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IN REPLY REFER TO:

HAR-EP.26.1256

April 14, 2026

TO: JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA, DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

ATTENTION: MARY ALICE EVANS, DIRECTOR
OFFICE OF PLANNING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROGRAM

FROM: EDWIN H. SNIFFEN
DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION

SUBJECT: DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND ANTICIPATED FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (DEA-AFNSI); KAWAIHAE HARBOR IMPROVEMENTS – JOB P50175; SOUTH KOHALA DISTRICT, ISLAND OF HAWAII; TAX MAP KEY NOS. (3) 6-1-003:023 POR., :024, :026, :028, :032, :033, :034, :036 POR., :037, :038, :039, :041 POR., :044, :046, :047, :048 POR., :049, :050 POR., :052, :053, :054, :055 POR., :057, :058, :059, :061, :062, :063, :064, (3) 6-1-003:999 (RIGHT-OF-WAY), AND (3) 6-1-002:999 (RIGHT-OF-WAY)

The Hawaii Department of Transportation hereby submits the DEA-AFNSI for the Kawaihae Harbor Improvements project for publication in the next available edition of *The Environmental Notice*.

We are providing this DEA-AFNSI electronically via the online Hawaii Revised Statutes, Chapter 343, Publication Submittal Form. This submittal includes an electronic file of the DEA-AFNSI and a zip file containing a shapefile of the action location boundary.

If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Celia Shen, Harbors Planner, Planning Section, at (808) 587-2013 or via email at celia.y.shen@hawaii.gov. You may also contact our consultant, Ms. Noelle Besa Wright, of HDR, Inc., at (808) 697-6297 or via email at kawaihae@hdrinc.com.

Attachment

From: dbedt.opsd.erp@hawaii.gov
To: DBEDT OPSD Environmental Review Program
Subject: New online submission for The Environmental Notice
Date: Thursday, April 16, 2026 8:33:25 AM

Action Name

Kawaihae Harbor Improvements

Type of Document/Determination

Draft environmental assessment and anticipated finding of no significant impact (DEA-AFNSI)

HRS §343-5(a) Trigger(s)

- (1) Propose the use of state or county lands or the use of state or county funds

Judicial district

South Kohala, Hawai‘i

Tax Map Key(s) (TMK(s))

(3) 6-1-003: 044; (3) 6-1-003: 046; (3) 6-1-003: 047; (3) 6-1-003: 048; (3) 6-1-003: 049; (3) 6-1-003: 053; (3) 6-1-003: 054; (3) 6-1-003: 023; (3) 6-1-003: 026; (3) 6-1-003: 028; (3) 6-1-003: 050; (3) 6-1-003: 024; (3) 6-1-003: 063; (3) 6-1-003: 057; (3) 6-1-003: 032; (3) 6-1-003: 034; (3) 6-1-003: 036; (3) 6-1-003: 037; (3) 6-1-003: 038; (3) 6-1-003: 039; (3) 6-1-003: 041; (3) 6-1-003: 062; (3) 6-1-003: 061; (3) 6-1-003: 059; (3) 6-1-003: 033; (3) 6-1-003: 052; (3) 6-1-003: 055; (3) 6-1-003: 058; (3) 6-1-003: 064; (3) 6-1-003: 999; (3) 6-1-002: 999

Action type

Agency

Other required permits and approvals

Other required permits and approvals Section 106, National Historic Preservation Act consultation; Section 7, Endangered Species Act (ESA); State Historic Preservation Review (HRS Chapter 6E); CWA Water Quality Certification, CWA Section 401, Blanket Certification; Clean Water Act, Section 402 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit; Air Quality Permit; Community Noise Permit; HRS Section 103-50 (Disability and Communication Access Board Review)

Proposing/determining agency

State of Hawai‘i Department of Transportation, Harbors (HDOT-HAR)

Agency jurisdiction

State of Hawai‘i

Agency contact name

Celia Shen

Agency contact email (for info about the action)

celia.y.shen@hawaii.gov

Email address for receiving comments

kawaihae@hdrinc.com

Agency contact phone

(808) 587-2013

Agency address

79 S. Nimitz Highway
Honolulu, HI 96813
United States
Map It

Is there a consultant for this action?

Yes

Consultant

HDR, Inc.

Consultant contact name

Noelle Besa Wright

Consultant contact email

noelle.wright@hdrinc.com

Consultant contact phone

(808) 697-6297

Consultant address

1001 Bishop Street
Suite 400
Honolulu, HI 96813
United States
Map It

Action summary

The State of Hawai'i Department of Transportation, Harbors (HDOT-HAR) proposes improvements to Kawaihae Commercial Harbor consisting of the widening of Kawaihae Road (Hawai'i Route 270) and various cargo yard improvements. The purpose of the project is to improve operating conditions and efficiencies within the cargo terminal, as well as reduce existing traffic congestion along Kawaihae Road associated with harbor operations. The Kawaihae Road widening will include construction of a northbound dedicated left turn and storage lane at the harbor main gate and associated improvements. Cargo yard improvements include reconstructing portions of the yard by replacing existing asphalt and paving unpaved areas with reinforced concrete; upgrading security lighting by replacing selected existing 40 foot light poles and fixtures with 80 foot-tall poles and fully shielded, energy efficient LED lighting; installing lighting and a fire suppression system in the Annex and Expanded yards; relocating the HDOT HAR District office and maintenance shed by renovating an existing warehouse for office use, with associated site improvements; and installing conduits and raised transformer pads for future upgrades.

Reasons supporting determination

Please refer to Section 6.1 HRS 343 Significance Criteria in the EA.

Attached documents (signed agency letter & EA/EIS)

- Agency-Publication-Letter-signed_PDFUA.pdf
- Kawaihae-Harbor_DEA_Final-Draft-041520261.pdf

Action location map

- Kawaihae_Harbor_Improvements_Project_Area1.zip

Compliance certification (HRS §368-1.5):

The authorized individual listed below certifies that documents submitted are unlocked, searchable, and compliant with the Hawaii Electronic Information Technology Disability Access Standards (including, but not limited to transcripts, captions, and other descriptions accompanying audio/video files). The individual acknowledges that the submitter retains the responsibility for compliance after documents have been published and any compliance queries will be directed back to the agency and/or applicant.

Authorized individual

Noelle Besa Wright

Authorized individual email

noelle.wright@hdrinc.com

Authorized individual phone

(808) 697-6297

Authorization

- The above named authorized individual hereby certifies that he/she has the authority to make this submission.

Kawaihae Harbor Improvements
Draft Environmental Assessment

Kawaihae, Island of Hawai‘i

April 2026

Proposing Agency:
Hawai‘i Department of Transportation, Harbors
79 South Nimitz Highway
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

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Appendix A: Pre-Assessment Consultation Letters

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Appendix C: National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 State Historic Preservation Division Concurrence

Appendix D: *A Natural Resources Assessment for Kawaihae Harbor.* AECOS, Inc. July 11, 2025.

Appendix E: Endangered Species Act, Section 7 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Concurrence

Abbreviations

AASHTO	American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
ACS	American Community Survey
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ADT	Average Daily Traffic
AECOS	AECOS, Inc.
ALRFI	Archaeological Literature Review and Field Inspection
APE	Area of Potential Effect
ASA	Aquifer Sector Area
ASYA	Aquifer Systems Area
ASL	Above sea level
AST	Aboveground Storage Tank
ATA	Austin, Tsutsumi & Associates, Inc.
BMPs	Best Management Practices
C&D	Construction and Demolition
CAB	Clean Air Branch
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CIA	Cultural Impact Assessment
County	County of Hawai‘i
CO	Carbon monoxide
COC	Contaminants of Concern
CWA	Clean Water Act
CWB	Clean Water Branch
CWRM	Commission of Water Resource Management
CZM	Coastal Zone Management
CZMA	Coastal Zone Management Act
CZMP	Coastal Zone Management Program
dBA	A-weighted decibels
DBEDT	Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
DHHL	Department of Hawaiian Homelands
DLNR	State of Hawai‘i Department of Land and Natural Resources
DOFAW	Division of Forestry and Wildlife
DWS	County of Hawai‘i Department of Water Supply
EA	Environmental Assessment
EHE-EHMP	Environmental Hazard Evaluation and Environmental Hazard Management Plan
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ERP	Environmental Review Program
ESA	Endangered Species Act
ESCP	Erosion and Sediment Control Plan
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
GHGs	Greenhouse Gas Emissions
HAR	Hawai‘i Administrative Rules

HAZMAT	Hazardous materials
HAZWOPER	Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response
HCC	Hawai‘i County Code
HDR, Inc.	HDR
HDOH	State of Hawai‘i Department of Health
HDOT	State of Hawai‘i Department of Transportation
HDOT-HAR	State of Hawai‘i Department of Transportation, Harbors
HDOT-HWY	State of Hawai‘i Department of Transportation, Highways
HELCO	Hawaiian Electric Light Company
HEPA	Hawai‘i Environmental Policy Act
HEPCRA	Hawai‘i Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act
HFD	Hawai‘i Fire Department
HPD	Hawai‘i Police Department
HRS	Hawai‘i Revised Statutes
HSTP	Hawai‘i Statewide Transportation Plan
IBC	International Building Code
iHEER	Hazard Evaluation and Emergency Response System
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LOS	Level of Service
LUC	State of Hawai‘i Land Use Commission
Makai	Ocean side
MAO	Maritime Administrative Orders
Mauka	Mountain side
Mgd	Millions of gallons per day
Mph	Miles per hour
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NEHRP	National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program
NCEI	National Centers for Environmental Information
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHO	Native Hawaiian Organization
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NHT	National Historic Trail
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
NO_2	Nitrogen dioxide
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NPS	National Park Service
O_3	Ozone
OCCL	Office of Conservation and Coastal Lands, State DLNR
OPSD	Office of Planning and Sustainable Development
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PacIOOS	Pacific Islands Ocean Observing System
Pb	Airborne lead
PIDP	Port Infrastructure Development Program
PIFSC	Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center

$PM_{2.5}$	Particulate matter smaller than 2.5 microns
PM_{10}	Particulate matter smaller than 2.5 microns
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
QEP	Qualified Environmental Professional
ROW	Right-of-Way
SHPD	State Historic Preservation Division
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
SIHP	State Inventory of Historic Places
SLR-XA	Sea Level Rise Exposure Area
SMA	Special Management Area
SO_2	Sulfur Dioxide
SSV	Shoreline Setback Variance
State	State of Hawai‘i
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
TEU	Twenty-foot Equivalent Unit
TMK	Tax Map Key
TWIC	Transportation Worker Identification Credential
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S.C.	U.S. Code
USCB	U.S. Census Bureau
USCG	U.S. Coast Guard
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey

1.0 Introduction and Background

1.1 Project Information Summary

The State of Hawai'i Department of Transportation, Harbors (HDOT-HAR) is proposing to construct improvements to Kawaihae Commercial Harbor (hereafter referred to as Kawaihae Harbor) consisting of widening of Kawaihae Road and various yard improvements (hereinafter referred to as the "Project" or "Proposed Action"). A summary of the Project information is provided in Table 1-1 below.

Table 1-1: Project Information Summary

	Project
Proposing Agency/Accepting Authority	Hawai'i Department of Transportation – Harbors 79 S. Nimitz Highway Honolulu, HI 96813
Project Contact	Celia Shen, Planner Phone: (808) 587-2013 Email: Celia.y.shen@hawaii.gov
Name of Action	Kawaihae Harbor Improvements
Planning/Environmental Consultant	HDR, Inc. 1001 Bishop Street, Suite 400 Honolulu, HI 96813 Contact: Noelle Besa Wright, Senior Environmental Planner Phone: (808) 570-6425 Email: kawaihae@hdrinc.com
Project Location	Kawaihae Harbor, Hawai'i Island (Figure 1-1)
Tax Map Keys	(3) 6-1-003:023 Por., :024, :026, :028, :032, :033, :034, :036 Por., :037, :038, :039, :041 Por., :044, :046, :047, :048 Por., :049, :050 Por., :052, :053, :054, :055 Por., :057, :058, :059, :061, :062, :063, :064, (3) 6-1-003:999 (Right-Of-Way), and (3) 6-1-002:999 (Right-Of-Way) (Figure 1-2)
Land Area	Approximately 56 acres
Existing Use	Commercial Harbor
Project/Proposed Action	Improvements to the Kawaihae Harbor consisting of two main components: • Component 1: Highway Widening and Entry Gate Improvements. Widen a portion of Kawaihae Road (Hawai'i Route 270) to create a northbound dedicated left turn and storage lane at the harbor main gate. Improve the entry to the main gate to accommodate the wider truck turning radius. • Component 2: Yard Improvements. Planned improvements include replacing existing asphalt surfaces with new reinforced concrete pavement in selected areas and paving pockets of unimproved fill areas; installing new or replacing existing lower-height lights with 80-foot high mast lighting and replacing some existing fixtures with LED lights; installing conduit and raised transformer pads for future harbor upgrades; and relocating the HDOT-HAR District office building and maintenance shed, which would increase the efficiency of the cargo yard.
State Land Use District	Urban (Figure 1-3)

	Project
County of Hawai'i Zoning	MG-1a: General Industrial District (Figure 1-4)
Community Plan	South Kohala
Special Management Area (SMA)	Within the SMA (Figure 1-5)
Flood Zone	Portions of the Project area are within Zone X, Unshaded and Shaded – 0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard (Figure 1-6)

Figure 1-1. Project Location

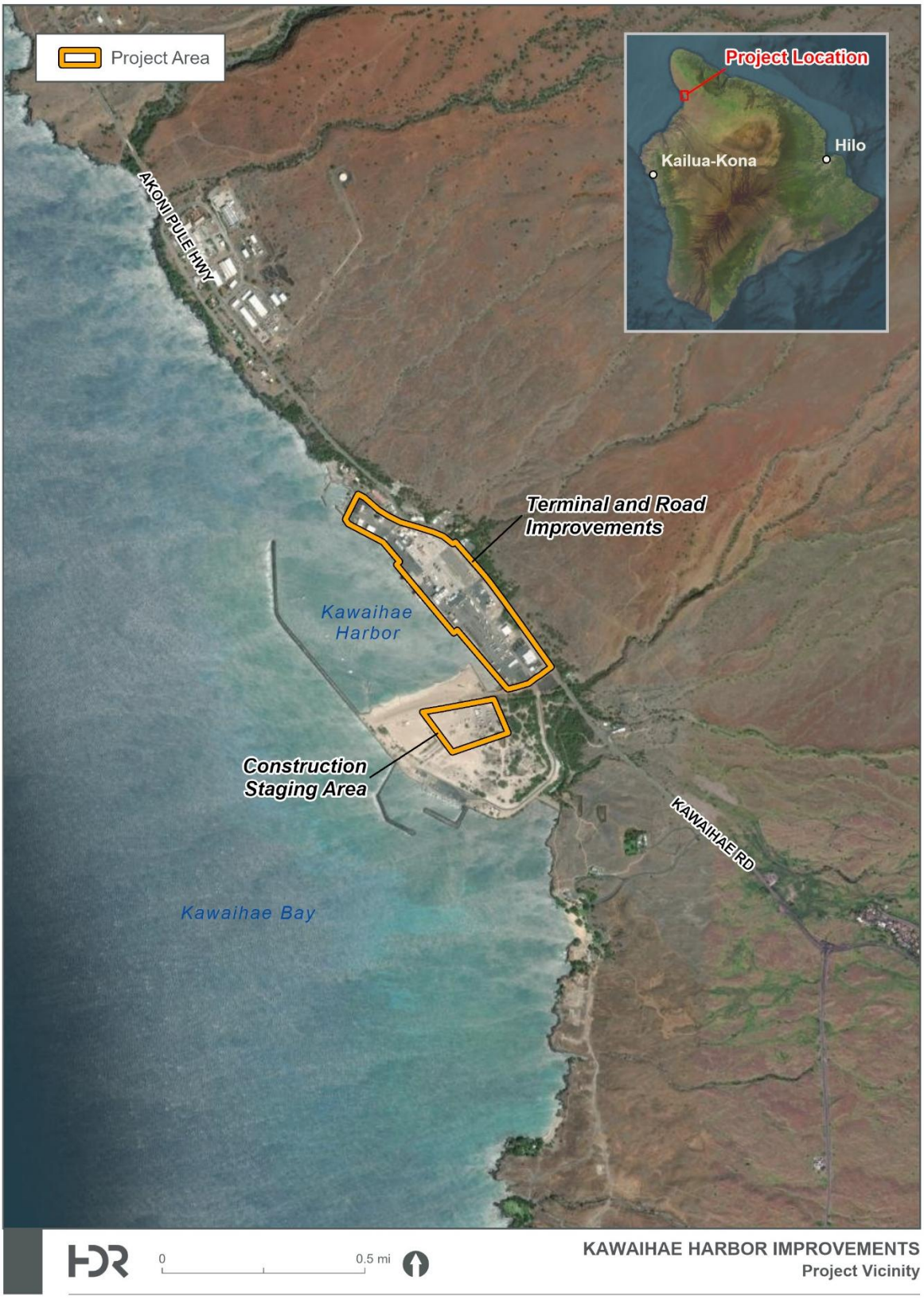


Figure 1-2. Tax Map Keys

*Refer to Table 1-2 below for the corresponding map identification numbers.

Table 1-2. Map Identification for Tax Map Key

Map ID	TMK	Ownership	Project Use
1	(3) 6-1-003: 044	State of Hawai'i	Terminal and Road Improvements
2	(3) 6-1-003: 046	State of Hawai'i	Terminal and Road Improvements
3	(3) 6-1-003: 047	State of Hawai'i	Construction Staging Area
4	(3) 6-1-003: 048	State of Hawai'i	Terminal and Road Improvements
5	(3) 6-1-003: 049	State of Hawai'i	Terminal and Road Improvements
6	(3) 6-1-003: 053	State of Hawai'i	Terminal and Road Improvements
7	(3) 6-1-003: 054	State of Hawai'i	Terminal and Road Improvements
8	(3) 6-1-003: 023	State of Hawai'i	Terminal and Road Improvements
9	(3) 6-1-003: 026	State of Hawai'i	Construction Staging Area
10	(3) 6-1-003: 028	State of Hawai'i	Terminal and Road Improvements
11	(3) 6-1-003: 050	State of Hawai'i	Terminal and Road Improvements
12	(3) 6-1-003: 024	State of Hawai'i	Terminal and Road Improvements
13	(3) 6-1-003: 063	State of Hawai'i	Terminal and Road Improvements
14	(3) 6-1-003: 057	State of Hawai'i	Terminal and Road Improvements
15	(3) 6-1-003: 032	State of Hawai'i	Terminal and Road Improvements
16	(3) 6-1-003: 034	State of Hawai'i	Terminal and Road Improvements
17	(3) 6-1-003: 036	State of Hawai'i	Terminal and Road Improvements
18	(3) 6-1-003: 037	State of Hawai'i	Terminal and Road Improvements
19	(3) 6-1-003: 038	State of Hawai'i	Terminal and Road Improvements
20	(3) 6-1-003: 039	State of Hawai'i	Terminal and Road Improvements
21	(3) 6-1-003: 041	State of Hawai'i	Terminal and Road Improvements
22	(3) 6-1-003: 062	State of Hawai'i	Terminal and Road Improvements
23	(3) 6-1-003: 061	State of Hawai'i	Terminal and Road Improvements
24	(3) 6-1-003: 059	State of Hawai'i	Terminal and Road Improvements
25	(3) 6-1-003: 033	State of Hawai'i	Terminal and Road Improvements
26	(3) 6-1-003: 052	State of Hawai'i	Terminal and Road Improvements
27	(3) 6-1-003: 055	State of Hawai'i	Construction Staging Area
28	(3) 6-1-003: 058	State of Hawai'i	Terminal and Road Improvements
29	(3) 6-1-003: 064	State of Hawai'i	Terminal and Road Improvements
30	(3) 6-1-003: 999	State of Hawai'i	Terminal and Road Improvements
31	(3) 6-1-002: 999	State of Hawai'i	Terminal and Road Improvements

Figure 1-3. State Land Use District

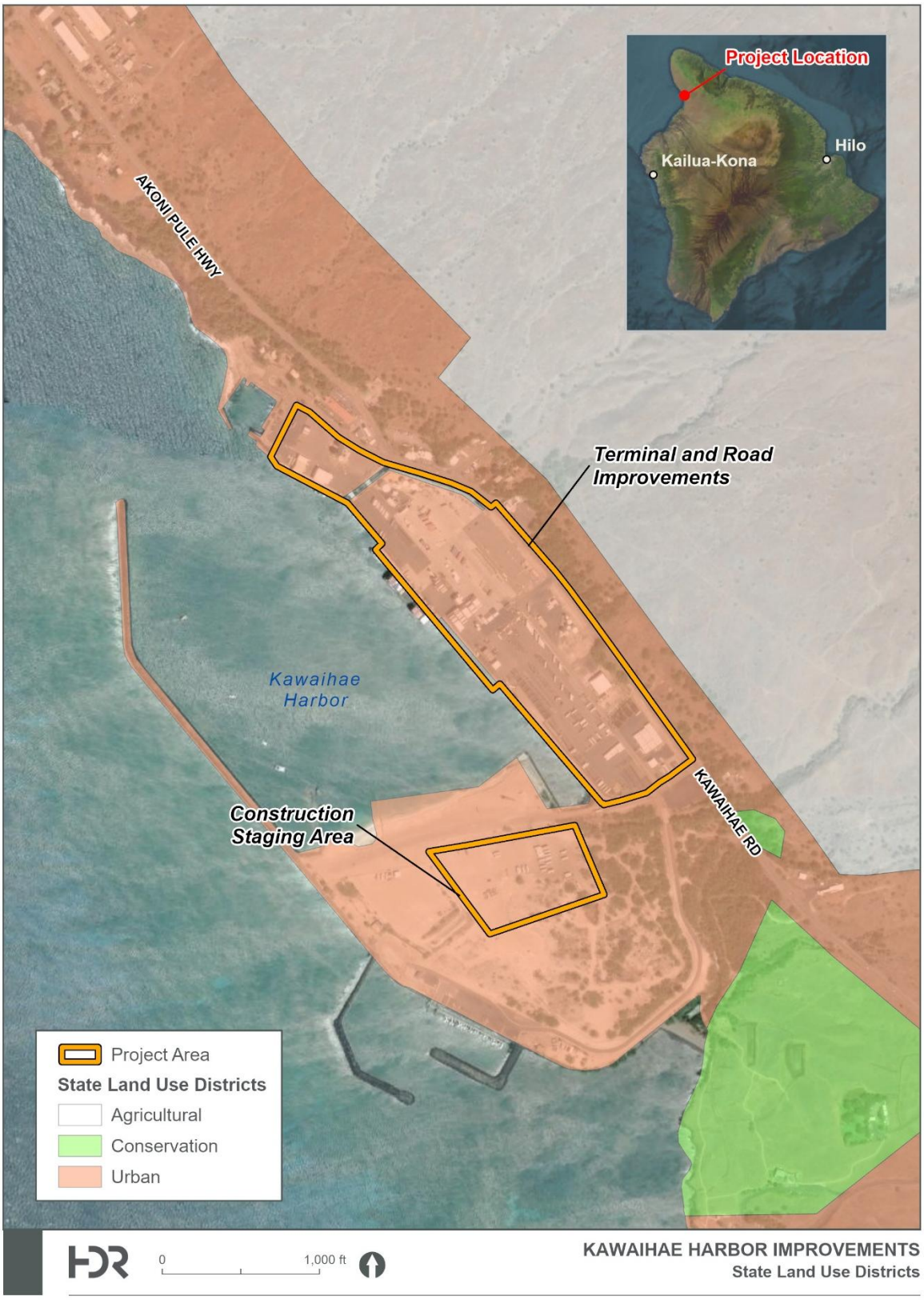


Figure 1-4. Hawai‘i County Zoning

Figure 1-5. Special Management Area (SMA)

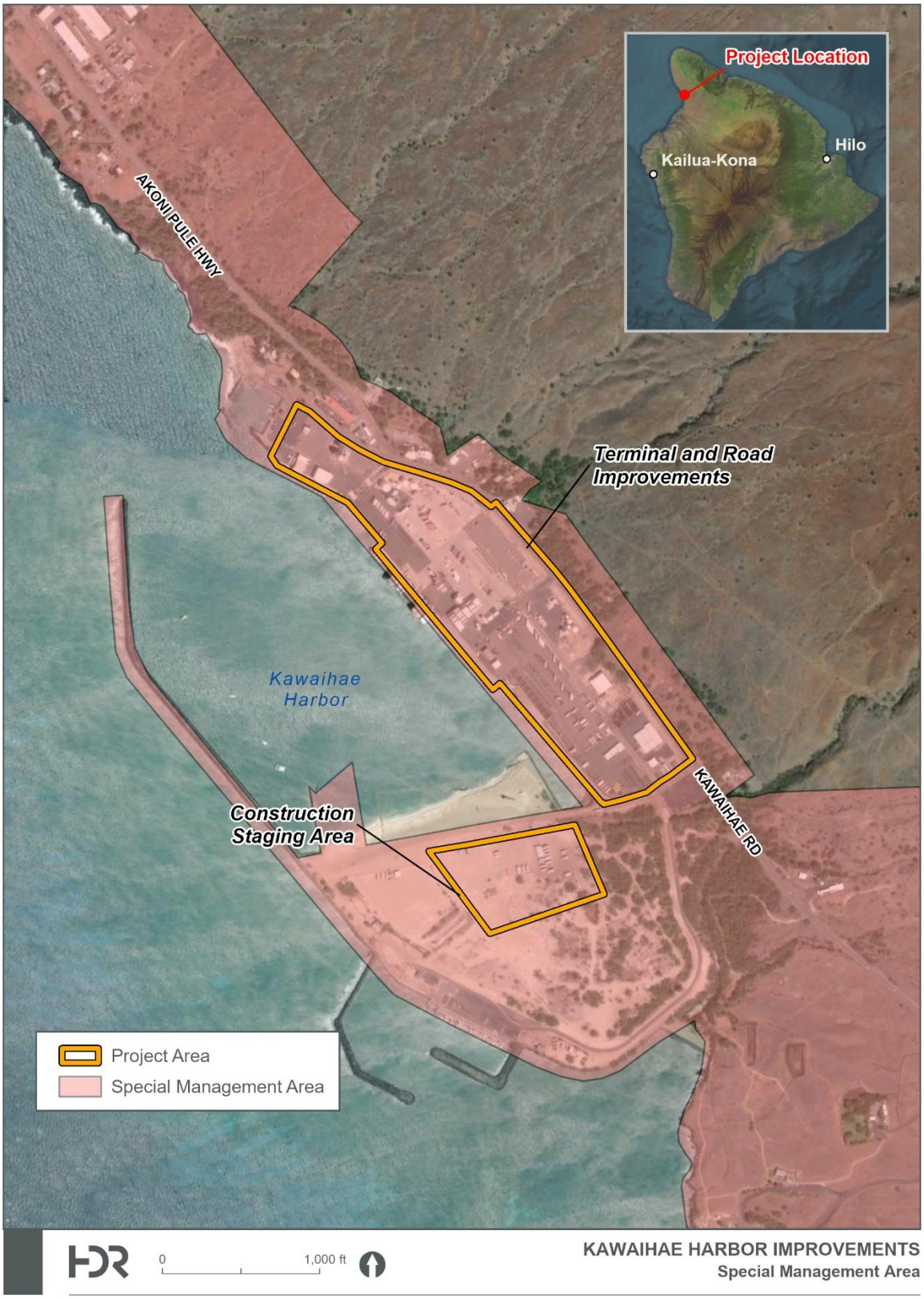
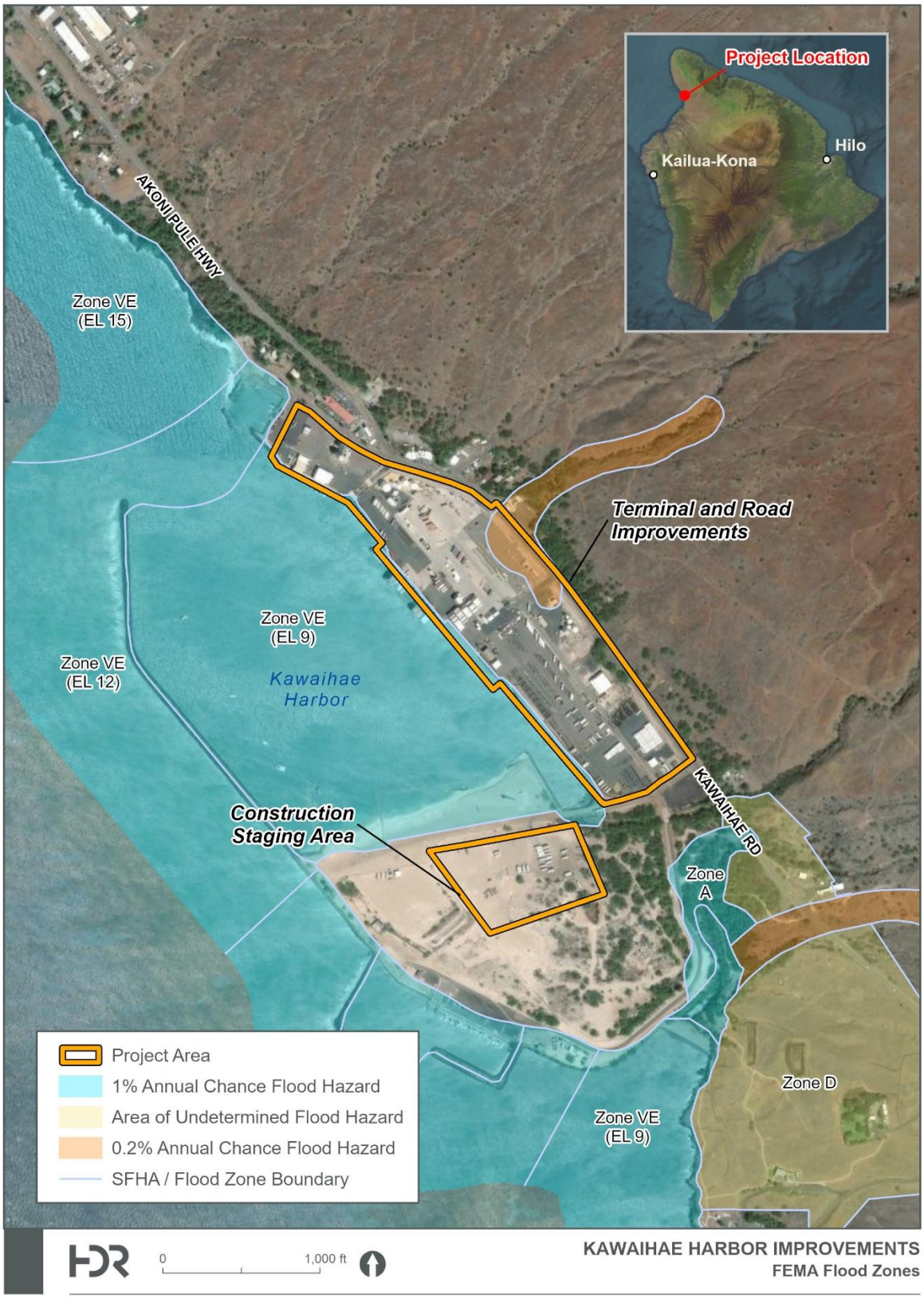


Figure 1-6. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Zone



1.2 Background

Approximately 85% of goods consumed statewide are imported, approximately 91% of which arrive through the State's commercial harbor system (HDOT 2022). The State of Hawai'i Department of Transportation, Harbors (HDOT-HAR), is responsible for managing and operating this statewide system to support the efficient movement of goods and people across the islands.

Honolulu Harbor on the island of O'ahu serves as the principal point of entry for cargo from the continental United States and foreign countries. From Honolulu, cargo is distributed to the neighbor islands through seven commercial harbor facilities. On Hawai'i Island, HDOT-HAR operates two commercial harbors: Kawaihae Harbor on the west coast and Hilo Harbor on the east coast (Figure 1-1). Together, the two harbors function as an integrated system serving the island's freight needs.

Kawaihae Harbor is located along the northwest coast of Hawai'i Island within the rural community of South Kohala. Kawaihae Harbor has served as an important maritime facility since the 19th century. In 1959, construction of a deep draft harbor and 2,650-foot-long breakwater was completed, which allowed larger barges to utilize the harbor. Subsequent transportation infrastructure improvements, including construction of the Queen Ka'ahumanu Highway and Akoni Pule Highway, enhanced regional access to the harbor. Following damage from the October 15, 2006 earthquake, repairs to Pier 1 and Pier 2A were completed by 2009.

Subsequently, infrastructure improvements to the harbor that were identified in the *Hawai'i Island Commercial Harbors 2035 Master Plan Update* (HDOT-HAR 2011) were evaluated in the *Final Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Improvements to Kawaihae Harbor*, published on November 8, 2013 (2013 EA) in *The Environmental Notice* by the State Office of Environmental Quality Control, an office that has since been replaced by the State Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) Environmental Review Program (ERP). The 2013 EA was prepared pursuant to the Hawai'i Environmental Policy Act, Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 343.[1]

Since publication of the 2013 EA, several improvements were completed, while some are no longer being considered for the foreseeable future. This EA evaluates the scope of the current Project. In addition, federal funding has been awarded by the U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD) and the applicable federal resource consultations have been initiated and completed. Where applicable, this EA incorporates background information from the 2013 EA while updating analyses to reflect current conditions and regulatory requirements.

1.3 Purpose of Environmental Assessment

The Project involves the use of State lands and funds, which triggers environmental review requirements pursuant to HRS Chapter 343 and Hawai'i Administrative Rules (HAR), Title 11, Chapter 200.1, Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Rules.

[1] The 2013 EA can be accessed on ERP's website at this link: https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/erp/EA_EIS_Library/2013-11-08-HA-FEA-Kawaihae-Harbor.pdf

Under HRS Chapter 343, agency actions or government actions are carried out by the Proposing Agency. The Proposing Agency is responsible for preparing the EA and defining the reasons to support the determination on the EA. For this Project, HDOT-HAR is the Proposing and Determining Agency.

In accordance with HAR § 11-200.1-18(a), HDOT-HAR consulted with agencies, organizations, and/or individuals who have jurisdiction, an area of expertise, or may be reasonably affected by the Project to help guide the scope and development of this Draft EA. See Chapter 5.0 for a list of parties that were consulted during the pre-assessment phase. A total of ten agencies, organizations, and individuals provided comments during the comment period. See Table 5-2 for the comments provided, in addition to responses.

The Draft EA will be published by the OPSD ERP in *The Environmental Notice*, followed by a 30-day public comment period. Substantive comments received or postmarked during the statutorily mandated review period will be provided with a written response to be included in the Final EA.

Notably, the Project also involves the use of federal MARAD funds under the Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP). As such, in coordination with MARAD, separate environmental review documentation will be prepared to satisfy the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended (Pub. L. 91-190, 42 United States Code [U.S.C.] §§ 4321–4347); MARAD's Maritime Administrative Orders (MAO) 600- 1, titled "Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts," to meet the agency's obligations under NEPA, 42 U.S.C. § 4321, et seq.; and the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) "Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts" (DOT Order 5610.1D).

1.4 Pre-Assessment Consultation Summary

In accordance with HAR, § 11-200.1(18)(a), HDOT-HAR conducted pre-assessment consultation seeking input from agencies, citizen groups, individuals with jurisdiction or expertise, and those reasonably affected by the Project to guide the scope and preparation of the Draft EA. The initial pre-assessment comment period occurred from November 18, 2025, through December 17, 2025. Subsequently, Native Hawaiian Organizations (NHOs) that participated in the Section 106 National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) consultation process were invited to provide comments on the scope of the HRS Chapter 343 Draft EA between December 29, 2025, and January 29, 2026. A total of 9 agencies, organizations, and individuals provided comments. Copies of the comment letters and responses are provided in Appendix A. In general, comments were regarding applicable policies and permits, project program and design, project location and vicinity, cultural and historical resources, impacts to wildlife, construction-related stormwater management, flooding, and erosion/sediment control, air quality, climate change and sea level rise (SLR), vehicular access during construction, emergency access, water supply, and outreach. Additionally, a comment noting no comments from the Office of the Mayor was provided and is categorized under (F) miscellaneous/other. Responses to the comments are provided in Table 5-2 and organized by topic.

1.5 Purpose and Need

1.5.1 Problem Definition and Need

Kawaihae Harbor is currently experiencing significant roadway congestion, cargo yard capacity constraints, and aging infrastructure, all of which hinder safe and efficient cargo operations. These conditions directly affect the reliability of the harbor, a critical node in Hawai‘i’s freight system where ocean cargo transport is the primary mechanism for supplying essential commodities statewide. Disruption or inefficiency at commercial harbors may result in higher consumer costs, reduced availability of goods, and reduced operational safety for both harbor users and nearby communities.

Increase in Vehicular Traffic on Kawaihae Road

The increase in cargo volumes at Kawaihae Harbor has led to increased truck traffic entering and exiting the harbor. This growth has contributed to congestion on Kawaihae Road, a two-lane roadway that serves as the primary access route to the harbor. During peak harbor operations, vehicle queues extending from the harbor entrance have been observed to back up approximately 1.25 miles to the intersection with Queen Ka‘ahumanu Highway (Figure 1-7). Such congestion increases travel delays for residents and disrupts harbor operations. Improvements to the adjacent roadway are needed to reduce congestion and improve safety for both freight and non-freight users. A left-turn and storage lane is needed to reduce severe congestion that impacts cargo operations (trucks entering and exiting), as well as nearby community members.

Figure 1-7. Kawaihae Road Congestion

Growth in Cargo Traffic and Yard Capacity Constraints

Cargo traffic at Kawaihae Harbor has increased in recent years following changes in shipping operations. Prior to 2021, Matson, which operates barge services from Pier 2B, would call at both Hilo and Kawaihae Harbors. Since 2021, Matson’s discharge of cargo on the island has moved exclusively to Kawaihae Harbor in order to significantly reduce fuel consumption related to towing barges to both harbors. Any Matson cargo bound for east Hawai‘i is now drayed by truck to the other side of the island.

As a result of this operational shift, container volumes at Kawaihae Harbor have increased and Matson's empty containers that were previously distributed between Hilo and Kawaihae Harbors are now concentrated at a single facility. After cargo is discharged, empty containers must be stored in the yard until they can be returned to Honolulu Harbor on outbound barge calls, increasing on-site storage demands and stacking heights. At times, empty containers are stacked higher than the existing 40-foot light poles (Figure 1-8).

Figure 1-8. Stacked Containers Exceed Existing Light Poles

The practical yard capacity at the Pier 2 Terminal is 111,000 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) per year. Based on data collected between 2018 and 2022, the yard facility currently exceeds this capacity (HDOT 2023). When counting both loaded and empty containers, this facility handled over 127,000 TEUs in 2022. When the capacity is exceeded, delays become much more likely and risk of injury increases. This is because when the yard reaches capacity, it becomes more congested, and the likelihood of double-handling containers increases.

HDOT-HAR recognizes that the operational cost savings achieved through consolidation of cargo operations at Kawaihae Harbor contribute to stabilizing the costs of consumer goods and seeks to accommodate the higher volumes while mitigating congestion in the cargo yard. HDOT-HAR staff at the harbor have implemented short-term solutions by allowing storage of containers in unimproved areas around the harbor. While these solutions have worked, a long-term solution is required to ensure commerce is sustained.

Deteriorating Cargo Yard Conditions

Higher container volumes and increased truck movement have accelerated wear of internal roads and resulted in deteriorated asphalt conditions within the cargo yard, creating potholes and depressions (Figure 1-9). These uneven surfaces create unsafe conditions and impact the efficiency of container movement.

Figure 1-9. Asphalt Surface Conditions at Kawaihae Harbor

In addition, existing lighting in the yard facility is outdated or insufficient, which constrains operational windows. Throughout the year, particularly during the winter months when daylight is reduced, there is insufficient illumination to complete backloading operations within available operating windows. When backloading cannot be completed before scheduled barge departures, outbound barges must leave the harbor before empty containers are loaded, resulting in additional empty containers remaining in the yard until subsequent barge calls. This condition contributes to ongoing yard congestion, operational delays, and additional costs. Improvements to the harbor are needed to allow barge operations to be completed the same day without sending the partially loaded barge back to Honolulu Harbor.

Improvements to cargo yard surface and lighting are needed not only to address current congestion and capacity issues, but also to enhance the reliability and resilience of harbor operations. A harbor operating at or beyond practical capacity with deteriorated infrastructure is more susceptible to operational disruption. Modernized and properly maintained infrastructure improves the harbor's ability to maintain or quickly restore operations following severe weather or natural disaster events.

1.5.2 Purpose

To address the aforementioned needs of Kawaihae Harbor, the purpose of the Project is to reduce existing traffic congestion along Kawaihae Road associated with harbor operations and to upgrade conditions and improve efficiencies within the Kawaihae Harbor cargo terminal. The Project proposes to advance the following objectives:

1. Reduce traffic congestion in the immediate Project vicinity by widening Kawaihae Road to include a dedicated left-turn and storage lane.
2. Provide a safe and level surface within the cargo yard to improve efficiency and operating conditions.
3. Improve cargo yard lighting conditions by replacing outdated fixtures and adding new poles and fixtures where they do not currently exist.
4. Reduce internal congestion at the cargo yard associated with increased cargo volumes at the Pier 2B Terminal, which is at capacity.

5. Improve the resiliency and reliability of Kawaihae Harbor to serve as alternative to Hilo Harbor during emergency or natural disaster events.
6. Support applicable state and county policies that call for the safe, efficient, and comfortable movement of goods (Hawai'i Island General Plan 2005); balanced use around the harbor area while preserving area cultural and historic importance (South Kohala Community Plan 2008); and improved traffic safety along Akoni Pule Highway (South Kohala Community Plan 2008).

2.0 Alternatives

This chapter provides an overview of the Project location, the surrounding area, and existing harbor conditions. As part of the planning process, a range of alternatives was evaluated to address the Project's purpose and need. This chapter presents the two alternatives carried forward for analysis: the Proposed Action and the No-Build Alternative, which serves as the baseline for comparison.

2.1 Project Location and Area

Kawaihae Harbor is located in the South Kohala District on the northwest coast of Hawai'i Island (Figure 1-1). The harbor occupies approximately 113 acres of State-owned land and extends from Pelekāne Bay at its southern end to the Kawaihae Small Boat Harbor (North) at the northern end. Immediately surrounding the harbor are operational port facilities, small-scale commercial uses, and limited rural residential development within the Kawaihae area.

The Project site encompasses a total of approximately 56 acres comprised of 31 Tax Map Key (TMK) parcels, including parcels that would be used for Cargo Terminal and Road Improvements (approximately 45.5 acres) and the Construction Staging Area (approximately 10.5 acres) (Figure 1-2 and Table 1-2). In addition to Kawaihae Harbor, the Project site includes the State-owned portion of the Coral Flats peninsula located immediately southwest of the harbor, which would be used for construction staging activities.

The Project site is within the State Urban Land Use District (Figure 1-3) and is zoned by the County for General Industrial Use (Figure 1-4). The State of Hawai'i owns all the land within the Project site (Figure 1-2 and Table 1-2).

Kawaihae Harbor is accessed via three entrances along Kawaihae Road (Highway 270). Kawaihae Road is an undivided, two-lane, state-owned arterial, extending from Akoni Pule Highway in the north to the intersection of Queen Ka'ahumanu Highway where it turns into Route 19. The main entrance to Kawaihae Harbor is about 6,500 feet northwest of the intersection of Queen Ka'ahumanu Highway and Kawaihae Road. The posted speed limit between Akoni Pule Highway and Queen Ka'ahumanu Highway is 35 miles per hour (mph).

2.2 Existing Conditions

Kawaihae Harbor has a history of significant development and alteration. Between 1957 and 1959, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dredged the harbor to create a deep-draft area suitable for larger vessels. The dredged coral was used to form a peninsula extending the shoreline for new port facilities and a 2,650-foot long breakwater was built to protect the harbor. Today, Kawaihae Commercial Harbor is a critical infrastructure hub with a fuel depot, shipping terminal, and supporting roadways and buildings. It does not handle passenger traffic. The harbor consists of two piers (Pier 1 and Pier 2) with distinct operational uses and infrastructure, as follows:

- **Pier 1:** 412 feet of berthing space, 4.6 acres of yard space, and approximately 16,000 square feet of shed area. It primarily serves cement barge operations, with Hawaiian Cement unloading bulk cement via pneumatic pipelines. Other users include Liquid Robotics for marine research and cattle transfer operations.

- **Pier 2:** 1,150 feet of berthing space and 30.6 acres for storage and cargo handling. It supports interisland cargo and fuel barge operations, mainly used by Young Brothers, Matson, and Par Hawaii. Young Brothers operates at Pier 2A, while Matson operates at Pier 2B, each with two weekly arrivals on Tuesdays and Fridays. This setup supports diverse harbor activities, facilitating interisland commerce and specialized maritime operations.

2.3 Surrounding Land Uses

Land uses surrounding the Kawaihae Harbor include a mix of harbor-related, recreational, industrial, limited commercial, and pockets of rural residential. Directly across Kawaihae Road from the harbor to the east, the terrain rises and transitions to hilly areas with sparse vegetation. Much of the broader surrounding area is zoned for agricultural and ranching purposes. To the north and east of Kawaihae Road are residential properties, including areas designated for the Kawaihae Hawaiian Home Lands under Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) jurisdiction, as well as industrial-related uses that support the harbor, such as warehousing. Other nearby commercial properties include the Kawaihae Town Center. Further to the east is the residential community of Waimea, located approximately 9 miles away.

