

Lihue Airport Master Plan Update Final Public Meeting & Transition to the Lihue Airport Optimization Plan

September 13, 2022

6:00pm – 8:00pm HST

AK1012-10 and 19061117

Chiefess Kamakahahei
Middle School - Cafeteria**MEETING FACILITATOR:** Ross Higashi and Ryan Lenda**DATE TRANSCRIBED:** September 14, 2022**NOTE TAKER(S):** Monica Daga and Foo Pham**TRANSCRIBED BY:** Monica Daga and Foo Pham**REVIEWED BY:** Ura Yvan

MEETING ATTENDEES	REPRESENTING	EMAIL
See Attached List of Public Registrants and Actual Public Participants. Hawaii Department of Transportation – Airports Division (HDOT-A) and Consultant Team participants shown below.		
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SUMMARY OF MEETING DISCUSSION

The following points were discussed:

- Opening Remarks and Meeting Procedures by Ryan Lenda (Ricondo)
- Purpose of Meeting, Introduction of Team, and Statement by Ross Higashi, Airports Deputy Director (HDOT-A)
 - HDOT-A shared that it heard the community concerns of the Lihue Airport Master Plan Update (LIH MPU) through the Kauai Legislative Delegation, the Kauai County, and community leaders. As a result, HDOT-A communicated and wanted to provide a clear message that the LIH MPU is cancelled and will

be transitioning to the Lihue Airport Optimization Plan (LAOP). In terms of terminal and landside improvements, the LIH MPU had proposed three additional aircraft gates and a consolidated rent-a-car facility (ConRAC). These proposals are no longer considered.

The additional three gates were intended to meet the peak period demand for the 20-year horizon of the Master Plan, which is estimated to reach 4.5 Million Annual Passengers, including arriving and departing passengers, to provide better passenger experience for residents and visitors traveling/returning to Lihue. HDOT-A explained that without the additional three gates, an aircraft may have to wait more than 30-45 minutes on the tarmac for an existing gate to become available, as these flight delays have been observed in peak travel periods today. The HDOT-A further explained that currently, all existing gates at the Lihue Airport are utilized during the typical busy days of the peak months. Therefore, any flight delays occurring today due to inclement weather, aircraft/equipment mechanical failure, personnel staffing, etc., greatly affects residents and visitors arriving and/or departing the Lihue Airport, as the aircraft may be waiting a minimum of 30-45 minutes before a gate is available. The additional three gates also included the construction of additional restrooms and holdrooms for arriving and departing passengers.

Limited gates at the Lihue Airport can exacerbate on-time airline arrivals and departures when planned flight schedules are affected by inclement weather, aircraft mechanical, availability of personnel and equipment servicing aircraft, etc. Flight delays at the gates affect arriving and departing residents and visitors who must remain on the aircraft until a gate is available.

- The Lihue Airport Optimization Plan resets the planning process to re-engage the community and various stakeholders on the proposed improvements, utilizing the footprint of existing facilities with a focus on improving the passenger arrival and departure experience. Input from the community and various stakeholders will be considered in the planning process to:
 - Expand and/or consolidate ticketing areas, holdrooms, passenger security screening checkpoints, baggage claims, public parking, and other undersized and congested facilities.
 - Renovate/replace existing aging infrastructure.
 - Equip existing ground loading Gate 10A with a loading bridge and holdroom.
 - Enhance safety by consolidating cargo, helicopter, and other general aviation operations.
- Comments, Question & Answer Discussion (listed in chronological discussion order)
 - How did the HDOT-A produce the plan for three more gates and a ConRAC?
 - In Airport Master Planning, the HDOT-A must follow FAA guidelines in the development of a 20-year aviation activity forecast, including passenger travel. The guidelines must be followed to ensure that any proposed projects will be acceptable to the FAA to review and be included into the Airport Layout Plan (ALP) for consideration of federal funding support. The HDOT-A explained that the ALP is the document that the FAA relies on when planning its funding support to the HDOT-A. If a project is not on the ALP, the project will not receive federal funding support.
 - The planning of the three gates and the ConRAC was based on the FAA approved aviation activity forecasts. These forecasts formed the basis for the demand/capacity and facility requirements for the Master Plan planning period of 20 years that led to the development of

