

HCR-19

Submitted on: 4/10/2023 3:31:38 PM

Testimony for TCA on 4/13/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kama Hopkins	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT HCR 19

TESTIMONY OPPOSED TO HCR-19

April 12, 2023

To the Honorable members of the Committee on Transportation and Culture and Arts and Department of Transportation Services.

SUMMARY

My neighbors and we are not in favor of the widening of University Avenue. We believe this project is of questionable need, creates additional risks for residents and students attending nearby schools, is not aligned with mass-transit plans, will damage important historical assets and adversely affect the quality of life for all the Manoa Valley residents. There are better alternatives that are better aligned with mass-transit, environment, housing and quality of life objectives.

FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS

- What is the purpose for this initiative and what benefits will be gained by widening this stretch of University Avenue?
- Why is there an effort to increase vehicular traffic into a residential neighborhood?
- Who is requesting the widening?
- Are there any organizations or special interests requesting this widening?

NEED AND FEASIBILITY

- If there is widening on this section, there will still be gridlock at the next intersection. This is pushing the issue into the valley which begs the question if this expansion will continue.
- The area where Oahu and University meet are already creating hazards with:
 - Cars speeding around the blind turn going into the valley.
 - Cars merging onto University Avenue from Oahu Avenue needing to cross two lanes
- There are narrow bands of time where there is congestion during the morning and afternoon school/work rush hour, but the vast majority of time during the day, traffic on University Avenue is manageable.
- As a resident on this stretch of University Avenue, it is easy to manage during rush hour by leaving extra time as is true anywhere in Honolulu.
- There are several alternative routes into the valley if there is serious congestion, including Punahou Street, Manoa Road, East Manoa Road, Oahu Avenue and the side streets.

SAFETY OF RESIDENTS AND STUDENTS OF NEARBY SCHOOLS

- This area along University Avenue is used extensively by pedestrians. Students from the University of Hawaii, Mid Pacific Institute and Noelani all walk along or cross this stretch of University Avenue. Many other residents, workers and visitors walk along this stretch on both sides of the roads. Widening the road will encourage more traffic and reduce the space to walk.
- Speed Risk – There is already a speeding issue on this stretch, including large numbers of cars that exceed the speed limit and occasionally cars that race down the stretch. Has this risk been assessed, and will the widening exacerbate the problem?

- Accident Risk - There is already an accident risk to pedestrians and drivers. The fire hydrant on the walkway, near to the crosswalk on Armstrong and University has been hit at least twice, creating the need to install poles to protect the hydrant.
- There have been accidents including a drunk driver that hit trees on the pedestrian easement. Widening the roads will reduce the space available to pedestrians and residents. Increasing speed and traffic will exacerbate this risk.

IMPACT TO RESIDENTS

- This effort would encourage more driving, reduce green space and reduce walking space. This would also change the character of the neighborhood and affect the quality of life for all of the valley's residents, especially if the effort to increase traffic continues further into the valley.
- This corridor of University Avenue is densely populated with unique historic homes. These homes are already impacted by the noise and soot from cars.
- Reducing residential lot sizes and increasing setbacks will reduce the ability to add space to our homes to allow our children to stay in Hawaii.

NOT ALIGNED WITH MASS-TRANSIT PLANS

- Widening University Avenue would encourage more driving and discourage the use of mass transit. A more aligned effort would discourage driving and encourage and make it safer for alternatives.
- A better alternative would be to look at making Manoa Valley a model for sustainable transportation aligned with mass transit. This could be achieved by encouraging alternatives to driving including buses, biking and walking.

CONCLUSION

Please stop this project that is of questionable benefit and adds risk to families that live, work and go to school in this area. You have the opportunity to use Manoa Valley as a model for how mass transit can be successfully implemented in a way that increases safety, protects the environment, and maintains the character and quality of a wonderful Hawaii neighborhood. Please take a forward looking approach to ensure that we improve life for residents and our children.

Mahalo,

Ryan Yamamoto