Immediately southwest of the harbor, dredged coral was used to form a peninsula in 1959 referred to throughout as the “Coral Flats.” This area contains various cultural and recreational resources. The majority of the Coral Flats are owned by the State, while a portion of the area is owned by the federal government and used by the U.S. Army. The U.S. Army owns and operates a landing ramp and an easement authorized by Governor’s Executive Order No. 1759, which allows them to conduct military operations and transfer goods. Off-loading generally occurs by dropping down a ramp from the shipping vessel. At times, they also make use of the state piers for this purpose. The use and need varies according to the status of deployment and scheduling of training exercises.

Further southeast of the Coral Flats is the Puʻukoholā Heiau National Historic Site (NHS), established in 1972, which encompasses three heiau (Haleokapuni, Mailekini, and Puʻukoholā-Pelekāne). Further description of these sites is provided in Section 3.1.

The shoreline north of Kawaihae Harbor is predominantly rocky, while the shoreline to the south is also largely rocky, apart from Pelekāne Bay and Spencer Beach Park. Kawaihae Harbor is north of the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail (NHT), a 175-mile corridor that preserves ancient pathways along Hawaiʻi Island's coastline, providing access to cultural resource areas. The trail is managed by a partnership including the National Park Service (NPS), the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), and the County of Hawaiʻi (County). The Kawaihae-Waiulaula Sector terminates or begins at Spencer Park and the trail is not connected through Kawaihae Harbor. Further south along the Kohala coast are the resort, residential, and commercial areas of Mauna Kea Beach and Waikōloa.

The Kawaihae Small Boat Harbor (North) borders the north end of the harbor, while the Kawaihae Small Boat Harbor (South) is located adjacent to the west of the Coral Flats area. The small boat harbors serve recreational and small-scale commercial vessels and are operated by the State DLNR Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation (DOBOR).

2.4 Description of the Proposed Action

2.4.1 Project Components

Improvements to the Kawaihae Harbor will be comprised of two main components: (1) Highway Widening and (2) Yard Improvements. The Project will result in the continued use of Kawaihae Harbor for its current use and would be contained within the existing harbor footprint and HDOT right-of-way (ROW). The following section details each Project component. A summary of the Project components is illustrated in Figure 2-1.

Component 1: Highway Widening

Component 1 of the Project includes widening of an approximately 875-foot-long portion of Kawaihae Road adjacent to the Kawaihae Harbor to reduce existing traffic congestion associated with harbor conditions. Work on Kawaihae Road will include construction of a dedicated left-turn and storage lane near the harbor's main gate for northbound vehicles turning left into the harbor. The total length of improvements will accommodate truck queuing at the main gate. Widening will be contained within the state ROW and state-owned land. HDOT-HAR will coordinate design and construction of this component with HDOT-Highways (HWY). The major design features are as follows:

1. Design and construct a left-turn and storage lane at the harbor main gate.
2. Relocate utility poles in the HDOT ROW toward the harbor facility.
3. Relocate security perimeter fencing inward to the harbor;
4. Modify the rock outcrop along the highway ROW by cutting back a portion to accommodate the highway widening.
5. Realign segments of the existing open drainage channel adjacent to Kawaihae Road and the culvert beneath the main harbor access road.
6. Maintain a six-foot ROW between the harbor perimeter fence and the highway shoulder for future reconstruction of the Ala Kahakai NHT.
7. Re-design the main gate accessway from 35 feet to approximately 60 feet to accommodate a wider truck turn radius.

See Appendix B for a preliminary plan and section view of the proposed Component 1 improvements.

Component 2: Yard Improvements

Component 2 of the Project includes improvements to the Kawaihae Harbor cargo terminal to upgrade conditions and improve efficiencies at the harbor. Improvements will include the following:

1. Reconstruct portions of the cargo yard by replacing existing asphalt surface and paving pockets of unpaved areas with reinforced concrete to accommodate modern heavy-lift cargo operations and stacked container storage.
2. Upgraded security lighting at the Pier 1 area.
3. Replace selected existing 40-foot-tall yard light poles and/or light fixtures with 80-foot light poles and fully shielded energy efficient LED bulbs compliant with County ordinance.
4. Install lighting in the Annex and Expanded yard areas. Lighting shall be fully-shielded, energy efficient LED bulbs compliant with County ordinance.

5. Install new fire suppression system within the Annex and Expanded yards.
6. Relocate the HDOT-HAR District office and maintenance shed away from the Pier 2 cargo yard to increase operational efficiency of the cargo yard. An existing warehouse building will be renovated and repurposed to house the new District office, which will also include ancillary parking, lighting and other site improvements.
7. Install conduits and raised transformer pads for future upgrades.

2.4.2 Construction Characteristics

Construction of the Project is anticipated to be characterized by the following. Final design and construction methods will be determined as the Project progresses.

Component 1: Highway Widening

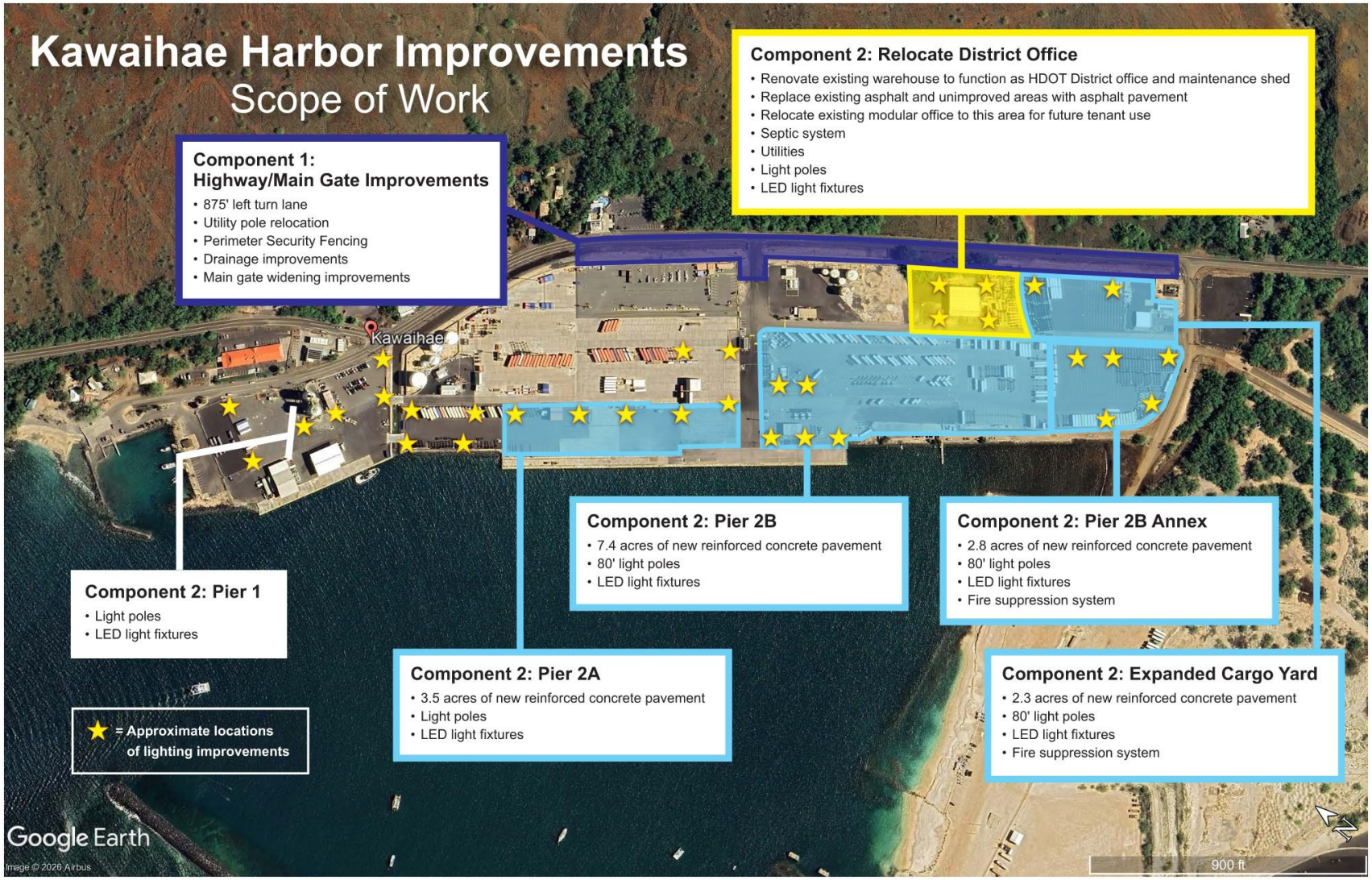
The appropriate areas will be excavated to remove the existing pavement and soil to approximately 3 feet. The subgrade, or the soil layer beneath the pavement, will be prepared by compacting it to provide a stable foundation. This may involve adding and compacting layers of gravel or other materials to achieve the desired strength and stability. A base layer of crushed stone or gravel is installed over the compacted subgrade. The pavement is constructed in layers, starting with a binder course of asphalt or concrete. This layer provides a strong and durable foundation for the surface layer. The surface layer, typically made of asphalt or concrete, is then applied and compacted to create a smooth and durable driving surface. It is anticipated that this work will involve road closures, one lane maximum at a time so traffic can still flow around the work area. Hours will be coordinated with HDOT.

Five utility poles, approximately 20 feet in height, within the highway right-of-way, will be relocated westward towards the harbor facility. Hydraulic jacks will be used to lift the utility poles from the ground while a crane will hold the pole steady as it is relocated to its new location. A hole approximately 12 feet deep will be dug in the new location. The previous location's hole will be backfilled using local soil and the utility connections will be reestablished.

Approximately 900 feet of the harbor's security perimeter fencing will also be moved inward towards the Kawaihae Harbor facility. The security fencing will require the dismantling of the fencing panels where they will be relocated to the new location. Holes 3 feet deep will be dug for the new fence posts. Once the fence posts are secure, the fencing panels will be reattached. For the guardrail installation, posts will be driven approximately 4 feet deep.

An existing natural/geological rock outcrop along the highway, approximately 375 feet in length and 15 feet in height (from road level) that comprises an approximate 0.8-acre undeveloped area at the harbor, will be modified by cutting back a portion to accommodate the highway widening. The area will then need to be prepped; this will involve clearing the area of any surface vegetation with bulldozers and excavators. To remove large rocks, drilling may be required. Smaller rocks can be removed with excavators. Once the rock and vegetation are removed, the area would be graded to the desired contour. This involves leveling the ground and ensuring proper drainage. Options for disposal of this material are still undecided, but consideration is being given to maintain the material on-site for potential use to reconstruct segments of Ala Kahakai NHT.

Figure 2-1. Preliminary Site Plan



Currently, stormflow around Kawaihae Harbor is channelized by a seven-foot-deep unlined drainage channel which was constructed to surround the land side of the harbor property to intercept and convey high-volume flash flood or stormwater runoff to the sea. This channel is split into two sections, both running along Kawaihae Road. The northern portion starts at the split of the aforementioned rock outcrop and turns towards the ocean near the intersection of Kawaihae Road and Akoni Pule Highway and empties into the harbor between Piers 1 and 2. The southern portion also starts at the outcrop and turns toward the ocean on the southern side of the South Gate. The Project will involve realigning the existing drainage channel to accommodate the left-turn and storage lane and appurtenant pavement widening. The existing open drainage channel will need to be cleared of any sedimentation and/or overgrowth to prepare the area for the new pavement. The area for the new drainage channel will also need to be cleared of any sedimentation and/or overgrowth to prep the area for excavation. This area will then be trenched out to match the size of the existing drainage channel, which is 30 by 700 feet and seven feet deep. The trench bottom is leveled and compacted, and a layer of bedding material, such as crushed stone or gravel, is placed to provide a solid base. Once the drainage channel is relocated, the roadway widening can proceed. This involves constructing the road base, paving, and installing any necessary drainage features to ensure proper water flow and prevent flooding.

The *Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management Plan* (NPS 2009) includes a proposal to continue the trail north through Kawaihae using land mauka of Kawaihae Harbor. The Project will maintain a six-foot-wide open corridor between the harbor perimeter fence and the highway shoulder for future reconstruction of the trail through the area. This reconstruction is a distinct and separate action from the current project and is assumed to be managed independently by the Ala Kahakai NHT extension of the NPS.

Component 2: Yard Improvements

This component aims to upgrade the yard facilities to support modern cargo operations. Portions of the yard will be reconstructed, replacing the existing asphalt surface with new reinforced concrete, covering approximately 3.5-acres area at Pier 2A, approximately 7.4 and 3.3 acres in the Main yard at Pier 2B, and an approximately 2.3-acres in the Expanded Cargo Yard. Excavation will remove existing pavement and soil to an approximate depth of 1-2 feet, followed by compacting the subgrade, adding a base layer of crushed stone or gravel, and installing steel reinforcement before placing and curing the concrete pavement.

Selected 40-foot yard light poles will be replaced with 80-foot poles at the Piers 2A and the 2B Main yards, using fully shielded, energy-efficient LED bulbs compliant with County ordinances. The total number of poles that will be replaced will be confirmed with a more detailed lighting study. New poles and fixtures will be added to the Pier 2B Annex and Expanded yards, as well as new security lighting at the Pier 1 yard. The existing poles will need to be removed using cranes. The existing foundation will need to be excavated to an approximate depth of 15-25 feet to accommodate the new 80-foot poles. New foundations will need to be installed, and cranes will position the new poles in place. In other areas of the harbor, light fixtures on existing poles will be replaced with LED fixtures.

A new fire suppression system, including fire hydrants, will be installed within the Expanded and Annex yards. This will involve trenching an area approximately 4 feet deep by 3 feet wide and 2,500 feet long to install underground water supply piping, connecting it to the main water source stub.

The fire hydrants will be installed at the appropriate locations and will be integrated with other fire suppression components at Kawaihae Harbor. Once installed the trench will be backfilled with local soil.

An existing warehouse building, located mauka of the Pier 2B cargo yard, will be renovated and repurposed to house the HDOT District office and maintenance functions. The ground floor will accommodate the office and maintenance functions and a new mezzanine will be constructed to provide storage. The approximately 30,000 square foot building site will be paved with asphaltic concrete (AC) and striped for approximately 10 parking stalls. To prepare the area, it will be cleared and graded to the appropriate level. Other site improvements to support the new office and maintenance shed may include a septic system, utility connections and security lighting.

The structures that currently house the District office and maintenance shed, both of which were originally constructed in February 2015, will be relocated from their current sites to a location further north, away from the Pier 2 Expanded Cargo Yard. Associated improvements include AC paving, utilities and security lighting. This relocation site is identified in Figure 2-1. The capacity and efficiency of the Expanded Cargo Yard will be increased with the relocation of these facilities.

Additionally, conduits and raised transformer pads will be installed to support future upgrades.

2.4.3 Anticipated Government Permits and Approvals

Table 2-1 lists the federal and state approvals/permits that are anticipated to be required for the Proposed Action. Note that per HRS § 266-2(7)(b), HDOT-HAR is exempt from the approval of county agencies.

Table 2-1: Anticipated Permits and Approvals

Permit/Approval/Consultation	Agency
Section 106, National Historic Preservation Act consultation	State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO)
Section 7, Endangered Species Act (ESA)	United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
HRS Section 103-50 (Disability and Communication Access Board Review)	State of Hawaii Department of Health (HDOH), Disability and Communication Access Board
State Historic Preservation Review (HRS 6-E)	State Historic Preservation Division
CWA Water Quality Certification, CWA Section 401, Blanket Certification	HDOH Clean Water Branch (CWB)
Clean Water Act, Section 402 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit	HDOH CWB
Air Quality Permit	HDOH Clean Air Branch
Noise Permit (if needed)	HDOH

2.4.4 Anticipated Project Cost and Schedule

Planning, design, and construction of the Project is anticipated to cost a total of approximately $50.3 million consisting of state and federal funds. Construction of the Project is anticipated to start in mid-2027, contingent upon receipt of necessary permits and approvals. Construction of Components 1 and 2 are anticipated to take approximately 24 months and is planned to occur concurrently.

2.5 No-Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative was considered but was not selected as the Proposed Action because it would not meet the Purpose and Need of the Project. Under the No-Build Alternative, Kawaihae Harbor would remain in its existing condition, with no implementation of the proposed improvements. Routine maintenance and previously committed actions, such as minor yard improvements planned independently by shipping companies, could continue outside of the Project.

Under the No-Build Alternative, existing operational constraints would remain, limiting the harbor's ability to improve efficiency, resiliency, and capacity to support long-term harbor operations and goods movement on Hawai'i Island. The No-Build Alternative would also not enhance redundancy within the island's harbor system in the event of a disruption at Hilo Harbor due to natural hazards such as earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic activity, or other events. Under the No-Build Alternative, existing traffic safety issues would continue, including insufficient turn radii for trucks entering and exiting the harbor, and congestion along Kawaihae Road would continue, affecting nearby communities and businesses.

Although the No-Build Alternative does not fulfill the Project's Purpose and Need, it represents the baseline condition against which the environmental effects of the Proposed Action are evaluated in this EA.

3.0 Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Avoidance/Minimization/Mitigation Measures

This section describes the Project's affected environment, evaluates potential impacts of the Proposed Action on these resources, and identifies applicable avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures. Resources analyzed were identified based on the potential for the Proposed Action to result in a significant or adverse impact. Under HEPA implementation guidelines, an agency determines whether an action may have a significant impact on the environment based on criteria outlined HAR § 11-200.1-13 and discussed in Section 6.1.

3.1 Historic and Archaeological Resources

3.1.1 Archaeological Resources and Historic Resources of the Built Environment

The area around Kawaihae Harbor is a landscape of rich geological, historical, and cultural significance. The Proposed Action is considered a federal undertaking subject to review under Section 106 (36 CFR Part 800) of the NHPA of 1966, as amended. As a State project, the Proposed Action is also subject to historic preservation review pursuant to HRS § 6E-8 and the implementing rules codified in HAR Chapter 13-275.

The following section summarizes the findings of the historic preservation process under Section 106 of the NHPA and is supported by the Archaeological Literature Review and Field Inspection (ALRFI) report prepared for the Project by Cultural Surveys Hawai'i and included in the 2013 Environmental Assessment (HDOT-HAR 2013). The State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD) concurred with a finding of "No Adverse Effect" under Section 106 of the NHPA on December 1, 2025 (Appendix C). Consultation with SHPD under HRS § 6E-8 has been initiated by HDOT-HAR and is ongoing.

Affected Environment and Existing Conditions

History of Project Area

During pre-contact times, Kawaihae was an important coastal settlement, providing deep channels and safe landing for canoes. Due to its strategic location, Kawaihae played a role in battles between warring chiefdoms and became particularly significant in the political career of Kamehameha I.

Following European contact, Kawaihae served as the only harbor on the northwest side of Hawai'i Island and a center for commerce. Kawaihae's role as a maritime gateway for the region expanded during World War II as demand for products from Waimea, including Parker Ranch cattle, increased. Recognizing the need for an improved harbor facility on the site, construction of Kawaihae Harbor was authorized by U.S. Congress in 1950 as a joint project between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Territory of Hawai'i and dedicated in 1959.

Historic Resources

Based on research conducted for the ALRFI, the 1959 construction of the harbor likely destroyed the original shoreline and historic properties that may have been within the Kawaihae Harbor area (HDOT-HAR 2013). While the harbor is over 50 years old, it has undergone numerous alterations and development since it was constructed and is therefore not of historic value.

While archeological resources may be unlikely in the harbor area, the mauka shoulder and hillside along Kawaihae Road are considered potentially sensitive given the presence of historic properties such as burial sites, cemeteries, and habitation areas in the vicinity.

In addition, the surrounding area was identified as potentially sensitive (though unlikely), given their locations on coral landfill interface with the original shoreline: the nearby Puʻukoholā Heiau NHS and the Pelekāne Lands Buffer Zone and the Kawaihae Road Highway corridor.

The Puʻukoholā Heiau NHS is located in the vicinity of Kawaihae Harbor, adjacent to the Coral Flats area. Designated as a national historic site in 1972, Puʻukoholā Heiau NHS contains three heiau – Haleokapuni, Mailekini, and Puʻukoholā-Pelekāne– as well as the residence of Kamehameha I and a stone post associated with Chief Alapaʻi.

South of the Puʻukoholā Heiau NHS is the Ala Kahakai NHT, a 175-mile corridor that preserves ancient pathways along Hawaiʻi Island's coastline, providing access to cultural resource areas. The Kawaihae-Waiulaula Sector terminates or begins at Spencer Beach Park and the trail is not connected through Kawaihae Harbor. The *Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management Plan* (NPS 2009) identifies a potential northern reconstruction of the trail along lands mauka (mountainside) of Kawaihae Harbor.

Section 106 NHPA Consultation

As part of the Section 106 NHPA review process, an Area of Potential Effects (APE) was developed to assess potential impacts to archaeological and historical resources. Historic properties are defined as sites, buildings, structures, or objects that are eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The significance of a historic property can be judged and explained only when evaluated within its historic context. Historic context is patterns or trends in history which specific occurrence, property, or site is understood and its meaning (and ultimately its significance) within history or prehistory is made clear.

The Project APE incorporates extensive research, including studies with assessments of the cultural and historical importance of Kawaihae Harbor, site visits, and consultation with the Kawaihae community. Three Project APEs were established, as follows:

1. APE 1: The entirety of Kawaihae Harbor (approximately 55 acres).
2. APE 2: The surrounding areas: Coral Flats area, Spencer Beach Park, Puʻukoholā NHS – including individual sites and Pelekāne Bay – and the area mauka of Kawaihae Road due to the historic sites present there. The APE also includes the offshore area between the reef outer crest margin and shoreline.
3. APE 3: The visual connectivity of the Haleakalā, Mauna Kea, Mauna Loa, and Hualālai summits to Kawaihae Harbor.

See Figure 3-1 for APEs 1 and 2 and Figure 3-2 for APE 3.

Figure 3-1. Section 106: Area of Potential Effects (APE) 1 and 2

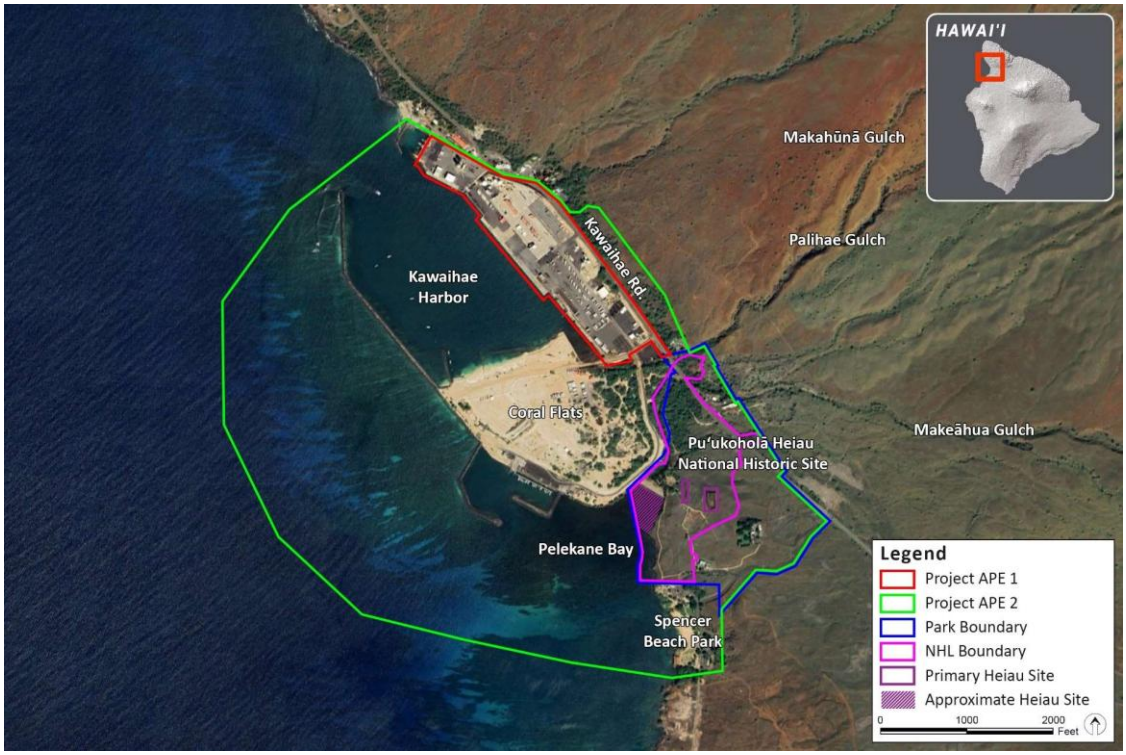
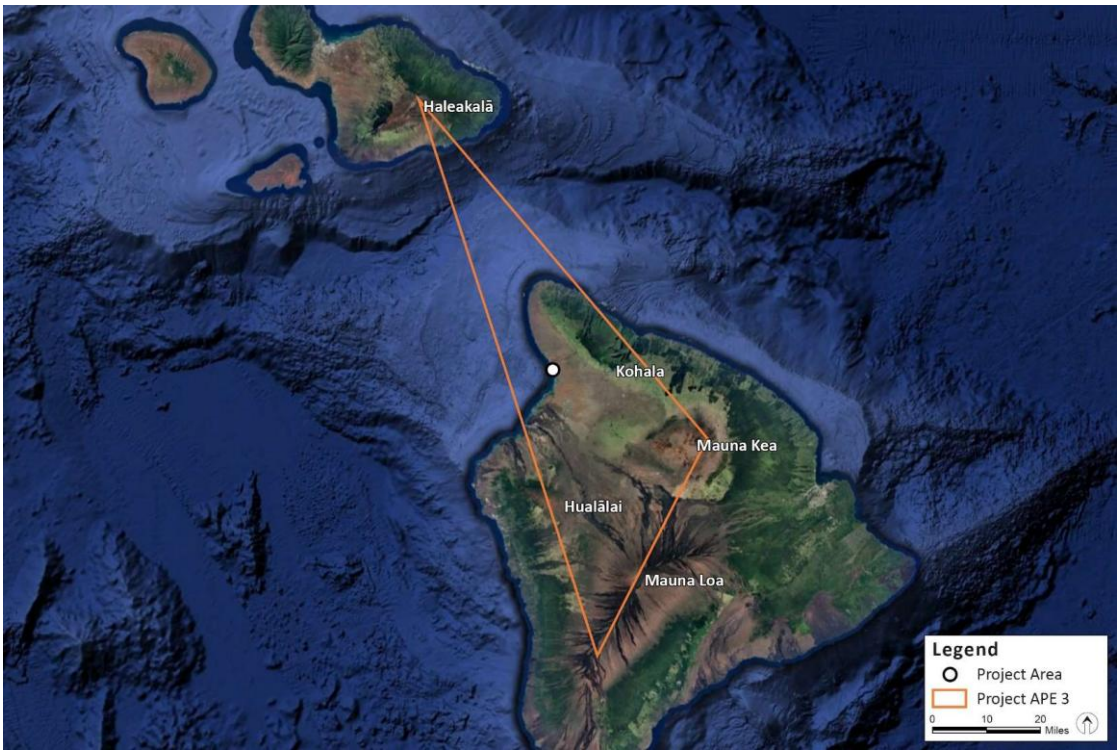


Figure 3-2. Section 106: Area of Potential Effects (APE) 3



Historic properties identified within the APEs are listed in Table 3-1. No historic properties were identified within APE 1, where all Project improvements would occur. Historic properties were found within APE 2, while a partial view of Project improvements exists from the Puʻukoholā Heiau Complex looking north toward Haleakalā within APE 3.

Table 3-1. Historic Properties in the Project APEs

Feature (SIHP Number/NRHP Reference Number)	Feature Description	Approximate Distance from Kawaihae Harbor
50-10-05-4139 / 66000105	Puʻukoholā Heiau Complex (encompasses Puʻukoholā Heiau, Mailekini Heiau, and Haleokapuni Heiau)	0.30 miles (from Haleokapuni Heiau)
05-02296	John Young's House Ruins	0.10 miles
50-10-05-13748 and 13749	Historical Habitation Site and Burial Complex	Adjacent on the Mauka Side of Kawaihae Road
50-10-05-13750	Historical Habitation Site (site of former Kawaihae Church)	Adjacent on the Mauka Side of Kawaihae Road
50-10-05-2298/13751	Historic Cemetery (includes George Heeu Davis' grave)	Adjacent on the Mauka Side of Kawaihae Road
50-10-05-13752	Historical Habitation Site	Adjacent on the Mauka Side of Kawaihae Road
50-10-05-13753/13754/13755	Historical Resident Complex	Adjacent on the Mauka Side of Kawaihae Road
50-10-05-13782	Burial Complex (relocated from Kawaihae Harbor)	Adjacent on the Mauka Side of Kawaihae Road
50-10-05-27642	Wall of historic agricultural or habitation feature	Adjacent on the Mauka Side of Kawaihae Road
50-10-05-27847	Two walls near John Young's House Ruins	0.10 miles

Note: SIHP = State Inventory of Historic Places; NRHP = National Register of Historic Places.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Under the Project, Kawaihae Harbor would continue to be used for harbor-related purposes; the proposed Project would not introduce any new permanent indirect visual, auditory, or atmospheric impacts. It is not anticipated that the Project would introduce direct or indirect adverse impacts to identified historic properties in APE 2 or 3. Based on the information, MARAD determined that the Project would have "No Adverse Effect" to historic properties (36 CFR 800.5(d)(1)). The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurred with the determination that, pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.5(b), the Project would have no adverse effect with the incorporation of agreed upon mitigation measures (Appendix B). Under HRS Chapter 6E-8, HDOT-HAR is proposing a "No Historic Properties Affected" determination. Coordination with SHPD is ongoing.

The Project will maintain a six-foot-wide corridor between the harbor perimeter fence and Kawaihae Road's shoulder for future reconstruction of the Ala Kahakai NHT through the area. The reconstruction is a distinct and separate action from the current project and is assumed to be managed independently by the NPS.

To mitigate the potential for short-term impacts associated with construction activities disturbing subsurface features or artifacts and potential impacts to visual resources, HDOT-HAR will implement the following measures, as summarized below and documented in the Section 106 process:

- **Archaeological and Cultural Monitoring.** Archaeological and cultural monitoring during construction, including any subsurface excavation activities, to better ensure protection of the historic properties above (mauka) the road's east shoulder and to mitigate the inadvertent discovery of subsurface features or artifacts that may be present in the road improvement area. Archaeological monitoring will comply with HAR § 13-279.
- **Vibration and Soil Impacts.** As it relates to vibration, a pre-construction baseline survey can be conducted to document the current condition of nearby historic sites on the mauka side of Kawaihae Road. This will serve as a reference point for monitoring any changes due to construction vibrations. To minimize vibration impacts, controlled work methods and designated work zones will be established. Construction activities that generate high vibrations will be carefully managed. In areas near archaeological sites, low-vibration techniques and equipment with lower vibration emissions will be prioritized. Throughout construction, real-time vibration monitoring will be conducted in sensitive locations to ensure vibration thresholds are not exceeded and archaeological sites are not impacted.
- **Maintaining Cultural Access to Coral Flats.** Ensure that access is maintained to the Coral Flats area, southwest of the APE 1, during project construction. Cultural resources and activities have been identified along the southern edges of Coral Flats but none have been identified within its central area.
- **Communications Plan and Ongoing Community Engagement.** The HDOT and its selected contractor(s) will continue to update and inform the appropriate stakeholders and community leaders of the project as it relates to construction activities. The HDOT and selected contractor(s) will also coordinate with the community to ensure construction noise impacts do not adversely affect any cultural events being held in the vicinity such as the Hoʻokuʻikahi Hawaiian Cultural Festival held in the month of August at Puʻukoholā Heiau.
- **Water Quality Protection.** To address the potential for water quality being impacted by runoff, which may impact a variety of aquatic activities and marine resources, Best Management Practices (BMPs) will include a comprehensive Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (ESCP) and spill containment and response plan (see Section 3.3 for further discussion on water quality protection).
- **Lighting Design and Visual Impact Mitigation.** Container terminals typically employ 100- to 120-foot-tall mast lights to provide recommended illumination, but at Kawaihae Harbor, approximately 80-foot-tall light poles will be used in conjunction with dark-sky compliant lights to ensure visual impacts are minimized from various vantage points in the area at night. Moreover, it is anticipated that the poles need to be painted yellow only up to a certain height and that the remainder of the poles will be painted with a color that blends the poles with the backdrop to mitigate visual impacts during the day.

- **Adaptive Reuse of Pōhaku and Excavated Soil Material.** The excavated rock and soil material from the modified rock outcrop will be considered for adaptive reuse within the ahupuaʻa. Such uses could include incorporation in other ʻāina restoration projects.

The following mitigation policies will also be implemented during the construction phase of the Project:

- If cultural materials are discovered during construction, all earth-moving activity within and around the immediate discovery area will cease until a qualified archaeologist can assess the nature and significance of the find.
- If previously unidentified non-burial historic properties, or unanticipated effects are discovered, the HDOT shall follow HAR § 13-280 "Rules Governing General Procedures for Inadvertent Discoveries of Historic Properties During a Project Covered by the Historic Preservation Review Process."
- If human remains are discovered, HAR § 13-300 states that further disturbances and activities shall cease in any area or nearby area suspected to overlie remains and the SHPD and the Police Department will be contacted. The appropriate process would then proceed in conformance with HAR § 13-300 Subchapter 4 "Procedures for Proper Treatment of Burial Sites and Human Skeletal Remains."

3.1.2 Cultural Resources

Projects subject to HRS Chapter 343 review are required to consider potential cultural impacts, including through preparation of a Cultural Impact Assessment (CIA), pursuant to Act 50, Session Laws of Hawaiʻi 2000. A CIA was prepared to evaluate potential cultural impacts associated with improvements to Kawaihae Harbor analyzed in the 2013 EA (HDOT-HAR 2013). While the scope of the proposed Project has evolved since the 2013 EA, the CIA provides baseline information regarding cultural practices, resources, and community perspectives associated with the Project area. The CIA was informed by archival research and consultation with individuals and organizations knowledgeable about cultural practices in the area.

Consultation conducted in 2025 as part of the Section 106 consultation process was used to supplement the findings of the CIA and to identify any new or changed concerns relevant to the currently proposed Project. The Section 106 consultation process for the proposed Project involved research related to the cultural and historical importance of Kawaihae Harbor, site visits, and consultations. Consultation with the Kawaihae community included NHOs and Native Hawaiian descendants with ancestral, lineal, or cultural ties to the APEs.

The following provides a summary of findings from the Section 106 consultation process and the CIA appended to the 2013 EA.

Affected Environment and Existing Conditions

Cultural Sites
As discussed in the previous section, the puʻu (hills), mauna (mountains), and gulches that surround Kawaihae Harbor are important to Native Hawaiian cultural worldviews and traditions. The Project straddles two ahupuaʻa (Kawaihae 1 and 2), or the land divisions that reflect traditional practices for resource management. The APEs are located within Kawaihae 1 and 2 ahupuaʻa.

The nearby Puʻukoholā Heiau NHS is an important part of social, political, and religious culture until today. Kamehameha's direct descendants meet regularly at the heiau (HDOT-HAR 2013). The site, which was constructed during the period of Kamehameha I's rule, includes several heiau structures as well as a ceremonial rock structure (ahu). The prominence and spiritual significance of the site is demonstrated through the number of religious structures located there. Repairs of damage caused by an earthquake on October 15, 2006, incorporated traditional methods and techniques of heiau wall construction, which was used to educate young Hawaiians on heiau, culture and traditional technology.

The Ala Kahakai NHT corridor provides access to area cultural resources, preserving ancient pathways along the coastline. The trail follows an ancient fisherman's trail and Hawaiian Kingdom road around the island. This system includes the ancient Ala Loa land trail, which connected about 600 communities during the fifteenth through eighteenth centuries. The Pua Ka ʻIlima O Kawaihae Cultural Surf Park is located on the coastline of Coral Flats. Traditional Hawaiian practices are celebrated at the surf park, including the hula, canoe building, and surfing.

Cultural Practices

The ocean remains an important subsistence resource, and the Kawaihae area continues to be used for fishing using modern and traditional methods. The shoreline of the Kawaihae area also continues to be a traditional gathering and recreation area for activities such as gathering, shoreline fishing, reef fishing, picnicking, swimming, reef fishing, outrigger canoe paddling, and surfing. Ongoing traditional uses and practices within the vicinity of the Project include the following:

- An actively used ahu on the southwestern end of Kawaihae Harbor.
- Kanu o ka ʻĀina New Century Public Charter School (KANU) operates an outdoor Native Hawaiian learning center on Coral Falts called Hālau Kukui.
- Surfing, hula, and canoe building occur at the Pua Ka ʻIlima ʻO Kawaihae Cultural Surf Park.
- The YMCA Aquatic Center teaches canoe paddling, surfing, crafts and hula, as well as conducting marine ecology and science instruction.
- The Na Kalai Waʻa Moku ʻO Hawaiʻi Hawaiian group maintains the Makaliʻi voyaging canoe, as well as leads educational programs.
- The Kawaihae Small Boat Harbor (North) is sometimes used to launch canoes.

Together, these elements highlight Kawaihae as a place of Hawaiian cultural heritage and identity.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Potential impacts to cultural resources were evaluated through the Section 106 process and the CIA. Although the APEs indicate some cultural significance in the area, the Project would not result in an adverse effect to cultural resources. Mitigation measures to avoid or minimize short-term construction-related impacts are identified in Section 3.1.1 above to further avoid potential effects. As a result, the Project is not anticipated to result in long-term adverse impacts to cultural resources or cultural practices in the Project area.

3.2 Flora and Fauna

A Natural Resource Assessment for the Project was prepared by AECOS in June 2025 and is provided in Appendix D. The assessment evaluates terrestrial and marine biological resources within the Project area, including vegetation, coral communities, aquatic fauna, birds, and marine mammals. A summary of the findings is provided in the following subsections.

Additionally, pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the Project has undergone consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The potential impacts and mitigation measures identified in the following sections are consistent with, and informed by, the findings of the Section 7 ESA consultation conducted in coordination with the USFWS, which concluded on October 1, 2025 with agency concurrence that the Proposed Action may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, listed species, as summarized in Section 4.1.3 (see also Appendix E).

3.2.1 Botanical Resources

Affected Environment and Existing Conditions

The Project site is heavily developed and has been used primarily for industrial and commercial use for over 50 years. The climate of the area is arid, and the region receives less than 10 inches of rain per year (Hawaii Statewide GIS Program 2025). Before human development in the area, the native ecosystem was comprised of lowland dry shrubland and grassland and rising to lowland dry and mesic forest, woodland and shrubland.

Plant species were identified through a pedestrian survey of the harbor facilities and part of Kawaihae Road (Appendix D). Vegetation in the Project area is generally sparse with primarily ruderal growth in a few areas of exposed soil and landscape plantings around buildings. Along Kawaihae Road, typical roadside plant species were observed. The survey found 47 plant species in the area. Native species include three indigenous species: kou (*Cordia subcordata*), pōhinahina (*Vitex rotundifolia*), and ʻuhaloa (*Waltheria indica*); and one endemic species: kokiʻo keʻokeʻo (*Hibiscus arnottianus*). Two species identified are early Polynesian introductions: niu (coconut palm, *Cocos nucifera*) and kī (ti, *Cordyline fruticosa*), while nine of the species are characterized as ornamentals, most of which were planted for landscaping purposes.

The Coral Flats area is also highly disturbed, and vegetation consists of a few common native grasses (piligrass and fingergrass), weeds, hardy shrubs like haole koa and ilima, and various trees, such as the kiawe, monkeypod, beach heliotrope, milo, kou, and coconut palms.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

None of the species observed in the Project area are of conservation interest or listed as threatened or endangered under state or federal law. Because the Project area is already highly disturbed and contains no protected plant species, no adverse effects are anticipated, and no mitigation measures are proposed. Standard construction BMPs, including limiting disturbance to areas necessary for construction and stabilizing disturbed soils, will be implemented to avoid potential impacts to vegetated areas.

3.2.2 Coral Communities

Affected Environment and Existing Conditions

The benthic ecosystem in Kawaihae Harbor has been heavily impacted by development. Beginning in the 1800s, land disturbance and deforestation resulted in excess soil erosion and sedimentation into nearshore waters. These conditions contributed to smothering the coral reef, elevated algal growth, and damaged reef ecosystems. The corals were further damaged in the 1950s to construct the harbor, which resulted in reduced circulation and flushing of the area (HDOT-HAR 2013). However, since the harbor's construction, coral communities have become well-established on manmade in-water structures such as the piling and pier supports. The coral colonies were found to be mainly small to medium in size, with the 10 to 25 centimeters (cm) and 5 to10 cm size classes making up 60%. This is likely due to limitations related to growth on vertical substrates. Despite this, these coral colonies have shown successful growth, remain healthy, and do not appear to be affected by regular harbor operations. Offshore coral colonies have also remained largely unaffected by harbor operations.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

No in-water work and no resulting loss of coral is planned as part of this Project. BMPs to maintain marine water quality will be implemented to minimize potential impacts on coral communities. Measures will be taken to ensure Project activities will not dispose of any debris or introduce nonnative species in the adjacent aquatic habitat. Additionally, construction materials related to the Project will not be stockpiled or placed next to aquatic habitats, and erosion measures will be in place to prevent wind, rain, or high surf from carrying material into the water. See Section 3.3 for further details on water quality BMPs. As a result, no adverse effects to coral communities are anticipated.

3.2.3 Marine Species

Affected Environment and Existing Conditions

The Project site is located adjacent to the ocean; however, it does not involve any in-water construction or development. The Natural Resource Assessment completed by AECOS (Appendix D) included visual observations for marine reptiles (sea turtles) and mammals (cetaceans and monk seals). No individuals of these species were observed during the survey. However, considering their known distribution throughout the Hawaiian Islands, Kawaihae Harbor is located within their range. Specifically, state- and federally- listed (endangered or threatened; DLNR 2015; USFWS n.d.) marine species, green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), hawksbill sea turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), and Hawaiian monk seal (*Monachus schauinslandi*) may occur in the general vicinity.

Within the specified area of Kawaihae Harbor, a Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC) Marine Turtle Biology and Assessment database search identified 14 reports of green sea turtles, 4 hawksbill sea turtles, and 1 unidentified turtle. The hawksbill sea turtle is much less common than the green sea turtle and is federally listed as endangered and as an endangered subspecies under state regulations. The green sea turtle that occurs in Hawai'i is listed as threatened under both federal and state regulations. In addition, critical habitat for the distinct population segment of green sea turtle in Hawaiian waters has been proposed by NOAA; however, no section of the Project area is included in this proposed critical habitat.

The Hawaiian monk seal is listed as endangered under both federal and state regulations. The Hawaiian monk seal population is also designated as "depleted" under the Marine Mammal Protection Act in 1976. For the Hawaiian monk seal, sighting information is mainly reported by the general public, therefore is highly biased by location and reporting effort. The only official recorded data is from aerial surveys completed in 2000, 2001, and 2008 by the PIFSC, although no Hawaiian monk seals were found in the Kawaihae Harbor at the time. Subsequently, between 2015 to 2024, the general public reported 5 sightings of monk seals in Kawaihae Harbor. No monk seal births have been recorded around Kawaihae Harbor. Critical habitat for Hawaiian monk seals has been designated and includes the seafloor and marine environment to 10 meters (33 feet) above the seafloor shoreward of the 200-meter (660-foot) depth contour, through the shoreline and extending onto the land 5 meters (16.5 feet) inland from the shoreline between identified boundary points. These terrestrial boundary points define preferred pupping areas and significant haul-out areas. The Project area is excluded from terrestrial critical habitat designation.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The Project does not involve in-water work and is not anticipated to impact marine species. Typically, sea turtles and marine mammals avoid human activity, therefore the likelihood of either being injured by construction activity or equipment operation is unlikely. To further reduce the chance of encounters, the contractor may watch for and avoid protected species. Work would be postponed or halted when protected species are within 50 yards of Project activities. BMPs will also be implemented to maintain water quality for these species. See Section 3.3 for further details on BMPs to protect water quality. As a result, no adverse effects are anticipated on marine species.

3.2.4 Avian Fauna

Affected Environment and Existing Conditions

As part of the Natural Resource Assessment (Appendix D), an avian survey was conducted. The survey involved four avian point count stations spaced evenly through the Project area where birds were identified by visual observations and listening for vocalizations. Eight species were identified, all of which are established introduced species. The Common Myna (*Acridotheres tristis*) and Rosy-face Lovebird (*Agapornis roseicollis*) accounted for 66% of the total birds counted. The avian diversity and densities observed during the survey are consistent with the developed industrial harbor operations and its location in North Kohala. No federally or state-listed Hawaiian seabirds—Hawaiian Petrel (*Pterodroma sandwichensis*), Newell's Shearwater (*Puffinus newelli*), Band-rumped Storm-Petrel (*Hydrobates castro*) were identified during the survey.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

As the site is highly developed with consistent human activity, it is unlikely that Hawaiian seabirds use the area as habitat. However, it is possible that Hawaiian seabirds, including the Hawaiian Petrel, Newell's Shearwater, Band-rumped Storm-Petrel, may fly over the Project area during the breeding and fledging season. These species nest in upland mountainous habitat on the island of Hawai'i and typically transit to the sea during breeding, nesting, and fledging seasons (between March 1 and December 15). During this period, exterior lighting can disorient protected seabirds, especially fledglings making their first flights from mountain nests to the sea between September 15 and December 15. When disoriented, seabirds may collide with man-made structures or the ground, once downed this leaves seabirds particularly vulnerable to predators, vehicle collision, and starvation. The primary cause of mortality for the listed seabirds is predation by alien

mammalian species at nesting sites; however, no nesting habitat for seabird species occurs in the Project area or nearby. Nonetheless, the Project could result in an adverse effect on seabird species in the Project area.

