic solutions and to develop a plan for the entire area is underway by the State DOT. While recognizing that unsafe driving habits and speeding need to be corrected through community involvement, education, and enforcement, this study is looking at the causes of traffic accidents and congestion to determine what problems could be corrected with design changes. They have developed some preliminary proposals and will meet with the Waianae Coast communities before the end of 2001. This study will be completed during the first quarter of 2002. The final projects will then be designed – probably beginning in early 2003.



APPENDIX A

- • • • • • •
- House Resolution 160, House Draft 1

HOUSE RESOLUTION

RELATING TO WAIANAЕ COAST TRAFFIC PROBLEMS.

1 WHEREAS, the Waianae Coast is plagued with numerous traffic
2 problems, including the lack of an alternative route in times
3 of emergency, speeding and unsafe drivers, pedestrian safety,
4 and growing traffic on Farrington Highway due to a growing
5 Leeward population; and

6
7 WHEREAS, past events such as the non-evacuation of the
8 Waianae Coast during Hurricane Iwa in 1982, various traffic and
9 pedestrian fatalities, and a recent hostage standoff have
10 repeatedly brought these issues to the fore; and

11
12 WHEREAS, funds have been appropriated by the Legislature to
13 conduct studies and planning solutions to the traffic problems
14 that plague the Waianae Coast; and

15
16 WHEREAS, the aforementioned appropriation of funds, most
17 recently \$200,000 in 1995 and \$1,000,000 in 1998, shows a good
18 faith effort on the part of the Legislature to address these
19 serious problems; and

20
21 WHEREAS, half of the 1995 funding lapsed and ninety percent
22 of the 1998 appropriation will lapse at the end of this
23 session; and

24
25 WHEREAS, the Department of Transportation and the Governor
26 are hesitant to use these funds to address the problem of an
27 alternate route to the Waianae Coast due to the low
28 prioritization with the Department of Transportation,
29 noninclusion within the Oahu Regional Transportation Plan, the
30 "prohibitive" cost, possible lack of traffic, and social and
31 environmental problems; and

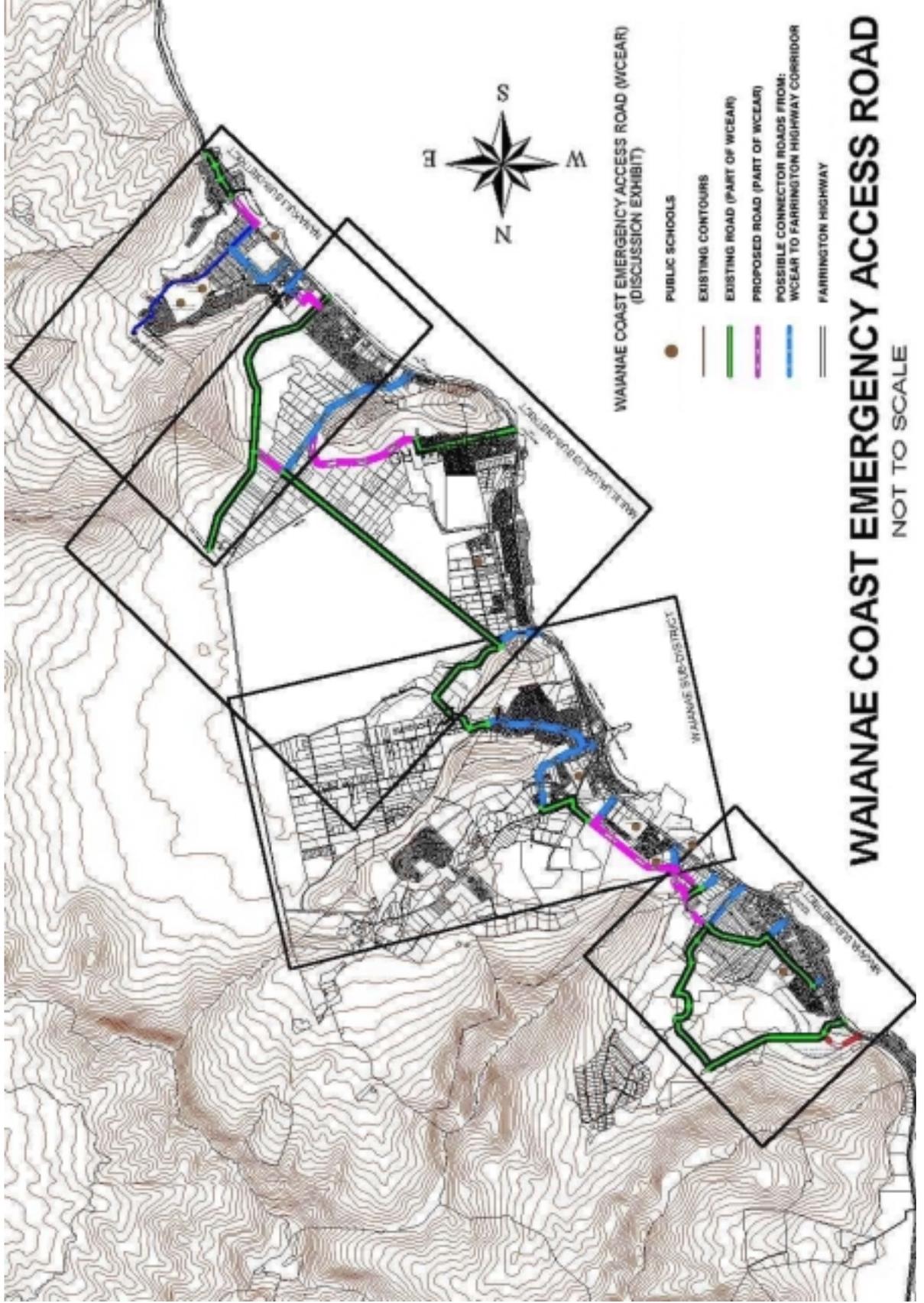
32
33 WHEREAS, these issues, including the alternate route to the
34 Waianae Coast, have been voiced for over two decades and only
35 grow worse over time and with neglect; now, therefore,

