



The Formation, Implementation, and Impact of O'ahu's Pedestrian Plan

BACKGROUND

Historically, Hawai'i faced significant challenges with its pedestrian and bike infrastructure, particularly on the island of O'ahu. A primary challenge for the island was a fragmented and insufficient pedestrian and bike infrastructure, making it unsafe for pedestrians, especially in high-traffic areas. Additionally, many critical corridors, largely concentrated in urban Honolulu, experienced high numbers of pedestrian injuries and fatalities. Insufficient funding and differing priorities among state, county, and city jurisdictions made it difficult to implement widespread improvements to pedestrian and bike infrastructure. This left many communities, especially those with high pedestrian traffic, without the necessary infrastructure to ensure their safety.

FORMATION

In 2018, a cross-disciplinary team of individuals from O'ahu attended the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors' Active People, Healthy NationSM [Walkability Action Institute](#) (WAI). The WAI brings together teams representing public health, planning, transportation, elected officials, and other disciplines to participate in an intensive, applied-learning course on improving walkability with a focus on community and transportation design. As a result of their participation in the WAI, the team decided to pursue the development of a comprehensive pedestrian plan for O'ahu that could improve funding and intergovernmental collaboration around bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements. As a result of the WAI, the team secured approvals for developing the plan and secured funding before the WAI ended. By August 2021, a draft of the plan was completed, and the final version of the [O'ahu Pedestrian Plan](#) was published in late 2022.



IMPLEMENTATION

Once the plan was finalized, the city and county of Honolulu took significant steps to implement its recommendations. Previously, sidewalk construction was partially funded by property owners, but a new city policy now provides full funding for sidewalk projects. The shift was crucial in addressing the long-standing issue of inadequate pedestrian infrastructure. In December 2022, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) awarded \$1.7 million through the [Safe Streets and Roads for All \(SS4A\) Grant Program](#) to O'ahu. The funds are being used to address high-priority pedestrian corridors identified in the plan, such as the major thoroughfares of Kapi'olani Boulevard, South King Street, and Beretania Street in urban Honolulu. The success of the FHWA grant underscores the importance of having a detailed pedestrian plan in place before applying for transportation infrastructure funding.

The plan also influenced the development of the [O'ahu Vision Zero Action Plan](#), which aims to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries by 2040. The action plan draws heavily from the pedestrian plan and proposes important changes such as reducing speed limits and improving traffic calming measures.

Quick Build Projects

Quick-build projects are short-term improvements to streets and bicycle/pedestrian facilities, utilizing inexpensive materials to achieve community goals.

To support community-led quick-build projects on city-owned streets, the City and County of Honolulu created the [Kāpala Toolbox](#).

IMPACT

The O'ahu Pedestrian Plan's comprehensive approach has led to broader policy changes and additional funding opportunities. O'ahu has leveraged over **\$115 million** in funding since attending the WAI to support safety, walking, biking, and other non-motorized methods of travel.

The plan has also had a profound impact on the community. It prioritized safety and ease of use by pedestrians, particularly in high-injury corridors and around schools. One notable current project influenced by the plan is a Safe Routes to Parks quick-build initiative at Wahiawa Elementary School along Glenn Avenue, a designed Pedestrian Priority Corridor, that will provide safer routes for students attending an elementary school designed for medically fragile students.

The success of the O'ahu Pedestrian Plan inspired similar efforts in other counties, contributing to a statewide movement toward safer pedestrian infrastructure.

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