Nighttime operations at the harbor are not regularly scheduled but do occur when barge loading runs late. Further, for security and safety reasons, some lighting at the harbor is needed throughout the night. However, to mitigate potential impacts to Hawaiian seabirds the following procedures will be implemented:

- All outdoor lights will be fully shielded so the bulb can only be seen from below.
- Except for lighting needed for security and safety, automatic motion sensor switches and controls may be installed on all outdoor lights or lights turned off when human activity is not occurring in the lighted area.
- If night-time construction is required lighting will be "dark sky compliant" in accordance with State DLNR guidance (DLNR-DOFAW 2016). Pole-mounted lights will be positioned high enough to direct lighting directly on the ground. Lights on structures will also point directly downward and, where possible, placed under eves to reduce upward glare.
- Nighttime construction will not occur during the seabird fledging period, September 15 through December 15.

By implementing the construction BMPs listed above, the Project is not likely to adversely affect protected avian species.

3.2.5 Terrestrial Mammals

Affected Environment and Existing Conditions

The Natural Resource Assessment identified one mammal at the Project site, an Asian mongoose (*Herpestes javanicus*) (Appendix D). Although, it is likely one or more of the four *Muridae* (rats and mice) species found on Hawai'i use the Project area to some extent. These introduced species damage native Hawaiian ecosystems and native faunal species. The highly developed and paved Project site also provides no suitable roosting or foraging habitat for Hawai'i's only native, protected mammal species, the Hawaiian hoary bat.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

No adverse impacts to protected mammalian species are anticipated and mitigation measures are not required.

3.3 Surface Waters and Groundwater

Affected Environment and Existing Conditions

Streams

Kawaihae Harbor sits between two volcanic slopes, which creates the Kawaihae watershed. Surface water flow within the Kawaihae watershed is intermittent and rainfall-dependent, consistent with the dry character of the region. Numerous small rills and drainage channels converge into several named gulches, including Makahuna, Makeāhua, and Pōhaukole Gulches. Of these, Makeāhua Gulch conveys the majority of watershed runoff (approximately 85 percent), while Makahuna Gulch drains the remaining portion before discharging to the ocean (Element Environmental, LLC 2025). Makahuna and Makeāhua Gulches ultimately discharge to the coastline

near Pelekāne Bay and Kawaihae Harbor basin. No perennial streams run through the Project site (Figure 3-3).

During high-intensity rainfall, runoff from upland areas is typically conveyed through adjacent gulches, including the Makeāhua and Pōhaukole gulches, and drainage channels toward the harbor basin or the ocean via Pelekāne Beach. When culverts along Kawaihae Road become inundated with sediment, runoff redirects onto Kawaihae Road and into the southeastern portion of the harbor base yard. In addition, the natural drainage pathway for upland runoff traverses the Coral Flats area. When this flow path is obstructed or exceeded, Coral Flats becomes highly susceptible to flooding and associated erosion damage. Further discussion is provided in Sections 3.6.3 and 3.9.1.

Stormflow around Kawaihae Harbor is also channelized by a seven-foot-deep open, unlined drainage channel constructed along Kawaihae Road to surround the land side of the harbor property and direct high-volume, flash flood and stormwater runoff to the ocean. Under DLNR Commission on Water Resource Management (CWRM) guidance, a feature must have a natural freshwater source, aquatic life, and support instream uses to qualify as a stream. The unlined drainage ditch conveys only stormwater runoff and lacks these characteristics, thus is not considered a regulated stream.

Marine Water Quality

Historically, widespread deforestation and land disturbance along the shores of Hawai‘i during the 1800s resulted in excess soil erosion and sedimentation into nearshore waters. These conditions contributed to smothering the coral reef, elevated algal growth, and damaged reef ecosystems. Kawaihae Harbor was then constructed in 1959 by blasting and dredging out part of the coral reef and constructing a 2,650-foot-long breakwater. The average depth of the harbor turning basin is 35 feet while the entrance channel is approximately 40 feet deep (HDOT-HAR 2013).

The HDOH categorizes Kawaihae Harbor as a “Class A Embayment”(HAR § 11.54-3) a designation intended to protect waters for recreational uses and visual enjoyment. Waters in this class are not permitted to receive discharges that haven’t had the proper level of treatment. No new sewage discharge or industrial discharges are authorized, unless covered by a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit.

The HDOH *2024 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report*, prepared pursuant to Sections 305(b) and 303(d) of the Clean Water Act (CWA), identifies Kawaihae Harbor as impaired for turbidity (HDOH 2024). As such, Kawaihae Harbor is included on the state’s Section 303(d) list of impaired waters for turbidity.

Pelekāne Bay, located adjacent to the Coral Flats area, is also included on the state’s Section 303(d) list. The bay is identified as impaired for nutrients (including nitrogen and/or phosphorus), ammonia, and algal growth. The HDOH further identifies watershed soil erosion as a contributing source of sediment and associated water quality degradation in the bay (HDOH 2024; EPA 2024).

Figure 3-3. Surface Waters

Groundwater

The Project area is on the Māhukona aquifer, which is an unconfined flank type brackish basal aquifer with an estimated sustainable yield of approximately 17 million gallons per day (MGD). The harbor's domestic water supply is sourced from this aquifer. Approximately 98% of the water in this aquifer is currently used for agricultural and municipal purposes (County 2010). Although the aquifer is classified as a potential drinking water resource, the groundwater in the immediate Kawaihae Harbor area is tidally influenced due to its proximity to the ocean

Unlike older Hawaiian islands that contain sedimentary coastal plains and cap-rock formations, Hawai'i Island consists primarily of highly permeable volcanic rock. As a result, basal groundwater levels are generally lower and more susceptible to seawater intrusion. Groundwater in the Project area is shallow, with depth ranges from 5.8 to 12.8 feet below the surface, and the direction of flow is generally toward the north-northeast (Arcadis 2023).

The harbor lies downgradient of an existing injection well; however, there are no basal groundwater wells in the Kawaihae area that provide drinking-quality water. Groundwater below portions of the harbor may be impacted by historical releases, as indicated in the HDOH's Hazard Evaluation and Emergency Response System (iHEER) maps. See further discussion in Section 3.13.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The Proposed Action includes realignment of portions of the existing open drainage channel along Kawaihae Road to accommodate roadway widening. These improvements are intended to maintain localized stormwater conveyance within the Project limits. The Project does not alter watershed-scale hydrology or upstream drainage features that contribute to existing flood conditions.

During operations, stormwater runoff patterns would remain generally consistent with existing conditions. Final grading will promote positive drainage and minimize ponding on site. The Project is not expected to increase pollutant loading to harbor waters.

Construction activities such as grading, excavation, and drainage improvements may potentially result in sedimentation or pollutant runoff to nearby waters. To minimize these impacts, erosion and sediment control measures will be implemented in accordance with an approved ESCP and Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). Because more than one acre will be disturbed, coverage under the NPDES General Permit for Construction Activities will be obtained prior to construction. Best management practices (BMPs) will include, but are not limited to:

- Construction equipment and materials used in proximity to surface waters will be inspected, cleaned, and maintained to prevent the discharge of pollutants, debris, or invasive species.
- A site-specific Spill Prevention and Response Plan will be implemented. Fueling, maintenance, and staging of vehicles and equipment will occur in designated areas away from surface waters and drainage features
- Exposed soils will be protected and stabilized to prevent erosion through the use of temporary cover (e.g., plastic sheeting, erosion control blankets, or filter fabric) and permanent stabilization measures as site conditions allow.
- Appropriate perimeter and inlet sediment control measures will be installed and maintained, including stabilized construction entrances/exits, compost filter socks, and silt fencing, to prevent sediment from leaving the work area.

- Earthwork activities will be temporarily suspended during heavy rainfall events when necessary to minimize the potential for sediment transport and turbidity.

Because the site is adjacent to coastal waters, additional precautions will be implemented as necessary to prevent sediment discharge into Kawaihae Harbor. If work occurs in proximity to the shoreline, temporary turbidity controls (e.g., sediment curtains) may be used as appropriate. Equipment used near water will be inspected and cleaned to prevent pollutant or invasive species introduction.

If groundwater is encountered during construction, appropriate response measures will be implemented in accordance with HDOH and EPA guidance. These measures include oversight by a Qualified Environmental Professional, implementation of proper dewatering and disposal procedures, appropriate worker health and safety training and protections, and notification of the HDOH HEER Office if previously unknown contamination is discovered. If free product is discovered, it would be required to be recovered to an extent practicable.

The Proposed Action does not include groundwater extraction, injection, or long-term alteration of groundwater flow patterns. Therefore, long-term impacts to groundwater quantity or quality are not anticipated.

3.4 Geology, Soils, and Topography

Affected Environment and Existing Conditions

Kawaihae is located at the base of Kohala Mountain, an inactive volcano. Kohala Mountain is one of the five volcanoes that produced lava flows that merged and created Hawai'i Island (HDOT-HAR 2013). The Kawaihae Harbor site ranges from approximately one to several feet above sea level and is characterized by generally flat terrain.

The basalt flows that formed the Kawaihae area were of the Polulu Volcanic Series (HDOT-HAR 2013). The lower layers of volcanic deposits consist of tholeiitic basalt, tholeiitic olivine, and oceanite, while the upper layers are alkalic olivine basalts. Volcanic ash common in the upper layers of the Polulu Volcanic Series provides the parent material for area soils. Additionally, fill material has more than tripled the uplands space in the harbor and allowed for a leveled operating area (Helber, Hastert & Fee 2009). The process involved using dense crushed coral dredge material to top lagoonal deposits of silty sands and soft clayey deposits, coralline detritus deposits, and weathered basalt (HDOT-HAR 2013).

The harbor cargo yard and Coral Flats area are underlain by soils classified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NCRS) as "dumps, fill land, 0 to 3% slopes" soil type consisting of compacted coral material dredged from the harbor. The soils along the mauka side of the harbor and under where the proposed widening would occur on Kawaihae Road are classified as "Kawaihae very cobbly very fine sandy loam, 12 to 20% slopes" (USDA NCRCS n.d.-a). The soils are well-drained with low runoff potential. A small portion of the Project area just north of the Kawaihae Road improvements and mauka of the harbor contains "Kawaihae very cobbly very fine sandy loam, 6 to 12% slopes." This soil type is all considered well-drained with low runoff potential.

A rock outcrop is located alongside Kawaihae Road in the vicinity of the planned roadway widening. The outcrop is approximately 375 feet in length and 15 feet in height (from road level).

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The Proposed Action would result in short-term, minor to moderate impacts to area geological or soil resources from land and soil disturbance from construction activities. No long-term impacts are anticipated as the Project area is already highly developed.

Design for roadway improvements, pavement, and foundations of relocated structures would incorporate geotechnical considerations to reduce potential for erosion or settling of new infrastructure. All site grading would consider drainage patterns (see Section 3.3 for details). Grading work will be done in accordance with applicable codes.

An ESCP will be developed during construction to reduce wind or water erosion and sedimentation. BMPs may include, but are not limited to, applying water during construction; stabilizing and revegetating disturbed soils as soon as practicable; covering material-transport trucks; stabilizing construction entrances at all exit points onto paved roads; and designating concrete washout areas. Additionally, geotextile silt screens will be installed around the work area to capture potential water-borne sediment and drywells and drain trenches will be lined with geotextile fabric. The designated truck washdown area will be lined with a plastic sheet, with washdown water collected and disposed of so it does not enter the aquatic environment.

To accommodate the Kawaihae Road widening, an existing rock outcrop will be modified, which will involve clearing the area of surface vegetation with bulldozers and excavators. To remove large rocks, drilling may be required. Once the rock and vegetation are removed, the area would be graded to the desired contour. Options for disposal of this material are still undecided, but consideration is being given to maintain the material on-site for potential use to reconstruct segments of Ala Kahakai NHT, which is a separate action to be completed by others. As a result, the Project would not have an adverse effect on geology, soils, and topography in the Project area.

3.5 Climate and Air Quality

Affected Environment and Existing Conditions

Climate and Rainfall

Hawai‘i Island experiences a two-season year. Summer lasts from roughly May through October, while winter runs from roughly October through April (Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA] 2017-a). The island has highly variable meteorological conditions due to its diverse topography. For example, temperatures at sea level can range from 58 degrees to 90 degrees Fahrenheit, while temperatures at the summits of Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa can be freezing.

Kawaihae has a leeward climate, as it is sheltered from moisture-bearing winds by Mauna Kea slopes and the Kohala mountains (HDOT-HAR 2013). Winds predominantly originate from an easterly direction but can be highly variable and unpredictable (HDOT-HAR 2013). Due to this climate, Kawaihae experiences some of the driest conditions on the island. Kawaihae’s annual rainfall is only 7 inches, while Hilo experiences 142 inches of annual rainfall due to its windward side climate (FEMA 2017-a). Dry conditions have resulted in drought restrictions in the South Kohala district in the past.

Air Quality

The county's air quality is considered to be generally clean and low in pollution. Predominant northeast winds can carry emissions generated inland toward the ocean (HDOT-HAR 2013). Volcanic activity from Kīlauea Volcano can cause particulates and sulfur dioxide (SO_2) to exceed federal and state thresholds, but this typically impacts areas downwind of the volcano and not Kawaihae.

Additional air quality impacts in the Project area are due to air pollutants from motor vehicles and equipment. Congestion from single-lane access on Kawaihae Road into the harbor, as well as a cargo yard operating at capacity, contributes to emissions from idling vehicles and equipment. Natural sources of air pollution emissions that could affect the Project area but cannot be quantified accurately include the ocean (sea spray), plants (aero-allergens), and wind-blown dust.

Under the Clean Air Act, the Environmental Protection Act (EPA) established the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for six air pollutants, which sets maximum allowable atmospheric concentration of the pollutants (EPA 2024). The pollutants include SO_2, carbon monoxide (CO), ozone (O_3), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), airborne lead (Pb), and particulate matter (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$). The state additionally established an ambient air standard for hydrogen sulfide. The state was in attainment for all NAAQS in 2024. While volcanic activity occasionally causes SO_2 exceedances on the island, these are often considered natural events, with the rest of the state typically meeting standards.

A statewide monitoring program for NAAQS and state criteria pollutants was developed by HDOH Clean Air Branch (CAB). HDOH CAB's nearest air quality monitoring station is in Waikōloa, which is approximately 4 miles south of Kawaihae Harbor and monitors SO_2 and $PM_{2.5}$ (HDOH CAB 2024). In 2024, the station found that the area did not exceed concentrations of $PM_{2.5}$ and SO_2.

In addition to conventional air pollutants, atmospheric greenhouse gases (GHGs) are compounds in the Earth's atmosphere which play a critical role in determining temperature near the Earth's surface. GHGs include carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), nitrous oxide (N_2O), and several chlorofluorocarbons. Primary GHG contributors in the Project area include motor vehicles and equipment associated with harbor operations and the adjacent road.

According to HDOH's fugitive emissions regulations outlined in HAR § 11-60.1-33, reasonable precautions must be taken to ensure visible fugitive dust does not become airborne. The regulations also prohibit visible fugitive dust from being discharged beyond the property line of origination, except when implementing best practices, and outline opacity monitoring requirements.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Construction of the Proposed Action would result in temporary, localized air quality impacts associated with demolition, grading, paving, and material transport. These activities would generate fugitive dust and exhaust emissions from equipment and trucks. Given the dry, leeward climate of Kawaihae and the potential for strong winds, exposed soils and unpaved areas may be susceptible to wind-blown dust during construction. These impacts would be short-term and limited to the duration of construction.

To minimize construction-related air emissions, the Project would comply with HAR Chapter 11-60.1 (Air Pollution Control), including HAR § 11-60.1-33 regarding fugitive dust. An ESCP and Project-specific dust control management plan would be implemented. BMPs would include, but not be limited to, measures recommended by HDOH CAB (Appendix A):

- Planning the different phases of construction, focusing on minimizing the amount of airborne, visible fugitive dust-generating materials and activities, centralizing on-site vehicular traffic routes, and locating potential dust-generating equipment in areas of the least impact.
- Providing an adequate water source at the site prior to start-up of construction activities.
- Landscaping and providing rapid covering of bare areas, including slopes, starting from the initial grading phase.
- Minimizing airborne, visible fugitive dust from shoulders and access roads.
- Providing reasonable dust control measures during weekends, after hours, and prior to daily start-up of construction activities.
- Controlling airborne, visible fugitive dust from debris being hauled away from the Project site.
- Where practicable, separation distances, temporary buffer areas, or other site management practices will be used to alleviate potential dust impacts to surrounding land uses.

With implementation of these measures, construction-related air quality impacts would be temporary and minor, and no adverse effects would occur.

Under existing conditions, vehicular traffic within the harbor yard and along Kawaihae Road contributes to localized emissions from vehicles and equipment. However, improvements to Kawaihae Road would reduce congestion and vehicle idling, thereby reducing associated emissions. The Proposed Action would also pave pockets of the unpaved areas, which would incrementally reduce fugitive dust generation and improve operational efficiency. The Project is not intended to increase cargo throughput beyond forecasted demand or induce new traffic growth, but rather to accommodate existing and projected needs more efficiently. As such, long-term increases in criteria pollutant emissions are not anticipated.

GHG emissions would be generated during construction from fuel combustion associated with equipment and material transport; however, these emissions would be temporary. The Project is intended to increase the efficiency of current operations and would not increase vehicle trips, vessel calls, or equipment beyond existing conditions, and therefore is not anticipated to result in a meaningful long-term increase in GHG emissions.

3.6 Natural Hazards

3.6.1 Hurricanes and Tropical Storm

Affected Environment and Existing Conditions

Kawaihae Harbor is located along the leeward coast of Hawai‘i Island and is partially sheltered from northeast trade wind swell and north Pacific swell by the island’s topography, including Mauna Kea and the Kohala Mountains. The harbor basin is further protected by an approximately

2,650-foot-long rubble-mound breakwater (HDOT-HAR 2013), which reduces the impacts of high surf events.

Tropical cyclones that present potential hazards to the county and Project site include tropical storms and hurricanes. A tropical cyclone is considered a tropical storm when the highest sustained win speeds reach between 39 and 73 miles per hour (mph; County 2025). When highest sustained winds are greater than 74 mph, the cyclone is considered a hurricane. Pacific basin tropical cyclones form during hurricane season from June to November, with hurricane development peaking in August and September.

The major threats to the Project area from hurricanes and tropical storms are storm surge, wind damage, and flooding from torrential rainfall. Hurricane intensity, or its potential to inflict property damage and flooding once making landfall, is measured according to the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale. Of the five categories on the scale, Category 3 (sustained 111-129 mph winds) or higher storms are considered major hurricanes due to their potential to cause substantial damage or loss of life (County 2025). Categories 4 and 5 can cause catastrophic levels of damage. On the Hawai‘i Island, however, a smaller cyclone storm can still have substantial wind impacts on land.

Tropical cyclones spin counterclockwise and have historically passed to the south of the island (County 2025). Eastern coastlines typically receive the strongest onshore winds that contribute to storm surge. However, both the western and eastern sides of the island are threatened by storm surge during cyclone events. Additionally, very high wind speeds may occur in the Project area from the downdraft of storm winds as they rapidly descend over the mountains.

Between 1954 and 2024, there have been five FEMA declarations for tropical cyclones on the island, with the most recent being Hurricane Douglas in 2020 which caused extensive flooding. The *2025 Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan* (County 2025) considers the probability of future tropical cyclone occurrence on the island to be frequent, or to have a 33% chance of occurring in any given year.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Tropical storms and hurricanes will continue to pose a risk to Hawai‘i Island, and future cyclone events may affect harbor infrastructure statewide. Wind, storm surge, heavy rainfall, and associated wave action can disrupt port operations and damage facilities. Eastern coastal communities, such as Hilo, are generally more exposed to onshore winds and storm surge during cyclone events, while leeward locations such as Kawaihae may experience different storm exposure conditions depending on storm track and intensity.

Above-ground structures constructed as part of the Proposed Action would be designed in accordance with applicable building code requirements and engineered for applicable wind, flood, and environmental loading conditions.

The Proposed Action would not increase exposure to storm hazards, as improvements would occur within the existing harbor footprint and would not expand development into new hazard-prone areas. By improving infrastructure condition and operational efficiency within the existing harbor footprint, the Project would enhance the harbor’s ability to maintain or restore operations following natural disasters. Maintaining functional capacity at Kawaihae Harbor supports island-wide supply chain continuity, particularly if other port facilities experience temporary disruption. As a result, the Project would not result in an adverse effect due to hurricanes and tropical storms.

3.6.2 Earthquake

Affected Environment and Existing Conditions

An earthquake is sudden displacement of rock in Earth's crust, which creates shaking that occurs in waves. Shaking from earthquakes can cause damage to structures, including failure and collapse, as well as cause landslides, liquefaction, and tsunamis. The majority of earthquakes that occur in the state are concentrated on or around Hawai'i Island. These earthquakes are primarily associated with magma movement under the earth's surface. Earthquakes on the island are particularly concentrated in the southern portion of the island where the Kīlauea, Mauna Loa, and Kama'ehuakanaloa volcanoes are most active (County 2025). The Kohala Region of Hawai'i Island where the Project area is located typically experiences less frequent seismic activity than the southern and eastern regions of the island; however, the area is still susceptible to earthquakes and can be impacted by fault lines that extend from volcanic regions (County, 2025).

In 2006, a 6.7 magnitude earthquake and 6.0 aftershock caused substantial damage in the Kawaihae area. The earthquake damaged Piers 1 and 2A at Kawaihae Harbor and the asphalt yard settled up to six inches (South Kohala Community 2008; HDOT-HAR 2013). These impacts substantially limited cargo movement and hindered marine traffic.

According to the National Earthquake Hazard Reduction Program (NEHRP), Soils D (stiff soil) and E (soft clay) are most susceptible to liquefaction during earthquake events. Neither soil type is present in the Project area (County 2025).

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Earthquakes will continue to pose a potential risk to Hawai'i Island, and the Project area, like the rest of the island, is susceptible to seismic events. Earthquakes have the potential to damage Kawaihae Harbor infrastructure, including piers, buildings, and paved areas.

New structures under the Proposed Action, including relocated buildings, would be designed in accordance with applicable building codes and current International Building Code (IBC) seismic provisions, including design standards for seismic loading. These standards are designed to reduce the risk of structural failure during design-level earthquake events. Roadway and pavement improvements would be designed based on site-specific geotechnical conditions and incorporate appropriate measures to address potential settlement or liquefaction, as required by applicable engineering standards.

The Proposed Action would not increase exposure to seismic hazards, as improvements would occur within the existing harbor footprint and would not expand development into new areas. Rather, by improving infrastructure condition and operational efficiency within the existing harbor footprint, the Project would enhance the harbor's ability to maintain or restore operations following natural disasters. Maintaining functional capacity at Kawaihae Harbor supports island-wide supply chain continuity, particularly if other port facilities experience temporary disruption. As a result, the Project would not result in an adverse effect due to earthquakes.

3.6.3 Flood Hazards

Affected Environment and Existing Conditions

Flooding of Hawai'i Island is generally associated with stream overflow, tsunamis, and hurricanes (FEMA 2017-a). Intense rainfall from seasonal rain and tropical storms can overwhelm drainage systems, while coastal areas are generally subject to flooding from storm surge and high surf during high tides (County 2025).

In the South Kohala District, the area from Kawaihae to Puakō experiences shallow flooding when runoff is contained within the higher segments of steep gulches but spreads out in the lower segments where the gulches become less defined (FEMA 2017-a). Additionally, it is not uncommon for dry areas such as Kawaihae to receive heavy rainstorms that can exceed half of the average annual rainfall within a few hours or a day.

Flooding associated with intense rainfall events has historically affected Kawaihae Harbor. Periods of significant rainfall have overwhelmed area roadways, the harbor, and the Coral Flats. During significant rainfall events, sediment accumulation occurs at two culverts along Kawaihae Road located southeast of the harbor facility. Typically, these culverts discharge runoff into the harbor basin and the ocean via Pelekāne Beach. When these culverts become inundated with sediment, runoff redirects onto Kawaihae Road and into the southeastern portion of the harbor base yard. In addition, the natural drainage pathway for upland runoff traverses the Coral Flats area. When this flow path is obstructed or exceeded, Coral Flats becomes highly susceptible to flooding and associated erosion damage. A major rain event in May 2024 resulted in flooding of harbor offices, damaged to vehicles, and undermining of local roadways. Substantial sediment deposition occurred within the harbor, requiring extensive removal efforts, and floodwaters washed out a portion of the Coral Flats access road leading to the Kawaihae Small Boat Harbor (South) (Element Environmental, LLC 2025).

Figure 1-6 shows the FEMA flood zones mapped within the Project area. The majority of the harbor and the Coral Flats area designated for construction staging are within FEMA Flood Zone X (Unshaded), which are areas determined to be outside the 0.2% annual chance floodplain. The north entrance to the cargo yard and approximately 0.11 miles of Kawaihae Road northwest of the entrance road are within a FEMA-designated Flood Zone X (Shaded) floodplain. Zone X (Shaded) indicates an area of minimal flood hazard located outside of the 0.2% annual chance floodplain (500-year flood event).

Kawaihae Harbor is protected by a breakwater that reduces the impacts of high surf events; however, coastal flooding can still occur. The harbor waters are mapped within a FEMA-designated Zone VE floodplain, which includes coastal flood zones with wave action hazards. This zone corresponds to a 1% annual chance floodplain (100-year flood event; FEMA 2017-b). The flood zone extends from the water to the outermost edge of the cargo yard.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Although the Project area is mapped outside the 1% annual chance floodplain, Kawaihae Harbor and the Coral Flats area have experienced localized flooding during high-intensity rainfall events. A known flooding concern involves sediment accumulation at culverts southeast of the harbor facility, which can obstruct drainage and redirect runoff onto Kawaihae Road and into portions of

the harbor yard. The natural overland flow path across Coral Flats also contributes to periodic inundation during heavy storm events.

Improvements to the upstream culverts or modifications to the broader regional drainage system responsible for these localized flooding conditions are outside the scope of the Project. The Project is not expected to increase flood risk or alter natural drainage patterns. Roadway and cargo yard improvements will incorporate standard grading and stabilization measures consistent with applicable state and county design standards to maintain existing drainage function. In addition, relocation of the District office from a flood-prone area would reduce vulnerability of that facility to future flood events. As a result, the Project would not result in an adverse effect due to flood hazards.

3.6.4 Tsunami Inundation

Affected Environment and Existing Conditions

Tsunamis are series of waves generated by submarine earth movements (FEMA 2017-a). The waves can have devastating impacts associated with flooding inundation and the physical force at which the waves impact physical infrastructure. Tsunamis are defined as local or distant, with local tsunamis caused by earthquakes or landslides near the Hawaiian Islands and distant tsunamis caused by earthquakes in the Pacific Rim area (County 2025). Local tsunamis typically provide little warning time, while distant tsunamis may travel for several hours before reaching Hawai‘i.

The location of the Proposed Action is at sea level and within the tsunami evacuation zone, making it susceptible to tsunami events (DOT&PF 2013). There have been several notable tsunami events in Hawai‘i County since 2010, including one FEMA Declaration event that occurred in 2011. Kawaihae was hit by a four-foot tsunami wave that originated from 9.1 magnitude earthquake in Japan (HDOT-HAR 2013; County 2025).

According to the *2025 Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan*, there is a 100% chance of a tsunami event occurring in the County in any given year, indicating that this is chronic, ongoing risk that must always be planned for (County 2025). Notably, Hilo on the east side of the island is especially susceptible to tsunami events and has historically experienced the most extensive tsunami damage (County, 2025).

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The Project area, like other coastal areas of Hawai‘i Island, is susceptible to tsunami events. Tsunami hazard exposure at Kawaihae Harbor is consistent with coastal locations statewide and is not increased by the Proposed Action. The Project does not alter shoreline configuration, increase occupancy, or expand development into new hazard-prone areas.

By improving infrastructure condition and operational efficiency within the existing harbor footprint, the Project would enhance the harbor’s ability to maintain or restore operations following natural disasters. Maintaining functional capacity at Kawaihae Harbor supports island-wide supply chain continuity, particularly if other port facilities experience temporary disruption.

The Proposed Action will stabilize existing deteriorated asphalt as well as pockets of unpaved areas with reinforced concrete. Structures, including relocated buildings and culverts, will incorporate appropriate structural engineering to withstand design events. Roadway and pavement improvements will incorporate applicable geotechnical engineering standards to protect against

liquefaction and settlement, which will minimize the potential for undermining from flooding. Design of the roadway widening and repaving of the cargo yard will incorporate appropriate grading that encourages proper drainage, minimizing the potential for flooding impacts. As a result, the Project would not result in an adverse effect due to tsunamis.

3.6.5 Wildfire

Affected Environment and Existing Conditions

In the past decade Northwest Hawai'i Island has experienced at least 39 wildfires with 13 of those burning more than 1,200 acres (HWMO 2024). The greater Kawaihae region has known fire risk due to its dry and windy climate and vegetation consisting of fire prone grasses. The risk factors are increasing, with severe and prolonged drought episodes, unmanaged vegetative fuels, and more people frequenting and living in the area (HWMO 2022). According to data from DLNR, Kawaihae Harbor is within a "High" fire risk area.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The Proposed Action would not substantially alter wildfire risk in the Project area. The Project site is located within an existing industrial harbor facility that is largely characterized by paved surfaces, buildings, and limited vegetative cover. No expansion into undeveloped or heavily vegetated areas is proposed.

Construction activities could temporarily introduce ignition sources, such as heavy equipment, welding, or other hot work. To minimize wildfire risk during construction, the contractor will implement standard fire prevention measures, including, but not limited to, maintaining fire extinguishers onsite and coordinating with local fire authorities during high fire weather conditions

The Proposed Action does not increase population density, introduce residential development, or expand public access into high-risk wildland areas. Therefore, the Project is not expected to increase wildfire ignition potential or exacerbate wildfire hazards.

Infrastructure upgrades associated with the Project will enhance overall site safety and fire protection capabilities at Kawaihae Harbor. The new fire suppression system will be designed to meet current standards and applicable distance requirements, allow for sufficient fire suppression coverage, and improve emergency response readiness at the harbor in the event of a fire. As a result, the Project would not increase risks or result in an adverse effect due to wildfires.

3.7 Climate Change and Sea Level Rise

Affected Environment and Existing Conditions

Rapid anthropogenic climate change is a well-established fact within the scientific community. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), climate change impacts are affecting earth in a variety of ways. Climate change impacts experienced on Hawai'i Island include rising temperatures, rising sea levels, increasing intensity of storm events, changing rainfall patterns, and drought (County 2025).

According to the *Hawai'i Sea Level Rise Vulnerability and Adaptation Report* (2017) and the 2022 update, climate change-led warming of the atmosphere and ocean, as well as melting of glaciers and ice sheets, is contributing to SLR at increasing rates (Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission 2022). SLR exposure mapping in the report and the associated Hawai'i

SLR Viewer mapping tool (Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission 2021) is based on the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report (2013), which estimates that, if the rate of GHG emissions continues to increase at the current level, there would be a 3.2-foot rise in global sea level by 2100 under a high-end projection. Accordingly, the 3.2-foot SLR Exposure Area (SLR-XA) provided in the Hawai'i SLR Viewer is widely used by counties as a planning and policy benchmark. A majority of the Project site is outside of the 3.2-foot SLR-XA except for the concrete-lined open culvert located at the north end of the harbor (Figure 3-4).

Since the 2017 report, the scientific understanding of SLR has continued to advance and more recent scientific reports, including the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (2021) and the NOAA-led interagency SLR report increasingly point to 3 to 4 feet of SLR by 2100 as a mid-range rather than high-end scenario for Hawai'i (Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission 2022).

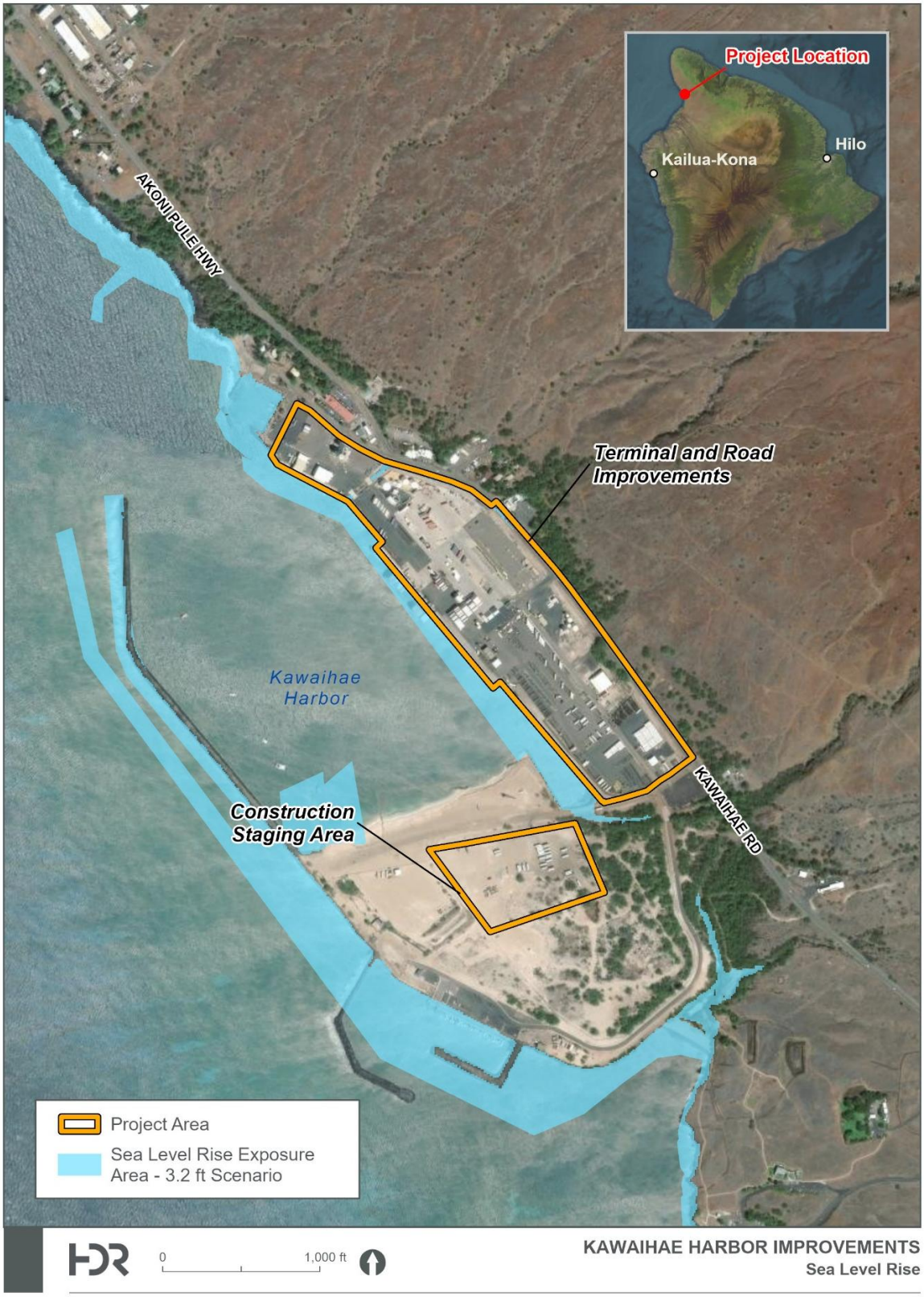
Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

As shown in Figure 3-4, a majority of the Project site is outside of the 3.2-foot SLR-XA except for the existing concrete-lined open culvert located at the north end of the harbor. According to the SLR Viewer, potential risks are primarily attributed to passive (high tide flooding) and the Project site is not susceptible to annual high tide flooding or coastal erosion under the 3.2-foot SLR scenario.

No new structures or improvements are planned within the 3.2-foot SLR-XA. The Proposed Action would improve and upgrade various components of the existing harbor, which would improve its overall resiliency to storm or flooding events that are expected to intensify or increase with climate change. Additionally, the Proposed Action would support the continued operability of Kawaihae Harbor following natural disaster events that may occur with increasing frequency due to climate change.

The Project is not anticipated to induce vehicular demand and contribute to increases in traffic volume or changes in vehicle mix. As such, increases in GHGs that contribute to climate change are not anticipated.

Figure 3-4. 3.2-foot Sea Level Rise Exposure Area (SLR-XA)



3.8 Traffic, Access, and Multimodal Facilities

3.8.1 Roadways and Traffic

Affected Environment and Existing Conditions

Kawaihae Road (Highway 270) is the highway directly serving access to the harbor. Kawaihae Road is an undivided, two-lane, state-owned arterial highway extending from Akoni Pule Highway in the north to the intersection of Queen Kaʻahumanu Highway where it turns into Route 19. Kawaihae Road transitions into the east-west direction from Queen Kaʻahumanu Highway to Māmalahoa Highway. The posted speed limit between Akoni Pule Highway and Queen Kaʻahumanu Highway is 35 mph. There are no formal pedestrian facilities along Kawaihae Road in the vicinity of the harbor. As such, vehicles are the primary means of access to the site.

Vehicular traffic to and from the site generally consists of passenger vehicles associated with harbor staff and visitors, heavy-duty trucks transporting shipping containers and bulk materials, service and maintenance vehicles, and other commercial vehicles supporting harbor operations.

A traffic impact assessment report was previously developed and summarized in Chapter 6 of the 2013 EA. That report applied an annual regional traffic growth rate of approximately 2.88 percent and an annual container growth rate of approximately 4.7 percent through 2025. Under the Proposed Action evaluated at that time, intersection operations were projected to remain acceptable at most study locations with the addition of turn lanes at harbor access points.

Under projected 2025 conditions, and with the addition of turn lanes at harbor access points, most study intersections were forecast to operate at acceptable Levels of Service (LOS), generally ranging from LOS A to LOS C, with the exception of the northbound left-turn movement at the intersection of Kawaihae Road and Queen Kaʻahumanu Highway, which operated at LOS F during peak periods identified in both existing and projected conditions. Internal circulation within the harbor was found to function adequately, with sufficient space for truck queuing and maneuvering.

The current Proposed Action represents a reduced scope of improvements and does not increase trip generation beyond the levels previously analyzed. Therefore, updated traffic modeling was not conducted for this EA.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Regional cargo activity and population growth may continue to influence traffic conditions along Kawaihae Road independent of the Proposed Action. Without implementation of the Proposed Action, existing congestion at harbor access points would be expected to persist.

The Project would not increase vehicle traffic volume or alter the vehicle mix in the Project area. The planned improvements are needed to support existing demand at the harbor and enhance the efficiency of operations. Improvements are limited to beneficial operational and circulation enhancements intended to relieve existing congestion, reduce existing queuing, and improve safety by providing dedicated turning movements at the harbor's main gate. As such, these improvements are not anticipated to increase the number of vehicles or equipment, but rather, allow them to operate more efficiently. Therefore, the Project is not anticipated to result in increased average daily traffic volumes or new long-term adverse impacts to roadway operations.

Short-term, temporary impacts to vehicular traffic may occur during construction due to lane shifts, partial lane closures, or equipment staging within the right-of-way. These effects would be temporary and localized. A Traffic Control Plan (TCP) will be developed for construction to minimize traffic pattern disruptions, ensure emergency access, and avoid other access issues along Kawaihae Road. During construction hours, the contractor will maintain Kawaihae Road for continuous flow of one-lane traffic. Additional BMPs include, but are not limited to, placing temporary signage, pavement markings, portable concrete barriers, and crash barrels approaches to serve as safety and traffic control measures during construction. First responders, the public, and commercial operators will be provided notice of planned roadway closures and expected delays during construction. As a result, the Project would not result in an adverse effect on roadways and traffic in the Project area.

3.8.2 Access

Affected Environment and Existing Conditions

Access to Kawaihae Harbor is provided via three entrances along Kawaihae Road. Primary access is provided at the main gate, where Kawaihae Road widening improvements are planned to occur. Roadway access into the harbor at the main gate can become congested, with traffic backing up as far as 1.25 miles (HDOT 2023). In addition to the main gate, there is a north gate and a south gate. Kawaihae Road has no dedicated turn lanes at these harbor access points. As the Project site is an active industrial harbor facility that is not open to the general public, access is secured at all gates and restricted to harbor users. Circulation on the site is facilitated via various internal roads.

Waterside access to Kawaihae Harbor is provided at Pier 1 and Pier 2. Vessel movement within the harbor basin includes commercial barge traffic and other operational harbor uses. The Project area includes limited public pedestrian shoreline access, outside of the secured area along the unimproved shoreline fronting the Pier 2B cargo yard.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Temporary lane closures or shifts in lane use on Kawaihae Road may be required to facilitate construction activities and may result in short-term access constraints for vehicles serving the harbor; however, full roadway closures would not occur. Potential effects would be addressed through a TCP that will be developed as the Project progresses. Safe access to the harbor and adjacent commercial facilities would be maintained throughout construction.

Portions of the Coral Flats area will be used for construction staging. However, vehicular access to the Army's boat ramp and the South Kawaihae Small Boat Harbor will be maintained during construction.

In the long term, the Project is anticipated to relieve traffic congestion along Kawaihae Road by incorporating a dedicated left-turn and storage lane, improving access to the harbor. Improved efficiency within the cargo yard would also promote efficient vessel movement and better access to the harbor from the waterside.

The Project does not include in-water work or modifications to existing piers, berthing facilities, or harbor basin configuration. Marine navigation and waterside access would remain unchanged.

The Project area is located within an active industrial harbor facility that is generally not open to the public. However, public pedestrian access along certain areas of the shoreline will continue to be permitted. Therefore, the Project would not adversely affect public access to coastal waters.

3.8.3 ROW and Relocations

Affected Environment and Existing Conditions
Kawaihae Road is within the state ROW, while the harbor is within land owned by HDOT-HAR. No privately owned parcels occur within the Project area.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures
The planned roadway widening would occur entirely within existing state-owned property, including the established state ROW and harbor lands. No acquisition of private property would be required. Because no private property would be acquired and no residences or businesses would be displaced, the Project would not result in relocations subject to the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act or comparable state requirements. Therefore, the Project would not have an adverse effect on ROW and relocations, and no mitigation measures related to ROW acquisition or relocation are necessary.

3.8.4 Multimodal Facilities

Affected Environment and Existing Conditions
Public transit on Hawai‘i Island is provided by the County Hele-On bus service. The county operates two Hele-On bus routes that travel south and two that travel north of the Kawaihae Harbor; however, the bus does not stop directly in the vicinity of the site. The nearest bus stops are located north of the harbor along Kawaihae Road; the stops are located approximately 0.3 miles north of the main entrance into Kawaihae Harbor and outside of the Project area.

There are no pedestrian pathways, crosswalks, or bike lanes along Kawaihae Road in the vicinity of the Project area, pedestrians and bicyclists sometimes utilize the paved shoulders for travel.

The nearest commercial airport is the Ellison Onizuka Kona International Airport, located over 20 miles south of the Project area. Air transportation is not directly related to the Proposed Action and would not be affected by the Project.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures
The Proposed Action would not impact the function, location, or availability of multimodal transportation facilities in the Project vicinity. Kawaihae Harbor would continue to operate as a commercial freight facility supporting marine-to-truck cargo transfer.

Public transit facilities are located outside the Project area and would not be directly affected by the Project. Temporary lane closures may be required to facilitate construction activities and may result in short-term delays for vehicles, including public transit services, traveling on Kawaihae Road; however, full roadway closures would not occur. Potential effects would be avoided and minimized through a TCP that will be developed as the Project progresses.

The Project will not impact pedestrian or bike facilities in the vicinity. Proposed roadway widening will maintain a six-foot open corridor between the harbor perimeter fence and the highway shoulder for the future reconstruction of the Ala Kahakai NHT, which is a separate action that

would be completed by others. As a result, the Project would not have an adverse effect on multimodal facilities.

3.8.5 Marine Traffic and Harbor Operations

Kawaihae Harbor operates on the M-H1 Daniel K. Akaka Marine Highway and is part of a larger hub-and-spoke transportation system (HDOT 2023). Incoming cargo first arrives in Honolulu Harbor on O'ahu Island and is then distributed to seven commercial harbors on the other Hawaiian Islands, including Kawaihae Harbor. Cargo traffic uses a just-in-time supply chain, with shipping containers often serving as temporary warehouses, storing goods after they arrive by water and before they are delivered to stores. The just-in-time supply chain is susceptible to disruptions, with inefficiencies adversely affecting the local and state economy and residents.

As discussed in Section 1.5.1, Pier 1 is used for cement and cattle transport, while Pier 2 is used primarily for cargo transport. Barges typically call at Pier 2A and 2B twice per week (HDOT 2023). Cargo traffic at Kawaihae Harbor has increased in recent years. Since 2021, cargo from Matson has been discharged only at Kawaihae instead of both Hilo and Kawaihae Harbors. Due to the change, the Pier 2 Terminal has exceeded its current capacity of 111,000 TEUs per year.

Table 3-2 shows container trends in the volume of container traffic at Kawaihae Harbor over a five-year period. The trends show an overall and continued increase in container traffic over time.