1
2 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
3 Twentieth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
4 of 2000, that this body requests the Oahu Metropolitan Planning
5 Organization (OMPO) to include in their current comprehensive
6 study, or to conduct a comprehensive updated study which would
7 offer several solutions to the traffic problems on the Waianae
8 Coast, taking into account the changes on the Waianae Coast
9 since the last comprehensive study over 20 years ago; and

10
11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this study should determine
12 the feasibility of each proposed solution and address several
13 issues specifically, including: an alternate route to the
14 Waianae Coast; an emergency route to and from the Waianae Coast
15 to be used in times of emergency; speeding and unsafe driving;
16 pedestrian safety; and increasing traffic flow on Farrington
17 Highway due to a growing population on the Leeward side of
18 Oahu; and

19
20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that OMPO should report the
21 findings and recommendations of the section of their current
22 comprehensive study which deals with the Waianae Coast traffic
23 problems or the findings and recommendations of their updated
24 study to the Legislature no later than twenty days before the
25 convening of the Regular Session of 2002; and

26
27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this
28 Resolution be transmitted to the Executive director and Policy
29 Committee Chair or OMPO and the Governor.

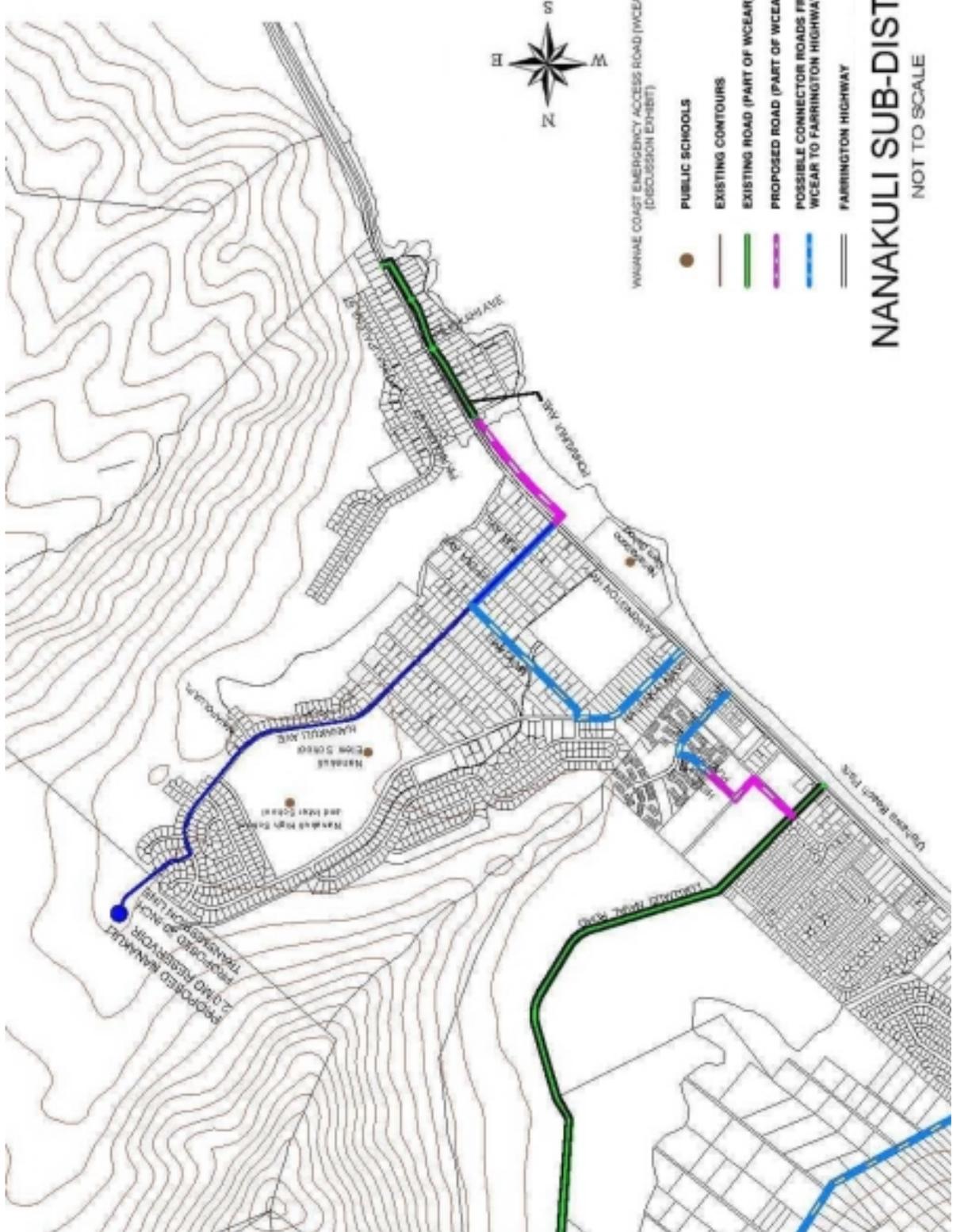


WAIANAЕ COAST EMERGENCY ACCESS ROAD (WCEAR)
(DISCUSSION EXHIBIT)

- PUBLIC SCHOOLS
- EXISTING CONTOURS
- EXISTING ROAD (PART OF WCEAR)
- PROPOSED ROAD (PART OF WCEAR)
- POSSIBLE CONNECTOR ROADS FROM:
WCEAR TO FARRINGTON HIGHWAY CORRIDOR
- == FARRINGTON HIGHWAY