- the proposed alternatives presented at the May 17th Public Meeting. The plan for three new gates and a ConRAC, however, should not be interpreted as a commitment for the HDOT-A to build these proposed facilities. The Master Plan forecast and demand/capacity and facility requirements analyses are posted on <https://www.lihmasterplan.com/documentation>.
- The HDOT-A also shared that due to its classification as a small primary hub, Lihue Airport benefits by having its FAA funded projects on a 90/10 split or 90 percent federally funded and 10 percent State airport fees. Therefore, at 90 percent federal funding, Lihue Airport can be a great rate of return on 10 percent of its co-share/investment on design and construction projects that improve runways and other eligible airport facilities.
- We need to consider smart growth and lay out the facts and not simply object to the plans because there is pushback from some people.
 - The HDOT-A acknowledged and explained that an airport provides the facilities to process aircraft and passengers safely and efficiently to/from the gate to the curbs. Growth in passenger traffic on the island, however, is also largely dependent on the number of accommodations available to visitors. Simply put, visitors will only book a flight to Kauai if they have a place to stay and Land Use Planning for visitor accommodations is controlled by the Kauai County.
 - Can you limit the number of planes landing to alleviate the congestion?
 - No. As a general rule, airport operators can't per se limit or restrict growth or access at airports. As a public facility, the Lihue Airport cannot restrict airlines from conducting business per the FAA Grant Assurance 22, Economic Nondiscrimination. The Airport accommodates airline requests for gates and the time scheduled to turnaround flights. The airline flight schedules include flights from neighbor island and other overseas airports and peak traffic into Lihue Airport is generally between 10:30 a.m. through 2:00 p.m. On paper, one can see that all gates are utilized during this mid-day peak and that the Airport can accommodate the planned arrival and departure flight schedules. However, irregular operations caused by weather conditions, equipment and/or mechanical malfunction, or personnel related matters, can cause congestion at the gates.
 - The HDOT-A shared a perspective that the role of the Airport is to promote competition. The airlines invest in advertising convenient flights (direct flights) from overseas airports to Lihue. To fill airlines seats, the airlines compete with other airlines for market share by their services or ticket prices. For example, when Southwest Airlines lowered their inter-island ticket prices to \$36, Hawaiian Airlines followed to match the same \$36 tickets. The residents of the State benefit from competition.
 - We consider/support existing facilities to have improvements and maintenance but do not expand and increase capacity.
 - The HDOT-A shared that there are improvements that benefit residents such as increasing the capacity of the public parking. The HDOT-A also shared that there is a relationship between the number of visitors through the Airport and the number of accommodations available on the island. With the County enforcing its ordinances and removing the illegal