Table 3-2. Container Volume Trends, 2018-2022

Container Status	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
> 40' loaded	29,043	28,594	28,395	32,856	35,254
< 40' loaded	8,429	8,195	8,001	7,912	8,483
> 40' empty	11,474	12,951	12,620	13,715	13,722
< 40' empty	1,245	1,375	1,348	2,082	2,020
Other	160	2,663	2,727	2,789	4,410

Source: HDOT, 2023

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Interruptions to marine traffic may occur during construction of cargo yard improvements, such as construction and reconstruction of yards, installation of lighting and utilities, and relocation of buildings. Improvements in the cargo yard may be phased to minimize impacts to operations. Construction scheduling and phasing would be communicated with harbor users ahead of time to ensure operations can be maintained.

The Project is needed to address cargo yard volume and capacity constraints discussed above, as well as deteriorating yard conditions. As such, the planned improvements will improve operations of the overall harbor and marine traffic in the long term. Therefore, the Project would not have an adverse effect on marine traffic and harbor operations and no mitigation measures are required.

3.9 Utilities and Infrastructure

3.9.1 Drainage

Affected Environment and Existing Conditions

The Project site is located within the Kawaihae Watershed, where surface drainage is dominated by intermittent and ephemeral flow paths that convey runoff during and immediately following heavy rainfall events. Numerous small rills and drainage channels converge into several named gulches. Makeāhua Gulch conveys the majority of watershed runoff (approximately 85 percent), while Makahuna Gulch drains the remaining portion before discharging to the ocean (Element Environmental, LLC 2025). Makahuna and Makeāhua Gulches ultimately discharge to the coastline near Pelekāne Bay and Kawaihae Harbor basin. No perennial streams run through the Project site (Figure 3-3).

Stormflow around Kawaihae Harbor is channelized by a seven-foot-deep open, unlined drainage channel constructed along Kawaihae Road to surround the land side of the harbor property and direct high-volume flash flood and stormwater runoff to the ocean. The channel is divided into two segments along Kawaihae Road. At the north end of the Project site, the channel turns makai (towards the ocean) near the intersection of Kawaihae Road and Akoni Pule Highway and empties into the harbor between Piers 1 and 2. In this area, the drainage feature consists of a concrete-lined open channel that functions in part as an open culvert.

The southern segment of the drainage canal turns makai south of the harbor's South Gate near the Coral Flats area and is characterized by an open earthen ditch. This portion of the drainage system forms a topographic division between the southern portion of the harbor and the Coral Flats area. Coral Flats is minimally developed and contains limited drainage infrastructure; as a result, the area is particularly susceptible to flooding and erosion during intense storm events due to its location along a natural flow path.

Existing drainage conditions along Kawaihae Road have led to flooding in recent years causing damage to harbor facilities. During significant rainfall events, sediment accumulation occurs at two culverts along Kawaihae Road located southeast of the harbor facility. Typically, these culverts discharge runoff into the harbor basin. When these culverts become clogged with sediment, runoff redirects onto Kawaihae Road and into the southeastern portion of the harbor base yard, at times causing significant damage to the facility. In addition, the natural drainage pathway for upland runoff traverses the Coral Flats area. When this flow path is obstructed or exceeded, Coral Flats becomes highly susceptible to flooding and associated erosion damage. In addition, during heavy rain events sediment enters Kawaihae Harbor which may negatively impact operations (Element Environmental, LLC 2025).

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The Proposed Action includes modifications to the existing drainage channel along Kawaihae Road to accommodate roadway widening. These improvements include realignment of the open channel segments adjacent to the widened roadway and relocation of the culvert beneath the main harbor access road to allow runoff to pass under the entrance roadway and discharge to the ocean. Such improvements would maintain the existing drainage conditions within the immediate Project area.

Short-term adverse impacts to drainage conditions could occur during construction due to soil disturbance, excavation, and sediment mobilization. These impacts would be temporary and mitigated through implementation of stormwater BMPs, including erosion and sediment control measures in accordance with an approved ESCP and SWPPP. Because the Project will disturb over one acre, an NPDES permit for general construction activities will be obtained prior to construction. See Section 3.3 for additional details on stormwater BMPs.

The Proposed Action does not include improvements to the upstream culverts or the broader drainage system southeast of the harbor facility or alterations to the regional watershed drainage patterns that have contributed to past flooding events. Therefore, existing flood risks associated with sediment accumulation and storm-driven runoff may remain. The Project is not expected to substantially impact flood risk or alter natural drainage patterns. Relocation of various structures currently located in flood-prone areas would reduce their vulnerability to flood damage but would not alter overall watershed hydrology.

3.9.2 Water Supply

Affected Environment and Existing Conditions

The Kawaihae Harbor is within the Māhukona Aquifer Systems Areas (ASYA) which is part of the greater Kohala Aquifer Sector Area (ASA). The Māhukona ASYA covers the dry leeward side of Kohala, including the harbor, and only contributes about 10 MGD or 8% of the total sustainable yield of the Kohala ASA.

Kawaihae Harbor currently receives potable water from the Lālāmilo Water System, which supplies about 718 connections extending from the commercial and industrial areas of Kawaihae to Mauna Lani Resort. The system is supplied by several wells in the Waimea ASA, storage tanks, booster pumps, and transmission lines. Water is generally conveyed from the Waimea water system, with supplemental supply from locally developed groundwater sources (DHHL 2024).

In recent years, the region has experienced prolonged periods of low rainfall and operation challenges affecting groundwater wells, resulting in constraints on water system reliability. To manage limitations of the system, the County of Hawai‘i Department of Water Supply (DWS) began construction of a 10-million-gallon reservoir in 2023. The reservoir will aid in water storage, energy efficiency, and fire protection (DHHL 2024). Construction is currently ongoing with anticipated completion in 2027.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The Project is not anticipated to result in an increase in long-term potable water demand at the harbor. The Project would support the continued use of the harbor for its existing functions and would occur entirely within the existing overall Kawaihae Harbor footprint and HDOT ROW. Improvements associated with the Project, including roadway widening, yard resurfacing, lighting upgrades, and relocation of the HDOT District office, are intended to improve operational efficiency and safety rather than expand or intensify harbor use. The Project involves relocation of the harbor office rather than construction of a new facility, which would not introduce new water demand beyond current levels. Water conservation will be promoted at the new District office through the use of water-efficient features such as low-volume toilets, automatic faucets, and drought-tolerant vegetation, if landscaping is proposed. Detailed estimated maximum daily water use calculations

associated with the relocated District office and Project plans will be submitted to the DWS for review and approval as design progresses.

The Project also includes installation of a new fire suppression system within the cargo yard. The new fire suppression system will be designed to current standards and will meet applicable distance requirements and allow for sufficient fire suppression coverage. Construction may temporarily increase water demand for purposes of BMP implementation; however, these impacts are expected to be minimal and will be coordinated with the DWS to ensure adequate service. All required permits and approvals will be obtained prior to construction and service to the existing 12-inch waterline under Kawaihae Road will be maintained throughout construction. As a result, the Project would not have an adverse effect on water supply in the Project area.

3.9.3 Wastewater Treatment and Disposal

Affected Environment and Existing Conditions

Kawaihae Harbor is not serviced by the County's sewer system. The region relies on an on-site sewage disposal system (OSDS) for its wastewater needs. Kawaihae Harbor has small-capacity cesspools located at Pier 1 that include treatment systems. These systems treat waste by using small aeration systems that inject oxygen, allowing bacteria to break down organic waste into carbon dioxide and water (HDOT-HAR 2013).

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The Project will not result in any increases in the generation of wastewater; therefore, mitigation measures are not proposed. In addition, the relocated harbor office will have a new septic system installed to treat wastewater and meet HDOH standards. The Project does not include construction or modification of wastewater treatment or disposal systems. As a result, the Project would not have an adverse effect on wastewater treatment and disposal in the Project area.

3.9.4 Solid Waste

Affected Environment and Existing Conditions

The County of Hawai'i, Environmental Management Department handles solid waste operations for the County. Kawaihae Harbor does not generate a significant amount of solid waste. Household rubbish produced by the harbor is disposed of in dumpsters and collected regularly by a private company, Pacific Waste, Inc. for disposal in the West Hawai'i (Pu'uanahulu) Sanitary Landfill. The landfill is the County's approved facility for construction and demolition waste.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The Project may result in a small increase in solid waste generation during construction. The quantity of debris generated by the Project is not expected to adversely affect landfill operations or capacity. Disposal of construction and demolition debris generated by the Proposed Action will occur off-site at the West Hawai'i Sanitary Landfill. All construction and demolition waste will be managed and disposed of in compliance with applicable federal and state regulations, including HAR § 11-58.1. If hazardous waste is generated by Project construction, it will be properly disposed of in accordance with applicable regulations. To further divert solid waste from the landfill and minimize waste generation, recycling and reuse practices would be implemented during construction to the extent practicable. As a result, the Project would not have an adverse effect on solid waste in the Project area.

3.9.5 Power and Telecommunications

Affected Environment and Existing Conditions

Kawaihae Harbor is serviced by the local power grid operator, Hawaiian Electric Light Company (HELCO). Several electrical poles and overhead transmission lines are installed along an electrical utility easement next to Kawaihae Road. Local power is provided by the HELCO power plant in Waimea.

Hawaii Telecom shares utility poles with HELCO to serve the harbor. In addition, Spectrum has cable buried along Kawaihae Road.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The Project will coordinate with the relevant utility companies to address potential increases in power demand and utility relocation needs.

Lighting upgrades associated with the Project will replace existing poles with energy-efficient fixtures, resulting in minimal impact on electrical demand. The Annex and Expanded yards, as well as upgraded security lighting at the Pier 1 area, would incorporate new fully shielded, energy efficient lighting, with negligible additional demand. Installation of new conduits and raised transformer pads is intended to accommodate potential future harbor upgrades and would not, by itself, increase electrical demand. Any future connections to this infrastructure would be subject to separate coordination and approval by the applicable utility providers.

Additionally, several utility poles, approximately 20 feet in height, within the highway ROW, will be relocated towards the harbor to accommodate highway widening. Prior to construction, the contractor will verify the locations of HELCO and Hawaiian Telecom facilities in the field. The Project team will coordinate with utility providers during design and construction to minimize conflicts with existing infrastructure and avoid service interruptions.

The contractor will comply with applicable state regulations for work near exposed or energized electrical lines and equipment, and maintain required clearances around overhead lines, utility poles, and their anchor systems. Where minimum clearances cannot be maintained, appropriate protective measures, coordination with the utility provider, and utility oversight may be implemented to address safety and prevent service disruptions. As a result, the Project would not have an adverse effect on power and telecommunications.

3.10 Noise

Affected Environment and Existing Conditions

The Project site includes an active roadway and industrial area with daily harbor operations. Land uses surrounding the Kawaihae Harbor include a mix of harbor-related, recreational, industrial, limited commercial, and rural residential. Directly across Kawaihae Road from the harbor to the east, the terrain rises and transitions to hilly areas with sparse vegetation. Much of the broader surrounding area is zoned for agricultural and ranching purposes. Noise in the Project area is generated primarily by heavy trucks along Kawaihae Road and harbor activities. Secondary sources of noise include typical vehicle traffic, aircraft flyovers, birds, and wind.

HDOH defines noise (HAR § 11.46-2) as sound that can negatively impact human health and wellbeing or disrupt activities like communication, work, recreation, rest, or sleep. Allowable noise levels vary by zoning district and are measured in A-weighted decibels (dBA). For Class A zoning districts, which include residential, conservation, preservation, public and open spaces, noise levels are limited to 55 dBA during the day and 45 dBA at night. Class C zoning districts include agriculture, country, and industrial areas, and have a higher threshold of up to 70 dBA.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The Project does not involve significant expansion of existing port operating areas, therefore significant increases in ambient noise are not expected. Kawaihae Harbor is already an active industrial area. Widening of Kawaihae Road in the immediate vicinity of the Project area would reduce existing congestion leading into the harbor, resulting in fewer idling vehicles and thereby potentially resulting in lower ambient noise levels. As a result, long-term Project impacts on ambient noise are anticipated to be minimal and comparable to existing ambient noise levels generated by current harbor and roadway activities.

Short term increases in noise levels associated with construction activities, such as demolition, excavation, and paving, are anticipated. Construction noise is regulated by the HDOH pursuant to HAR Chapter 11-46. Construction-related noise may temporarily exceed permissible limits depending on the activity. If exceedances occur, a Community Noise Permit from HDOH would be obtained and the contractor would comply with associated conditions.

Construction noise minimizations measures recommended by HDOH will be implemented and will include, but not be limited to, using mufflers on diesel and gasoline equipment, ensuring equipment and machinery is properly tuned and balanced, installing temporary noise barriers where practicable, or limiting high-noise construction activities to daytime hours.

Construction activities may also generate localized ground vibration. While vibration is not regulated under HDOH noise rules, vibration-related impacts to historic and cultural resources are addressed through the Section 106 consultation process and associated mitigation measures (Section 3.1). As a result, the Project would not have an adverse effect on noise in the Project area.

3.11 Public Facilities and Services

3.11.1 Police Protection

Affected Environment and Existing Conditions

Kawaihae Harbor is required by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to maintain full-time on-site security, which is located at the harbor's main gate. In addition, Kawaihae Harbor is served by the County's law enforcement agency, the Hawai'i Police Department (HPD). Hawai'i Island has five substations and is organized into two operations bureaus with investigative and patrol operations (County of Hawai'i Planning Department 2024). The closest substation to Kawaihae Harbor is Kalahuipua'a located at 68-5660 Queen Ka'ahumanu Highway about 5 miles to the south of the Harbor.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Prior to construction, HDOT-HAR will prepare a construction TCP. Construction activities may require temporary lane closures or shifts on Kawaihae Road; however, complete road closures are not anticipated and access for emergency vehicles will be maintained at all times. Construction

activities will not impact on-site security operations. In the long-term, the Project is anticipated to result in beneficial impacts to emergency access by reducing traffic congestion on Kawaihae Road associated with harbor-related traffic. As a result, the Project would not have an adverse effect on police protection in the Project area.

3.11.2 Fire Protection

Affected Environment and Existing Conditions

The Hawaii Fire Department (HFD) provides fire suppression, rescue services, 911 emergency medical response, hazardous materials response, and ocean safety response services to Hawai'i Island. The nearest fire station to the Project is South Kohala located about seven miles to the South of Kawaihae Harbor (County of Hawai'i Planning Department 2024). The next closest fire station would be in Waimea town, approximately 9 miles from Kawaihae Harbor.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Prior to construction, HDOT-HAR will coordinate with HFD to review the construction TCP. Construction activities may require temporary lane closures or shifts on Kawaihae Road; however, complete road closures are not anticipated and access for emergency vehicles will be maintained at all times.

Infrastructure upgrades associated with the Project will enhance overall site safety and fire protection capabilities at Kawaihae Harbor. The new fire suppression system will be designed to meet current standards and applicable distance requirements, allow for sufficient fire suppression coverage, and improve emergency response readiness at the harbor in the event of a fire. The Project will have long-term benefits on emergency access through reduced traffic congestion on Kawaihae Road. As a result, the Project would not have an adverse effect on fire protection in the Project area.

3.11.3 Emergency Medical and Hospital Services

Affected Environment and Existing Conditions

Hawai'i Island has five hospitals, the nearest to the Project site is the Queen's North Hawaii Community Hospital in Waimea, approximately 12 miles east of Kawaihae Harbor. This hospital provides general acute care with emergency services and various specialties.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The Project would not intensify activities occurring at the Kawaihae Harbor and is therefore not expected to result in an increase in the need for medical services in the area. Construction activities would be temporary and are not anticipated to result in adverse impacts to emergency medical services or hospital capacity. As a result, the Project would not have an adverse effect on emergency medical and hospital services in the Project area, and no mitigation measures are required.

3.11.4 Recreational Services

Affected Environment and Existing Conditions

The Kawaihae Small Boat Harbor (North) borders the north end of the harbor, while the Kawaihae Small Boat Harbor (South) is located adjacent to the west of the Coral Flats area. The small boat harbors serve recreational and small-scale commercial vessels and are operated by DLNR DOBOR. Facilities at each harbor include moorings, piers, boat ramps, and comfort stations, with the south harbor also including berthing space. Users of the small boat harbors include the Kawaihae Canoe Club.

Various recreational activities such as fishing, surfing, canoeing, and beach/swimming activities occur in the coastal areas in the vicinity of the Project site. Pelekāne Beach is adjacent to the southern portion of the Coral Flats area and the Puʻukoholā Heiau NHS. The Spencer Beach Park and Ala Kahakai NHT are located further south of the harbor. Other recreational establishments in the area include the Pua Ka ʻIlima ʻO Kawaihae Cultural Surf Park within the Coral Flats area and Na Kalai Waʻa Moku ʻO Hawaiʻi.

The Ala Kahakai NHT is in the immediate vicinity of Kawaihae Harbor and is managed by the NPS, DLNR, and County in accordance with the *Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management Plan* (NPS 2009). The trail is included in the DLNR, Division of Forestry and Wildlife Nā Ala Hele trail system. The trail was established in 2000 for the preservation and, protection and interpretation of traditional Native Hawaiian culture and natural resources. The trail runs along the coastline encompassing ancient fishermen's trails and Hawaiian Kingdom roads, it allows users access to the shoreline, protected anchialine ponds, and petroglyph fields.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Impacts on recreational activities are expected to be minimal as these activities are generally localized to the adjacent Kawaihae Small Boat Harbors while other sites are located farther from the Project area, minimizing potential impacts. Access to the small boat harbors will be maintained throughout construction and no long-term impacts are anticipated as improvements will be contained to the Project site. HDOT-HAR will notify the community regarding construction activities that may impact recreational uses during construction. Construction BMPs will be implemented to maintain water quality throughout construction, minimizing impacts to in-water recreational activities.

Proposed roadway widening will maintain a six-foot-wide open corridor between the harbor perimeter fence and the highway shoulder for the Ala Kahakai NHT. Trail reconstruction is a distinct and separate action from the current project and is assumed to be managed independently by the Ala Kahakai NHT extension of the NPS. Access to the recreational resources within the Coral Flats area, including the Pua Ka ʻIlima ʻO Kawaihae Cultural Surf Park, will be maintained throughout construction. As a result, the Project would not have an adverse effect on recreational services in the Project area or vicinity.

3.12 Socioeconomics

Affected Environment and Existing Conditions

The State of Hawai'i relies on approximately 4,430 miles of public roadways with 55 miles of interstate highways, none of which connect the islands to the continent or provide inter-island surface transport. As a result, harbor facilities are essential for sustaining daily life in the state. Kawaihae Harbor plays a key role in delivering goods to the over 200,000 residents of Hawai'i County (U.S. Census Bureau 2024), handling containerized, breakbulk, and bulk cargo that supports various local industries and consumer needs.

Population, Housing, and Community Character

Kawaihae Harbor is located in the South Kohala District of Hawai'i Island, which is a predominantly rural area. The South Kohala District covers approximately 300 square miles on the northwestern side of Hawai'i Island. The Project site is located primarily in Census Tract 217.08, while a portion of Kawaihae Road is in Census Tract 218, which includes Kawaihae Hawaiian Home Lands. Census Tract 217.07 is also located near the Project area and includes a portion of Waikōloa. See Figure 3-5.

The nearest main population center and commercial hub in the district is Waimea Town (Census Tracts 217.05 and 217.06) which is about 9 miles east of Kawaihae Harbor, with a population of about 10,000 residents. Many residents of Waimea have multi-generational ties to the ranching industry. Further south of the harbor are the coastal resort areas of Waikōloa and Mauna Lani, which have higher populations of new residents compared to Waimea, including workers in the tourism industry, retirees, and second-home owners (Hawai'i Island Agricultural Partnership 2024).

The following Table 3-3 highlights the historical population and projected population growth for the County of Hawai'i and the State of Hawai'i. According to DBEDT population estimates, the County's population is projected to grow from 200,712 in 2020 to 230,730 in 2050, an increase of approximately 15%.

Table 3-3: Resident Population, Historical and Projected (2010-2050)

Year	State of Hawai'i Population	Hawai'i County Population
2010[a]	1,365,065	185,296
2020[a]	1,451,043	200,712
2030[b]	1,501,150	215,570
2040[b]	1,542,570	224,460
2050[b]	1,560,890	230,730

[a] Estimates by the U.S. Census Bureau (USCB) for July 1st
[b] Projections by DBEDT for July 1st population (DBEDT 2024)

To compare conditions within the Project area, which is primarily within Census Tract 217.08 but includes a portion of Census Tract 218, compared to the County of Hawai'i and State of Hawai'i, data from the 2024 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates that cover the period from 2020 to 2024 was used in the analysis that follows (USCB 2024).

Figure 3-5. Project Area Census Tracts

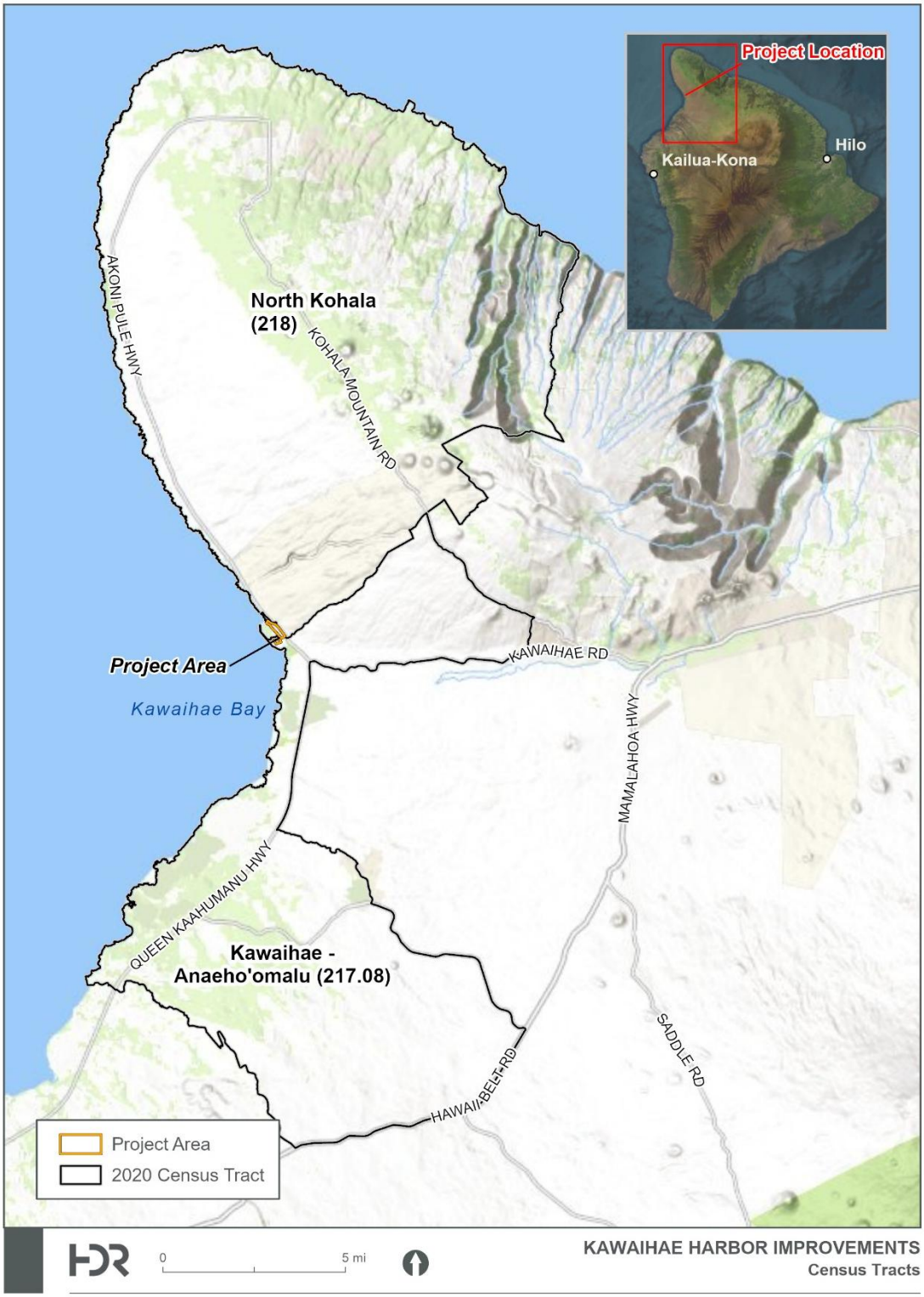


Table 3-4: Population and Age Distribution shows the population and age distribution of residents in the state, county, and Census Tracts where the Project is located. The County of Hawai'i has a slightly older population than the rest of the state and in general, with 23.8% aged 65 and over compared to 20.5% for the state. Census Tract 217.08 has a comparatively higher percentage of the population aged 18 and under compared to the county (24.6% compared to 20.6%), it also has a higher percentage of its population aged 65 and over (24.9% for Census Tract 217.08 compared to 23.8% for the county).

Table 3-4: Population and Age Distribution

Population and Age	State of Hawai'i	Hawai'i County	Census Tract 217.08	Census Tract 218
Total Population	1,445,235	205,769	4,475	7,153
Population 18 and under, percent	20.7%	20.6%	24.6%	23.2%
Population 65 and over, percent	20.5%	23.8%	24.9%	29.6%

Note: USCB data was collected from 2024 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates that cover the period from 2020 to 2024.
Source: USCB 2024

Native Hawaiians originally inhabited Hawai'i Island in significant numbers, developing extensive agricultural systems and ahupua'a-based land management. However, after western contact in the late eighteenth century the Native Hawaiian population declined rapidly because of introduced diseases and broader socioeconomic changes. The expansion of sugar plantations in Hawai'i further introduced changes with the immigration of laborers from Asia and Europe. Kawaihae has historically been a major coastal landing and trading site. The area was one of the only suitable landing sites for vessels due to a gap in the extensive reef flats and played a key role in the early logging, whaling, and ranching industries on the island (DHHL 2024). In more recent years, economic diversification through tourism, military and government, and research related development have contributed to migration from other parts of the U.S. Table 3-5 below illustrates an overview of the racial and ethnic characteristics of Hawai'i County along with Census tracts 217.08 and 218 where the Project is located. A significant portion of the population of Census Tract 218 are non-white minorities who live on the nearby 10,000 acres of Hawaiian Home Lands and 193 homestead leases held by Native Hawaiian families.

Table 3-5: Race and Ethnicity

Race	State of Hawai'i		Hawai'i County		Census Tract 217.08		Census Tract 218	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
White	319,370	22.1%	63,553	30.9%	2,122	47.4%	1,749	24.5%
Black or African American	27,320	1.9%	1,678	0.8%	0	0.0%	42	0.6%
American Indian and Alaska Native	3,662	0.3%	921	0.4%	2	0.0%	16	0.2%
Asian	533,801	36.9%	42,748	20.8%	258	5.8%	1,276	17.8%

Race	State of Hawai'i		Hawai'i County		Census Tract 217.08		Census Tract 218	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	145,701	10.1%	25,749	12.5%	957	21.4%	1,008	14.1%
Some Other Race	247,29	1.7%	4,215	2.0%	104	2.3%	64	0.9%
Two or More Races	390,652	27.0%	66,905	32.5%	1,032	23.1%	2,998	41.9%
Total	1,445,235	100%	205,769	100%	4,475	100%	7,153	100%

Source: USCB 2024

Hawai'i County has about 200,000 residents distributed throughout about a 200-mile length of low-density settlement along the island's coast. This has mainly been characterized by single-family homes, with about 18,449 acres used for these units, while only 3,403 acres are used for multi-family homes (County 2024). In response to high housing demand and low availability, many single-family homes are occupied by multiple generations. Housing demand in Hawai'i has outpaced housing development and will need to be addressed in coming years. To address high housing demand, recent estimates note that Hawai'i would need an average of 900 new housing units a year to accommodate past and future growth through 2045 (County 2024). Affordable housing will be a critical component of this. There are approximately 1,647 total occupied housing units in Census Tract 217.08 and 2,476 in Census Tract 218. As shown in Table 3-6, the average household size in Census Tract 217.08 is 2.72 persons, which is consistent with the rural character of the area and slightly lower than the overall average for the state and county (2.85 and 2.74, respectively). The average household size in Census Tract 218 is more similar to that of the state at 2.88.

Table 3-6: Housing and Poverty Statistics

Population and Age	State of Hawai'i	Hawai'i County	Census Tract 217.08	Census Tract 218
Average Household Size	2.85	2.74	2.72	2.88
Total households (occupied housing units)	492,453	74,072	1,647	2,476
Total housing units	567,896	90,735	4,875	2,797

Source: USCB 2024

Employment and Income Patterns

Hawai'i Island has three main economic sectors: the services producing sector, the goods producing sector, and agriculture. The services producing sector provides the highest rate of employment at 85.4% in 2020 (County 2024). Government is the largest single employer in the state, while tourism remains the second largest employer despite diversification efforts over the years. In the County of Hawai'i, tourism drives the arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services industries, and a portion of retail trade. Growth is expected in the educational services, business services, health services, eating and drinking, and professional services sectors according to the DBEDT 2045 forecast (DBEDT 2018).

In both Census Tracts 217.08 and 218 the greatest percentage of the civilian population over 16 years old is employed in the "art, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services" industry (USCB 2024). The County of Hawai'i has an overall unemployment rate higher

than the rest of the state as shown below. However, from 2024 to 2025 both the statewide and county unemployment rates have dropped, indicating strong labor demand (DBEDT 2025).

The median household income in Census Tract 217.08 is similar to that of the state ($105,417 and $100,389, respectively), while median household income in Census Tract 218 is lower at $95,000. As shown in Table 3-7, the state median household income is $100,389 (USCB 2024). Per capita income in Census Tract 217.08 is $50,417 and lower in Census Tract 218 at $42,991. The Project site is comparable or higher than the county's per capita income of $39,739. The county's per capita income is lower than the overall state average ($46,005).

Table 3-7: Employment and Income

Employment Status	State of Hawai'i	Hawai'i County	Census Tract 217.08	Census Tract 218
Civilian labor force, number	701,694	94,449	1,808	3,279
Civilian labor force, percentage	59.6%	56.2%	50.8%	57.3%
Unemployment rate, percentage	4.9%	6.0%	1.2%	4.2%
Median household income	$100,389	$78,639	$105,417	$95,000
Per capita income	$46,005	$39,739	$50,417	$42,991
Percentage of families and people whose income in the past 12 months is below the poverty level, all families	6.8%	10.3%	10.4%	5.2%

Note: The civilian labor force represents all citizens 16 years or older who are either employed or unemployed and looking for work, excluding members of the armed forces.
Source: USCB 2024

In general, the County of Hawai'i has a notable mismatch between areas of higher population density and job opportunities. The Kawaihae region has relatively fewer jobs compared to other areas in Hawai'i County such as Kailua-Kona and Hilo. As a result, many Kawaihae residents commute to work in Waimea or Kona, with many spending 30 minutes or more on their daily commute (DHHL 2024). Hawai'i County, including the Project area, has a lower percentage than the state of residents who use public transit or walk to commute to work as shown in Table 3-8 below. Therefore, there is an increased reliance on roadways in the area for residents who drive alone or carpool to work.

Table 3-8: Travel Mode for Commuting to Work

Mode	State of Hawai'i	Hawai'i County	Census Tract 217.08	Census Tract 218
Car, truck, or van – drove alone, percent	65.2%	68.2%	69.1%	67.5%
Car, truck, or van – carpooled, percent	13.9%	14.8%	15.0%	21.9%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab), percent	3.8%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Walked, percent	4.3%	1.9%	0.8%	0.6%
Other means, percent	3.2%	2.3%	1.3%	1.2%
Worked from home, percent	9.6%	12.1%	13.8%	8.9%

Note: For all workers 16 years old and older.

Source: USCB 2024

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

The Project will have long-term benefits to the area residents through increased resiliency and reliability of the harbor, which serves as a critical commercial gateway for Hawai'i Island. The harbor facilitates import of food, fuel, construction materials, consumer goods, and other essential commodities relied upon by area residents and businesses. The Project will increase operational efficiency and cargo-handling capacity, supporting reliable access to resources needed to support both current demands and projected future growth in nearby communities. The Project is consistent with the site's long-existing use as an industrial harbor and is therefore not anticipated to impact the character of the local community.

In addition, it is anticipated that the Project will generate jobs during construction using local and union labor. The Project must comply with prevailing wage laws; therefore, local workers will be paid fairly and receive competitive wages for the area. Improvements to Kawaihae Road are anticipated to ease existing traffic congestion on the roadway, thus reducing commute times for residents near Kawaihae. During construction there may be minimal, short-term impacts related to construction activities, including slowdowns and interruptions to local traffic. A TCP will be developed as the Project progresses and implemented to minimize adverse impacts. As a result, the Project would not have an adverse effect on Socioeconomics in the Project area and vicinity.

3.13 Hazardous Materials

Affected Environment and Existing Conditions

The HDOH Hazard Evaluation and Emergency Response System (iHEER) maps report emergency releases, discovery and remediation sites, and Hawai'i Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (HEPCRA) facilities. According to iHEER, there are four reported hazardous material (HAZMAT) releases in the vicinity of the Project (iHEER 2026).

The Kawaihae Harbor Pier 2 Dry Well site located within the Project area has a documented historical release. Adjacent to the Project area is the former Chevron Kawaihae Terminal and Par Kawaihae Terminal, which also have reported historical releases. Kawaihae Harbor is within the Waikōloa Maneuver Area, a Formerly Used Defense Site where there are concerns of potential hazardous, toxic, and radioactive waste associated with the military's historic use of the property (USACE 2023). Remediation projects and field investigations related to this site are ongoing.

Kawaihae Harbor has experienced historic petroleum contamination of its groundwater, largely associated with long-term fuel storage and transfer operations at multiple harbor facilities. (HDOT-HAR 2024)

An Environmental Hazard Evaluation Update completed by AECOM in 2025 evaluated a site at the harbor owned by the State of Hawai'i and currently leased to the Big Island Energy Company, LLC operating as Akana Petroleum, Inc. for petroleum and lubricant storage and retail services. (AECOM 2025). The terminal at Pier 2 was originally constructed in the 1950s. Although no official documentation exists confirming petroleum releases to subsurface soil or groundwater, historical operations of underground and aboveground petroleum pipelines, aboveground storage tanks (ASTs), and related infrastructure indicate that such releases may have occurred. A total of ten ASTs were present, five of which remain but have been out of service since 2009. The tanks

contained gasoline, diesel, jet fuel, and bunker fuel, and leaks over time were likely caused by corrosion or spills during transport and loading. Soil sampling and groundwater testing conducted between 2019 and 2020 indicated that lead levels, likely from corroded AST coverings and fuel-related contamination, were elevated; however, these levels were below HDOH safety standards.

The current Par Hawaii fuel storage facility at Pier 2 was constructed in the 1950s. The facility historically contained five ASTs. The site is unpaved and is therefore susceptible to soil and groundwater contamination from releases (TRC 2004). A groundwater monitoring well was placed at the site to assess potential contamination and was removed in 2006. Analysis completed in 2008 determined that the oil- and diesel-range petroleum hydrocarbons soil sample concentrations were under HDOH limits. More recently, the Limited Programmatic Environmental Hazard Evaluation and Environmental Hazard Management Plan (EHE-EHMP) for Hilo and Kawaihae Harbors from July 2024 (HDOT-HAR 2024), reports minor releases of oil- and diesel-range petroleum hydrocarbons, that did not require remediation. The plan also documents a separate petroleum release with impacts on soil and groundwater, for which no remediation is currently in place.

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Over the long-term, the Project is not expected to result in impacts related to hazardous materials. The Project does not involve the expansion or modification of sites where the potential for additional releases exists. During construction, BMPs and proper handling procedures will be implemented to ensure that no new hazardous materials are introduced to the area. Both engineered remedial measures and long-term institutional controls have been implemented and continue to be maintained to protect human health and the environment within Kawaihae Harbor. Despite these measures, potentially hazardous contaminants of concern (COCs) remain present in soil, groundwater, and soil gas at various locations throughout the harbor. The Limited Programmatic EHE-EHMP identifies the sources of existing contamination as historical activities. Residual contamination may be present in soil and groundwater as a result of historic activities. Therefore, if soil from this area is moved offsite before proper research and sampling, it could impact humans and ecological resources in off-site locations.

The Project does not generally include dewatering or excavation below the groundwater table; however, excavation depths required for installation of 80-foot light pole foundations may extend below groundwater elevations and would require temporary dewatering. Temporary dewatering would be conducted in compliance with applicable NPDES permitting requirements. Therefore, impacts to contaminated groundwater are not anticipated with the implementation of BMPs. Additionally, grading and excavation activities to repave the yard may encounter soil contamination. To minimize potential exposure and ensure safe management of contaminated materials during construction, the following BMPs will be implemented.

- Workers who may encounter contaminated soil must wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Field oversight will be maintained by a Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) to ensure contaminated soil is properly managed.
- Workers who may encounter contaminated soil must have required training (at a minimum, 40-hour OSHA Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) certification and current 8-hour annual refresher training).

- Soil trucked off-site must be drained of fluids and covered with a dust screen during transport.
- If previously unknown soil contamination is discovered, the HDOH HEER Office must be notified immediately and reported as a new release.

Prior to reusing soil on-site or disposing of it at a licensed facility, soil will be sampled and properly characterized to decide its final disposition. Construction equipment fueling and maintenance will occur in designated areas using secondary containment and spill prevention measures in accordance with applicable BMPs. A Spill Prevention and Response Plan will be implemented during construction. The Project will further comply with the HDOH Technical Guidance Manual and the 2024 Limited Programmatic EHE-EHMP (HDOT-HAR 2024) to safely manage residual contamination, thereby protecting workers, the public, and the environment. As a result, the Project would not have an adverse effect on a known hazardous materials site and would not accidentally release hazardous materials in the Project area.

3.14 Visual Resources

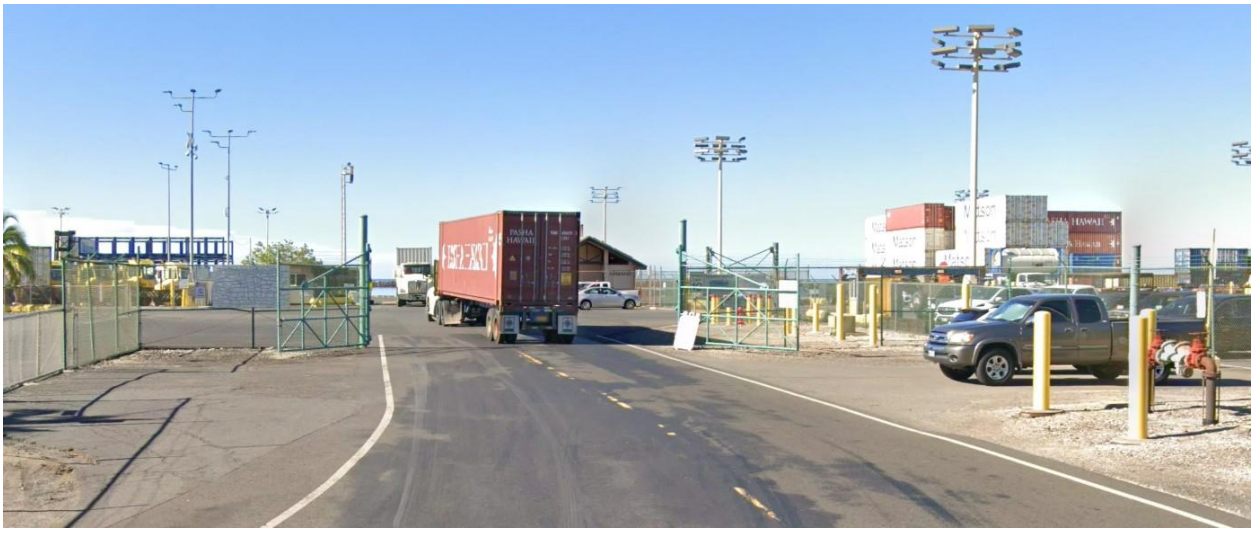
Affected Environment and Existing Conditions

Visual receptors in the vicinity include travelers along Kawaihae Road, harbor users, nearby commercial properties, and visitors to nearby historic and recreational areas, including Puʻukoholā Heiau NHS. Kawaihae Harbor's visual environment is characterized by an industrial development typical of a commercial harbor, with the landscape dominated by views of stacked containers, cargo yard lighting, above-ground storage tanks, buildings, and barges. There is generally a lack of natural vegetation or formal landscaping. See Figure 3-6.

Figure 3-6. Aerial View of the Project Site Looking North

On the makai or ocean side of the road, views along the Project boundary are dominated by the harbor. Figure 3-7 and Figure 3-8 show the surrounding landscape of the Kawaihae Harbor facility from the main gate and from the southernmost gate, which is also used to access the Coral Flats area.

Figure 3-7. Makai view of Main Gate into Kawaihae Harbor (Looking Southwest)



Source: Google Maps

Figure 3-8. View of the Southern Entrance to Harbor and Coral Flats Area from Kawaihae Road (Looking Southwest)

Source: Google Maps

On the mauka or mountain side of the road, open space and views of Kohala Mountain are obscured by tall trees, berms, and weedy vegetation characteristic of the dry environment. Traveling further north along Kawaihae Road are pockets of commercial structures on the mauka side.

A rock outcrop surrounds Kawaihae Road in the vicinity of the planned roadway widening, which further obscures mauka views and intermittently blocks views of the harbor (Figure 3-9).

Figure 3-9. View of the Rock Outcrop Along a Portion of Kawaihae Road (Traveling Northwest)

Source: Google Maps

The Coral Flats area was built using dredged spoils from the original harbor construction. Vegetation in the Coral Flats area consists mainly of kiawe forest in unused areas and weedy species in the in-use areas (HDOT-HAR 2013). The Pua Ka ʻIlima O Kawaihae Cultural Surf Park on Coral Flats but outside of the Project area has small, landscaped areas.

South of Kawaihae Harbor and outside of the Project area, the Puʻukoholā Heiau NHS is a prominent visual resource. The 86-acre property contains culturally significant structures such as the Puʻukoholā Heiau and Mailekini Heiau (HDOT-HAR 2013). Just below Puʻukoholā Heiau is the Pelekāne Beach, which abuts the Coral Flats area but is not in the Project area. Kawaihae Harbor is visible from the Puʻukoholā Heiau NHS and partially screened by the Pelekāne Buffer Zone and existing topography (HDOT-HAR 2011).

Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Temporary, minor adverse visual impacts may occur during construction, particularly during roadway widening and modification of the coral rock outcrop. Construction equipment, temporary traffic control devices, and exposed soils may be visible from Kawaihae Road and nearby vantage points. These effects would be temporary and consistent with the existing industrial character of the harbor setting.

Roadway widening would follow the same alignment as the existing road. Modification of the rock outcrop adjacent to Kawaihae Road may increase visibility of harbor operations from certain roadway viewpoints. However, the surrounding landscape is already characterized by industrial harbor features, including container stacks, storage tanks, and marine vessels. Therefore, impacts are anticipated to be negligible.

No protected scenic vistas identified in county or state plans or studies would be impacted by the Project, nor is the Project area identified within a designated view plane. Visual considerations related to historic properties were also evaluated as part of the Section 106 consultation process (Section 3.1). The Project was determined not to result in adverse effects to historic properties,

including Puʻukoholā Heiau NHS. The Pelekāne Buffer Zone between Coral Flats and the Puʻukoholā Heiau NHS will continue to serve as a physical and visual separation between the site and the industrial harbor facility. Long-term visual conditions as viewed from Puʻukoholā Heiau NHS are not anticipated to substantially change as a result of the Proposed Action.

Installation of new light poles would introduce additional vertical elements within the harbor facility. While container terminals typically use 100- to 120-foot-tall mast lights to provide recommended illumination, new lighting at Kawaihae Harbor will use 80-foot-tall light poles in conjunction with dark-sky compliant lights to minimize potential visual impacts from various vantage points in the area at night. Additionally, automatic light sensors would be used in the cargo yard so that lights turn off when there is no activity. Moreover, it is anticipated that the poles need to be painted yellow only up to a certain height and that the remainder of the poles will be painted with a color that blends the poles with the backdrop to mitigate visual impacts during the day. With implementation of these measures, long-term visual impacts would be minor and consistent with the established industrial character of Kawaihae Harbor. As a result, the Project would not have an adverse effect on visual resources in the Project area.

3.15 Secondary and Cumulative Impacts

Secondary Impacts

Secondary or indirect impacts are caused by an action at a later time or at a distance from the immediate Project vicinity but are reasonably foreseeable. These impacts may include land use pattern changes, population growth, or downstream impacts to water or air quality.

The Proposed Action is not expected to induce residential development, population growth, or changes in regional land use patterns. The Project is limited to improvements within the existing Kawaihae Harbor facility and adjacent roadway and is intended to improve operational efficiency to meet existing demand rather than expand harbor capacity beyond current needs.

Temporary economic benefits may occur from construction-related employment and procurement of materials and services. In the long term, improved operational efficiency may support continued commercial activity at the harbor; however, the Project does not expand the harbor footprint or introduce new development types that would substantially alter growth patterns.

Improved traffic flow at the harbor main entrance due to roadway widening may indirectly reduce vehicle idling and localized congestion. Relocation of facilities from flood-prone areas may incrementally improve operational resilience but would not alter regional hazard exposure.

No substantial adverse secondary impacts are anticipated.

Cumulative Impacts

HAR § 11-200.1-2 defines cumulative impacts as incremental impact of the proposed action when combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. This means individually minor impacts could become collectively significant.

The cumulative study area includes Kawaihae Harbor, Coral Flats, Kawaihae Road (Route 270), adjacent coastal waters, and nearby cultural resources.

Past actions include original harbor construction in the mid-20th century, dredging, upland fill placement, yard development, roadway improvements, and prior erosion and pavement repairs. These activities established the existing industrial character of the harbor and permanently altered portions of the natural landscape.