WAIANAЕ COAST EMERGENCY ACCESS ROAD

NOT TO SCALE

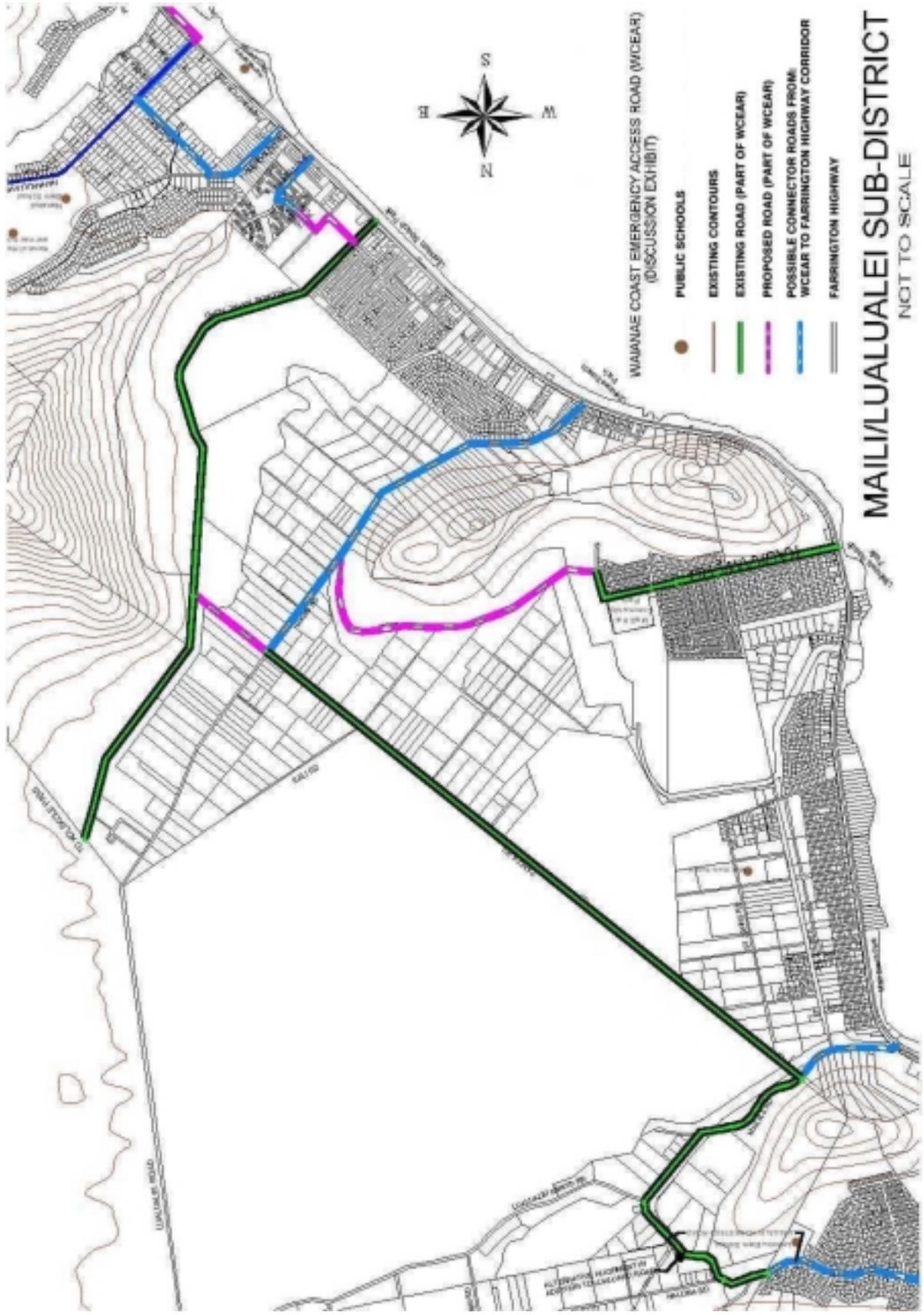


Wahaike Coast Emergency Access Road (WCEAR)
(Discussion Exhibit)

- PUBLIC SCHOOLS
- EXISTING CONTOURS
- EXISTING ROAD (PART OF WCEAR)
- PROPOSED ROAD (PART OF WCEAR)
- POSSIBLE CONNECTOR ROADS FROM:
WCEAR TO FARRINGTON HIGHWAY CORRIDOR
- FARRINGTON HIGHWAY