- accommodations, the HDOT-A experienced an increase in room rates to attend tonight's meeting for what is considered as off-season travel.
- The HDOT-A also described the Airport as a facility that provides opportunities for each of the island communities to connect, such as youth baseball at the Hanapepe field, Waimea volleyball and scholastic athletics, to travel to colleges and universities as well as connection to families. As an island State, the Airports connects communities and supports the economy of the island with air freight commerce such as FedEx and Amazon.
- If the airport is not expanded or capacity increased, airline may be disincentivize from doing business at LIH.
- The HDOT-A responded that the Lihue Airport cannot restrict growth or access at its airport. As a public facility, the Lihue Airport cannot restrict airlines from conducting business per the FAA Grant Assurance 22, Economic Nondiscrimination. In addition, the HDOT-A stated that there is a relationship between the number of visitors through the airport and the number of accommodations available on the island. There may not be a disincentive from doing business at the Airport so long as there is a demand to travel to Kauai.
- What is causing the congestion during the mid-day?
- Airlines determine their flight schedules and have their business reasons for concentrating flights during the middle of the day. On paper, one can see that all gates are utilized during the mid-day peak and that the Airport can accommodate the planned arrival and departure flight schedules. However, irregular operations caused by weather conditions, equipment and/or mechanical malfunction, or personnel related matters, can cause significant congestion at the existing gates. The airport works with the airlines to accommodate flights at gates, but flights can arrive early or late depending on many factors, as previously cited. The reasons for these delays are not limited to situations at Lihue Airport but by other factors prior to flights arriving at Lihue Airport. For example, a flight is late to arrive at Honolulu then, that connecting flight to Lihue will be late.
 - In regards to congestion at the Airport, the HDOT-A compared the airline flight schedules congestion to local morning and afternoon peak-hour traffic, when residents need to get somewhere at the same time that schools and businesses open in the mornings and close during the afternoons. Airline flight schedules peak-hour traffic at the Lihue Airport is between 10:30 a.m. to about 2:00 p.m.
- Would the construction contracts for airport projects be awarded to local or mainland companies? These airport projects would support the Kauai residents with jobs.
- The State's procurement process is through competitive sealed bidding, awarded to the lowest responsive, responsible bidder. The General Contractor could be a local contractor or a mainland contractor. However, by State statutes, at least 80 percent of the labor force needs to be Hawaii residents.
- How is the flow from the airport to highways going to be managed?
- The HDOT-A will coordinate with the HDOT-Highways Division and the County of Kauai for managing connections between the airport roads and off-airport roadways.

- Can you provide an update to the community about the Runway 3-21 Safety Improvements project?
 - The purpose of the project is to comply with federal regulations by updating the safety area for Runway 3-21 to design standards. A 1,000-foot runway safety area (RSA) is required at the end of the runway in the event an aircraft overshoots, undershoots, veers off the runway, or aborts takeoff. The primary departure runway is for aircraft to depart off the Runway 3 end (towards the ocean) but there is less than 200 feet from the Runway 21 end (opposite end of Runway 3) to the airport property. In order to provide the required 1,000-foot RSA, the Runway 3 end will need to be extended toward the mountain side. The effective runway length will not be extended and will remain the same at 6,500 feet through the use of declared distances.
 - The Runway 3-21 Safety Improvements project is not part of the cancelled LIH MPU or the LAOP. For more details on this project, please see the Final Environmental Assessment (EA) for which the FAA issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) in June 2018, prior to the start of the LIH MPU. The final EA is available at https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/erp/EA_EIS_Library/2018-07-08-KA-FEA-Lihue-Airport-Runway-Safety-Improvements.pdf
- How will the airport remain open or operate safely when the Runway 3-21 Safety Improvements project is underway?
 - The work will occur beyond the Runway 3-21 ends, so the existing runway will remain in operation during construction. Only when the new work ties into the existing runway, the effective runway length will be reduced from 6,500 feet. A safety risk assessment is done for all airfield projects, with participation by the FAA, Airlines, and Airport personnel. Potential risks are identified, and depending on the severity and probability of each identified risk, mitigation measures are implemented.
- As part of the Master Plan Update there were plans for taxiways to be improved, is that still being considered?
 - The proposed taxiway improvements were illustrated as part of the LIH MPU to adhere to the FAA design safety standards. With the cancellation of the LIH MPU, these improvements will not be considered as part of the LAOP.
- How was the aviation activity forecast derived?
 - The aviation activity forecast utilized the FAA Terminal Area Forecast (TAF), Lihue Airport data, local socioeconomic data, and plans on the island. For more details, please see the aviation activity forecast report posted on <https://www.lihmasterplan.com/documentation>
- Will there be a public hearing after this meeting?
 - There will not be another meeting for the cancelled LIH MPU.
- Can you provide the mentioned LAOP objectives on the website?
 - Yes.