Recently completed projects include the Kawaihae Harbor Erosion Repairs and Vehicle Barrier Installations completed in 2024 (HDOT-HAR n.d.), as well as the intersection improvements at Queen Kaʻahumanu Highway and Kawaihae Road, which were completed in November 2018 (HDOT-HWY 2018).

Ongoing or foreseeable projects in the vicinity include:

- Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management Plan (NPS 2009), which includes a proposal to continue the trail north through Kawaihae using land mauka of Kawaihae Harbor. Ala Kahakai NHT reconstruction is a distinct and separate action from the current project and is assumed to be managed independently by the Ala Kahakai NHT extension of the NPS.
- Grading Coral Flats, which includes the grading of about 13 acres of the central portion of Coral Flats to create a more level area that enhances usability for harbor operations (estimated completion November 2026). A portion of this area would be used for construction staging for the Proposed Action.
- Kawaihae Harbor Pavement Repairs (estimated completion November 2025; HDOT-HAR n.d.)
- Kawaihae Harbor Pier 2A Substructure Repairs (estimated completion March 2026; HDOT-HAR n.d.)
- Route 19 – Kawaihae Road, Waiaka Stream Bridge Replacement, which includes realignment of approaches to the intersection (HDOT-HWY n.d.)
- An "Emergency Escape Route & Traffic Safety Measures" project identified in the DHHL *Kawaihae Regional Plan* which seeks to develop emergency access route for residents of Kailapa, as ʻAkoni Pule Highway is the sole route (DHHL 2024) (Section 4.2.6)
- A project to "Improve Coastal & Marine Resource in Kawaihae through Erosion Mitigation" in the DHHL *Kawaihae Regional Plan* which would seek to promote reforestation efforts in Kawaihae (DHHL 2024) (Section 4.2.6)

The Grading Coral Flats was a separately planned project and is anticipated to be completed prior to initiation of the Proposed Action. Because the grading would be finished beforehand and the Proposed Action would use the newly leveled area for construction staging, the Project would not result in additional ground disturbance in that location, and no long-term cumulative effects would occur.

When considered in combination with these actions, the incremental impacts of the Proposed Action are not anticipated to be significant. The Project occurs within previously disturbed and industrialized areas and does not expand the harbor footprint or intensify land use beyond its existing function. Implementation of erosion and sediment control measures and compliance with applicable permits will minimize potential contributions to cumulative water quality impacts. Historic and cultural resource mitigation measures agreed upon under Section 106 (Section 3.1) will mitigate the likelihood of contributing to cumulative effects on historic properties along

Kawaihae Road. Widening of Kawaihae Road is planned to address existing congestion and is not expected to generate new traffic demand.

The Project does not increase long-term harbor throughput beyond existing demand and is not anticipated to meaningfully contribute to cumulative air quality or GHG impacts relative to regional sources. Installation of conduits and transformer pads will not, in and of themselves, increase cargo throughput or operational intensity at the harbor. Future electrical upgrades would be subject to separate environmental and regulatory review, as applicable. Therefore, these improvements do not represent a commitment to larger actions or create substantial cumulative impacts.

Visual and noise impacts associated with the Proposed Action would be consistent with the established industrial setting and are not expected to substantially add to cumulative effects in the area.

Considering the industrialized nature of the Project area, the limited scope of improvements, and the historic and cultural resources mitigation measures identified in this EA, the incremental contribution of the Proposed Action to cumulative impacts is not anticipated to be significant when combined with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions.

4.0 Federal, State, and County Plans and Policies

Federal, State, and County policies, plans, and land use controls are established to guide development to enhance the environment and quality of life. These plans, policies, and land use controls at each level of the government have been put into effect to help promote the long-term social, economic, environmental, and land use needs of the community and region. The Project's relationship to and conformance with land use policies, plans, and controls for the region are summarized in this chapter.

4.1 Federal

Because the Project involves the use of Federal MARAD funds, it is subject to Federal statutory and regulatory requirements as discussed in the subsequent sections.

4.1.1 National Environmental Policy Act

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended (Public Law 91-190; 42 United States Code [U.S.C.] §§ 4321–4347), establishes a national policy to promote informed decision-making by federal agencies through consideration of the environmental effects of proposed federal actions. NEPA requires federal agencies to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of their actions, consider reasonable alternatives, and involve the public in the decision-making process.

For this Project, compliance with NEPA will be carried out in accordance with MARAD's Maritime Administrative Order (MAO) 600-1, *Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts*, which implements NEPA for MARAD actions, as well as the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) Order 5610.1D, *Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts*.

> **Discussion:** HDOT-HAR is coordinating with MARAD regarding federal environmental review requirements and the class of action. A separate environmental review document will be prepared, as appropriate, to satisfy NEPA requirements.

4.1.2 National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Section 106)

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended (PL 89-665, codified as 54 U.S.C. 470), recognizes the nation's historic heritage and establishes a national policy for the preservation of historic properties as well as the NHRP. Section 106 of the NHPA (16 U.S.C. 470f) requires that Federal agencies consider the effects of their projects on historic properties. The purpose of the Section 106 consultation process is to evaluate the potential for effects on existing historic sites, if any, resulting from the Project.

The Section 106 review process encompasses "good faith effort" in ascertaining the existence and location of historic properties near and within the Project site, establishing an APE of the Project, identifying whether a potential for "adverse effects" on historic properties by the Project exists, and developing a reasonable and acceptable resolution in the monitoring and treatment of any historic sites that is agreed upon by the agency, the SHPO, and consulting government agencies, community associations, and NHOs and families.

> **Discussion:** Consultation letters initiating the Section 106 process for the proposed Project were sent to SHPO, NHOs, and Native Hawaiian descendants with ancestral, lineal,

or cultural ties to the APEs on January 15, 2025. A public notice about the Section 106 process was published in the January 2025 edition of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs *Ka Wai Ola*, as well as the January 15, 2025, issues of the *Star Advertiser*, the *Hawaii Tribune Herald*, and the *West Hawaii Today*.

Three APEs for identification of historic properties were identified and concurred with by SHPO in a letter dated March 25, 2025. A full discussion of the identification and evaluation of historic properties within the Project APEs is provided in Section 3.1. As described in Section 3.1.1, no historic properties were identified in APE 1 where all Project improvements would occur. Ten historic properties were found within APE 2 and a partial view of Project improvements exists from the Puʻukoholā Heiau Complex looking north toward Haleakalā was identified within APE 3. All of the identified sites were evaluated under federal criteria (36 CFR Part 60.4) for historic significance and are eligible for preservation consideration under Section 106 of the NHPA.

Under the Project, Kawaihae Harbor would continue to be used for harbor-related purposes; the proposed Project would not introduce any new permanent indirect visual, auditory, or atmospheric impacts. It is not anticipated that the Project would introduce direct or indirect adverse impacts to identified historic properties in APE 2 or 3. Based on the information, MARAD determined that the Project would have "No Adverse Effect" to historic properties. MARAD submitted an effect determination letter to SHPO on October 20, 2025, with the finding. On December 1, 2025, SHPD concurred with the determination that, with the implementation of recommended mitigation measures, the Project would have no adverse effect, pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.5(b) (Appendix C). Refer to Section 3.1.1 for a summary of the agreed upon mitigation measures that the Project will implement.

4.1.3 Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Section 7)

The 1973 Endangered Species Act (ESA; 16 U.S.C. 1531-1544) establishes a process for identifying and listing threatened and endangered species, as well as requires programs for the conservation of Federally listed endangered and threatened plants and wildlife and designated critical habitats for such species. The ESA prohibits actions by Federal agencies that would likely jeopardize the continued existence of those species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat. Section 7 of the ESA requires consultations with Federal wildlife management agencies, such as the USFWS and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

Discussion: The Project has undergone an informal consultation with USFWS, which is documented in Appendix E and discussed in Section 3.2. According to the USFWS Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC), list dated July 16, 2025, 16 listed ESA-species are potentially present in the Project area and there is no designated critical habitat. A biological survey conducted July 2025 identified three of the IPaC species as potentially present in the Project area: the Band-rumped Storm-Petrel, Hawaiian Petrel, and Newell's Shearwater (Appendix D). Details on the results of the biological survey and the potential impacts to listed species are presented in Section 3.2. Mitigation measures were developed to minimize Project impact to listed species, which are also included in Section 3.2.4.

An informal consultation letter was provided to USFWS on August 1, 2025, requesting concurrence with MARAD's conclusion that, with the implementation of proposed mitigation measures, the proposed Project may affect but is not likely to adversely affect listed or proposed-for-listing species. On October 1, 2025, USFWS concurred with findings that the Proposed Action may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, the listed Hawaiian seabirds.

4.1.4 Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972

The 1972 Federal Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Act ensures activities within or outside the coastal zone that affect any land or water use or natural resource of the coastal zone will be carried out in a manner which is consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the enforceable policies of approved State management programs. Hawai'i's Coastal Zone Management Program (CZMP) was enacted to provide a common focus for state and county actions dealing with land and water uses and activities. Projects that require federal permits or are supported by certain federal funding sources are required by the CZMA to be consistent with Hawai'i's CZMP objectives and policies through a Federal Consistency Review. The State administers the enforcement of this Act under the Hawai'i CZMP (HRS Chapter 205A). The proposed Project is located within the Coastal Zone as defined by the State of Hawai'i. The CZM area encompasses the entire state and extends seaward to the limit of the state's police power and management authority, to include the territorial sea.

Discussion: The Project site, as with the entire State, is located within the CZM area. However, the Proposed Action does not require one of the federal permits, such as an Army Corp permit, nor is receiving financial assistance from one of the federal programs identified in CZMP's Hawaii's Listed Federal Actions. Therefore, CZM Federal Consistency Review is not anticipated to be required for the Proposed Action. A full discussion of the Project's compatibility with HRS Chapter 205A is provided in Section 4.2.3.

4.1.5 Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act

The Federal government enacted the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to ensure equal opportunities and accommodations for individuals with disabilities. Title II of the ADA enforces nondiscrimination against persons with disabilities when using state and local government services, per 28 CFR Part 35. As stated in 28 CFR § 35.151, which applies to new construction and alterations, portions of facilities altered by public entities must be designed and constructed so they can be accessed by those with disabilities, to the maximum extent feasible, using accessible design standards.

Discussion: Improvements in Kawaihae Harbor and Kawaihae Road will be designed to adhere to appropriate standards to ensure ADA-compliance of facilities.

4.2 State

4.2.1 Hawai‘i State Plan

The Hawai‘i State Plan, HRS Chapter 226, is the umbrella document in the statewide planning system. It serves as a written guide for the long-range development of the State by describing a desired future for the residents of Hawai‘i and providing a set of goals, objectives, and policies that are intended to shape the general direction of public and private development.

The Project supports and is consistent with the following State Plan objectives.

> *SEC. 226-17 Objective and policies for facility systems – transportation. (a) Planning for the State's facility systems with regard to transportation shall be directed towards the achievement of the following objectives:*
>
> *(1) An integrated multi-modal transportation system that services statewide needs and promotes the efficient, economical, safe, and convenient movement of people and goods.*
>
> *(2) A statewide transportation system that is consistent with and will accommodate planned growth objectives throughout the State.*
>
> *(b) To achieve the transportation objectives, it shall be the policy of this State to:*
>
> *(2) Coordinate state, county, Federal, and private transportation activities and programs toward the achievement of statewide objectives.*
>
> *(3) Encourage a reasonable distribution of financial responsibilities for transportation among participating governmental and private parties.*
>
> *(4) Provide for improved accessibility to shipping, docking, and storage facilities.*
>
> *(6) Encourage transportation systems that serve to accommodate present and future development needs of communities.*
>
> *(8) Increase the capacities of airport and harbor systems and support facilities to effectively accommodate transshipment and storage needs.*
>
> *(10) Encourage the design and the development of transportation systems sensitive to the needs of affected communities and the quality of Hawaii's natural environment.*

Discussion: The Project directly fulfills the Hawai‘i State Plan's objectives for transportation systems. Specifically, the Project will support an integrated, multimodal transportation system for the State of Hawai‘i by improving harbor facilities and providing better landside access for cargo operations. The widening of Kawaihae Road will improve accessibility to the harbor and reduce traffic congestion, reducing commute times for residents and improving the efficient movement of

goods to, from and through the harbor. Reconstruction of a portion of the harbor's cargo yards to replace deteriorating existing asphalt pavement and paving pockets of unpaved areas with reinforced concrete will increase efficiency and safety of cargo operations and will allow the harbor to effectively accommodate modern heavy-lift cargo operations and stacked container storage. The Project will also increase operational efficiency and cargo-handling capacity, supporting reliable access to resources needed to support both current demands and projected future growth in nearby communities. These improvements will strengthen harbor resiliency and help Kawaihae Harbor reliably serve as alternative to Hilo Harbor during emergency or natural disaster events.

The Project has been designed to address community needs while implementing BMPs and other measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate adverse impacts on the natural environment (Sections 3.2 and 3.3). The Project will be implemented through a coordinated funding approach, leveraging both state and federal resources, highlighting a reasonable distribution of financial responsibility among government agencies.

> *SEC. 226-14 Objective and policies for facility systems – in general. (a) Planning for the State's facility systems in general shall be directed towards achievement of the objective of water, transportation, waste disposal, and energy and telecommunication systems that support statewide social, economic, and physical objectives.*
>
> *(b)To achieve the general facility systems objective, it shall be the policy of this State to:*
>
> *(1) Accommodate the needs of Hawaii's people through coordination of facility systems and capital improvement priorities in consonance with state and county plans.*
>
> *(2) Encourage flexibility in the design and development of facility systems to promote prudent use of resources and accommodate changing public demands and priorities.*
>
> *(3) Ensure that required facility systems can be supported within resource capacities and at reasonable cost to the user.*
>
> *(4) Pursue alternative methods of financing programs and projects and cost-saving techniques in the planning, construction, and maintenance of facility systems.*

Discussion: The Proposed Action supports the Hawai'i State Plan's objectives for facility systems through improving harbor infrastructure. This capital improvements Project aligns with both state and county plans. The Project will allow the harbor increased flexibility for increased cargo demands through yard improvements and widening of Kawaihae Road. The Project leverages both federal PIDP funding and state HDOT funds. Over the long-term the Project will generate cost savings by reducing maintenance requirements and improving the efficiency of cargo movement.

4.2.2 State Land Use Law

Lands in the State of Hawai'i are classified into one of four land use districts pursuant to HRS Chapter 205 and 205A and HAR Chapter 15-15: Urban, Rural, Agricultural, and Conservation. The Project area is entirely within the Urban State Land Use District (Figure 1-3).

> **Discussion:** The proposed improvements are allowable uses within this land use district and are consistent with the permitted activities outlined in the applicable county ordinance. No change in land use classification is needed.

4.2.3 Coastal Zone Management, Hawai'i Revised Statutes Chapter 205A

Under HRS Chapter 205A, the CZM is a comprehensive framework that establishes and enforces standards and policies guiding public and private development within coastal areas. Hawai'i's CZMP was enacted to provide a common focus for state and county actions dealing with land and water uses and activities. State CZM objectives and policies address ten subject areas: (1) recreational resources, (2) historic resources, (3) scenic and open space resources, (4) coastal ecosystems, (5) economic uses, (6) coastal hazards, (7) managing development, (8) public participation, (9) beach protection, and (10) marine resources. These subject areas mainly relate to potential development impacts on the shoreline, nearshore, and ocean environments.

The following discusses the Project's compliance with the relevant CZM objectives and policies in HRS Chapter 205A or notes if they are not applicable.

(1) Recreational resources: Provide coastal recreational opportunities accessible to the public.

(A) Improve coordination and funding of coastal recreational planning and management; and

(B) Provide adequate, accessible, and diverse recreational opportunities in the coastal zone management area by...

> **Discussion:** The Project is not anticipated to have adverse impacts on nearby recreational resources. Most recreational activities in the area take place at the nearby Kawaihae small boat harbors (North and South). During construction a TCP will be implemented and continued access to these facilities will not be impacted. Coordination with the community would occur in the event of conflicts between construction activities and recreational users. BMPs to minimize potential impacts to water quality, thereby impacting in-water recreational activities, will be implemented. The Proposed Action also considers the Ala Kahakai NHT and would maintain a six-foot-wide open corridor between the harbor perimeter fence and the highway shoulder for future trail reconstruction. Trail reconstruction is a distinct and separate action from the current project and is assumed to be managed independently by the Ala Kahakai NHT extension of the NPS. Section 3.11.4 describes in further detail the existing recreational resources, potential impacts, and mitigation measures.

(2) Historic resources: Protect, preserve, and, where desirable, restore those natural and manmade historic and prehistoric resources in the coastal zone management area that are significant in Hawaiian and American history and culture.

(A) Identify and analyze significant archaeological resources;

(B) Maximize information retention through preservation of remains and artifacts or salvage operations

(C) Support State goals for protection, restoration, interpretation, and display of historic resources.

Discussion: The land surrounding Kawaihae Harbor is of geological, historical, and cultural significance. The Puʻukoholā Heiau NHS is adjacent to the Project area, separated by the Pelekāne Buffer Zone. Puʻukoholā Heiau NHS contains three heiau, Haleokapuni, Mailekini, and Puʻukoholā-Pelekāne, as well as the residence of Kamehameha I and a stone post associated with Chief Alapaʻi. Pelekāne Bay, which is makai of Puʻukoholā Heiau and abuts the Coral Flats area, includes submerged remnants of Haleokapuni (MARAD 2025). The Ala Kahakai NHT corridor is a 175-mile corridor that preserves ancient pathways along the Island's coastline, which is in proximity to Kawaihae Harbor.

The Project is considered to be a federal undertaking subject to Section 106 NHPA consultation and review. Through consultation, the SHPO determined that, with the incorporation of mitigation measures, the proposed Project would have no adverse effect, pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.5(b). Refer to Section 3.1.1 for a summary of the agreed upon mitigation measures that the Project will implement and Appendix C for documentation of SHPD's concurrence.

There is potential for short-term impacts associated with construction activities disturbing subsurface features or artifacts. However, mitigation measures would be implemented to preserve archeological and historical resources in the APEs, as well as mitigate any impacts to visual resources. Additionally, the proposed Project will maintain a six-foot-wide open corridor between the harbor perimeter fence and Kawaihae Road's shoulder. Future reconstruction of the Ala Kahakai NHT through the Kawaihae Harbor area is a distinct and separate action from the current project and is assumed to be managed independently by the Ala Kahakai NHT extension of the NPS. Further details regarding historic and archaeological resources are in Section 3.1.1.

(3) Scenic and open space resources: Protect, preserve, and, where desirable, restore or improve the quality of coastal scenic and open space resources.

(A) Identify valued scenic resources in the coastal zone management area;

(B) Ensure that new developments are compatible with their visual environment by designing and locating those developments to minimize the alteration of natural landforms and existing public views to and along the shoreline;

(C) Preserve, maintain, and, where desirable, improve and restore shoreline open space and scenic resources; and

(D) Encourage those developments that are not coastal dependent to locate in inland areas.

Discussion: Section 3.14 discusses visual resources in the Project area. During construction there will be short-term impacts to the scenic environment. Construction equipment within the harbor and along Kawaihae Road will be temporarily visible and will be removed once construction is complete.

The Project is expected to have minimal long-term adverse impacts on scenic and open space resources. Container terminals typically employ 100- to 120-foot-tall mast lights to provide recommended illumination, but at Kawaihae Harbor, approximately 80-foot-tall light poles will be used in conjunction with dark-sky compliant lights to ensure visual impacts are minimized from various vantage points in the area at night. Moreover, it is anticipated that the poles need to be painted yellow only up to a certain height and that the remainder of the poles will be painted with a color that blends the poles with the backdrop to mitigate visual impacts during the day.

Cultural and scenic resources near Kawaihae Harbor, such as the Pelekāne Buffer Zone and Puʻukoholā Heiau NHS, will maintain their existing visual character.

(4) Coastal ecosystems: Protect valuable coastal ecosystems, including reefs, beaches, and coastal dunes, from disruption and minimize adverse impacts on all coastal ecosystems.

(A) Exercise an overall conservation ethic, and practice stewardship in the protection, use, and development of marine and coastal resources;

(B) Improve the technical basis for natural resource management;

(C) Preserve valuable coastal ecosystems of significant biological or economic importance, including reefs, beaches, and dunes;

(D) Minimize disruption or degradation of coastal water ecosystems by effective regulation of stream diversions, channelization, and similar land and water uses, recognizing competing water needs; and

(E) Promote water quantity and quality planning and management practices that reflect the tolerance of fresh water and marine ecosystems and maintain and enhance water quality through the development and implementation of point and non-point source water pollution control measures.

Discussion: The Project does not involve in-water work, however; BMPs to maintain water quality are discussed further in Section 3.3. An NPDES permit will also be obtained prior to construction to manage potential stormwater runoff during construction activities. With the implementation of mitigation measures, the Proposed Action is not anticipated to affect threatened or endangered marine species (Section 3.2.3).

(5) Economic uses: Provide public or private facilities and improvements important to the State's economy in suitable locations.

(A) Concentrate coastal dependent development in appropriate areas;

(B) Ensure that coastal dependent development and coastal related development are located, designed, and constructed to minimize exposure to coastal hazards and adverse social, visual, and environmental impacts in the coastal zone management area; and

(C) Direct the location and expansion of coastal development to areas designed and used for that development and permit reasonable long-term growth at those areas, and permit coastal development outside of designated areas when: (i) Use of designated locations is not feasible; (ii) Adverse environmental effects and risks from coastal hazards are minimized; and (iii) The development is important to the State's economy.

Discussion: The Proposed Action will support economic uses important to the state by improving capacity and efficiency of Kawaihae Harbor, a critical coastal-dependent transportation facility that supports interisland and statewide goods movement. The Project would generate temporary construction employment and associated economic activity. By increasing harbor efficiency and capacity, the Project will enhance Kawaihae Harbor's ability to keep pace with demands for goods and services.

The Project concentrates coastal-dependent development within the existing industrial harbor area, directing it to an appropriate area that has historically been used for marine cargo handling and related infrastructure while supporting long-term economic activity important to the state. The location and design of the Proposed Action reflect the functional requirements of harbor operations, which by their nature must occur at the shoreline and cannot be feasibly relocated inland.

(6) Coastal hazards: Reduce hazard to life and property from coastal hazards.

(A) Develop and communicate adequate information about the risks of coastal hazards;

(B) Control development, including planning and zoning control, in areas subject to coastal hazards;

(C) Ensure that developments comply with requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program; and

(D) Prevent coastal flooding from inland projects.

Discussion: The Proposed Action would minimize impacts related to coastal hazards through resilient design and infrastructure improvements within an existing harbor environment. The above-ground structures would be constructed using materials appropriate for applicable environmental design criteria and in compliance with applicable building code requirements, minimizing the potential for structural damage from a tropical cyclone event. Additionally, cargo yard leveling and roadway improvements would incorporate appropriate drainage design to mitigate flooding impacts during storm events.

The Proposed Action would improve Kawaihae Harbor's resilience to earthquakes and tsunamis by updating physical infrastructure and supporting continued harbor operations following natural hazard events. New structures, including relocated buildings and culverts, will incorporate current design standards and be built to applicable force-based codes to resist design-level earthquake loading. Roadway and pavement improvements will incorporate geotechnical engineering to protect against liquefaction and settlement from seismic events.

Deteriorated asphalt and unimproved areas would be stabilized with reinforced concrete, improving resiliency to natural disaster events such as tsunami inundation. New structures, including relocated buildings and culverts, will incorporate appropriate structural engineering to withstand design events. Roadway and pavement improvements will incorporate geotechnical engineering to protect against liquefaction and settlement, which will minimize undermining from flooding. Design of the roadway widening and repaving of the cargo yard will be in accordance with state and county standards, minimizing the potential for flooding impacts.

Small portions of the Project area are within the 3.2-foot SLR-XA. Although most of the Project area may not be directly exposed to coastal erosion or annual high tide, its low-laying coastal location makes it susceptible to climate change and SLR impacts such as passive (high tide) flooding and storm surge events. The Proposed Action would improve and upgrade various components of the existing harbor, which would improve its overall resiliency to storm or flooding events that are expected to intensify or increase with climate change. Additionally, the Proposed Action would support the continued operability of Kawaihae Harbor following natural disaster events that may occur with increasing frequency due to climate change.

(7) Managing development: Improve the development review process, communication, and public participation in the management of coastal resources and hazards.

(A) Use, implement, and enforce existing law effectively to the maximum extent possible in managing present and future coastal zone development;

(B) Facilitate timely processing of applications for development permits and resolve overlapping or conflicting permit requirements; and

(C) Communicate the potential short and long-term impacts of proposed significant coastal developments early in their life cycle and in terms understandable to the public to facilitate public participation in the planning and review process.

Discussion: This EA has been prepared in compliance with environmental requirements outlined in HRS Chapter 343 and HAR Chapter 11-200.1. The Project will be conducted in compliance with all necessary state and county environmental rules and regulations as discussed throughout this EA. HDOT-HAR has initiated consultation with relevant agencies regarding the required permits noted in Table 2-1, which will facilitate timely processing of approvals.

(8) Public participation: Stimulate public awareness, education, and participation in coastal management.

(A) Promote public involvement in coastal zone management processes;

(B) Disseminate information on coastal management issues by means of educational materials, published reports, staff contact, and public workshops for persons and organizations concerned with coastal issues, developments, and government activities; and

(C) Organize workshops, policy dialogues, and site-specific mediations to respond to coastal issues and conflicts.

Discussion: In accordance with HAR § 11-200.1(18)(a), HDOT-HAR conducted a pre-assessment consultation seeking input from agencies, citizen groups, individuals with jurisdiction or expertise, and those reasonably affected by the Project to guide the scope and preparation of the Draft EA. A total of 9 agencies provided comments during two 30-day comment periods, which occurred between November 18, 2025 and December 17, 2025, and December 29, 2025 and January 29, 2026. See Table 5-1 for a listing of those who provided comments during the pre-assessment consultation and responses. Those listed in Table 5-1. will also be notified of the availability of this Draft EA.

(9) Beach and coastal dune protection;

(A) Protect beaches and coastal dunes for: (i) Public use and recreation; (ii) the benefit of coastal ecosystems; and (iii) use as natural buffers against coastal hazards;

(B) Coordinate and fund beach management and protection.

Discussion: The Project is located near two beaches, Spencer Beach Park and the Pua Ka ʻIlima ʻO Kawaihae Cultural Surf Park and no coastal dunes are in the Project vicinity. To minimize potential water quality impacts from runoff, which could impact a variety of aquatic activities and marine resources, BMPs will include an ESCP for all earth-moving activities. If the current access route to the Coral Flats area is temporarily unavailable during construction, HDOT-HAR would notify and coordinate with the community and an alternative route will be provided for continued access to the surrounding recreational activities.

(10) Marine and coastal resources: Promote the protection, use, and development of marine and coastal resources to assure their sustainability.

(A) Ensure that the use and development of marine and coastal resources are ecologically and environmentally sound and economically beneficial;

(B) Coordinate the management of marine and coastal resources and activities to improve effectiveness and efficiency;

(C) Assert and articulate the interests of the State as a partner with federal agencies in the sound management of ocean resources within the United States exclusive economic zone;

(D) Promote research, study, and understanding of ocean and coastal processes, impacts of climate change and sea level rise, marine life, and other ocean resources to acquire and inventory information necessary to understand how coastal development activities relate to and impact ocean and coastal resources; and

(E) Encourage research and development of new, innovative technologies for exploring, using, or protecting marine and coastal resources.

Discussion: As discussed throughout the EA, potential adverse impacts on marine and coastal resources and water quality will be mitigated through the implementation of BMPs throughout construction. Applicable mitigation measures are discussed in Section 3.3.

The Proposed Action does not include in-water work and development is limited to an existing industrial harbor area. The Proposed Action will also provide economic benefits by supporting the more efficient movements of goods essential to statewide commerce.

The Project will comply with applicable federal and state regulations, including NPDES permitting requirements, and would involve coordination with relevant agencies to effectively manage marine and coastal resources.

4.2.4 Hawai‘i Statewide Transportation Plan 2045 (2022 Update, [Draft])

The Hawai‘i Statewide Transportation Plan (HSTP) establishes the framework for planning Hawai‘i’s transportation system. The goals and objectives identified in the HSTP support the development of an integrated, multimodal transportation system for the safe, efficient and effective movement of people and goods throughout Hawai‘i.

The HSTP was established by HRS Chapter 279A to: (1) establish a comprehensive, multimodal statewide transportation planning process to develop coordinated transportation plans, (2) address the obligation of the statewide transportation system to clearly serve and address social, economic, and environmental objectives, and (3) provide a connection to and encourage coordination with the State’s goals and other State agencies, such as the HDOH and DBEDT. The HSTP is updated approximately every 10 years and has an outlook for 20 to 25 years. The most recently adopted HSTP was completed in 2011. As of November 2022, an updated HTSP is in draft form and awaiting final adoption. The following section includes a discussion of the Project-relevant goals from the updated draft HTSP (HDOT 2022).

Goal: Infrastructure

Objective: Maintain the multimodal transportation system in a state of good repair

Policy-level Strategies: Manage transportation assets effectively and efficiently

Objective: Modernize transportation infrastructure

Policy-level Strategies: Manage transportation assets effectively and efficiently

Harbors: Implement the Harbors Modernization Plan and recommendations from various harbors master plans.

Discussion: The Proposed Action would address the pavement deterioration of Kawaihae Harbor yard by replacing the existing asphalt surface with new reinforced concrete as well as paving pockets of unimproved areas. These improvements will support the more efficient movement of goods, increase safety, and maintain the harbor in a state of good repair. The Project also implements recommendations from the State’s Hawai‘i Commercial Harbors 2035 Master Plan (HDOT-HAR 2011).

Goal: Mobility and Accessibility

Objective: Reduce delay and improve reliability across all modes, for all users

Policy-level Strategies: Increase the efficiency of transportation services through partnerships, advanced technologies, and operational enhancements to improve service delivery methods.

Harbors: Implement the harbors' primary mission and goals/objectives of each individual harbor's master plan.

Policy-level Strategies: Optimize intermodal connections

Potential Opportunity: Look for opportunities or projects to improve the modal connections at airports and harbors to the highways system.

> **Discussion:** The Proposed Action would improve the efficiency and reliability of goods movement through Kawaihae Harbor. Improvements to Kawaihae Road would provide a more efficient connection between the harbor and highways system by reducing existing traffic congestion caused by truck queues. In addition, yard improvements would address uneven surfaces, allowing for the more efficient and safer container storage and operation of equipment. Expanding yard capacity and upgrading lighting would further support efficient yard operations. The Project also implements recommendations from the State's Hawai'i Commercial Harbors 2035 Master Plan (HDOT-HAR 2011).

Goal: Economy

Objective: Serve Hawaii communities through efficient and reliable goods movement and distribution

Policy-level Strategies: Optimize multimodal freight capacity and connectivity to global supply chains

Objective: Advance and diversify statewide and local economic development

Policy-level Strategies: Support sustainable development in urban and rural communities

Highways: Invest in infrastructure that supports the HDOT's mission of supporting economic vitality.

> **Discussion:** The Project will directly optimize multimodal freight capacity through expanding yard capacity, allowing for the more efficient movement of goods through the harbor. Improvements to lighting and pavement infrastructure will further enable extended operating hours and improve overall ease of movement within the harbor.

Goal: Resiliency

Objective: Enhance resiliency of transportation systems to the impacts of climate change, public health crises, and other disruptions

Policy-level Strategies: Improve system resiliency to public health crises

Ensure adequate system capacities so that critical goods can be transported during public health crisis.

Objective: Improve emergency preparedness, response, and evacuation

Policy-level Strategies: Anticipate and prepare for system emergencies

> **Discussion:** Improvements to Kawaihae Harbor, including expansion of its capacity to meet current demands, will enhance its resiliency and better enable the harbor to support the residents of Hawai'i in the event of an emergency. Hawai'i Island is specifically susceptible to various natural hazards such as tsunami, hurricanes, earthquakes, and lava flow. Therefore, if Honolulu or Hilo Harbor were made inoperable by a catastrophic event, Kawaihae Harbor would be critical to supplying emergency services and essential goods. See Section 3.6 for further discussion.

Goal: Environment

Objective: Improve and preserve the quality of air, water, land, and other natural and cultural resources

Policy-level Strategies: Avoid or mitigate the negative impacts of transportation systems and infrastructure

Incorporate federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Hawaii Environmental Policy Act (HEPA) compliance on projects.

> **Discussion:** The Project will comply with HEPA through the publication and processing of this EA as described in Section 1.3. Separate environmental review documentation will be prepared in coordination with HDOT and MARAD to satisfy the requirements of NEPA of 1969, as amended (Pub. L. 91-190, 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321–4347; MARAD's MAO 600- 1; 42 U.S.C. § 4321, et seq.; and DOT Order 5610.1D).

4.2.5 Hawai'i Department of Transportation Energy Security and Waste Reduction Plan

The Hawai'i Energy Security and Waste Reduction Plan was adopted in 2025 to help the state address the critical need to strengthen its energy security and community resilience (HDOT 2025). The plan serves as a guide to reduce transportation-related GHG emissions and meet statewide targets to reduce transportation emissions by 50% by 2030 and achieve net-negative emissions by 2045. To achieve these goals, emissions will need to be addressed across all transportation modes, including those that are historically challenging to decarbonize, such as aviation, marine vessels and legacy internal combustion vehicles.

The plan recognizes that strategies need to be economical, as limited access to clean and affordable transportation increases the cost of living, reduces safety, and affects quality of life. According to the 2022 HDOH GHG Emissions Inventory, the Marine Sector accounted for about 5% of the total emissions from all modes of transportation. Key considerations were made for what strategies would be most feasible to implement at Hawai'i's harbors, with clean and alternative marine fuel options being prioritized rather than electrification strategies.

> **Discussion:** The Proposed Action is consistent with the goals of the HDOT Energy Security and Waste Reduction Plan and represents a collaboration between HDOT-HWY and -HAR to support statewide emissions-reduction goals. Interisland barge operations serving

Hawai'i Island have consolidated at Kawaihae Harbor to improve operational efficiency and reduce fuel consumption and associated emissions. As a result of this consolidation, cargo volumes at the Pier 2B Terminal have increased and the terminal is operating at or near capacity, leading to internal yard congestion and reduced operational efficiency. The Proposed Action would address these conditions by adding capacity for wheeled containers, reducing internal congestion, and allowing existing cargo volumes to be handled more efficiently. Improved yard efficiency supports consolidated operations by reducing delays that can otherwise require vessels to operate at higher-than-normal travel speeds to maintain schedules. Operating at higher speeds results in disproportionately greater fuel consumption compared to more efficient cruising speeds. In addition, the widening of Kawaihae Road to create a dedicated left-turn and storage lane will reduce congestion, vehicle idling, and associated emissions.

Strategies outlined in the plan emphasize the importance of implementing clean and alternative fueling options at harbors. The Plan targets 100% bio- or renewable diesel adoption for interisland tug-and-barge cargo operations by 2030. The proposed improvements would enhance the overall yard condition, which could facilitate future installation of alternative fueling infrastructure by harbor users if such improvements are pursued under separate actions.

On the landside, installation of conduits and raised transformer pads would allow for the future installation of reefer plugs, which would eliminate the use of generators to power refrigerated containers while sitting at the port, thus helping to reduce GHG emissions.

In addition, enhancing Kawaihae Harbor's operational capability would improve the resiliency of the Hawai'i Island commercial harbor system by providing a reliable alternative to Hilo Harbor during emergency or natural disaster events.

4.2.6 Department of Hawaiian Home Lands Kawaihae Regional Plan 2024

DHHL has prepared 23 Regional Plans for the Hawaiian homesteads under its jurisdiction. These plans are intended to assess land use development factors, document issues and opportunities, and identify top priority projects to be implemented over a five-year planning horizon.

There are two existing DHHL homesteads in the vicinity of the Project: the Kailapa Homestead, located directly across Kawaihae Road and mauka of the harbor, and the Kawaihae Makai Homestead, located north of the harbor along the coast. The *2024 Kawaihae Regional Plan* (DHHL 2024) provides an update to the 2010 version. The update included three beneficiary consultations where a vision, community values, and priority projects were identified. Priority projects identified for the Kawaihae Region relate to potable water access, emergency evacuation routes and traffic safety measures, the Kailapa Resource Center, safe energy upgrades, and improvements to the coastal and marine resources in Kawaihae through erosion mitigation.

Discussion: The Proposed Action is not anticipated to impact the Hawaiian Home Lands nearby the Project area or hinder the implementation of the Kawaihae Regional Plan's priority projects. The Project will not significantly increase the harbor's potable water demand and therefore will not affect water-related initiatives. Improvements along

Kawaihae Road would support the plan's objectives for traffic safety and emergency access, while the relocation of existing utility poles will not interfere with the implementation for safe energy upgrades for the homesteads. The planned roadway widening would also maintain existing stormwater runoff conveyance and drainage along Kawaihae Road and is not anticipated to impact marine resources. Improvements to the harbor would support reliable access to essential goods and services for nearby homestead residents.

4.3 County of Hawai'i

4.3.1 County of Hawai'i General Plan 2045

The County of Hawai'i General Plan 2045 is intended to guide the long-term comprehensive development of the Hawai'i Island (County 2024). The first county plan was adopted in 1971 and, since then, there have been two comprehensive reviews in 1989 and 2005. In 2015, a comprehensive review of the 2005 Plan was initiated, involving an extensive process of community input, technical analysis, and collaboration among agencies. The General Plan aims to provide a comprehensive, action-oriented framework that guides more detailed planning efforts based on community driven values, goals, and objectives. It establishes four primary goals supported by 49 more specific objectives that further define implementation for these goals.

The Hawai'i County General Plan 2045 is currently a Final Recommended Draft and is awaiting final approval by the City Council. The following includes a discussion of the Project-relevant goals from the updated draft Hawai'i County General Plan 2045 (County 2024).

Goal: Sustainable Development and Resilient Communities

Objective 12: Reduce the threat to life and property from natural hazards and disasters.

Objective 16: Achieve a transportation system that is consistent with and will accommodate planned growth.

> *Policy 16.1 Encourage transportation systems that serve to accommodate the present and future development needs of communities.*

Objective 24: Improve accessibility to airports, harbor systems, and support facilities.

> *Policy 24.2 The State Department of Transportation should continue to implement its plans for transportation terminals and related facilities to promote and follow desired land use policies.*
>
> *Policy 24.4 Encourage maximum use of the island's airport and harbor facilities.*
>
> *Policy 24.5 Encourage the development, maintenance, and enhancement of Hilo and Kawaihae Harbors as detailed within the State's Hawai'i Commercial Harbors 2035 Master Plan.*

Objective 25: Improve the efficiency, reliability, and sustainability of essential infrastructure systems.

Discussion: The Proposed Action is consistent with the General Plan's goal for sustainable development and resilient communities. Hawai'i Island is specifically susceptible to various natural hazards such as tsunami, hurricanes, earthquakes, and lava flow. Therefore, if Honolulu or Hilo Harbor were made inoperable by a catastrophic event, Kawaihae Harbor would be critical to supplying emergency services and essential goods. Planned improvements to the harbor as described in Section 2.4 will increase its resiliency and reliability during emergency or natural disaster events. See Section 3.6 for further discussion.

The Project will also support the county's projected long-term growth by maximizing the harbor's operational efficiency and enhancing the reliability of the harbor that island residents rely on for goods and services.

The planned harbor improvements are in alignment with the State's Hawai'i Commercial Harbors 2035 Master Plan (HDOT-HAR 2011). Planned paving improvements, including paving pockets of unimproved yard, relocating the District office, and widening of Kawaihae Road to relieve congestion and improve accessibility to the harbor, will maximize the efficient use of the harbor's existing footprint.

4.3.2 County of Hawai'i Zoning

The Hawai'i County Code (HCC) Chapter 25 is known as the "Zoning Code". The Zoning Code establishes land use zones and outlines permitted land uses and development standards. The purpose of HCC Chapter 25 is to promote health, safety, morals, and the general welfare of the County. The provisions of Chapter 25 are administered by the two County Planning Commissions, the Leeward Planning Commission, which includes the Project site, and the Windward Planning Commission.

Discussion: The entire Project area is currently zoned as MG-1a, or General Industrial District (minimum land area of 1 acre, required for each building site). The Project is consistent with permitted uses under the applicable land use classifications and will not introduce new uses or require a zone change. Refer to Figure 1-4 for a map of the county zoning districts in the Project area.

4.3.3 South Kohala Community Development Plan

The South Kohala Community Development Plan (CDP) is intended to translate broad statements from the 2005 County General Plan into more specific actions tailored for the South Kohala District. The CDP aims to identify priority issues, then establish policies and actionable programs to address those issues. These policies and actions reflect community input, guide future land use, coordinate public improvements, and help balance growth with cultural preservation and environmental protection. Development of the CDP began with community outreach efforts in 2006, and the plan was formally adopted in 2008. The CDP organizes its policies and strategies by geographic areas within the South Kohala District; the following discussion outlines strategies specific to the Kawaihae area.

Policy 1: The County and State Governments shall work closely with the Kawaihae Community to create a balance of recreational, commercial, and industrial uses around the harbor area while preserving the cultural and historic importance of the area.

Strategy 1.7: Mitigate the effects of industrial sprawl around the harbor and industrial areas.

Policy 3: The County shall work with the Kawaihae Community and other State and Federal agencies to improve the ocean water quality along the Kawaihae coast.

Policy 4: The County and State Governments shall work closely with the Kawaihae Community to improve traffic safety for both vehicular and non-vehicular transportation along Akoni Pule Highway.

Discussion: The Proposed Action will maintain the balance of recreational, commercial, and industrial uses around the harbor area. The Project will not adversely impact cultural and historical resources in the area (Section 3.1). Planned roadway widening will maintain a six-foot-wide open corridor between the harbor perimeter fence and the highway shoulder to accommodate future reconstruction of the Ala Kahakai NHT through the area by others.

In addition, harbor improvements are fully within the existing footprint; therefore, the Project will not create additional sprawl.

The planned widening of Kawaihae Road is anticipated to mitigate existing traffic congestion generated by harbor operations. This improved roadway segment directly connects to Akoni Pule Highway north of the harbor, a key transportation corridor in the area.

Additionally, during construction, the Proposed Action will implement BMPs to mitigate potential impacts to water quality.

4.3.4 Special Management Area and Shoreline Setback Area

The purpose of the SMA is to preserve, protect, and where possible, to restore the natural resources of the coastal zone of Hawai'i. SMA permitting is a part of the CZMP and allows counties to manage uses, activities, and operations occurring on land or touching water within the SMA to ensure compliance with CZM objectives and policies. Under HRS Chapter 205A, the County is given authority to regulate land uses located within the established SMA for the island. As shown in Figure 1-5, the entire Project site is within the SMA.

Discussion:

During the pre-assessment consultation period, the County Planning Department confirmed that the Project is not subject to the approval of an SMA permit or an SSV pursuant to HRS § 266-2(7)(b), as follows:

(7) (b) Notwithstanding any law or provision to the contrary, the department of transportation is authorized to plan, construct, operate, and maintain any commercial harbor facility in the State, including, but not limited to, the acquisition and use of lands necessary to stockpile dredged spoils, without the approval of county agencies.

5.0 Agency Coordination and Public Involvement

5.1 Agency Coordination

In accordance with HAR, § 11-200.1(18)(a), HDOT-HAR conducted pre-assessment consultation seeking input from agencies, citizen groups, individuals with jurisdiction or expertise, and those reasonably affected by the Project to guide the scope and preparation of the Draft EA. Table 5-1. identifies the parties invited to participate in the pre-assessment consultation and the 9 agencies, organizations, and individuals that provided comments. Those listed in Table 5-1. will also be notified of the availability of this Draft EA. Section 5.2 provides a summary of comments and responses received during the pre-assessment consultation period.