NANAKULI SUB-DISTRICT

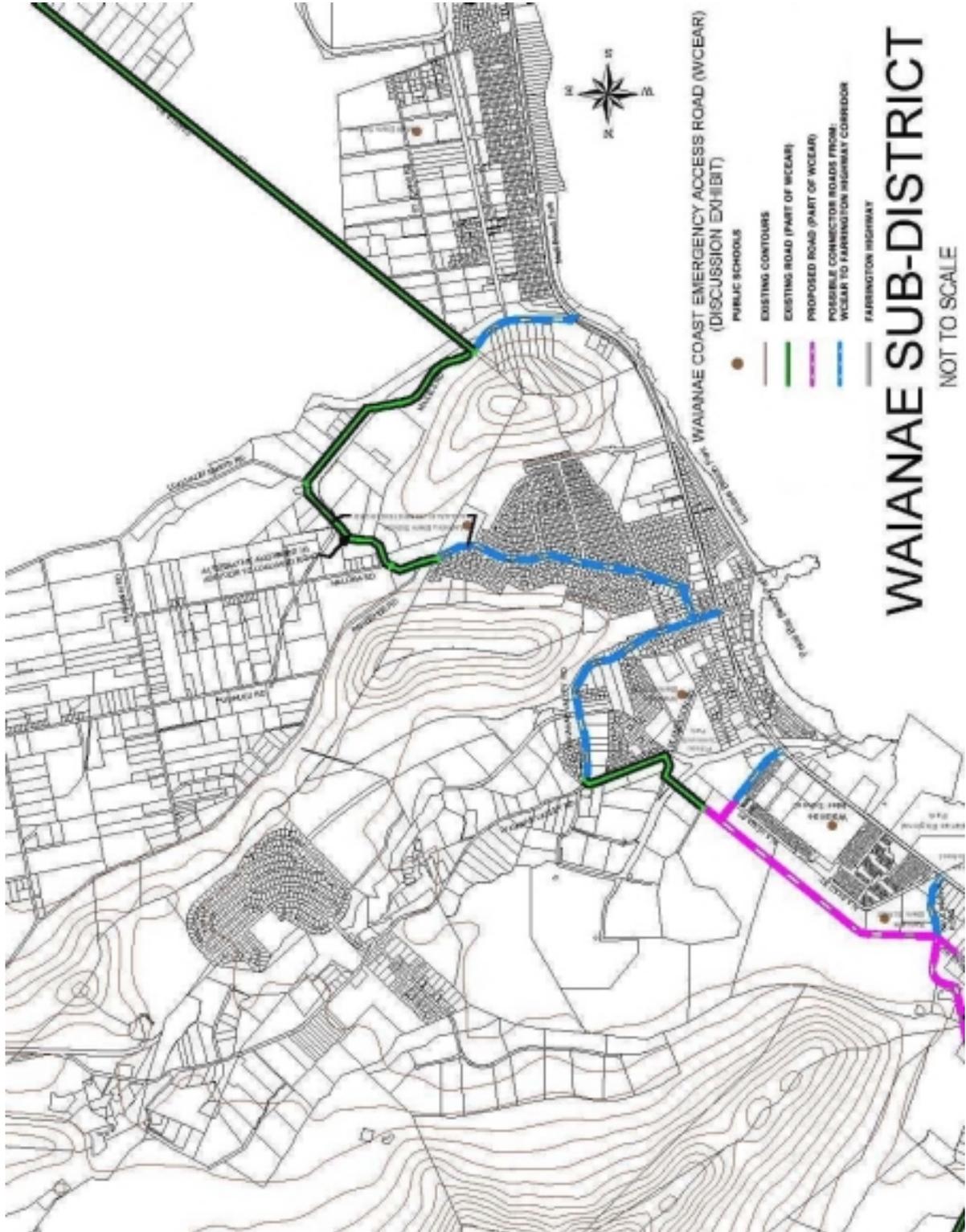
NOT TO SCALE



WAIANAE COAST EMERGENCY ACCESS ROAD (WCEAR)
(DISCUSSION EXHIBIT)

- PUBLIC SCHOOLS
- EXISTING CONTOURS
- EXISTING ROAD (PART OF WCEAR)
- PROPOSED ROAD (PART OF WCEAR)
- POSSIBLE CONNECTOR ROADS FROM WCEAR TO FARRINGTON HIGHWAY CORRIDOR
- FARRINGTON HIGHWAY