- How will the projects under the LAOP be funded? Can you provide estimates?
 - The LAOP is starting from square one and still needs to be scoped. Cost estimates cannot be provided at this time.
 - People may not know but the airport system was designed as a hub and spokes, where all domestic and international flights arrived at Honolulu International Airport (HNL), and all flights to the neighbor island airports originated from HNL on Aloha and Hawaiian Airlines. With changes to the aviation industry, airlines are now flying directly from the Continental U.S. to the neighbor island airports, like Lihue Airport. These airports were not designed to accommodate the large volume of passengers; as such, the curbside is congested, the ticket lobbies are congested, security checkpoints are congested, holdrooms are congested, outbound baggage processing and baggage claims are congested, and restrooms are congested.
 - The LAOP will strive to improve the facilities within the existing terminal footprint. As an analogy, we have 10 lbs. of rice in a five lb. bag. The LAOP may be able to get a seven lb. bag but it will not be optimum. The LIH MPU would have provided the optimum.
- Would the Master Plan Update's proposed three aircraft gate project be covered by the FAA Airport Improvement Program (AIP) Grants?
 - As stated at the onset of the meeting, the Lihue Airport Master Plan is cancelled. Therefore, the proposal to add up to three new gates at the airport is also cancelled.
- The baggage inspection equipment at the TSA Checkpoints should be in an enclosed air-conditioned area to maintain longevity of equipment. The TSA Checkpoints need more space for the equipment to fit and to alleviate congestion by passengers waiting to be screened. Can these issues be considered?
 - Yes, these can be considered in the LAOP.
- What is the process of developing the LAOP? How will the community be engaged? Begin the process by defining and obtaining stakeholder consensus on the objectives and constraints of the Plan so that it does not repeat the same process as the Master Plan Update.
 - The LAOP still needs to be scoped. The HDOT-A will work closely with the Kauai Legislative Delegation and Kauai Visitors Bureau as the LAOP is developed.
- During COVID-19, there were projects being constructed. Is that part of the LAOP?
 - No, the ticket lobby improvements were already planned before the pandemic. The control rooms and the processing facilities installations at the baggage claims were in response to the pandemic.
- Will the consultant for the LAOP be the same?
 - No decision has been made yet.
- The airport is outdated, and we need the upgrades.
 - Acknowledged.

- While the lodging dilemma has contributed to attract visitors, there is a need to stop and control the other “growth inducing” factors and the airport is one of them.
 - HDOT-A acknowledged that while the airport is the conduit of bringing visitors to the island, property owners on the island have effectively increased the visitor accommodation capacity by providing more rooms and beds as short-term vacation rentals. As a public facility, the Airport’s mission is to facilitate the safe and efficient travel for all users, including residents and visitors.
 - As previously discussed, airport operators can’t per se limit or restrict growth or access at airports. As a public facility, the Lihue Airport cannot restrict airlines from conducting business per the FAA Grant Assurance 22, Economic Nondiscrimination.
- What is the timeline of the LAOP?
 - The LAOP still needs to be scoped.
- Next Steps and Closing by Deputy Director, Ross Higashi, Representatives Jimmy Tokioka and Nadine Nakamura
 - The collaboration between the HDOT-A and Kauai Delegation and their commitment to listening and addressing the community concerns was edified. A successful example of such collaboration was provided and showed HDOT-A and the Kauai Delegation working together to address challenges with Turo and the lack of available parking at LIH.
 - It was stated the lihueairportop.com website is still a work-in-progress. The community was encouraged to visit the lihueairportop.com website for more updates and to submit any comments and questions when the website features are available.

ATTACHMENTS:

Meeting Attendee List

DISTRIBUTION:

State of Hawaii: AK1012-10
Internal: 19061117
HDOT-A Meeting Attendees

LIHUE AIRPORT FINAL MASTER PLAN MEETING, TRANSITION TO OPTIMIZATION PLAN

PUBLIC MEETING, SEPTEMBER 13, 2022 - REGISTERED ATTENDEES

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LIHUE AIRPORT OPTIMIZATION PLAN - PUBLIC MEETING, SEPTEMBER 13, 2022

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