Table 5-1. Consultation List

Respondents and Distribution	Pre-Consultation	Pre-Consultation Comments Received	Receiving the Draft EA
Federal Agencies			
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Honolulu District	X		X
U.S. Coast Guard, Oceania District	X		X
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection	X		X
U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), National Park Service (NPS), Puʻukoholā Heiau National Historic Site	X		X
U.S. DOI NPS, Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail[1]	X	X	X
U.S. Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries)	X		X
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Pacific Island Fish and Wildlife Office	X		X
U.S. Geological Survey, Pacific Islands Water Science Center Office	X		X
State of Hawaiʻi Agencies			
Department of Accounting and General Services	X		X
Department of Agriculture & Biosecurity	X		X
Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT)	X		X
DBEDT Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD)	X	X	X
Department of Defense, Hawaii Emergency Management Agency	X		X
Department of Education, Hawaii District	X		X
Department of Health	X		X
Department of Health (DOH) Clean Water Branch (CWB)	X		X
DOH Clean Air Branch (CAB)	X	X	X
Department of Human Services	X		X

Respondents and Distribution	Pre-Consultation	Pre-Consultation Comments Received	Receiving the Draft EA
Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), Commission on Water Resource Management			X
DLNR Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR)	X	X	X
DLNR Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation	X		X
DLNR Engineering Division	X		X
DLNR Office of Conservation and Coastal Lands (OCCL)	X	X	X
DLNR State Historic Preservation Division	X		X
Department of Hawaiian Home Lands	X		X
Office of Hawaiian Affairs	X		X
County of Hawai'i			
Civil Defense Agency	X		X
Department of Environmental Management	X		X
Department of Parks and Recreation	X		X
Department of Water Supply	X	X	X
Hawai'i Fire Department	X		X
Hawai'i Police Department	X		X
Planning Department	X	X	X
Department of Public Works	X		X
Mass Transit Agency	X		X
Office of Sustainability, Climate, Equity, and Resilience	X		X
Elected Officials			
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards III, State Senator (District 4)	X		X
Representative David A. Tarnas, State Representative (District 8)	X		X
Mayor Kimo Alameda	X	X	X
Councilmember James E. Hustace, Councilmember (District 9)	X		X
Individuals & Organizations			
Ali'i 'Aimoku Royal Order of Kamehameha I Heiau Māmalahoa, Helu 'Elua (Pomai Brown) [1]	X		X
Big Island Energy Company	X		X
Cindy Evans			X
Daniel "Kaniela" Kahikina Akaka Jr. [1]	X		X
Hālau Manaola/Lim 'Ohana (Kumu Hula Nani Lim/Mana Ola Lim) [1]	X		X
Hawai'i Harbor Users Group	X		X
Historic Hawai'i Foundation[1]	X		X
Jojo Tanimoto[1, 2]	X	X	X
Ka'opua/Asing 'Ohana[1]	X		X
Kahului Trucking & Storage (KTS)			X
Kailapa Community Association	X		X

Respondents and Distribution	Pre-Consultation	Pre-Consultation Comments Received	Receiving the Draft EA
Kanu o Ka ʻĀina[1]	X		X
Kawaihae Canoe Club	X		X
Kuulei McCarthy[1]	X		X
Matson Navigation Co.[3]	X		X
Par Petroleum	X		X
Robin Makapagal and Patricia Lynn[1]	X		X
South Kohala Community Development Plan Action Committee	X		X
Waimea-Kawaihae Community Association	X		X
Willette and Eddie Akau[1]	X		X
Young Brothers, Ltd	X		X
Utilities			
Hawaiian Electric Light Company	X		X
Hawaiian Telecom	X		X

[1] Participants in the Section 106 NHPA consultation process were invited to comment during the pre-assessment comment period occurring between December 29, 2025, and January 29, 2026.

[2] Ms. Jojo Tanimoto provided two separate responses via email during the pre-assessment consultation period.

[3] Matson Navigation Co. provided an initial response to the request for comments but subsequently withdrew its letter.

5.2 Pre-Assessment Consultation

In accordance with HAR, § 11-200.1(18)(a), HDOT-HAR conducted pre-assessment consultation seeking input from agencies, citizen groups, individuals with jurisdiction or expertise, and those reasonably affected by the Project to guide the scope and preparation of the Draft EA. The initial pre-assessment comment period occurred between November 18, 2025 and December 17, 2025. Subsequently, NHOs that participated in the Section 106 consultation process were invited to provide comments on the scope of the HRS Chapter 343 Draft EA between December 29, 2025 and January 29, 2026. A total of 9 agencies, organizations, and individuals provided comments. Copies of the comment letters are provided in Appendix A. Responses to the comments are provided in Table 5-2 and organized by topic.

Table 5-2. Pre-Assessment Consultation Summary of Comments and Responses

Comments	Commenter	Responses
Applicable Policies and Permits		
Special Management Area Determination: In accordance with Planning Commission Rule 9 relating to the Special Management Area (SMA), "development" does not include the following: Rule 9-4(i)(2)(R): Plan, design, construct, operate, and maintain any lands or facilities under the jurisdiction of the Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation of the State Department of Land and Natural Resources. Therefore, according to rule, no SMA approval or SMA permit is required for the proposed project as it is considered an exempt action.	County Planning Department (PD)	To clarify, the Project will take place at the Kawaihae Commercial Harbor under HDOT-HAR jurisdiction. No work is proposed to the North Kawaihae Small Boat Harbor under DLNR-DOBOR jurisdiction. The correct reference for HDOT-HAR to exempt itself from the SMA permitting requirements is HRS § 266-2(7)(b) (Section 4.3.4). The County PD acknowledged this via email correspondence and reiterated that work within the HDOT ROW would not require SMA permitting approval.
Shoreline Setback Area Determination: In accordance with Planning Department Rule 11 relating to the Shoreline Setback Area (SSA), the following structures or activities may be permitted within the shoreline setback area without the need for a shoreline setback variance (SSV). Rule 11-7(a)(9): Work being done consists of maintenance, repair, and minor additions to or alterations of legal, publicly owned boating, maritime, or water sports recreational facilities, which are publicly owned, and which result in little or no interference with natural shoreline processes. Since the proposed project is located at a well-developed small boat harbor and the proposed activities consist of repair, reconstruction and minor additions to the existing harbor facility, staff believe the proposed project will have little impact on natural shoreline processes. Therefore, based on Rule 11-7(a)(9) no Shoreline Setback Variance (SSV) application will be required for the proposed project.	County PD	To clarify, the Project will be conducted at a well-developed, publicly owned maritime facility, not a small boat harbor. Given the applicability of HRS 266-2(7)(b) and the justification provided by the County PD, it is understood that an SSV would not be required (Section 4.3.4).
Please note that any substantive changes to the proposed project as represented by HDOT-HAR may require additional review under both the Special Management Area and Shoreline Setback Area rules and regulations and may require permitting or approvals not noted in this letter.	County PD	HDOT-HAR acknowledges the comment and will notify the County PD should the project scope substantively change; however, pursuant to HRS § 266-2(7)(b), the Project is exempt from county approvals and permits.

Comments	Commenter	Responses
It appears that the proposed project is located entirely within the Urban State Land Use District, and therefore our office would not have jurisdiction. Should there be any proposed work within the Conservation District, please contact our office for further review.	State OCCL	The Applicant acknowledges that the Project site is entirely within the Urban District and is therefore outside of OCCL jurisdiction (Section 4.2.2).
1. The EA shall discuss the triggers for the preparation of an EA set forth in Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 343, as well as a list of all required permits and approvals. Furthermore, the Draft EA should contain the project location maps, including the regional location on the Island of Hawai'i, and provide schematic plans or drawing indicating the scope of the project.	State OPSD	The HRS Chapter 343 triggers for preparation of the EA are discussed in Section 1.3 and a list of all government permits and approvals is provided in Table 2-1. Figure 1-1 shows the location of the project and the preliminary site plan is provided in Figure 2-1.
2. The Hawai'i Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Law requires all state and county agencies to enforce the CZM objectives and policies. The subject EA should include an assessment with mitigation measures as to how the proposed project conforms to each of the CZM objectives and policies set forth in HRS § 205A-2, as amended.	State OPSD	A discussion the Project's conformance to CZM objectives and policies and planned mitigation measures is provided in Sections 4.1.4 and 4.2.3.
5. Pursuant to HRS § 266-2, notwithstanding any law or provision to the contrary, HDOT is authorized to plan, construct, operate, and maintain any commercial harbor facility in the State, including, but not limited to, the acquisition and use of lands necessary to stockpile dredged spoils, without the approval of county agencies. The EA should discuss whether the proposed Kawaihae Harbor Improvements Project will be authorized under HRS § 266-2.	State OPSD	HDOT-HAR acknowledges that the Project will be authorized under HRS § 266-2. See Section 4.3.4 for further discussion.
You must obtain an air pollution control permit from the Clean Air Branch and comply with all applicable conditions and requirements. If you do not know if you need an air pollution control permit, please contact the Permitting Section of the Clean Air Branch.	State DOH CAB	The contractor will obtain the necessary construction-related air pollution control permits and comply with the associated conditions and requirements. Construction BMPs related to air pollution control will be implemented, as discussed in Section 3.5.
Project Location and Surrounding Uses		
8-The north Small Boat Harbor seems part of this assessment also. What will be available to the public?	Jojo Tanimoto	As shown in Figure 1-1, the Kawaihae Small Boat Harbor (North) is not included in the scope of this Project. Access to the small boat harbor will be maintained throughout construction and operation of the Project. Traffic along Kawaihae Road will be accommodated during construction. Temporary lane closures may be required to facilitate construction activities; however, full roadway closures would not occur.

Comments	Commenter	Responses
2) Also, I am not aware of TMK: 6-1-003:060 and 6-1-002:999. Can you please identify these locations.	Jojo Tanimoto	Refer to Figure 1-2 for TMKs within the Project site. TMK (3) 6-1-002:999 refers to the Kawaihae Road ROW. Following the pre-assessment consultation notice, the Project site was refined and TMK (3) 6-1-003:060 is not within the bounds of the Proposed Action.
The Department of Hawaiian Homelands did create a Master Plan for the Department, but nothing was done and no plans to implement since 1986. Will this document address this problem?	Jojo Tanimoto	The purpose of the Project is to reduce existing traffic congestion along Kawaihae Road associated with harbor operations and to upgrade conditions and improve efficiencies within the Kawaihae Harbor cargo terminal. (Section 1.5). HDOT does not have the authority to implement DHHL's Master Plan (Section 4.2.6). Accordingly, roadway improvements discussed in DHHL's 2024 Regional Plan Update, including a bypass or alternate emergency route, are outside the scope of the Project.
Cultural and Historical Resources		
With the passage of an act of the U.S. Congress sponsored by Senator Daniel Akaka, the system of historic trails, located within a broad coastal corridor extending from Hawaii Island's Upolu Point to South Point and into Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, was designated in the year 2000 and called the Ala Kahakai NHT. Subsequent to the designation and based on numerous consultations with communities within all five moku of Hawaii Island, it is now the policy of the Ala Kahakai NHT to engage individuals and families with ancient and historic ancestral ties to the ahupua'a/moku to lead community-based efforts to manage associated segments of the trail system based on the ahupua'a concept of community land management. As such, building community capacity, sustainable economies, resiliency, and partnerships are the cornerstones for the successful implementation of this policy. We are currently working with communities in North and South Kohala and with Puʻukoholā National Historic Park to connect and reestablish the trail system within the Kawaihae area. We are also in preliminary conversations with the NPS transportation planners and FDOT on planning for this as well. Please visit www.nps.gov/alka for more info. In the past, we have had supported discussions with the DLNR's Harbors Division administrator at Kawaihae Harbor on connecting the trail as it laterally traverses the Kawaihae Harbor bordering Kawaihae Road to connect with the trail to the north and south of the harbor.	National Park Service (NPS)	HDOT-HAR is aware of the *Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management Plan* (NPS 2009) and the proposal to continue the trail north through Kawaihae using land mauka of Kawaihae Harbor. The Project supports this proposal and will maintain a six-foot-wide open corridor between the harbor perimeter fence and the highway shoulder to accommodate future reconstruction of the trail through the area. This reconstruction is a distinct and separate action from the Project and is assumed to be managed independently by the NPS.

Comments	Commenter	Responses
As you may be aware, there is no safe pedestrian access along Kawaihae Road fronting the harbor boundary. Pedestrians need to walk along the guardrail or cross the road to walk along the road's shoulder. While this EA addresses the improvements to the road, etc., we are requesting that accommodations in these improvements' plans and designs be made allowing for future capital improvements for safe pedestrian access that will also include the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail route.		
4) The community is currently working with the government to identify historic sites and burial sites. The NPS Heiau's have identified the vibration of so many large vehicles and the vibration impacts to the integrity of the non-cemented structures. The communities concern are the 3 Historic Bridges leading to the harbor, and beyond. Pōhaukole, Makeāhua and Makahuna. Without these bridges, there currently are no alternative traffic routes to evacuate Kawaihae. That includes the residents from Kohala.	Jojo Tanimoto	Alternative access routes and the maintenance of the three historic bridges is outside the scope and purpose of the Project. Potential vibration impacts to historic properties were evaluated as part of the Section 106 consultation process and addressed through mitigation measures developed in coordination with the SHPD (Section 3.1). Construction activities will incorporate controlled work methods, designated work zones, and vibration-minimizing techniques in areas near historic and archaeological resources. Activities that generate high vibration levels will be carefully managed, and low-vibration construction methods will be prioritized where practicable. To minimize vibration impacts, controlled work methods and designated work zones will be established. Construction activities that generate high vibrations, such as heavy compaction or rock excavation, will be carefully managed. In areas near archaeological sites, low-vibration techniques will be prioritized.
4-Across the harbor lies the Historic Ke Ala Hou cemetery and Isaac Davis Crypt. They are registered and also susceptible to erosion due to vibration. Will this document address this problem?	Jojo Tanimoto	Potential vibration impacts to historic properties were evaluated as part of the Section 106 consultation process and addressed through mitigation measures developed in coordination with the SHPD (Section 3.1). The EA summarizes the findings of the Section 106 consultation and associated mitigation measures, and documents SHPD's concurrence that the Project will have "No Adverse Effect" to historic properties under Section 106. Construction activities will incorporate controlled work methods, designated work zones, and vibration-minimizing techniques in areas near historic and archaeological resources. Activities that generate high vibration levels will be carefully managed, and low-vibration construction methods will be prioritized where practicable. To minimize vibration impacts,

Comments	Commenter	Responses
		controlled work methods and designated work zones will be established. Construction activities that generate high vibrations, such as heavy compaction or rock excavation, will be carefully managed. In areas near archaeological sites, low-vibration techniques will be prioritized.
Impacts to Wildlife		
4. In enacting Act 224, Session Laws of Hawaii 2005, the legislature found that light pollution in Hawaii's coastal areas and artificial lighting illuminating the shoreline and ocean waters can be disruptive to avian and marine life. For artificial lighting provided by a government agency or its authorized users for government operations, security, public safety, or navigational needs, a government agency or its authorized users shall make reasonable efforts to properly position or shield lights to minimize adverse impacts of lights.	State OPSD	USFWS concurred with MARAD's determination that the Proposed Action may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, wildlife that may occur in the Project area, including Hawaiian seabirds and turtles (Appendix E). Mitigation measures identified through the Section 7 ESA consultation process with the USFWS will be implemented during construction and operation of the Project (Section 3.2). To mitigate potential impacts to Hawaiian seabirds, lighting will be fully shielded, pointed downwards, and dark-sky compliant to minimize potential impacts on wildlife and the surrounding visual environment. Except for security lighting, automatic motion sensor switches and controls may be installed on outdoor lights or lights will be turned off when human activity is not occurring in the lighted area. Nighttime construction will not occur during the seabird fledging period, September 15 through December 15. Additionally, during construction, the contractor would contact appropriate agencies should a downed fledgling be observed (Section 3.2.4).
Light Pollution: Artificial lighting from construction sites can disorient and confuse marine wildlife such as sea turtles, fish, crabs, and birds. The disruption of their natural rhythms can have long-lasting consequences on their survival and population dynamics. DAR recommends that all outdoor lighting should be fully shielded and pointed downward. Construction activities should occur during the daylight hours to the extent possible. Outdoor lighting should be turned off when not necessary, and automatic sensors are recommended. Seabird fledgling season occurs during Sept 15th - Dec 15th, and nighttime activity should be halted during this time. Fledglings become easily confused by artificial lighting, which can cause them to crash or land on the ground. Downed fledglings become easy prey for cats, mongoose, or	State DLNR-DAR	USFWS concurred with MARAD's determination that the Proposed Action may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, wildlife that may occur in the Project area, including Hawaiian seabirds and turtles (Appendix E). Mitigation measures identified through the Section 7 ESA consultation process with the USFWS will be implemented during construction and operation of the Project (Section 3.2). To mitigate potential impacts to Hawaiian seabirds, lighting will be fully shielded, pointed downwards, and dark-sky compliant to minimize potential impacts on wildlife and the surrounding visual environment. Except for security lighting, automatic motion sensor switches and controls may be installed on

Comments	Commenter	Responses
other predators. If downed or injured fledglings are observed in the construction area, they should be reported for rescue: Hawaii Wildlife Center (808) 884-5000 9:00 am – 5:00 pm, 7 days a week Hawaii Marine Animal Response (808) 220-7802 7:00am – 7:00pm, 7 days a week https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/wildlife/seabird-fallout-season/#response Personnel working on-site should be informed of the hazards light pollution may pose to seabirds and other wildlife and be able to recognize native species.		outdoor lights or lights will be turned off when human activity is not occurring in the lighted area. Nighttime construction will not occur during the seabird fledging period, September 15 through December 15. Additionally, during construction, the contractor would contact appropriate agencies should a downed fledgling be observed (Section 3.2.4).
Protected Marine Species: In the event that protected species such as the Hawaiian monk seal, other marine mammal, or sea-turtle is observed in close proximity to the construction site, and the activities being conducted may be considered as a "negligent or intentional act which results in disturbing or molesting a marine mammal", contractors should take appropriate action to modify activities in order to avoid disturbance to the regular behavior and activities of the animal. Appropriate action would include but is not limited to ceasing construction activity until the animal leaves the area of its own accord. If a pup is observed in the area, particular caution should be taken including creating a larger buffer between construction and the animals. All staff working onsite will receive training to recognize the Hawaiian monk seal and sea turtles, as well as learn the necessary procedures to follow if these species are observed. Any interaction between a protected species and the construction and repair activity proposed should be reported to the NOAA Protected Species Division and State of Hawaii DOCARE: NOAA Marine Mammal Response Coordinators (Oahu): 808-220-7802 NOAA Sea Turtles (Oahu): Monday-Friday, 7:30am-4pm NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service - PIFSC Marine Turtle Biology and Assessment Program: (808) 725-5730	State DLNR-DAR	USFWS concurred with MARAD's determination that the Proposed Action may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, wildlife that may occur in the Project area, including Hawaiian seabirds and turtles (Appendix E). Mitigation measures identified through the Section 7 ESA consultation process with the USFWS will be implemented during construction and operation of the Project (Section 3.2). To mitigate potential impacts to Hawaiian seabirds, lighting will be fully shielded, pointed downwards, and dark-sky compliant to minimize potential impacts on wildlife and the surrounding visual environment. Except for security lighting, automatic motion sensor switches and controls may be installed on outdoor lights or lights will be turned off when human activity is not occurring in the lighted area. Nighttime construction will not occur during the seabird fledging period, September 15 through December 15. Additionally, during construction, the contractor would contact appropriate agencies should a downed fledgling be observed (Section 3.2.4). State and federally-listed sea turtles and monk seals may occur in the general Project vicinity; however, exposure to construction equipment and activity is unlikely and anticipated to be non-injurious as these species typically avoid human activity. Additionally, no sea turtles or monk seals were observed in

Comments	Commenter	Responses
State of Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE): 808-643-3567 Seabirds may nest near coastal areas. Prior to initiating construction and before restarting construction after a delay, qualified personnel with seabird biology experience conduct surveys.		Kawaihae Harbor during the survey conducted for the natural resources assessment (Appendix D). For work close to the dock face, the contractor may reduce the likelihood of interactions by watching for and avoiding protected species before commencing work and by postponing or halting such work when protected species are within 50 yards of project activities (Section 3.2.3).
Construction-Related Stormwater Management, Flooding, and Erosion/Sediment Control		
Sedimentation: Sedimentation can introduce suspended solids, nutrients, and pollutants into aquatic ecosystems, leading to turbidity, reduced light penetration, and impaired water quality. Implement erosion and sediment control measures such as silt fences, sediment traps, and erosion control blankets to minimize soil disturbance and sediment runoff during construction activities. Vegetation buffers: Maintain vegetative buffers along coastal areas to stabilize soil, reduce erosion, and filter sediment-laden runoff before it reaches the ocean. Stormwater management: Implement stormwater management practices such as permeable pavement, vegetated swales, and retention ponds to reduce stormwater runoff volume and pollutant loads. Monitoring and compliance: Consider establishing monitoring protocols to assess sedimentation levels, water quality parameters, and compliance with regulatory requirements throughout the project lifecycle.	State DLNR-DAR	In accordance with applicable state and county regulations, the Project will incorporate an SWPPP and ESCP that include BMPs to minimize or avoid sedimentation impacts during construction. BMPs may include, but not be limited to, stabilizing and revegetating disturbed soils as soon as practicable, installing geotextile silt screens around the work area to capture potential water-borne sediment, and lining drywells and drain trenches with geotextile fabric. The Proposed Action involves realigning the existing drainage channel to accommodate the left-turn/storage lane and appurtenant pavement widening. The area within the existing open drainage channel will be cleared of any sedimentation and or overgrowth to prepare the area for the new pavement. The new drainage swale will continue to manage stormwater on the Project site and the potential for sediment transport to adjacent coastal waters. Construction activities and monitoring will be conducted in compliance with applicable regulatory requirements. See Sections 3.3 and 3.4 for additional discussion.
Erosion/LBSP: DAR recommends following best management practices for mitigating erosion and Land-Based Source Pollution (LBSP). The close proximity to aquatic resources should be considered during design and construction. Landscape design and leveling should minimize long-term erosion and LBSP.	State DLNR-DAR	The Proposed Action does not involve work within adjacent coastal waters. However, to protect water quality and mitigate potential impacts to marine resources, the Project will incorporate an SWPPP and ESCP that include BMPs to minimize or avoid sedimentation impacts during construction. BMPs may

Comments	Commenter	Responses
During construction, these measures would include any type of barrier (e.g. sediment barriers/bags, petroleum absorption diapers, etc.) that limits the amount of sediment or LBSP (e.g. petroleum products, chemicals, debris, etc.) to the maximum extent practicable. DAR recommends that all construction materials be composed of environmentally inert materials to the extent practicable. The Contractor shall consider the weather while performing construction. Some work may be performed during low rain conditions, but all construction would be halted during storm conditions or when storm conditions threaten the watershed. DAR would like to request notification, photo documentation, and GPS coordinates for any occurrence where above-average amounts of sediment or pollution have entered the water or drainage systems, to assess the impact, if any. DAR recommends that, where there is the opportunity to employ these erosion control and land-based sources of pollution (LBSP) barrier measures, the Contractor implement the practice of utilizing these (e.g. at any site where there will be excavation or sediment/pollutant producing activities up on top of the bank or in sections that have enough area between the activity and the water-line). These measures would include any type of barrier (e.g. sediment barriers/bags, petroleum absorption diapers, etc.) that limits the amount of sediment or LBSP (e.g. petroleum products, chemicals, debris, etc.) to the maximum extent practicable. DAR recommends minimizing these incidences of sediment or land based sources of pollution releases in order to avoid a continuous release or buildup of sediment or LBSP in areas of the stream that may result in permanently killing or negatively impacting endemic species located in the lower reaches of the watershed. DAR should be notified to assess impact should any event that occurs during construction that could negatively impact aquatic resources. Examples of this type of event include but are not limited to excess turbidity from construction and release of liquids such as oil or gas into the water. For the purpose of sediment control, partial isolation via barrier should be considered by the Contractor. This method minimizes the continued release of sediment into bodies of water. Sediment will still be released during the installation and removal of the barrier, but it will occur in a		include, but not be limited to, stabilizing and revegetating disturbed soils as soon as practicable, installing geotextile silt screens around the work area to capture potential water-borne sediment, lining drywells and drain trenches with geotextile fabric, using environmentally inert construction materials where feasible, and implementing good housekeeping practices for fuel and material handling. Construction activities will consider weather conditions, and work may be limited or suspended during storm events to reduce the potential for sediment or pollutant transport. Temporary isolation or containment measures may be considered if applicable to minimize continuous sediment release. For additional details on mitigation measures related to erosion and sediment control, as well as avoidance of contaminated runoff, refer to Sections 3.3 and 3.4.

Comments	Commenter	Responses
single, smaller burst rather than continuously. Water quality impacts should be carefully considered before applying this approach.		
3) I checked with the State Department of Transportation here, Mr. Bob Lee, says the area outside the fenced area, along KAWAIHAE ROAD, is part of the Harbor authority. Kawaihae has had a few incidents about clearing that ditch of erosion and debris. a) Please confirm because it may contain hazardous materials from cargo and other large containers. Then, if the harbor is the authority, how will this assessment mitigate this risk and traffic pattern to/from the harbor?	Jojo Tanimoto	The existing open drainage channel along Kawaihae Road will be relocated or replaced as part of the Proposed Action to accommodate the left-turn/storage lane and associated roadway improvements. Potential hazardous materials associated with harbor operations and roadway construction are evaluated in Section 3.13. During clearing, excavation, and reconstruction of the drainage channel, construction activities will implement BMPs including erosion and sediment controls, proper material handling procedures, and spill prevention measures, to minimize the potential for contaminated sediment or hazardous materials to enter the environment. With respect to traffic and access, HDOT-HAR will develop a construction Traffic Control Plan as the Project progresses to manage traffic flow along Kawaihae Road and maintain safe access to and from the harbor.
5-I was not aware that this Environmental Assessment included use of lands at the harbor for staging pollutants such as asphalt, etc. while repaving the property. That location is next to the Makahuna Gulch erosion ramp, where families gather to line fish. How will this document address the food sustenance and food safety for the families that use this area?	Jojo Tanimoto	The temporary staging area will not block access to shoreline fishing. Construction site BMPs as discussed in Section 3.3 will be implemented to avoid or minimize the potential for pollutants to run offsite and impact harbor waters.
7 – The Palihae Stream and Pahonu Stream (location of the historic church grounds and cemetery) are also a problem for flooding. It is normal occurrence during rainstorms. This is also the safety risks for goats that cross the roadways to the north small boat harbor and the harbor culvert stream.	Jojo Tanimoto	HDOT-HAR acknowledges the flooding and safety concerns associated with flooding of the Palihae Stream and Pahonu Stream. The Proposed Action is limited to improvements within the Project site and does not include work within upstream drainage systems or stream channels, including Palihae Stream and Pahonu Stream. Flooding associated with these upstream sources is therefore outside the scope of the subject Project and is not addressed by the proposed improvements.

Comments	Commenter	Responses
Air Quality		
Construction activities must comply with the provisions of Hawaii Administrative Rules, § 11- 60.1-33 on Fugitive Dust. In addition, for cases involving mixed land use, it is strongly recommended that buffer zones be established, wherever possible, in order to alleviate potential dust concerns.	State HDOH CAB	Construction activities will comply with HAR, § 11- 60.1-33. The Project is located within an industrially-zoned area adjacent to undeveloped agricultural land and open space and limited commercial uses. During construction, dust control measures will be implemented to minimize dust generation and off-site transport. Where practicable, separation distances, temporary buffer areas, or other site management practices will be used to alleviate potential dust impacts to surrounding land uses.
You must reasonably control the generation of all airborne, visible fugitive dust. Note that construction activities that occur near existing residences, businesses, public areas and major thoroughfares exacerbate potential dust concerns. It is recommended that a dust control management plan be developed which identifies and mitigates all activities that may generate airborne, visible fugitive dust. The plan, which does not require Department of Health approval, should help you recognize and minimize potential airborne, visible fugitive dust problems.	State HDOH CAB	A dust control management plan that identifies mitigation strategies for airborne, visible fugitive dust will be developed prior to initiation of construction. Refer to Section 3.5 for BMPs that will be employed during construction of the Project.
You must provide reasonable measures to control airborne, visible fugitive dust from the road areas and during the various phases of construction. These measures include, but are not limited to, the following: • Planning the different phases of construction, focusing on minimizing the amount of airborne, visible fugitive dust-generating materials and activities, centralizing on-site vehicular traffic routes, and locating potential dust-generating equipment in areas of the least impact; • Providing an adequate water source at the site prior to start-up of construction activities; • Landscaping and providing rapid covering of bare areas, including slopes, starting from the initial grading phase; • Minimizing airborne, visible fugitive dust from shoulders and access roads; • Providing reasonable dust control measures during weekends, after hours, and prior to daily start-up of construction activities; and Controlling airborne, visible fugitive dust from debris being hauled away from the project site.	State HDOH CAB	The proposed Project will include a dust control management plan that incorporates the BMPs recommended by HDOH CAB to mitigate airborne, visible fugitive dust during construction (Section 3.5)

Comments	Commenter	Responses
Climate Change and Sea Level Rise		
3. Hawai'i Sea Level Rise Viewer at https://www.pacioos.hawaii.edu/shoreline/slr-hawaii/ particularly identifies a 3.2-foot sea level rise exposure area across the main Hawaiian Islands which may occur in the mid to latter half of the 21st century. The EA should provide a map of the 3.2-foot sea level rise exposure area, including passive flooding, high wave flooding and shoreline erosion, in relation to the project area, and assess the potential impacts of sea level rise, including inundation of saltwater, on the proposed structures and improvements.	State OPSD	As shown in Figure 3-4, a majority of the Project site is outside of the 3.2-foot SLR-XA except for the concrete-lined open culvert located at the north end of the harbor. According to the SLR Viewer, potential risks are primarily attributed to passive (high tide flooding) and the Project site is not susceptible to annual high tide flooding or coastal erosion under the 3.2-foot SLR scenario. No new structures or improvements are planned within the 3.2-foot SLR-XA. Potential SLR impacts on the Project are discussed in Section 3.7.
Vehicular Access During Construction		
6-I am not understanding how vehicle traffic will access and egress this part of the harbor during construction. The south Small Boat Harbor is the alternative boat ramp and the military needs an alternative vehicle route. Please advise this situation.	Jojo Tanimoto	A portion of the Coral Flats area will be used for temporary staging during construction. Access to this area will be maintained during construction, and the staging area will not block any access route to the shoreline, the Army's area, or the Kawaihae Small Boat Harbor (South).
Emergency Access		
I noticed that I did forget an important issue the communities here are concerned about and that is addressing the issue of an alternative road route in case of emergency evacuation events. Kawaihae Road goes over three historic bridges and if they break, how will anyone get to Waimea, Pohakuloa or Kona? There is no ByPass Route and going around Kohala Mountain Road is not efficient. With the rising population and cost of fuel, this problem being addressed by the largest user of this roadway would help the whole Kohala region.	Jojo Tanimoto	As described in Section 1.5, the purpose of the Project is to address existing traffic congestion along Kawaihae Road associated with harbor operations and to upgrade conditions and improve efficiencies within the Kawaihae Harbor cargo terminal. Regional evacuation planning, bridge replacement, and development of alternative access routes are outside the scope and purpose of the Project and should be addressed through separate transportation and emergency management planning efforts.

Comments	Commenter	Responses
Water Supply		
Please be informed that we will need to maintain service that the existing 12-inch waterline provides under Kawaihae Road during the construction of the project. As such, the Department would request that two (2) sets of the construction plans be submitted to our Department for review and approval. Further, the Department requests, for a detailed estimated maximum daily water usage calculation for the proposed new District office, prepared by a professional engineer licensed in the State of Hawai'i, for review and approval. The water usage calculations should include the total estimated daily water usage in gallons per day (GPD) and the estimated peak flow in gallons per minute (GPM). Upon acceptance of the water usage calculations, the Department will determine if water is available, the facilities charge due, and necessary water system improvements to support the subject development. We have no objection to the proposed project with the condition that the applicant/contractor will be responsible for the cost of relocation or modifying any of our water system facilities within the project area.	County Department of Water Supply (DWS)	The Applicant acknowledges the need to maintain service to the existing water line during construction and confirms that two (2) sets of construction plans will be provided to the DWS for review and approval. Detailed estimated maximum daily water use calculations associated with the relocated District office will also be submitted to the DWS for review and approval.
Outreach		
1) I am surprised that no one from this homestead and from the Waimea homestead was aware of this public outreach.	Jojo Tanimoto	In accordance with HAR § 11-200.1(18)(a), HDOT-HAR conducted pre-assessment consultation seeking input from agencies, citizen groups, individuals with jurisdiction or expertise, and those reasonably affected by the Project to guide the scope and preparation of the Draft EA. The initial pre-assessment comment period occurred from November 18, 2025, through December 17, 2025. Subsequently, NHOs that participated in the Section 106 consultation process were invited to provide comments on the scope of the HRS Chapter 343 Draft EA between December 29, 2025, and January 29, 2026. A total of 9 agencies, organizations, and individuals provided comments. See Table 5-1.. HDOT-HAR appreciates input regarding additional groups that may wish to review the Draft EA and/or who may wish to receive notice of the Draft EA publication and public comment period.

Comments	Commenter	Responses
Miscellaneous		
On behalf of Mayor Alameda, please accept this correspondence as confirmation that Mayor Alameda has no comments to provide in regards to Kawaihae Harbor Improvements.	Office of the Mayor	HDOT-HAR acknowledges the comment.

6.0 Anticipated Findings and Conclusions

This EA finds that the potential effects associated with the proposed Project will not be significant or adverse; or will be avoided, minimized or mitigated such that any potential adverse effects will be less than significant. Potential Project effects are generally temporary, occurring during construction, and would not be expected to adversely impact the long-term environmental quality of the Project area. This section summarizes the significance criteria used to determine whether the Proposed Action would have a significant impact on the environment.

6.1 HRS 343 Significance Criteria

The potential effects of the proposed project were evaluated based on the Significance Criteria specified in HAR § 11-200.1-13. Discussion of the project's conformance to the HAR criteria is presented as follows.

(1) Irrevocably commit a natural, cultural, or historic resource.

The Project site is limited to previously disturbed and industrialized areas within the existing Kawaihae Harbor facility, adjacent Kawaihae Road ROW, and Coral Flats area. No expansion into undeveloped lands or native habitat is proposed. To avoid or minimize potential impacts to natural, cultural, and historic resources, HDOT-HAR will implement mitigation measures developed in consultation with, and agreed upon by, SHPD through the Section 106 and HRS 6E processes (Section 3.1.1). These measures include archaeological and cultural monitoring in sensitive mauka areas during roadway widening; vibration management and monitoring near archaeological sites; maintaining cultural access to Coral Flats; implementation of water quality BMPs; design measures to reduce visual impacts associated with new lighting; and coordination with the community during construction. HDOT-HAR will also follow required procedures for inadvertent discoveries of cultural materials or human remains pursuant to HAR § 13-279, 13-280, and 13-300. With these measures in place, the Project does not involve an irrevocable commitment to or loss of significant natural or cultural resources.

(2) Curtail the range of beneficial uses of the environment.

The Project maintains the existing industrial harbor use and does not convert land to new use types. Cultural access to Coral Flats will be maintained during construction to ensure continued traditional cultural and community recreational uses. Public shoreline access is not currently provided within the harbor footprint and will not be altered. The Project does not curtail the range of beneficial uses of the environment.

(3) Conflict with the State's environmental policies or long-term environmental goals established by law.

The Project is consistent with State environmental review requirements under HRS Chapter 343 and HAR Chapter 11-200.1. As discussed throughout Chapter 5.0, the Project is consistent with the visions, objectives, goals, and policies of various state and county long-term environmental policies.

(4) Have a substantial adverse effect on the economic welfare, social welfare, or cultural practices of the community and State.

The Project would not substantially or detrimentally affect the economic or social welfare and activities of the community, county, or state. The Proposed Action would construct improvements to the existing harbor facility and widen a portion of Kawaihae Road to relieve congestion associated with harbor activities. Construction impacts will be temporary and minimized through the implementation of BMPs discussed throughout Chapter 3.0. In the long term, the Project would improve economic and social welfare of the residents of not only the Kawaihae and South Kohala region, but the entire island by improving the reliability and resilience of the critical Kawaihae Harbor.

The Project would not adversely impact historic or cultural resources or traditional or customary practices. Through the NHPA Section 106 process, measures have been developed and agreed upon to protect cultural resources and practices. See Section 3.1.2 for further discussion.

(5) Have a substantial adverse effect on public health.

The Project would not result in long-term permanent impacts to public health. Construction-phase air and water quality impacts such as dust or sedimentation will be temporary and mitigated through the implementation of BMPs outlined in the SWPPP and construction specifications. The Project will not result in long-term operational emissions or pollutant discharges. See Sections 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5 for further discussion.

(6) Involve adverse secondary impacts, such as population changes or effects on public facilities

The Project involves improvements to Kawaihae Harbor and widening of the adjacent Kawaihae Road and would not result in adverse secondary impacts such as population growth, adverse impacts to public services, or the need to expand public facilities. Planned widening of Kawaihae Road is needed to relieve existing congestion associated with harbor operations, which would not induce new traffic or generate demand for public facilities or services.

(7) Involve a substantial degradation of environmental quality.

The Project would not result in any impacts that would substantially degrade environmental quality. Construction activities associated with the proposed Project would result in temporary impacts and would not be substantial (Chapter 3.0). Construction impacts will be temporary and minimized or mitigated through the implementation of BMPs discussed throughout Chapter 3.0.

(8) Be individually limited but cumulatively have substantial adverse effect upon the environment or involves a commitment for larger actions.

The Proposed Action involves improvements to the Kawaihae Harbor facility and widening of Kawaihae Road within the existing ROW and HDOT-HAR land. The Project is a complete, independent project and does not commit HDOT-HAR to a larger program of

infrastructure expansion or corridor redevelopment. The Pier 2 cargo yard is currently operating at or above its practical capacity, and the Proposed Action is planned to restore safe and efficient operations within the existing harbor footprint rather than expand overall throughput.

Cumulative impacts are discussed in Section 3.15. While other maintenance or development projects may be planned at the harbor or the surrounding area, the Project has been designed to avoid contributing to incremental degradation of environmental or cultural resources. BMPs to minimize construction-related impacts such as erosion, sedimentation, and stormwater runoff will be implemented. With proposed mitigation measures in place, the Project is not anticipated to contribute to cumulative significant environmental effects in the region.

The Project does not preclude or necessitate future actions beyond routine maintenance and does not represent a segment of a larger phased undertaking by HDOT-HAR. Installation of conduits and transformer pads will not, in and of themselves, increase cargo throughput or operational intensity at the harbor. Future electrical upgrades installed by harbor users would be subject to separate environmental and regulatory review, as applicable. Therefore, these improvements do not represent a commitment to larger actions or create substantial cumulative impacts. Therefore, while the Project is part of HDOT-HAR's ongoing efforts to maintain aging infrastructure to meet current demands, it does not result in a cumulative substantial adverse effect on the environment, nor does it involve a commitment to larger actions requiring future environmental review.

(9) Have a substantial adverse effect on a rare, threatened, or endangered species, or its habitat

The Project would not adversely affect rare, threatened, or endangered animal or plant species or critical habitat. In a survey conducted of the Project area, no plant or faunal species of conservation interest or listed as threatened or endangered under State or Federal statutes was observed (Section 3.2). Measures will be implemented during construction and following Project completion to ensure that the Project minimizes impacts to listed species to the maximum extent practicable (refer to minimization measures discussed in Section 3.2). The potential for downstream impacts to marine water quality is minimal and BMPs will be implemented to prevent sedimentation and protect downstream water quality including, but not limited to, silt fencing, vegetated buffers, timing restrictions, and soil stabilization measures (see Sections 3.2.3 and 3.3).

(10) Have a substantial adverse effect on air or water quality or ambient noise levels.

Only minor, short-term, and temporary impacts on air quality and noise levels are anticipated during the operation of construction equipment. BMPs would be implemented to prevent adverse impacts to water quality and the project would adhere to permitting requirements to protect water quality. No long-term, direct or indirect, adverse impacts to these resources are anticipated from implementation of the Project. See Sections 3.3, 3.5, and 3.10) for further discussion.

(11) Have a substantial adverse effect on or be likely to suffer damage by being located in an environmentally sensitive area such as a flood plain, tsunami zone, sea level rise exposure area, beach, erosion-prone area, geologically hazardous land, estuary, fresh water, or coastal waters.

As a port facility, Kawaihae Harbor is, by necessity, located along the coast within hazard-prone areas, including the tsunami evacuation zone and SLR-XA (Sections 3.6.4 and 3.7). The Project area is designated as FEMA Flood Zone X (shaded and unshaded), indicating those areas of moderate or minimal hazard (Section 3.6.3). Flooding associated with intense rainfall events has historically affected Kawaihae Harbor, as discussed in Section 3.6.3.

However, tsunami hazard exposure at Kawaihae Harbor is consistent with coastal locations statewide and is not increased by the Proposed Action. While the Project area is primarily subject to storm-driven flooding, with the area within the SLR-XA vulnerable to passive flooding, planned improvements will be designed to withstand such events. The Proposed Action includes drainage improvements to the Project area as described in Section 2.4. Design of structures would be informed by geotechnical investigations and appropriate for local soil conditions. Short-term impacts to soil stability during construction activities would be mitigated using BMPs. See Section 3.4 for details on these BMPs. By constructing new structures, clearing and reconstructing existing drainage structures, and relocating buildings outside of areas known to be prone to flooding, the Proposed Action is not expected to cause a substantial adverse effect on or be likely to suffer damage by being located in an environmentally sensitive area.

(12) Have a substantial adverse effect on scenic vistas and view planes, during day or night, identified in county or state plans or studies.

The Proposed Action is not anticipated to have a substantial adverse effect on scenic vistas or view planes identified in county or state plans or studies, during either daytime or nighttime conditions. Roadway widening will follow the existing alignment within the state ROW. Modification of the adjacent rock outcrop may increase views of the harbor from certain viewpoints along Kawaihae Road; however, the surrounding visual environment is already characterized by industrial harbor features, including container stacks, storage tanks, lighting infrastructure, and marine vessels.

Visual effects to historic properties, including Puʻukoholā Heiau NHS, were evaluated through the Section 106 consultation process and the Project was determined not to result in adverse effects. The Pelekāne Buffer Zone will continue to provide physical and visual separation between the harbor and adjacent cultural resources.

Installation of new 80-foot light poles will introduce additional vertical elements within the harbor facility. Lighting will consist of fully shielded, dark-sky compliant LED fixtures with automatic controls to minimize nighttime glare and light spill. Pole color treatments will further reduce daytime visual contrast. With implementation of these measures, long-term visual impacts are expected to be minor and consistent with the established industrial character of Kawaihae Harbor. See further discussion in Section 3.14.

(13) Require substantial energy consumption or emit substantial greenhouse gases.

Construction of the Project would not require substantial energy consumption. Fuel would be consumed by construction vehicles and equipment on a short-term and intermittent basis. Planned widening of Kawaihae Road would relieve existing congestion associated with harbor operations, which would not induce new traffic nor contribute to increases in vehicle traffic volume or changes in vehicle mix (Section 3.8). As such, the Proposed Action would not contribute to a long-term increase in vehicle emissions that impact air quality or emit substantial GHGs.

6.2 Anticipated Findings of No Significant Impact

Based on the information presented and examined in this document, the proposed Project is not expected to produce significant adverse social, economic, cultural, or environmental impacts. Therefore, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is anticipated, pursuant to HRS Chapter 343 and the provisions of HAR Chapter 11-200.1.

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Appendix A

Pre-Assessment Consultation Letters

Wright, Noelle

From: Arakaki, Aric <Aric_Arakaki@nps.gov>
Sent: Monday, January 26, 2026 11:52 AM
To: Wright, Noelle
Cc: 10447523_2025059HDOT P50175WO5KwhaeEA; Shen, Celia Y; Gmirkin, Richard V; Scolari, Paul
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Pre-Assessment Consultation for an Environmental Assessment: Kawaihae Harbor Improvements

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Aloha e Noelle,

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on the subject EA.

With the passage of an act of the U.S. Congress sponsored by Senator Daniel Akaka, the system of historic trails, located within a broad coastal corridor extending from Hawaii Island's Upolu Point to South Point and into Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, was designated in the year 2000 and called the Ala Kahakai NHT. Subsequent to the designation and based on numerous consultations with communities within all five moku of Hawaii Island, it is now the policy of the Ala Kahakai NHT to engage individuals and families with ancient and historic ancestral ties to the ahupua'a/moku to lead community-based efforts to manage associated segments of the trail system based on the ahupua'a concept of community land management. As such, building community capacity, sustainable economies, resiliency, and partnerships are the cornerstones for the successful implementation of this policy.

We are currently working with communities in North and South Kohala and with Pu'ukohola National Historic Park to connect and reestablish the trail system within the Kawaihae area. We are also in preliminary conversations with the NPS transportation planners and FDOT on planning for this as well. Please visit www.nps.gov/alka for more info.

In the past, we have had supported discussions with the DLNR's Harbors Division administrator at Kawaihae Harbor on connecting the trail as it laterally traverses the Kawaihae Harbor bordering Kawaihae Road to connect with the trail to the north and south of the harbor.

As you may be aware, there is no safe pedestrian access along Kawaihae Road fronting the harbor boundary. Pedestrians need to walk along the guardrail or cross the road to walk along the road's shoulder.

While this EA addresses the improvements to the road, etc., we are requesting that accommodations in these improvements' plans and designs be made allowing for future capital improvements for safe pedestrian access that will also include the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail route.

I'd be happy to discuss this further with you in terms of the route that was discussed in the past.

Mahalo!

Aric Arakaki, Superintendent
Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail
73-4786 Kanalani Street, #14
Kailua Kona, HI 96740
Mobile: (808) 217-0307
https://www.nps.gov/alka/index.htm

From: Wright, Noelle <Noelle.Wright@hdrinc.com>
Sent: Monday, December 29, 2025 3:59 PM
To: Arakaki, Aric <Aric_Arakaki@nps.gov>
Cc: 10447523_2025059HDOT P50175WO5KwhaeEA <kawaihae@hdrinc.com>; Shen, Celia Y <celia.y.shen@hawaii.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pre-Assessment Consultation for an Environmental Assessment: Kawaihae Harbor Improvements

Aloha e Aric,

On behalf of the Hawai‘i Department of Transportation, Harbors Division (HDOT-HAR), please find attached the Pre-Assessment Consultation letter for the proposed Kawaihae Harbor Improvements project on the Island of Hawai‘i.

HDR is preparing a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) in accordance with Hawai‘i Revised Statutes, Chapter 343, and Hawai‘i Administrative Rules, Section 11-200.1. The attached letter provides a description of the proposed project and requests your input to help guide the scope and development of the EA.

We respectfully request that written comments be submitted within 30 days of receipt of the letter, by January 28, 2026.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Mahalo for your time and participation in the environmental review process.