MAILILUALUALEI SUB-DISTRICT
NOT TO SCALE

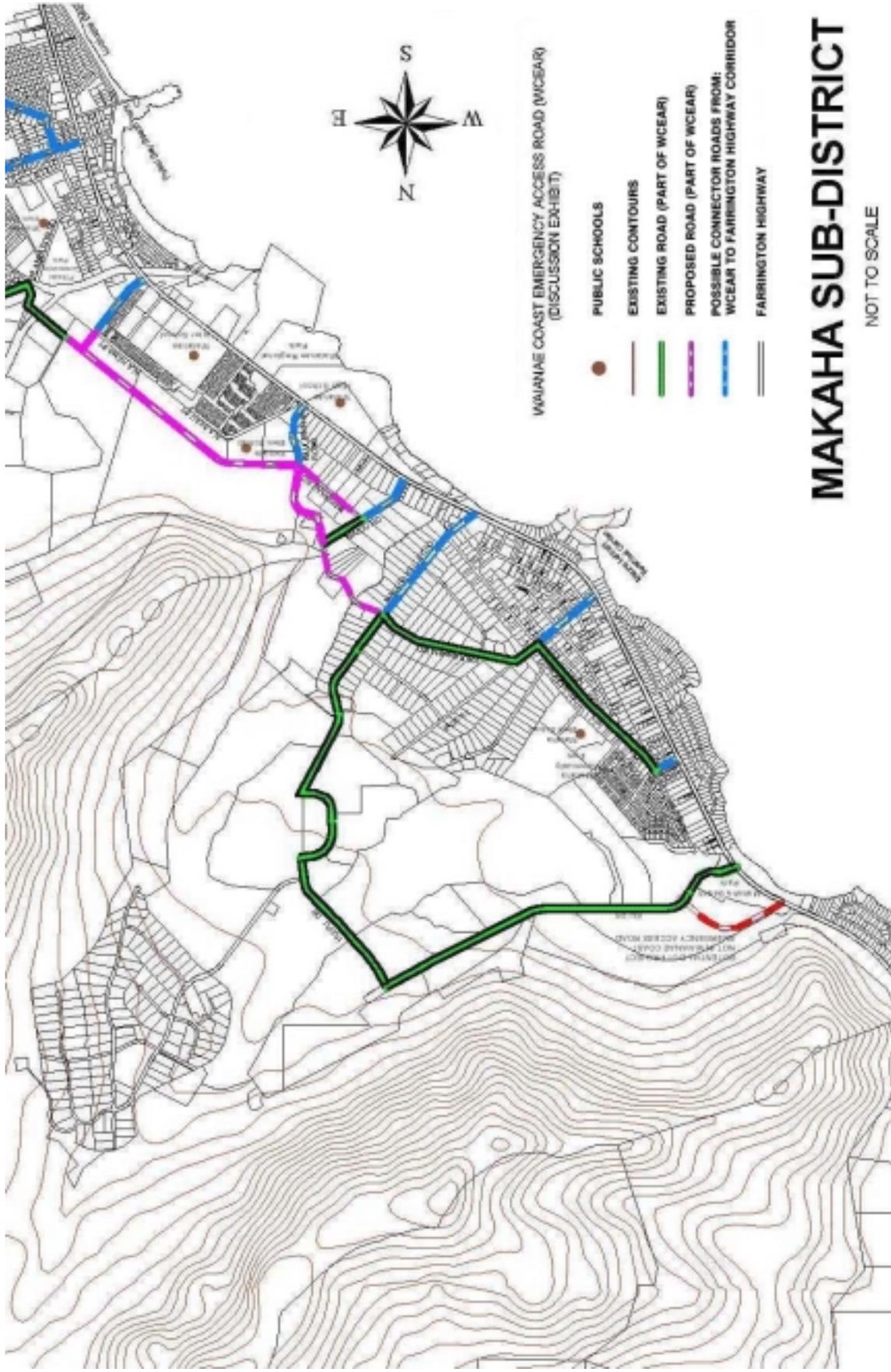


WAIANAЕ COAST EMERGENCY ACCESS ROAD (WCEAR)
(DISCUSSION EXHIBIT)

- PUBLIC SCHOOLS
- EXISTING CONTOURS
- EXISTING ROAD (PART OF WCEAR)
- PROPOSED ROAD (PART OF WCEAR)
- POSSIBLE CONNECTOR ROADS FROM:
WCEAR TO FARRINGTON HIGHWAY CORRIDOR
- FARRINGTON HIGHWAY

WAIANAЕ SUB-DISTRICT

NOT TO SCALE



WAIANAE COAST EMERGENCY ACCESS ROAD (WCEAR)
(DISCUSSION EXHIBIT)

- PUBLIC SCHOOLS
- EXISTING CONTOURS
- EXISTING ROAD (PART OF WCEAR)
- PROPOSED ROAD (PART OF WCEAR)
- POSSIBLE CONNECTOR ROADS FROM:
WCEAR TO FARRINGTON HIGHWAY CORRIDOR
- FARRINGTON HIGHWAY



MAKAHA SUB-DISTRICT

NOT TO SCALE

This report was funded in part through grants from the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation. The views and opinions of the agency expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the U. S. Department of Transportation.