Noelle

Noelle Besa Wright, AICP
Senior Environmental Planner

HDR

STATE OF HAWAIʻI
OFFICE OF PLANNING
& SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

235 South Beretania Street, 6th Floor, Honolulu, Hawaiʻi 96813
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawaiʻi 96804

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR

MARY ALICE EVANS
DIRECTOR

Telephone: (808) 587-2846
Fax: (808) 587-2824
Web: https://planning.hawaii.gov/

Coastal Zone Management Program

Environmental Review Program

Land Use Commission

Land Use Division

Special Plans Branch

State Transit-Oriented Development

Statewide Geographic Information System

Statewide Sustainability Branch

DTS202511211512MO

December 12, 2025

Ms. Noelle Besa Wright
HDR
1001 Bishop Street, Suite 400
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Ms. Wright:

Subject: Pre-Assessment Consultation for an Environmental Assessment for Kawaihae Harbor Improvements, Kawaihae, Island of Hawai‘i; Tax Map Keys: (3) 6-1-003: 022 Por., 023 Por., 024 Por., 028, 032, 034, 036 Por., 037, 046, 049, 052 to 054, 057 to 064, and (3) 6-1-002: 999

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) is in receipt of your early consultation request, received November 21, 2025, for the preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Kawaihae Harbor Improvements Project located in Kawaihae, Island of Hawai‘i.

The State of Hawai‘i Department of Transportation, Harbors Division (HDOT-HAR) proposes to widen a portion of Kawaihae Road to include a new left-turn and storage lane at the harbor main gate, as well as construct cargo yard improvements, which would include 1) replacing existing asphalt surfaces with new reinforced concrete pavement in selected areas and paving pockets of unimproved fill areas; 2) new 80-foot high mast lighting to replace lower-lighting equipment; 3) installation of conduit and raised transformer pads for future harbor upgrades; and 4) the relocation of the HDOT-HAR district office building and maintenance shed to increase cargo yard footprint. The project area which encompasses construction and staging areas is approximately 63 acres.

The proposed improvements will improve operating efficiencies within the cargo terminal and enhance the capacity of Kawaihae Harbor to serve as an alternative harbor should an emergency or natural disaster affect Hilo Harbor.

The OPSD has reviewed the EA early consultation request and has the following comments to offer:

1. The EA shall discuss the triggers for the preparation of an EA set forth in Hawai‘i Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 343, as well as a list of all required permits and approvals. Furthermore, the Draft EA

should contain the project location maps, including the regional location on the Island of Hawai'i, and provide schematic plans or drawing indicating the scope of the project.

2. The Hawai'i Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Law requires all state and county agencies to enforce the CZM objectives and policies. The subject EA should include an assessment with mitigation measures as to how the proposed project conforms to each of the CZM objectives and policies set forth in HRS § 205A-2, as amended.

3. Hawai'i Sea Level Rise Viewer at https://www.pacioos.hawaii.edu/shoreline/slr-hawaii/ particularly identifies a 3.2-foot sea level rise exposure area across the main Hawaiian Islands which may occur in the mid to latter half of the 21st century. The EA should provide a map of the 3.2-foot sea level rise exposure area, including passive flooding, high wave flooding and shoreline erosion, in relation to the project area, and assess the potential impacts of sea level rise, including inundation of saltwater, on the proposed structures and improvements.

4. In enacting Act 224, Session Laws of Hawaii 2005, the legislature found that light pollution in Hawaii's coastal areas and artificial lighting illuminating the shoreline and ocean waters can be disruptive to avian and marine life. For artificial lighting provided by a government agency or its authorized users for government operations, security, public safety, or navigational needs, a government agency or its authorized users shall make reasonable efforts to properly position or shield lights to minimize adverse impacts of lights.

5. Pursuant to HRS § 266-2, notwithstanding any law or provision to the contrary, HDOT is authorized to plan, construct, operate, and maintain any commercial harbor facility in the State, including, but not limited to, the acquisition and use of lands necessary to stockpile dredged spoils, without the approval of county agencies. The EA should discuss whether the proposed Kawaihae Harbor Improvements Project will be authorized under HRS § 266-2.

If you respond to this comment letter, please include DTS202511211512MO in the subject line. For any questions regarding this letter, please contact Shichao Li of our office at (808) 587-2841 or by email at shichao.li@hawaii.gov.

Sincerely,

Mary Alice Evans

Mary Alice Evans
Director

STATE OF HAWAI'I | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA
Office of Conservation and Coastal Lands
P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

REF:OCCL:MK

COR HA 26-90
Dec 3, 2025

Noelle Besa Wright, AICP
HDR Inc.
1001 Bishop Street, Suite 400
Honolulu, HI 96813

SUBJECT: Correspondence HA 26-90 Pre-Assessment Consultation for Environmental Assessment for Kawaihae Harbor Improvements
Located at Kawaihae, South Kohala, Island of Hawai'i
Tax Map Keys: (3) 6-1-003:022, Por. 023, Por 024, Port 028, 032, 033, 034, 036, Port 037, 046, 049, 052, 053, 054, 057, 058, 059, 060, Por 061, 062, 063, 064, and (3) 6-1-002:999 (ROW)

Dear Noelle Besa Wright:

The Office of Conservation and Coastal Lands (OCCL) is in receipt of your letter regarding the subject matter. According to the information you have provided, the Department of Transportation, Harbors Division, represented by HDR Inc. is proposing to make improvements to Kawaihae Road to reduce traffic congestion, and enhance the capability of Kawaihae Harbor to serve as an alternate harbor should an emergency or natural disaster affect Hilo Harbor. Pursuant to Chapter 343 of Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRSR) and Title 11 Chapter 200.1 of Hawai'i Administrative Rules (HAR), the HDOT HAR is preparing a draft environmental assessment.

It appears that the proposed project is located entirely within the Urban State Land Use District, and therefore our office would not have jurisdiction. Should there be any proposed work within the Conservation District, please contact our office for further review.

Should you have any questions, please contact Mari Kurosawa of our Office at mari.i.kurosawa@hawaii.gov or at (808) 587-0381.

Sincerely,

S Michael Cain

S. Michael Cain, Administrator
Office of Conservation and Coastal Lands

CC: Hawai'i District Land Office
County of Hawaii- Department of Planning

STATE OF HAWAIʻI | KA MOKUʻĀINA ʻO HAWAIʻI
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL
RESOURCES DIVISION OF AQUATIC RESOURCES
1151 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 330
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

Date: 12/17/2025

DAR # AR6998

MEMORANDUM

TO: Brian J. Neilson
DAR Administrator

FROM: Ashley Wills, Aquatic Biologist
Honor Weber, Aquatic Biologist

SUBJECT: Pre-Assessment Consultation for Kawaihae Harbor Improvements

Request Submitted by: HDR on behalf of HDOT

Location of Project: Kawaihae Harbor, Kawaihae, Island of Hawaiʻi

Brief Description of Project:

HDOT proposes to widen a portion of Kawaihae Road (Hawaiʻi Route 70) to include a new left-turn and storage lane at the harbor main gate as well as construct cargo yard improvements which will include replacing asphalt surfaces, installing new 80ft. high last lighting, installing conduit and raised transformer pads, and relocation of the HDOT-HAR district office building. The purpose of this project is to reduce traffic congestion, and improve operating conditions and efficiencies within the cargo terminal.

Comments:

☐ No Comments ☑ Comments Attached

Thank you for providing DAR the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed project. Should there be any changes to the project plan, DAR requests the opportunity to review and comment on those changes.

Comments Approved: _____ Date: 12/17/2025

Brian J. Neilson
DAR Administrator

DAR# AR6998

Comments

Light Pollution:
Artificial lighting from construction sites can disorient and confuse marine wildlife such as sea turtles, fish, crabs, and birds. The disruption of their natural rhythms can have long-lasting consequences on their survival and population dynamics.

DAR recommends that all outdoor lighting should be fully shielded and pointed downward. Construction activities should occur during the daylight hours to the extent possible. Outdoor lighting should be turned off when not necessary, and automatic sensors are recommended.

Seabird fledgling season occurs during Sept 15th - Dec 15th, and nighttime activity should be halted during this time. Fledglings become easily confused by artificial lighting, which can cause them to crash or land on the ground. Downed fledglings become easy prey for cats, mongoose, or other predators. If downed or injured fledglings are observed in the construction area, they should be reported for rescue:
Hawaii Wildlife Center
(808) 884-5000
9:00 am – 5:00 pm, 7 days a week
Hawaii Marine Animal Response
(808) 220-7802
7:00am – 7:00pm, 7 days a week
https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/wildlife/seabird-fallout-season/#response
Personnel working on-site should be informed of the hazards light pollution may pose to seabirds and other wildlife and be able to recognize native species.

Protected Marine Species:
In the event that protected species such as the Hawaiian monk seal, other marine mammal, or sea-turtle is observed in close proximity to the construction site, and the activities being conducted may be considered as a "negligent or intentional act which results in disturbing or molesting a marine mammal", contractors should take appropriate action to modify activities in order to avoid disturbance to the regular behavior and activities of the animal. Appropriate action would include but is not limited to ceasing construction activity until the animal leaves the area of its own accord. If a pup is observed in the area, particular caution should be taken including creating a larger buffer between construction and the animals. All staff working on-site will receive training to recognize the Hawaiian monk seal and sea turtles, as well as learn the necessary procedures to follow if these species are observed.
Any interaction between a protected species and the construction and (continued on next page)

DAR# AR6998

Comments

and repair activity proposed should be reported to the NOAA Protected Species Division and State of Hawaii DOCARE:
NOAA Marine Mammal Response Coordinators (Oahu): 808-220-7802
NOAA Sea Turtles (Oahu): Monday-Friday, 7:30am-4pm NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service - PIFSC Marine Turtle Biology and Assessment Program: (808) 725-5730
State of Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE): 808-643-3567
Seabirds may nest near coastal areas. Prior to initiating construction and before restarting construction after a delay, qualified personnel with seabird biology experience conduct surveys.

Sedimentation:
Sedimentation can introduce suspended solids, nutrients, and pollutants into aquatic ecosystems, leading to turbidity, reduced light penetration, and impaired water quality. Implement erosion and sediment control measures such as silt fences, sediment traps, and erosion control blankets to minimize soil disturbance and sediment runoff during construction activities.
Vegetation buffers: Maintain vegetative buffers along coastal areas to stabilize soil, reduce erosion, and filter sediment-laden runoff before it reaches the ocean.
Stormwater management: Implement stormwater management practices such as permeable pavement, vegetated swales, and retention ponds to reduce stormwater runoff volume and pollutant loads.
Monitoring and compliance: Consider establishing monitoring protocols to assess sedimentation levels, water quality parameters, and compliance with regulatory requirements throughout the project lifecycle.

Erosion/LBSP:
DAR recommends following best management practices for mitigating erosion and Land-Based Source Pollution (LBSP). The close proximity to aquatic resources should be considered during design and construction. Landscape design and leveling should minimize long-term erosion and LBSP.
During construction, these measures would include any type of barrier (e.g. sediment barriers/bags, petroleum absorption diapers, etc.) that limits the amount of sediment or LBSP (e.g. petroleum products, chemicals, debris, etc.) to the maximum extent practicable. DAR recommends that all construction materials be composed of
(continued on next page)

DAR# AR6998

Comments

environmentally inert materials to the extent practicable. The Contractor shall consider the weather while performing construction. Some work may be performed during low rain conditions, but all construction would be halted during storm conditions or when storm conditions threaten the watershed.

DAR would like to request notification, photo documentation, and GPS coordinates for any occurrence where above-average amounts of sediment or pollution have entered the water or drainage systems, to assess the impact, if any.

—--

DAR recommends that, where there is the opportunity to employ these erosion control and land-based sources of pollution (LBSP) barrier measures, the Contractor implement the practice of utilizing these (e.g. at any site where there will be excavation or sediment/pollutant producing activities up on top of the bank or in sections that have enough area between the activity and the water-line). These measures would include any type of barrier (e.g. sediment barriers/bags, petroleum absorption diapers, etc.) that limits the amount of sediment or LBSP (e.g. petroleum products, chemicals, debris, etc.) to the maximum extent practicable.

DAR recommends minimizing these incidences of sediment or land based sources of pollution releases in order to avoid a continuous release or buildup of sediment or LBSP in areas of the stream that may result in permanently killing or negatively impacting endemic species located in the lower reaches of the watershed.

DAR should be notified to assess impact should any event that occurs during construction that could negatively impact aquatic resources. Examples of this type of event include but are not limited to excess turbidity from construction and release of liquids such as oil or gas into the water.

For the purpose of sediment control, partial isolation via barrier should be considered by the Contractor. This method minimizes the continued release of sediment into bodies of water. Sediment will still be released during the installation and removal of the barrier, but it will occur in a single, smaller burst rather than continuously. Water quality impacts should be carefully considered before applying this approach.

November 18, 2025

SUBJECT: **Pre-Assessment Consultation for an Environmental Assessment**
Hawai'i Revised Statutes, Chapter 343
Kawaihae Harbor Improvements
Kawaihae, Island of Hawai'i
Tax Map Keys: (3) 6-1-003:022 Por., :023 Por., :024 Por., :028, :032, :033, :034, :036 Por., :037, :046, :049, :052, :053, :054, :057, :058, :059, :060 Por., :061, :062, :063, :064, and (3)-6-1-002:999 (Right-Of-Way)

Dear Participant:

On behalf of the Hawai'i Department of Transportation, Harbors Division (HDOT-HAR), HDR is preparing a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) in accordance with Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS), Chapter 343 and Hawai'i Administrative Rules (HAR), Section 11-200.1, for the Kawaihae Harbor Improvements project located in Kawaihae, Island of Hawai'i (Figure 1). HDOT-HAR proposes to widen a portion of Kawaihae Road (Hawai'i Route 70) to include a new left-turn and storage lane at the harbor main gate, as well as construct cargo yard improvements. Improvements to the cargo yard would include replacing existing asphalt surfaces with new reinforced concrete pavement in selected areas and paving pockets of unimproved fill areas; new 80-foot high mast lighting to replace lower-lighting equipment; installation of conduit and raised transformer pads for future harbor upgrades; and the relocation of the HDOT-HAR district office building and maintenance shed to increase cargo yard footprint. The Project Area is approximately 63 acres. The Project Area encompasses construction and anticipated staging areas.

The purpose of the project is to reduce traffic congestion along Kawaihae Road caused by truck queues, as well as improve operating conditions and efficiencies within the cargo terminal. Through these upgrades, the project also intends to enhance the capability of Kawaihae Harbor to serve as an alternate harbor should an emergency or natural disaster affect Hilo Harbor.

The project involves the use of State lands and funds and is therefore subject to environmental review requirements under HRS, Chapter 343. This project also includes the use of Federal U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD) funds; MARAD will undertake a separate environmental evaluation to satisfy National Environmental Policy Act requirements. In accordance with HAR, Section 11-200.1-18(a), HDOT-HAR is seeking input from agencies, organizations, and/or individuals who have jurisdiction, an area of expertise, or may be reasonably affected by the project to help guide the scope and development of the Draft EA.

We request your written comments via U.S. mail or email to the following address within 30 days of receipt of this letter by December 17, 2025:

HDR
Attn: Noelle Besa Wright, AICP
1001 Bishop Street, Suite 400
Honolulu, HI 96813
(808) 697-6297
Email: kawaihae@hdrinc.com

Thank you for your participation in the environmental review process.

Sincerely,

Noelle Besa Wright, AICP
Senior Environmental Planner

Enclosure
cc: Celia Shen, HDOT-HAR (sent via electronic mail)

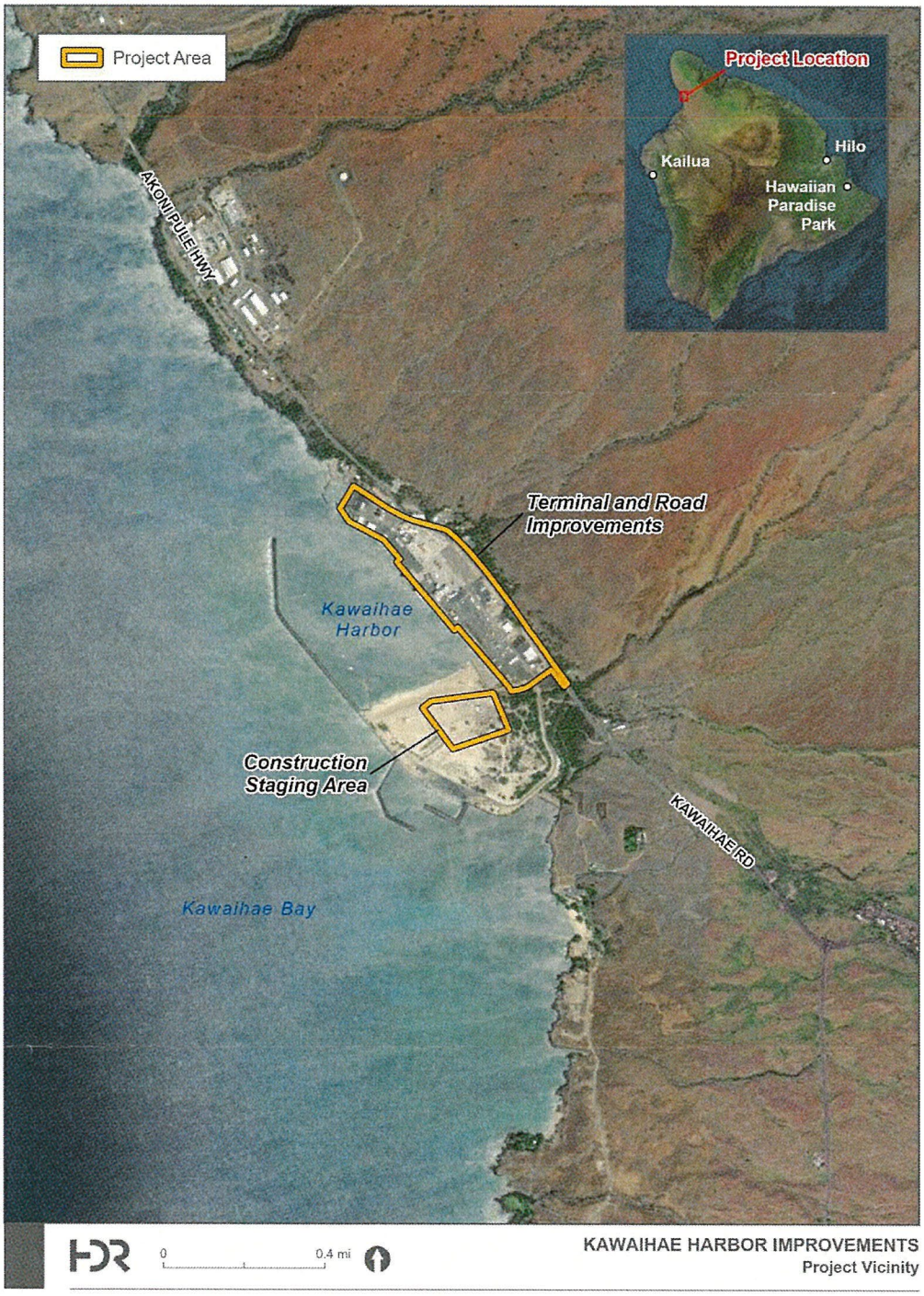

Figure 1. Project Location and Vicinity

AR6998 Environmental Review: Kawaihae Harbor Improvements

Final Audit Report 2025-12-17

Created:	2025-12-17 (Hawaii-Aleutian Standard Time)
By:	Honor Weber (honor.n.weber@hawaii.gov)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAAUifxMtpYveA4D342FWF0Fk9YNI3LBgNL
Number of Documents:	2
Document page count:	8
Number of supporting files:	0
Supporting files page count:	0

"AR6998 Environmental Review: Kawaihae Harbor Improvements" History

Document created by Honor Weber (honor.n.weber@hawaii.gov)
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Document emailed to Brian Neilson (brian.j.neilson@hawaii.gov) for signature
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Agreement viewed by Brian Neilson (brian.j.neilson@hawaii.gov)
2025-12-17 - 2:13:19 PM HST- IP address: 162.221.246.37

Document e-signed by Brian Neilson (brian.j.neilson@hawaii.gov)
Signature Date: 2025-12-17 - 2:13:29 PM HST - Time Source: server- IP address: 162.221.246.37

Agreement completed.
2025-12-17 - 2:13:29 PM HST

ETS
STATE OF HAWAI'I

Standard Comments for Land Use Reviews
Clean Air Branch
Hawaii State Department of Health
July 3, 2024

All project activities shall comply with Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR), Chapter 11-59 and 11-60.1.

If your proposed project:

Requires an Air Pollution Control Permit

- You must obtain an air pollution control permit from the Clean Air Branch and comply with all applicable conditions and requirements. If you do not know if you need an air pollution control permit, please contact the Permitting Section of the Clean Air Branch.
- Permit application forms can be found here: https://health.hawaii.gov/cab/permit-application- forms/

Has the potential to generate fugitive dust

- You must reasonably control the generation of all airborne, visible fugitive dust. Note that construction activities that occur near existing residences, businesses, public areas and major thoroughfares exacerbate potential dust concerns. It is recommended that a dust control management plan be developed which identifies and mitigates all activities that may generate airborne, visible fugitive dust. The plan, which does *not* require Department of Health approval, should help you recognize and minimize potential airborne, visible fugitive dust problems.
- Construction activities must comply with the provisions of Hawaii Administrative Rules, §11- 60.1-33 on Fugitive Dust. In addition, for cases involving mixed land use, it is strongly recommended that buffer zones be established, wherever possible, in order to alleviate potential dust concerns.
- You must provide reasonable measures to control airborne, visible fugitive dust from the road areas and during the various phases of construction. These measures include, but are not limited to, the following:
    - Planning the different phases of construction, focusing on minimizing the amount of airborne, visible fugitive dust-generating materials and activities, centralizing on-site vehicular traffic routes, and locating potential dust-generating equipment in areas of the least impact;
    - Providing an adequate water source at the site prior to start-up of construction activities;
    - Landscaping and providing rapid covering of bare areas, including slopes, starting from the initial grading phase;
    - Minimizing airborne, visible fugitive dust from shoulders and access roads;
    - Providing reasonable dust control measures during weekends, after hours, and prior to daily start-up of construction activities; and
    - Controlling airborne, visible fugitive dust from debris being hauled away from the project site.
- If you have questions about fugitive dust, please contact the Enforcement Section of the Clean Air Branch. Please also see fugitive dust fact sheet at: https://health.hawaii.gov/cab/files/2024/02/Hawaii-Fugitive-Dust-Fact-Sheet-February-2024.pdf.

Includes construction, demolition, or renovation activities that involve potential asbestos and lead containing materials

- Please contact the Indoor and Radiological Health Branch at (808) 586-4700 or visit: https://health.hawaii.gov/irhb/

Increases the population and potential number of vehicles in an area

- The creation of apartment buildings, complexes, and residential communities may increase the overall population in an area. Increasing the population in an area may inadvertently lead to more air pollution via vehicle exhaust. Vehicle exhaust releases pollutants in the air that can negatively impact human health and air quality, including lung irritants, carcinogens, and greenhouse gases.
- Ensure that drivers keep vehicle idling times to three (3) minutes or less.
- Consider and incorporate support for alternative transportation options such as bike racks and/or electric vehicle charging stations where possible.

If you have any questions, please contact the Clean Air Branch at (808) 586-4200 or at cab@doh.hawaii.gov.

From: Carriaga, Pualililehua
To: 10447523_2025059HDOT_P50175WO5KwhaeEA
Subject: Kawaihae Harbor Improvements Request (Letter dated 11/18/2025)
Date: Monday, December 15, 2025 11:49:14 AM

Aloha Noelle,

On behalf of Mayor Alameda, please accept this correspondence as confirmation that Mayor Alameda has no comments to provide in regards to Kawaihae Harbor Improvements.

Mahalo,

Pualililehua "Pua" Carriaga
Executive Secretary to
C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D., Mayor
Office of the Mayor
25 Aupuni Street
Hilo, HI 96720
Telephone: 961-8860
Fax: 961-6553
Pualililehua.Carriaga@hawaiicounty.gov

C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.
Mayor

William V. Brilhante, Jr.
Managing Director

West Hawai‘i Office
74-5044 Ane Keohokālole Hwy
Kailua-Kona, Hawai‘i 96740
Phone (808) 323-4770
Fax (808) 327-3563

County of Hawai‘i
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Jeffrey W. Darrow
Director

Michelle S. Ahn
Deputy Director

East Hawai‘i Office
101 Pauahi Street, Suite 3
Hilo, Hawai‘i 96720
Phone (808) 961-8288
Fax (808) 961-8742

December 03, 2025

HDR
Attn: Noelle Besa Wright, AICP
1001 Bishop Street, Ste. 400
Honolulu, HI 96813
VIA EMAIL

Dear Noelle Besa Wright:

SUBJECT: Pre-Assessment Consultation for an Environmental Assessment (PL-INT-2025-011897)
Landowner: State of Hawai‘i
Applicant: State of Hawai‘i Department of Transportation, Harbors Division
Tax Map Keys: (3) 6-1-003:022-024, :028, :032-034, :036 :037, :046, :049, :052-054, :057-064, and (3) 6-1-002:999 South Kohala, Island of Hawai‘i

This is to acknowledge receipt on November 20, 2025, of your request for comments on the proposed Hawai‘i Department of Transportation – Harbors Division (HDOT-HAR) *Kawaihae Harbor Improvement Project* at the North Kawaihae Small Boat Harbor (NKSBH) located on the subject parcels. The proposed project includes widening a portion of Kawaihae Road (Hawai‘i Rte. 70) to include a new left-turn and storage lane at the harbor main gate, as well as construct cargo yard improvements, such as replacing existing asphalt, constructing a new 80-ft high mast light, install conduit and raised transformer pads for future harbor upgrades, and the relocation of the HDOT-HAR district office and maintenance shed.

The purpose of the proposed project is to reduce traffic congestion along Kawaihae Road caused by truck queues, as well as improve operating conditions within the existing cargo terminal.

The subject parcels, which are located at the northern end of the Kawaihae Harbor complex are zoned General Industrial 1-acres (MG-1a) as well as within the State Land Use (SLU) Urban district. The General Plan Land Use Pattern Allocation Guide (LUPAG) Map designates the

subject parcels as both Open (ope) and Industrial (ind). The subject parcels are located entirely within the Special Management Area (SMA) as well as within the shoreline area as defined by Hawai‘i Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 205A-41.

Chapter 343 Determination:

Planning Staff acknowledge the need for the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed project due to its use of state lands and funds. Our comments on the Draft EA are provided below.

Special Management Area Determination:

In accordance with Planning Commission Rule 9 relating to the Special Management Area (SMA), "development" does not include the following:

Rule 9-4(i)(2)(R): *Plan, design, construct, operate, and maintain any lands or facilities under the jurisdiction of the Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation of the State Department of Land and Natural Resources.*

Therefore, according to rule, **no SMA approval or SMA permit is required for the proposed project** as it is considered an exempt action.

Shoreline Setback Area Determination:

In accordance with Planning Department Rule 11 relating to the Shoreline Setback Area (SSA), the following structures or activities may be permitted within the shoreline setback area without the need for a shoreline setback variance (SSV).

Rule 11-7(a)(9): *Work being done consists of maintenance, repair, and minor additions to or alterations of legal, publicly owned boating, maritime, or water sports recreational facilities, which are publicly owned, and which result in little or no interference with natural shoreline processes.*

Since the proposed project is located at a well-developed small boat harbor and the proposed activities consist of repair, reconstruction and minor additions to the existing harbor facility, staff believe the proposed project will have little impact on natural shoreline processes. Therefore, based on Rule 11-7(a)(9) **no Shoreline Setback Variance (SSV) application will be required for the proposed project**.

Please note that any substantive changes to the proposed project as represented by HDOT-HAR may require additional review under both the Special Management Area and Shoreline Setback Area rules and regulations and may require permitting or approvals not noted in this letter.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact Alex Roy at (808) 961-8140 or via email at Alex.Roy@hawaiicounty.gov.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey W. Darrow
Jeffrey W. Darrow (Dec 3, 2025 11:16:08 HST)
JEFFREY W. DARROW
Planning Director

AJR:rms
P:\Wpwin60\CZM\Letters\2025\PL-INT-2025-011897_Kawaihae_Harbor_DEA.Docx

DEPARTMENT OF WATER SUPPLY • COUNTY OF HAWAI'I
345 KEKŪANAŌ'A STREET, SUITE 20 • HILO, HAWAI'I 96720
TELEPHONE (808) 961-8050 • FAX (808) 961-8657

December 11, 2025

Ms. Noelle Besa Wright, AICP
HDR
1001 Bishop Street, Suite 400
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Ms. Wright:

Subject: Pre-Environmental Assessment Consultation
Kawaihae Harbor Improvements
Tax Map Keys (3) 6-1-003:022-024, 028, 032-034, 036-037, 046, 049, 052-054, 057-064 Portion and (3)-6-1-002:999 (State Right-Of-Way)

This is in response to your Pre-Environmental Assessment Consultation letter dated November 18, 2025.

Please be informed that we will need to maintain service that the existing 12-inch waterline provides under Kawaihae Road during the construction of the project.

As such, the Department would request that two (2) sets of the construction plans be submitted to our Department for review and approval.

Further, the Department requests, for a detailed estimated maximum daily water usage calculation for the proposed new district office, prepared by a professional engineer licensed in the State of Hawai'i, for review and approval. The water usage calculations should include the total estimated daily water usage in gallons per day (GPD) and the estimated peak flow in gallons per minute (GPM).

Upon acceptance of the water usage calculations, the Department will determine if water is available, the facilities charge due, and necessary water system improvements to support the subject development.

We have no objection to the proposed project with the condition that the applicant/contractor will be responsible for the cost of relocation or modifying any of our water system facilities within the project area.

Should there be any questions, please contact Mr. Michael Mori of our Water Resources and Planning Branch at (808) 961-8070, extension 257.

Sincerely yours,

Keith K. Okamoto, P.E.
Manager-Chief Engineer

MM:dfg

copy – Celai Shen, HDOT-HAR

Wright, Noelle

From: Jojo Tanimoto <guavaland622@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 13, 2026 2:48 PM
To: Wright, Noelle; Ibarra OHA-Kaweni; oha-Kaim@oha.org
Subject: Re: Pre-Assessment Consultation for an Environmental Assessment: Kawaihae Harbor Improvements

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Aloha

I'd like to thank Kaweni Ibarra from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs for forwarding this opportunity to request information about this Environmental Assessment.

1) I am surprised that no one from this homestead and from the Waimea homestead was aware of this public outreach.

2) Also, I am not aware of TMK: 6-1-003:060 and 6-1-002:999. Can you please identify these locations.

3) I checked with the State Department of Transportation here, Mr. Bob Lee, says the area outside the fenced area, along KAWAIHAE ROAD, is part of the Harbor authority. Kawaihae has had a few incidents about clearing that ditch of erosion and debris.
a) Please confirm because it may contain hazardous materials from cargo and other large containers.
b) Then, if the harbor is the authority, how will this assessment mitigate this risk and traffic pattern to/from the harbor?

4) The community is currently working with the government to identify historic sites and burial sites. The NPS Heiau's have identified the vibration of so many large vehicles and the vibration impacts to the integrity of the non-cemented structures. The communities concern are the 3-Historic Bridges leading to the harbor, and beyond. Pohaukaole, Makeahua and Makahuna. Without these bridges, there currently are no alternative traffic routes to evacuate Kawaihae. That includes the residents from Kohala.

The Department of Hawaiian Homelands did create a Master Plan for the Department, but nothing was done and no plans to implement since 1986. Will this document address this problem?

4-Across the harbor lies the Historic Ke Ala Hou cemetery and Isaac Davis Crypt. They are registered and also susceptible to erosion due to vibration. Will this document
address this problem?

5-I was not aware that this Environmental Assessment included use of lands at the
harbor for staging pollutants such as asphalt, etc. while repaying the property. That location is next to the Makahuna Gulch erosion ramp, where families gather to line fish. How will this document address the food sustenance and food safety for the families
that use this area?

6-I am not understanding how vehicle traffic will access and egress this part of the
harbor during construction. The south Small Boat Harbor is the alternative boat ramp
and the military needs an alternative vehicle route. Please advise this situation.

7-The Palihae Stream and Pahonu Stream (location of the historic church grounds and cemeter) are also a problem for flooding. It is normal occurrence during rainstorms.
This is also the safety risks for goats that cross the roadways to the north small boat harbor and the harbor culvert stream.

8-The north Small Boat Harbor seems part of this assessment also. What will be available to the public?

This seems the extent of my comments, until I receive a reply. Mahalo
Jojo Tanimoto, resident of the Kawaihae homestead.

Sent from my iPad

> On Dec 29, 2025, at 3:56 PM, Wright, Noelle <Noelle.Wright@hdrinc.com> wrote:
>
> Aloha e Jojo,
>
> On behalf of the Hawai‘i Department of Transportation, Harbors Division (HDOT-HAR), please find attached the Pre-Assessment Consultation letter for the proposed Kawaihae Harbor Improvements project on the Island of Hawai‘i.
>
> HDR is preparing a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) in accordance with Hawai‘i Revised Statutes, Chapter 343, and Hawai‘i Administrative Rules, Section 11-200.1. The attached letter provides a description of the proposed project and requests your input to help guide the scope and development of the EA.
>
> We respectfully request that written comments be submitted within 30 days of receipt of the letter, by January 28, 2026.
>
> Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.
>
> Mahalo for your time and participation in the environmental review process.

Noelle

Noelle Besa Wright, AICP
Senior Environmental Planner

HDR
1001 Bishop Street, Suite 400
Honolulu, HI 96813

D (808) 697-6297 **M** (808) 761-9230
noelle.wright@hdrinc.com

hdrinc.com/follow-us

<Kawaihae Harbor_Pre-Assessment Consultation Letter_final_12.29.25.pdf>

Wright, Noelle

From: Jojo Tanimoto <guavaland622@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 26, 2026 10:46 AM
To: Wright, Noelle
Subject: Kawaihae Harbor improvements

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Aloha Noelle
Mahalo for taking the time to talk with me.

I noticed that I did forget an important issue the communities here are concerned about and that is addressing the issue of an alternative road route in case of emergency evacuation events.
Kawaihae Road goes over three historic bridges and if they break, how will anyone get to Waimea, Pohakuloa or Kona?

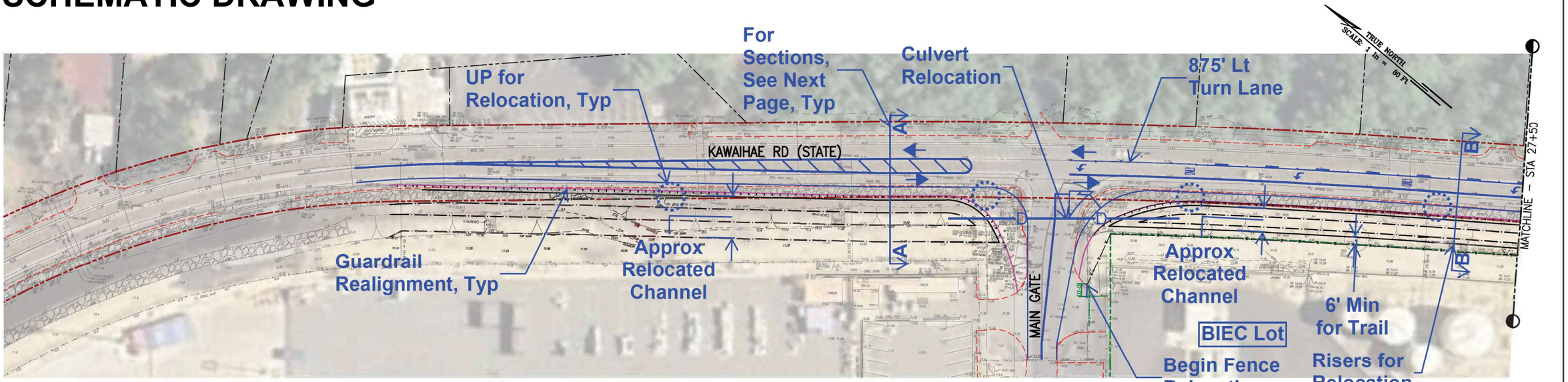
There is no ByPass Route and going around Kohala Mountain Road is not efficient. With the rising population and cost of fuel, this problem being addressed by the largest user of this roadway would help the whole Kohala region.

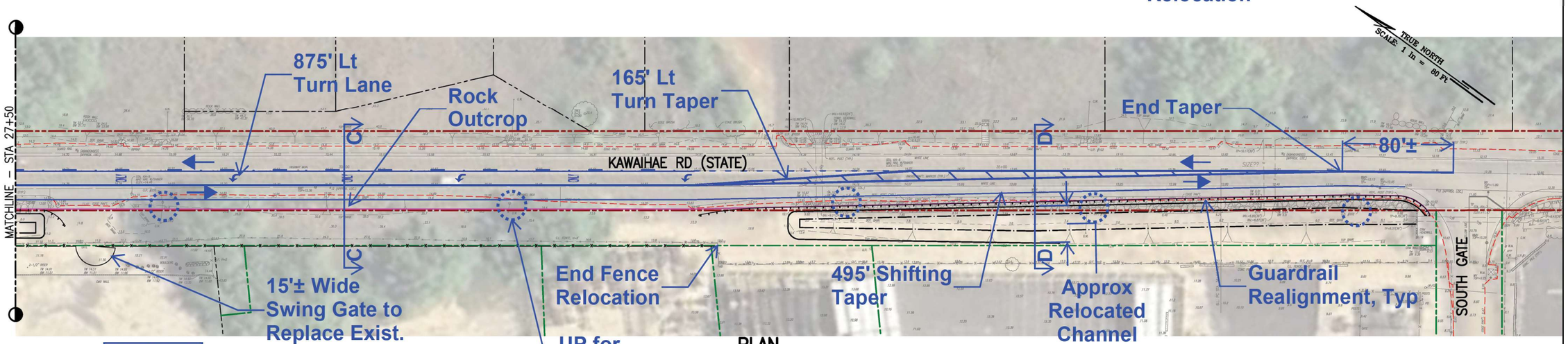
Mahalo
Jojo Tanimoto Kawaihae
Sent from my iPad

Appendix B

Kawaihae Road Improvements – Preliminary Drawings

SCHEMATIC DRAWING





PLAN
SCALE: 1" = 80'

NOTE:
*Guardrail layout & relocated/resized channel are for schematic purposes only and will need to look into design later.

LEGEND:

- EXIST RIGHT–OF–WAY OR PROPERTY LINE
- EXIST EDGE OF PAVEMENT
- NEW PAVEMENT MARKING
- NEW EDGE OF PAVEMENT
- EXIST DOT–HWY R/W
- EXIST DOT–HAR PROPERTY

NOTES:

1. EXIST POSTED SPEED LIMIT IS 35 MPH.
2. ADDITIONAL LANES AND SHOULDER ARE 11'± AND 7'± WIDE RESPECTIVELY UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

GRAPHIC SCALE:
40' 20' 0 40' 80'
SCALE: 1" = 80'

SSFM International
SSFM INTERNATIONAL, INC.
501 Sumner Street, Suite 620
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

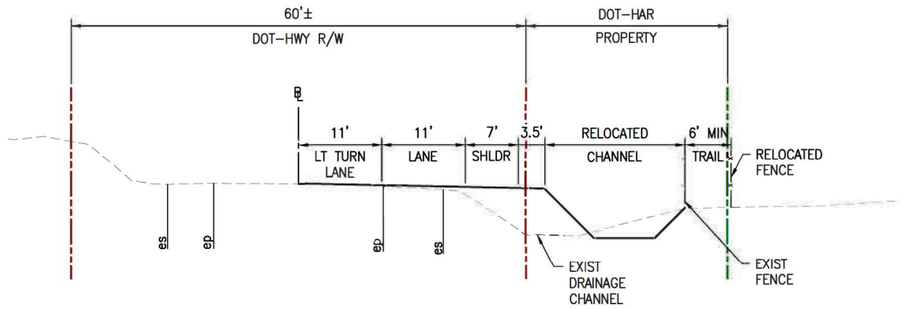
KAWAIHAE HARBOR MAIN ENTRANCE IMPROVEMENTS

LEFT TURN LANE INTO MAIN GATE (PIDP)

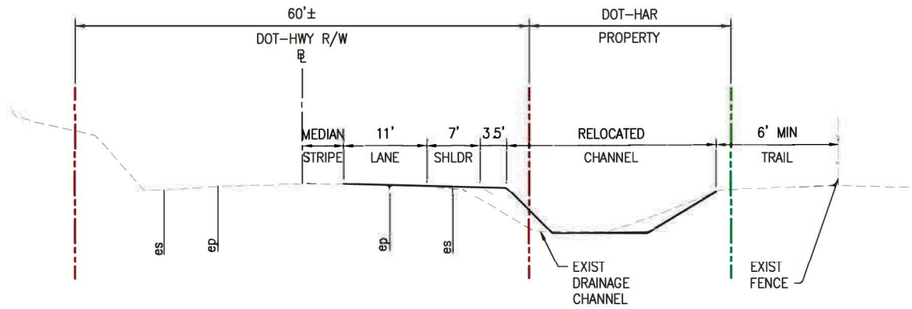
SCALE: AS NOTED | DATE: FEBRUARY 2026

EXHIBIT

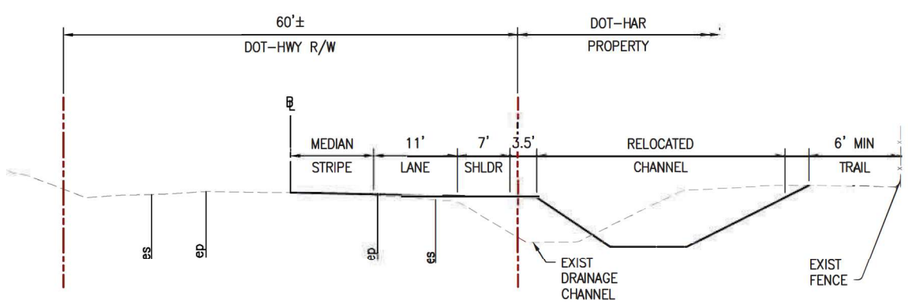
SCHEMATIC DRAWING



SECTION B–B
NOT TO SCALE



SECTION D–D
NOT TO SCALE



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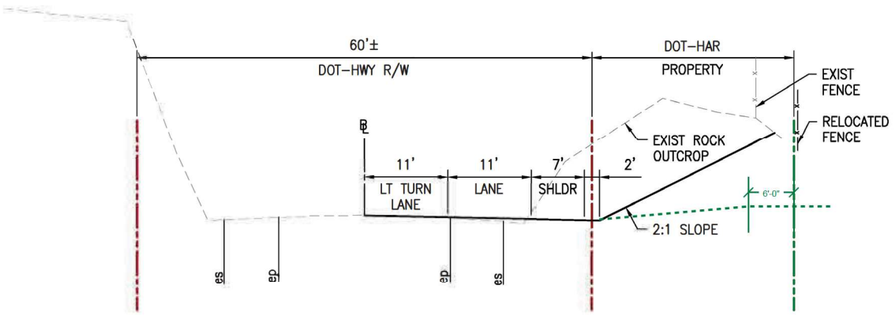

SECTION C–C
NOT TO SCALE

SSFM International
SSFM INTERNATIONAL, INC.
501 Sumner Street, Suite 620
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

KAWAIHAE HARBOR MAIN ENTRANCE IMPROVEMENTS

LEFT TURN LANE INTO MAIN GATE (PIDP)

SCALE: AS NOTED

DATE: FEBRUARY 2026

EXHIBIT

Appendix C

National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 Concurrence

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIAʻĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIAʻĀINA

DAWN N.S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

RYAN K.P. KANAKAʻOLE
FIRST DEPUTY

CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

STATE OF HAWAIʻI | KA MOKUʻĀINA ʻO HAWAIʻI
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA ʻOIHANA KUMUWAIWAI ʻĀINA

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION
KAKUHIHEWA BUILDING
601 KAMOKILA BLVD, STE 555
KAPOLEI, HAWAII 96707

December 1, 2025

Wendy M. Coble
Historian and Acting Federal Preservation Officer
U. S. Department of Transportation
Maritime Administration
West Building
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590
Email: wendy.coble@dot.gov

IN REPLY REFER TO:
Project No. 2025PR00137
Doc. No. 2511SN08
Archaeology, Architecture

Davis K. Yogi
Administrator
State of Hawaii Department of Transportation
Harbors Division
79 South Nimitz Highway
Honolulu, Hawaiʻi 96813
Email: davis.k.yogi@hawaii.gov

Dear Wendy Coble and Davis Yogi:

SUBJECT: **National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 Review – Request for Concurrence with a Project Effect Determination Kawaihae Harbor Improvements Project Kawaihae 1 and 2 Ahupuaʻa, South Kohala District, Island of Hawaiʻi TMK: (3) 6-1-003:022 por., 023 por., 024 por., 028, 032, 033, 034, 036 por., 037, 038, 039, 041, 043, 044, 046, 048, 049, 052, 053, 054, 057, 058, 059, 060 por., 061, 062, 063, 064; and (3)-6-1-002:999 (Kawaihae Road [Hawaii Route 270] Right-Of-Way [ROW])**

This letter provides the State Historic Preservation Division's (SHPD's) review of the State of Hawaiʻi Department of Transportation's (HDOT's) request for the State Historic Preservation Officer's (SHPO's) concurrence with a project effect determination for the Kawaihae Harbors Improvements Project. In a letter dated March 25, 2025 (Doc. No. 2503SN17), the SHPO previously concurred with the proposed area of potential effect (APE). SHPD received the current submission on November 7, 2025, which consisted of a letter dated October 20, 2025, from the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Maritime Administration (MARAD) requesting the SHPO's concurrence with an effect determination of *no adverse effect* pursuant to 36 CFR §800.5(b).

This HDOT project has been awarded funds by the MARAD under the Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) for improvements to the Kawaihae Commercial Harbor (Kawaihae Harbor) located on the northwest coast of the island of Hawaiʻi. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) also will provide support and oversight for the specific roadway/entrance improvements, with MARAD as the lead Federal agency for this undertaking. The project has been determined to be a federal undertaking as defined in 36 CFR §800.16(y); thus, the project is subject to compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA. This HDOT project is also subject to Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) §6E historic preservation review.

MARAD indicates that the project will consist of two components (see Attachment 1 for full descriptions):

- Component 1 – Highway Widening (Kawaihae Road – Hawai‘i Route 270)
- Component 2 – Yard Improvements

The APE which consists of three project locations labeled by HDOT as APE 1, APE 2, and APE 3:

1. APE 1: Encompasses the entire Kawaihae Harbor comprising ~55 acres.
2. APE 2: Includes the surrounding areas of Kawaihae, encompassing the adjacent coral flats, Spencer Beach Park, Pu‘ukoholā National Historic Site (NHS), several historic sites, Pelekane Bay, and the mauka area of Kawaihae Road. It also covers the offshore area between the shoreline and the outer reef crest.
3. APE 3: Focuses on the visual connectivity and view plane of the four summits: Haleakalā, Mauna Kea, Mauna Loa, and Hualālai.

The overall APE (consisting of three locations) takes into consideration several studies that included assessments of the cultural and historical significance of the Kawaihae Harbor and surrounding areas and the need for ongoing community engagement and archaeological monitoring.

MARAD identified the following significant historic properties within the vicinity of the Kawaihae Harbor:

1. State Inventory of Historic Places (SIHP) and National Register of Historic Places (NHRP) which include: Pu‘ukoholā Heiau Complex (encompasses Pu‘ukoholā Heiau, Mailekini Heiau, and Haleokapuni Heiau) (SIHP Site 50-10-05-4139, NRHP Ref. No. 66000105),
2. John Young’s House Ruins (SIHP Site 50-10-05-02296),
3. Historical Habitation Site and Burial Complex (SIHP Sites 50-10-05-13748 and 50-10-05-13749),
4. Historical Habitation Site (site of former Kawaihae Church) (SIHP Site 50-10-05-13750),
5. Historic Cemetery (includes George Davis’ grave) (SIHP Site 50-10-05-2298, 50-10-05-13751),
6. Historical Habitation Site (SIHP Site 50-10-05-13752),
7. Historical Resident Complex (SIHP Sites 50-10-05-13753, 50-10-05-13754, and 50-10-05-13755),
8. Burial Complex (relocated from Kawaihae Harbor) (SIHP Site 50-10-05-13782),
9. Wall of Historic Agricultural or Habitation Feature (SIHP Site 50-10-05-27642), and
10. Two walls near John Young’s House Ruins (SIHP Site 50-10-05-27847).

The MARAD requests the SHPO’s concurrence with a project effect determination of *no adverse effect* with the implementation of the measures developed in the HDOT Master Plan (2011) for improvements at the Harbor developed to avoid impacts to historic properties which include archaeological and cultural monitoring. These mitigation efforts were determined in consultation with stakeholders, ensuring collaboration for access and construction sensitivity, public outreach, and a comprehensive erosion control plan. The proposed mitigation measures include the following:

- Archaeological and Cultural Monitoring
- Monitoring vibration and soil impacts
- Maintaining cultural access to Coral Flats area (southwest of APE 1)
- Ongoing communications and community engagement with stakeholders and community leaders
- Water quality protections
    - Erosion and sediment control plan
    - Spill containment and response
    - Waste management and inspections
- Lighting and visual impact monitoring
- Adaptive reuse of rock outcrop and excavated soil
- Mitigation policies for inadvertent discoveries
    - If non-burial archaeological features are encountered, then HDOT will comply with HAR §13-280 and a SHPD-accepted archaeological monitoring plan (AMP) produced for the current project.

- If human skeletal remains are discovered, then work in the vicinity of the find will cease and the project proponent will notify the Police and SHPD; and comply with HAR §13-300-40 for treatment of burial sites.

The SHPO concurs with MARAD's determination that the proposed undertaking will have *no adverse effect*, pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.5(b), with implementation of the aforementioned agreed upon mitigation commitments.

The SHPD also looks forward to the initiation of the HRS Chapter 6E-8 historic preservation review process.

In order to initiate the HRS §6E-8 historic preservation review process, **SHPD requests the following**:

1. A letter from HDOT initiating the HRS §6E-8 historic preservation review process.
2. HDOT submit an AMP that meets the requirements of HAR §13-279-4 for review and acceptance prior to the initiation of ground disturbing work associated with the project and, following completion of monitoring, submit an archaeological monitoring report (AMR) meeting the requirements of HAR §13-279-5 for review and acceptance.
3. Confirmation from HDOT that, while cultural monitoring is not mandated under the current Hawaii Administrative Rules (HARs), HDOT will apply the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's (ACHP's) policy guidance to enhance and expand monitoring protocols to include cultural monitoring efforts to ensure the protection of historic properties within the APEs to honor Native Hawaiian cultural values and address community concerns.

Please submit the requested letter and AMP by responding to our request under HICRIS Project No. 2025PR00137 as requested via HICRIS.

SHPD will notify HDOT and FHWA when the AMP has been reviewed and accepted, and the project initiation process may continue.

The MARAD, FHWA and the HDOT are the offices of record for this undertaking. Please maintain a copy of this letter with your environmental review record for this undertaking.

Please contact Mary Kodama, Architecture Branch Chief, at Mary.Kodama@hawaii.gov, for any concerns regarding architectural resources or Susan A. Lebo, Archaeological Branch Chief, at Susan.A.Lebo@hawaii.gov, for any matters regarding this letter.

Aloha,

Dawn N. S. Chang, Esq.
DLNR Chairperson
State Historic Preservation Officer

cc: Meesa Otani, FHWA, meesa.otani@dot.gov
Celia Shen, HDOT, DOT.HAR-E_HICRIS@hawaii.gov
Henry Kennedy, HDOT, henry.kennedy@hawaii.gov
Holly Yuen, HDOT, holly.yuen@hawaii.gov
Lawrence M. Laus, HDOT, lawrence.m.laus@hawaii.gov
Gregory M. Ibara, HDOT, gregory.m.ibara@hawaii.gov
Trisha Watson, Honua Consulting, watson@honuaconsulting.gov
Dalton Beauprez, G70, daltonb@g70.design
Kawika McKeague, G70, kawikam@g70.design, KawaihaeHarborS106@g70.design

Attachment 1:

MARAD indicates that the project will consist of two components:

- Component 1 – Highway Widening (Kawaihae Road – Hawai‘i Route 270): This component aims to improve traffic flow and safety near the harbor Main Gate by adding a dedicated left-turn lane and a deceleration lane for northbound vehicles. Key components include relocating the Main Gate, guardrail, drainage channels, and chain link fencing to facilitate a wider turn radius for trucks. Excavation of existing pavement and soil will occur, followed by subgrade preparation and layer installation for the new pavement. Road work will involve temporary lane closures, with utility poles and security fencing being relocated. A rock outcrop may also need removal, and existing drainage channels will be replaced or relocated to accommodate the new roadway. A six-ft.-wide ROW will be maintained for the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail.

- Component 2 – Yard Improvements: This component focuses on upgrading yard facilities for modern cargo operations, including reconstructing and replacing asphalt with reinforced concrete across multiple areas. The project includes replacing up to 53 existing yard light poles with taller, energy-efficient LED poles, installing a new fire suppression system, and relocating the HDOT district office and maintenance shed to expand the cargo yard. The district office will be renovated from a cinderblock warehouse (1960) into a functional space, incorporating new utilities and site improvements.

-

Appendix D

A Natural Resources Assessment for Kawaihae Harbor

AECOS, Inc. July 11, 2025

AECOS No. 1893

A natural resources assessment for Kawaihae Harbor, Kawaihae, Island of Hawai'i

AECOS Inc.
45-939 Kamehameha Highway
Suite 104
Kāneʻohe, Hawaiʻi 96744

July 11, 2025

A natural resources assessment for Kawaihae Harbor, Kawaihae, Island of Hawai'i

July 11, 2025 **DRAFT** *AECOS* No. 1893[1]

Eric B. Guinther, Reggie David, and Flor Muciño
AECOS Inc.
45-939 Kamehameha Highway Suite 104
Kāneʻohe, Hawaiʻi 96744
Phone: (808) 234-7770 Fax: (808) 234-7775 Email: guinther@aecos.com

Introduction

Department of Transportation, Harbors Division is proposing improvements to facilities in eight "improvement areas" at Kawaihae Harbor on the Island of Hawai'i (herein, the "Project"). G70 contracted *AECOS* to conduct a biological survey of the Project "Area of Potential Effects" (APE; see Figure 1) and prepare a report that addresses impacts of the proposed improvements[2]. The APE included consideration of harbor waters directly off the dock face. The survey included botanical, avian, and land-based marine survey to identify any listed or sensitive biological resources. Sensitive biota includes species currently listed by the Endangered Species Act of 1973 as amended (ESA), or by state administrative rule (HDLNR, 1998, 2015).

Site Description

The state facilities at Kawaihae Harbor are in an extensive paved area with multiple shipping-oriented businesses and parking for trucks and trailers that transport materials to and from the docking facilities (Figure 2). Improvements are planned for both buildings and roadway/parking areas. In addition, improvements along Kawaihae Road at the Harbor main gate are planned to ease traffic problems presently caused by trucks accessing the gate into the Harbor facilities.

[1] This document is ADA compliant.
[2] This document will be incorporated into documents intended to satisfy environmental entitlements for the Project and will become part of the public record.

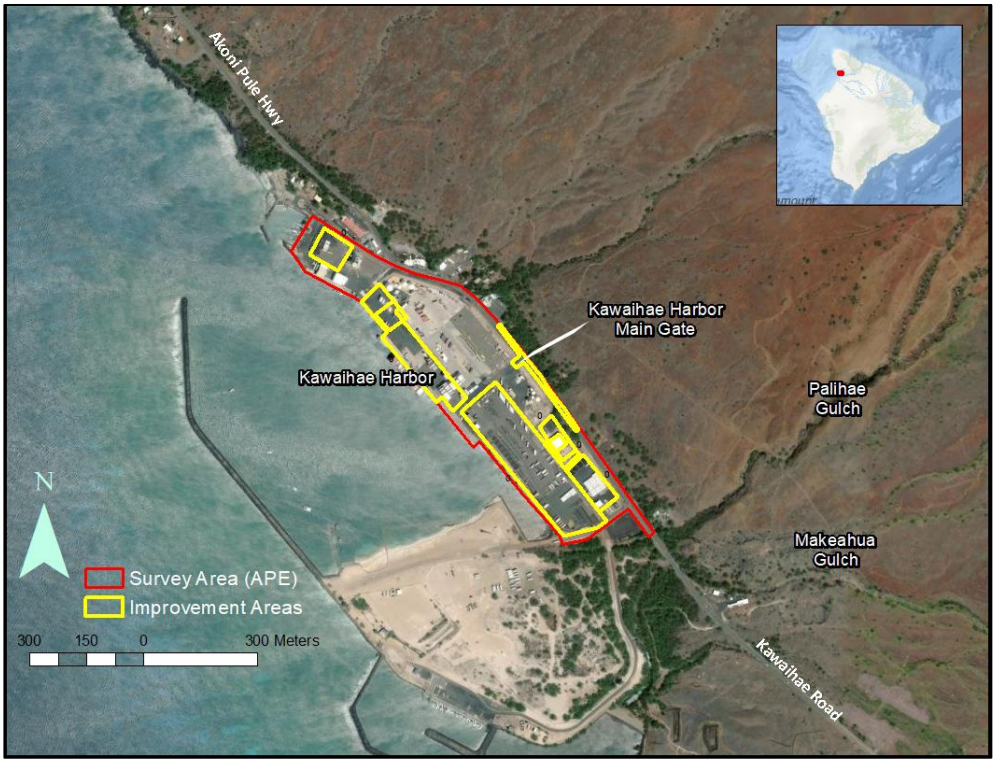

Figure 1. Project location with survey area and proposed work areas outlined.

Figure 2. A trailer parking area at Kawaihae Harbor.

Methods

Botanical Survey

AECOS botanist, Eric Guinther accompanied by Flor Muciño, surveyed the Project area (Figure 1) on June 18, 2025. Plant species were identified as they were encountered during wandering transects that covered the survey area (all of the harbor facilities and a portion of Kawaihae Road). Species names follow *Manual of the Flowering plants of Hawaiʻi* (Wagner, Herbst, & Sohmer, 1990; Wagner & Herbst, 1999) for native and naturalized flowering plants, *Hawaiʻi's Ferns and Fern Allies* (Palmer, 2003) and *Taxonomic and Nomenclatural Updates to the Fern and Lycophyte Flora of the Hawaiian Islands* (Ranker et al, 2019) for ferns, and *A Tropical Garden Flora* (Staples & Herbst, 2005) for ornamental and agricultural plants. More recent name changes for naturalized flowering plants moistly follow Imada (2019).

Vertebrates Survey

Avian Survey

An avian survey was conducted by Reginald David on the morning of June 18, 2025. Four avian point count station were established approximately equidistant from each other across the survey area. A single eight-minute count was conducted at each of the count stations. Birds were identified by visual observations aided by Leica 8 X 42 binoculars, and by listening for vocalizations. Weather conditions were ideal with unlimited visibility, no precipitation, and winds between 3 and 10 kilometers per hour. The avian phylogenetic order and nomenclature used in this report follows the AOU *Check-List of North and Middle American Birds* 2024, and the Sixty-fifth Supplement to the American Ornithological Society's *Check-list of North American Birds* (Chesser et al., 2024, 2024).

Turtle and Monk Seal Surveys

Observations on utilization of the Harbor waters by sea turtles were made from multiple points along the waterfront. Binoculars assisted with the observations. We conducted research using databases from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for information on monk seal and sea turtle use of Kawaihae Harbor.

Terrestrial Mammals Survey

A list was made of mammals encountered during the survey. Indicators of mammalian presence, such as tracks, scat, and other sign were noted. Mammalian phylogenetic order and nomenclature follow *Mammal Species of the World* (Wilson and Reeder, 2005), and for Hawaiian hoary bat (Pinzari et al., 2020).

Results

Water Features

The harbor itself is a tidal body of water and thus comes under federal jurisdiction as a waters of the U.S. (WOTUS). The only other features in the APE are a drainage swale along Kawaihae Road (Figure 3 and the concrete-lined culvert that connects the ditch to the harbor (Figure 4). These two features are part of a system that drains local rainfall away from the harbor facilities. Water seen in the concrete culvert is either tidal or from recent terrestrial flow, held by the impermeable concrete surface. Ephemeral contributions to the flow may come from unnamed gulches *mauk*a of Kawaihae Road. If tidal, federal jurisdiction authorized by the Rivers and Harbors Act (RHA) and Clean Water Act (CWA) extends up to mean high water (MHW) or the high tide line (HTL), respectively; otherwise, these features are not WOTUS. MHW and HTL are defined in the *Final rule for regulatory programs of the Corps of Engineers* (USACE, 1986).

Vegetation

Vegetation on the Harbor property is sparse and limited to ruderal growth in scattered areas of exposed soil and to a few areas of landscape plantings around buildings (Figure 4). Along the surveyed segment of the highway, only ruderal plants typical of a highway verge are present (Figure 5). In areas of essentially weedy, herbivorous plants, evidence of regular maintenance by spraying with herbicide was seen.

Flora

A listing of plants recorded during the June 2025 survey is presented as Table 1 and shows 47 species observed as occurring in the survey area. Four native (3 indigenous, one endemic) plants were recorded (*kou*, *pōhinahina*, *ʻuhaloa,* and *kokiʻo keʻokeʻo*), the first two planted as landscape elements. *Niu* (coconut palm)

Figure 3. Drainage feature on the makai side of Kawaihae Road adjacent to harbor security fence.

Figure 4. Concrete-lined open culvert crossing the Project APE.

Figure 5. Area of weedy herbaceous growth and planted ti on exposed soil.

Figure 6. Kawaihae Road at cut showing verge vegetation.

Table 1. Plant species observed in the Project area.

Species listed by family	Common name	Status	Notes
FERNS AND FERN ALLIES			
POLYPODIACEAE			
Phymatosorus aureum (L.) J. Sm.	*lauaʻe*	Nat	<1>
FLOWERING PLANTS MONOCOTS			
ALOEACEAE			
Aloë vera (L.) N.L. Burman	aloe	Orn	
ARECACEAE			
Cocos nucifera L.	coconut palm	**Pol**	<1>
Phoenix cf. *dactylifera* L.	date palm	Nat	<1>
Ptychosperma macarthurii (Veitch) J. D. Hook.	Macarthur palm	Orn	
ASPARAGACEAE			
Cordyline fruticosa (L.) A. Chev.	*ki,* ti	**Pol**	<1>
LILIACEAE			
Crinum asiaticum L.	giant lily	Nat	<3>
POACEAE			
Cenchrus ciliaris L.	buffelgrass	Nat	
Chloris barbata (L.) Sw.	swollen fingergrass	Nat	
Cynodon x magennisii Hurcombe	hybrid Bermuda	Orn	
Eleusine indica (L.) Gaertn.	wiregrass	Nat	
Eragrostis pectinacea (Michx.) Nees	Carolina lovegrass	Nat	
Sporobolus diandrus (Retz.) P. Beauv.	Indian dropseed	Nat	
Sporobolus sp.	rattail grass	Nat	
Zoysia matrella var. *pacifica* Goudswaard	Mascarene grass	Nat	<1>
FLOWERING PLANTS EUDICOTS			
AMARANTHACEAE			
Amaranthus viridus L.	slender amaranth	Nat	
APOCYNACEAE			
Nerium oleander L.	oleander	Orn	
Plumeria rubra L.	graveyard flower	Orn	

Table 1 (continued).

Species listed by family	Common name	Status	Notes
ASPARAGACEAE			
Dracaena sanderiana M.T. Masters	sanderiana	Orn	
ASTERACEAE (COMPOSITAE)			
Tridax procumbens L.	coat buttons	Nat	
BATACEAE			
Batis maritima L.	*ʻakulikuli kai*	Nat	
BORAGINACEAE			
Cordia subcordata Lam.	*kou*	**Ind**	<1>
Heliotropum procumbens Mill.	---	Nat	
CHENOPODIACEAE			
Chenopodium ambrosioides L.	Mexican tea	Nat	
CARYOPHYLLACEAE			
Spergula arvensis L.	corn spurry	Nat	
CONVOLVULACEAE			
Merremia sp.	juv. merremia	Nat	<3>
EUPHORBIACEAE			
Euphorbia hirta L.	garden spurge	Nat	
Euphorbia hypericifolia L.	graceful spurge	Nat	
Euphorbia prostrata Aiton	prostrate spurge	Nat	
FABACEAE			
Calliandra haematocephala Hassk.	red powderpuff	Orn	
Desmanthus pernambucanus (L.) Thellung	virgate mimosa	Nat	
Indigofera hendicaphyla Jacq.	creeping indigo	Nat	
Leucaena leucocephala (Lam.) deWit	*koa haole*	Nat	
Mimosa pudica L.	sensitive plant	Nat	
Prosopis pallida (Humb. & Bonpl. ex Willd.) Kunth	*kiawe*	Nat	
MALVACEAE			
Hibiscus arnottianus A. Gray	*kokiʻo keʻokeʻo*	**End**	<1>
Sida rhombifolia L.	---	Nat	
Sida spinosa L.	prickly sida	Nat	
Waltheria indica L.	*ʻuhaloa*	**Ind**	
MORACEAE			
Ficus microcarpa L. f.	Chinese banyan	Nat	

Table 1 (continued).

Species listed by family	Common name	Status	Notes
NYCTAGINACEAE			
Boerhavia coccinea Mill.	false *alena*	Nat	
PORTULACACEAE			
Portulaca oleracea L.	pigweed	Nat	
Portulacaria afra (L.) N. Jacq.	miniature jade tree	Orn	
SOLANACEAE			
Capsicum annuum complex	small peppers	Orn	
Solanum lycopersicum var. *cerasiforme* (Dunal) Spooner, G. Anderson, & Jansen	wild cherry tomato	Nat	
VERBENACEAE			
Vitex rotundifolia L fil.	*pōhinahina*	**Ind**	<1>
ZYGOPHYLLACEAE			
Tribulus terrestris L.	puncture vine	Nat	

Legend to Table 1

STATUS = distributional status for the Hawaiian Islands:
- **End** = endemic; native and unique to the Hawaiian Islands.
- **Ind** = indigenous; native to Hawaii, but not unique to the Hawaiian Islands.
- Nat = naturalized, exotic, plant introduced to the Hawaiian Islands since the arrival of Cook Expedition in 1778, and well-established outside of cultivation.
- Orn = A cultivated plant; a species not thought to be naturalized in Hawaiʻi.
- **Pol** = An early Polynesian introduction. Introduced before 1778.

NOTES
- <1> - Planted here as an ornamental.
- <2> - Species seen in the road verge (ruderal).
- <3> - Juvenile or seedling; identification uncertain.

and *kī* (ti) are the only Early Polynesian introductions recorded. Nine of the species (20%) are classified as ornamentals, although 17 (36%) have been planted in the area for landscaping purposes.

Avian Fauna

A total of 65 individual birds of eight species, representing six separate families, were recorded during the station counts (Table 2). All species recorded are

established introduced species. The avian diversity and densities observed during the survey are consistent with the developed industrial harbor operations and its location in North Kohala. Two species—Common Myna (*Acridotheres tristis*) and Rosy-face Lovebird (*Agapornis roseicollis*)—accounted for 66% of the total number of birds recorded.

Table 2. Avian species detected at Kawaihae Harbor, June 2025.

Common Name	ORDER FAMILY *Species*	Status	RA
	GALLIFORMES		
	PHASIANIDAE - Pheasants & Partridges		
	Phasianinae - Pheasants & Allies		
Gray Francolin	*Ortygornis pondicerianus*	A	0.25
Red-Junglefowl	*Gallus gallus*	A	0.25
	COLUMBIFORMES		
	COLUMBIDAE - Pigeons & Doves		
Spotted Dove	*Streptopelia chinensis*	A	1.00
Zebra Dove	*Geopelia striata*	A	0.75
	PSITTACIFORMES		
	PSITTACULIDAE - Lories, Lovebirds, and Indomalayan and Papua-Australasian Parrots		
	Psittaculineae - Indomalayan and Papua-Australsian Parrots		
	Agapornithinae - Lovebirds and Hanging-Parrots		
Rosy-faced Lovebird	*Agapornis roseicollis*	A	4.75
	PASSERIFORMES		
	STURNIDAE - Starlings		
Common Myna	*Acridotheres tristis*	A	5.75
	PASSERIDAE - Old World Sparrows		
House Sparrow	*Passer domesticus*	A	3.25
	CARDINALIDAE - Cardinals & Allies		
Northern Cardinal	*Cardinalis cardinalis*	A	0.25

Key to Table 2.

Status:

A = Alien introduced species

RA: Relative abundance, number of birds recorded divided by the number of count stations ~4

Reptiles and Mammals

The only mammalian species recorded during the course of the survey was a Small Asian mongoose (*Herpestes javanicus*).

Observations by all three members off the team made over the course of the survey for marine reptiles (sea turtles) and mammals (cetaceans and monk seals) within Harbor waters were negative.

Discussion and Recommendations

Recommendations are partly based on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Animal Avoidance and Minimization Measures (USFWS-PIFWO, 2023). Implementation of the recommendations (provided below as bulleted items) will minimize impacts to listed species to the maximum extent practicable.

Water Quality

Although all work proposed will be on the hard surfaces of the Harbor facilities or the roadway on the *mauka* side of the Harbor security area (no in-water work is proposed), these locations will need to consider implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce contaminants in runoff moving beyond a work area and/or into adjacent harbor waters. Standard BMPs include the following:

- Minimize turbidity and siltation from project-related work. Use effective silt containment devices and curtail work during periods of weather-related runoff.
- Prior to use, clean pollutants from all project-related materials and equipment (dredges, barges, backhoes, etc.) that will be placed near the water.
- Fuel project-related vehicles and equipment away from the water and develop a contingency plan to control petroleum products accidentally spilled during work. Store absorbent pads and containment booms on-site, as appropriate, to facilitate the clean-up of accidental petroleum releases.
- Protect from erosion any soil exposed as part of the Project (with plastic sheeting, filter fabric, etc.) after exposure and stabilize as soon as practicable (with native or non-invasive vegetation matting, hydroseeding, etc.).

Floral Resources

Although scattered and sparse occurrences of native flora are present within the Project area, these plants are all common species, and most members of their respective populations are more numerous outside of the APE. No plants proposed or listed as threatened or endangered species as set forth in the Endangered Species Act of 1973 as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543; USFWS, nd-a) were seen in the Project area. For plants, state listing follows the federal listing (HDLNR, 1998).

Avian Resources

The eight avian species detected during this survey are non-native introduced species naturalized in the Hawaiian Islands. No species currently listed under federal or State of Hawaii endangered species statutes were recorded (HDLNR, 1998, 2015; USFWS, nd-a).

Seabirds

Although no seabirds were recorded during the survey, it is probable that one or more of the listed night-flying seabirds in Hawaiʻi include Hawaiian Petrel (*Pterodroma sandwichensis*), Newell's Shearwater (*Puffinus newelli*), and Band-rumped Storm-Petrel (*Hydrobates castro*) overfly the harbor facility during the breeding and fledging season. On the Island of Hawaiʻi these three species nests in upland mountainous habitat. In the summer and fall, protected night-flying seabirds (especially fledglings) transiting to the sea from inland locations can become disoriented by exterior lighting. When disoriented, seabirds may collide with man-made structures or the ground. If not killed outright, dazed or injured birds are targets of opportunity for feral mammals (Podolsky et al., 1998; Ainley et al., 2001; Day et al., 2003). The primary cause of mortality in listed species is predation by alien mammalian species at the nesting colonies (USFWS, 1983; Ainley et al., 2001). Collision with man-made structures is considered the second most significant cause of mortality of these seabirds in Hawaiʻi. No suitable nesting habitat for seabird species occurs in the Project area, or close to the area.

- The Project can minimize or avoid risks to protected night-flying seabirds by not conducting night-time construction and ensure that all outdoor lighting installed is fully shielded (night sky compliant). DLNR recommends avoiding construction-related night-time lighting between September 15 and December 15 (HDLNR-DOFAW, 2016).

Mammalian Resources

In addition to the lone small Asian mongoose recorded on the site, it is probable that one or more of the four Muridae found on the Island—roof rat (*Rattus rattus*), brown rat (*Rattus norvegicus*), Polynesian rat (*Rattus exulans hawaiiensis*), and European house mouse (*Mus musculus domesticus*) use resources on and within the general Project area on a seasonal basis. These introduced mammals are deleterious to native ecosystems and native faunal species. There is no suitable habitat for Hawaii's lone terrestrial mammalian species, Hawaiian hoary bat, on the industrial site.

Marine Biota

State- and federally-listed (endangered or threatened; HDLNR, 2015; USFWS, nd-a) marine species—green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), hawksbill sea turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), and monk seal (*Neomonachus schauinslandi*)—may occur in the general vicinity of the Project considering the distribution of these species throughout the Hawaiian Islands. If Project improvements require in-water work then proper protocol may be required to avoid injuring sea turtles and marine mammals. Sea turtles and marine mammals typically avoid human activity, so exposure to construction activity and equipment operation would be unlikely and non-injurious, resulting in insignificant effects on the ESA-listed marine species.

- For work close to the dock face, protected species BMPs require that the project manager and contractor reduce the likelihood of interactions by watching for and avoiding protected species before commencing work and by postponing or halting such work when protected species are within 50 yds of project activities (NOAA-NMFS, 2025).

Monk Seal

The Hawaiian monk seal (*Neomonachus schauinslandi*) was listed as an endangered species pursuant to the ESA in 1976 (41 FR 51612). In the same year, the Hawaiian monk seal population was designated "depleted" under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA). The majority of Hawaiian monk seal sighting information collected in the main Hawaiian Islands is reported by the general public and, therefore, highly biased by location and reporting effort. The only systematic monk seal count data available for the main Hawaiian Islands are from aerial surveys conducted by the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (NOAA-PIFSC) in 2000, 2001, and 2008 (Baker and Johanos, 2004; PIFSC, unpublished

data). No Hawaiian monk seals were sighted in Kawaihae Harbor during these aerial surveys.

Reports by the general public have been collected in the main Hawaiian Islands since the early 1980s. For the purposes of this report, a sighting is defined as a calendar day during which an individual seal is documented as present at a specific location. There have been 5 reported sightings of monk seals in Kawaihae Harbor from 2015 through 2024. Sighting locations were recorded based on reported location and were generated from a list of standardized place names. No monk seal births have been documented in the vicinity of Kawaihae Harbor.

Critical habitat for Hawaiian monk seals has been designated and includes the seafloor and marine environment to 10 m (33 ft) above the seafloor shoreward of the 200 m (660 ft) depth contour, through the shoreline and extending onto the land 5 m (16.5 ft) inland from the shoreline between identified boundary points. These terrestrial boundary points define preferred pupping areas and significant haul-out areas. The Project area is excluded from terrestrial critical habitat designation (NOAA, 2015).

Sea Turtles

The distinct population segment (DPS) of green sea turtle that occurs in Hawaiʻi is listed as a threatened species by both the ESA and state regulations (USFWS & NOAA, 2016; HDLNR, 2015). Hawksbill sea turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) is federally listed as endangered (USFWS, nd-a) and is listed as an endangered subspecies (*Eretmochelys imbricata bissa*) under state regulations (HDLNR, 2015). Hawksbill sea turtle is much less common than green sea turtle in Hawaiian waters.

A PIFSC Marine Turtle Biology and Assessment Program (MTBAP) database query resulted in 14 reports of green sea turtles, 4 hawksbill sea turtle, and 1 unidentified turtle within the specified area of Kawaihae Harbor (S. Murakawa, pers. comm., 2025).

Critical habitat for the Central North Pacific distinct population segment (DPS) of green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) has been proposed (NOAA, 2023). No area within the Project area is included in the proposed critical habitat for sea turtle.

Other Resources of Potential Concern

Critical Habitat

Federally delineated Critical Habitat is not present in the Project area (USFWS, nd-b). No equivalent designation exists under state law.

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Appendix E

Endangered Species Act, Section 7
USFWS Concurrence

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office
300 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 3-122
Honolulu, Hawai‘i 96850

In Reply Refer To:
2025-0005393-S7-001

October 1, 2025

Kristine Gilson, Director
Office of Environmental Compliance
U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Subject: Informal Consultation for the Proposed Kawaihae Harbor Improvement Project, Hawai‘i County

Dear Kristine Gilson,

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office received your letter dated August 1, 2025, requesting informal consultation for the proposed Kawaihae Harbor Improvement Project, Hawai‘i County, Hawai‘i. You have determined that the proposed project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect the following federally listed species: the endangered Hawai‘i Distinct Population Segment of the ‘akē‘akē (band-rumped storm-petrel, *Hydrobates castro*), endangered ‘ua‘u (Hawaiian petrel, *Pterodroma sandwichensis*), and threatened ‘a‘o (Newell’s shearwater, *Puffinus newelli*) (hereafter collectively referred to as Hawaiian seabirds).

The findings and recommendations in this consultation are based on: (1) your consultation request and accompanying documents; (2) email correspondences between the Service and the consultant September 11 through 23, 2025; (3) the Service’s official species list from Information for Planning and Consultation; and (4) other biological information available to us. This response is in accordance with section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) (ESA).

Project Description
The U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration (MARAD) awarded funds to the State of Hawai‘i Department of Transportation under the Port Infrastructure Development Program for improvements to the Kawaihae Commercial Harbor. The Federal Highway

Administration will also provide support to the specific roadway/entrance improvements with MARAD as the lead Federal agency for this undertaking. The project is located on the northwest coast of Hawai‘i Island (Figure 1) and is within the rural community of South Kohala on the following Tax Map Key (TMK) parcels: (3) 6-1-003:022 Por., :023 Por, 024 Por, :028, :032, :033, :034, :036 Por, :037, :046, :049, :052, :053, :054, :057, :058, :059, :060 Por, :061, :062, :063, :064, and (3)-6-1-002:999 (Right-Of-Way). Kawaihae Harbor is a critical infrastructure hub with a fuel depot, shipping terminal, and supporting roadways and buildings, and is one of nine commercial ports that support the economy of Hawai‘i.

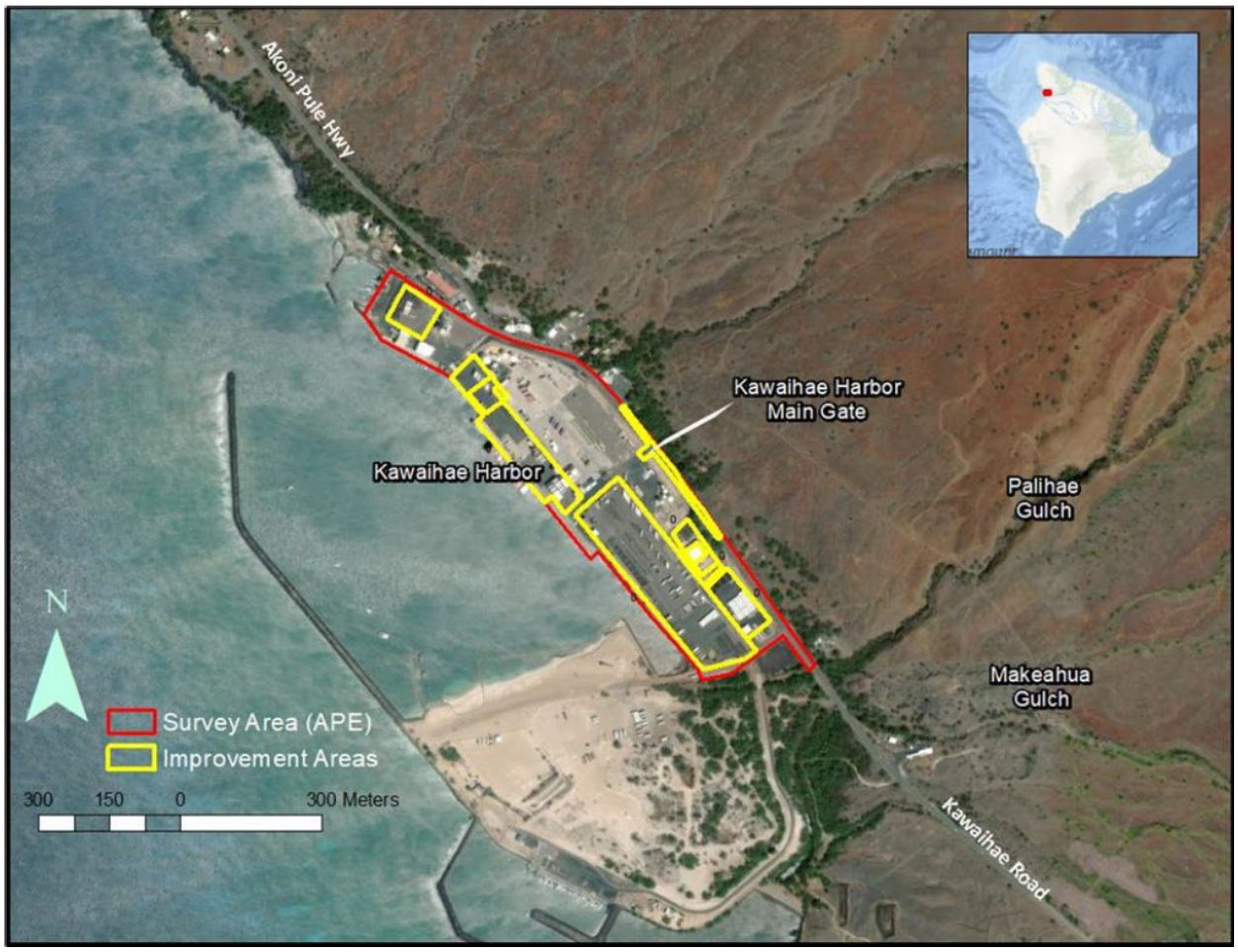

Figure 1. Kawaihae Harbor, Kawaihae, Island of Hawai‘i. Project and survey area (outlined in red), improvement areas outlined in yellow.

The harbor consists of two piers with distinct operational uses and infrastructure (Figure 2):

- **Pier 1**: 412 feet of berthing space, 4.6 acres of yard space, and 8,300 square feet of shed area. It primarily serves cement barge operations, with Hawaiian Cement unloading bulk cement via pneumatic pipelines. Other users include Liquid Robotics for marine research and cattle transfer operations.

- **Pier 2**: 1,150 feet of berthing space and 30.6 acres for storage and cargo handling. It supports interisland cargo and fuel barge operations, mainly used by Young Brothers, Matson, and Par Hawaii. Young Brothers operates at Pier 2A, while Matson operates at Pier 2B, each with two weekly arrivals on Tuesdays and Fridays. This setup supports diverse harbor activities, facilitating inter-island commerce and specialized maritime operations.

Figure 2. Improvement plan area map.

The project encompasses two main components aimed at improving the infrastructure and operational efficiency of Kawaihae Harbor situated within eight key areas of Piers 1 and 2.

Component 1 – Highway Widening (Kawaihae Road – Hawai‘i Route 270)
This component focuses on enhancing traffic flow and safety near the harbor’s main gate by constructing a dedicated left-turn lane and a deceleration lane for northbound vehicles turning left into the harbor. The total length of this new lane will be approximately 875 feet and will be able to accommodate truck queuing. To accommodate the highway widening, an existing natural/geological feature rock outcrop along the highway may have to be removed. It is approximately 375 feet in length and 15 feet in height (from road level) and comprises an approximate 0.8 acres of undeveloped area at the harbor.

Additionally, five utility poles, approximately 20 feet in height, within the highway's right-of-way, will be relocated westward towards the harbor, as will approximately 900 feet of the harbor's security perimeter fencing.

Currently, stormflow around Kawaihae Harbor is channelized by a seven-foot-deep drainage canal, which was constructed to surround the inland side of the harbor property to intercept and convey high-volume flash flood or stormwater runoff to the sea. The proposed action will involve relocating or replacing the existing drainage channel to accommodate the left-turn/storage lane and appurtenant pavement widening. The area within the existing open drainage channel will be cleared of any sedimentation and or overgrowth to prepare the area for the new pavement.

In the 2009 National Park Service (NPS) Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management Plan, the NPS proposed extending the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail north of Kawaihae Harbor using land mauka of Kawaihae Harbor. Although the NPS trail extension is not a part the proposed action, a six-foot wide clear corridor will be maintained between the harbor perimeter fence and the highway shoulder to allow for the future potential extension of the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail through the project area by others.

Component 2 – Yard Improvements

This component aims to upgrade the yard facilities to support modern cargo operations. Portions of the yard will be reconstructed, which includes replacing the existing asphalt surface with new reinforced concrete that will cover an approximate 3.2-acre area at Pier 2A, approximately 7.4 and 2.8-acre areas in the main yard at Pier 2B, approximately 2.3-acre area in the expanded cargo yard, and an approximate 0.7-acre area at the leasable lot. Other improvements include replacing up to 53 existing 40-foot yard light poles with 80-foot poles, and installing fully shielded, energy-efficient LED bulbs compliant with County ordinances. The total number of poles that will be replaced will be confirmed with a more detailed lighting study. This includes lighting in the 2.8-acre area within the main yard at Pier 2B. These replacement light poles primarily will be within Pier 1 and Pier 2 yards as well as the Expanded Cargo Yard. The existing poles will be removed using cranes.

A new fire suppression system, including fire hydrants, will be installed within the expansion and annex yards. An existing warehouse building, located mauka of the Pier 2B cargo yard, will be renovated and repurposed to house the HDOT District office and maintenance functions. The ground floor will house the new 3,100 square foot maintenance shed and a new 1,600 square foot mezzanine will be constructed to house the district office. An exterior stairway and elevator will be installed to access the mezzanine. The approximately 30,000 square foot building site will be paved with asphaltic concrete and striped for approximately 10 parking stalls. The structures that currently house the district office and maintenance shed will be relocated from their current sites to a future leasable lot location further north, away from the Pier 2 cargo yard, to increase the footprint of the expanded cargo yard. Additionally, conduits and raised transformer pads will be installed for future upgrades to be constructed or installed by harbor users.

Kawaihae Harbor does not have nighttime operations. It is used primarily for the biweekly barge service from O‘ahu and Maui, which arrive early and leave the same day. Therefore, there will be a few lights on at night for security and safety reasons.

Best management practices and erosion control measures will be used to prevent soil, debris, and other materials from leaving the project site (Attachment A). Measures will be taken to control invasive species (Attachment B), including ensuring that all imported materials are free of nonnative plants, seeds, and organisms. Construction equipment and vehicles will be thoroughly cleaned prior to arriving at the site to remove any soil, plant matter (including seeds), insects, and reptiles or amphibians (and their eggs). Equipment will also be cleaned before leaving the site, especially if transported to other islands. Any invasive species identified in stockpiled materials will be removed using appropriate chemical or mechanical methods.

Conservation Measures
To avoid and minimize project impacts to Hawaiian seabirds the following measures will be implemented:

- All outdoor lights will be fully shielded so the bulb can only be seen from below.
- Automatic motion sensor switches and controls will be installed on all outdoor lights or lights will be turned off when human activity is not occurring in the lighted area.
- Nighttime construction will not occur during the seabird fledging period, September 15 through December 15.

Analysis of Effects
Hawaiian seabirds
Hawaiian seabirds may traverse the project area at night during the breeding, nesting, and fledging seasons (March 1 to December 15). Outdoor night lighting used at night can result in seabird disorientation, fallout, and injury or mortality because seabirds are attracted to lights and after circling the lights, they may become exhausted and collide with nearby wires, buildings, or other structures or they may land on the ground. Young birds (fledglings) are particularly vulnerable to light attraction when they are traversing the project area between September 15 and December 15, as they are making their first flights from their mountain nests to the sea. Downed seabirds are subject to increased mortality due to collision with automobiles, starvation, and predation by dogs, cats, and other predators.

By implementing the conservation measures above, including avoiding nighttime construction during the seabird fledging season from September 15 through December 15, fully shielding all outdoor lights, ensuring lights are only visible from below, and turning off lights when human activity is not occurring in the area, it is unlikely that Hawaiian seabirds become attracted or disoriented to lights, and fallout resulting in injury or mortality. Because impacts from the proposed project are unlikely, effects are considered discountable.

Summary
Based on the project description, implementation of the avoidance and minimization measures, and because effects from the action are discountable, we concur that the proposed action may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect Hawaiian seabirds (‘akē‘akē, ‘ua‘u, and ‘a‘o).

Reinitiation of this consultation is required by the Service, where discretionary Federal involvement or control over the proposed actions has been retained or is authorized by law and:

1) If new information reveals effects of the action that may affect listed species or critical habitat in a manner or to an extent not previously considered;
2) If the identified action is subsequently modified in a manner that causes an effect to listed species or critical habitat that was not considered herein; or
3) If a new species is listed or critical habitat designated that may be affected by the proposed actions.

Thank you for participating in the protection of federally listed species. If you have any questions, please contact Jay Nelson, at jay nelson@fws.gov or pifwo_admin@fws.gov. When referring to this project, please include this reference number: 2025-0005393-S7-001.

Sincerely,

CHELSIE JAVAR-SALAS

Digitally signed by CHELSIE JAVAR-SALAS
Date: 2025.10.01 10:34:11 -10'00'

Island Team Manager – Maui Nui and Hawai‘i Island
Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office

Attachments: A: BMPs For Work in or Around Aquatic Environment
B: PIFWO Invasive Species Biosecurity Protocols

Attachment A: BMPs For Work in or Around Aquatic Environment

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Recommended Standard Best Management Practices (BMPs)

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) recommends the following measures are incorporated into project planning to avoid or minimize impacts to fish and wildlife resources. Incorporation of these BMPs may reduce negative impacts to aquatic habitats from project construction-related activities. These BMPs are recommended in addition to, and do not over-ride any terms, conditions, or other recommendations prepared by the Service, other Federal, state, or local agencies. Please contact the Service Aquatic Ecosystems Conservation Program at 808-792-9400 with any questions.

1. Authorized dredging and filling-related activities that may result in the temporary or permanent loss of aquatic habitats should be designed to avoid indirect, negative impacts to aquatic habitats that extend beyond the planned project area.
2. Dredging/filling in the marine environment should be scheduled to avoid coral spawning and recruitment periods, and sea turtle nesting and hatching periods. Because these periods vary throughout the Pacific islands, we recommend contacting the relevant local, state, or Federal fish and wildlife resource agency for site specific guidance.
3. Turbidity and siltation from project-related work should be minimized and contained within the project area by silt containment devices and curtailing work during flooding or adverse tidal and weather conditions. The BMPs should occur for the life of the construction period until turbidity and siltation within the project area is stabilized. All project construction-related debris and sediment containment devices should be removed and disposed of at an approved site.
4. All project construction-related materials and equipment (i.e., dredges, vessels, backhoes, silt curtains, etc.) to be placed in an aquatic environment should be inspected for pollutants including, but not limited to; marine fouling organisms, grease, oil, etc., and cleaned to remove pollutants prior to use. Project related activities should not result in any debris disposal, nonnative species introductions, or attraction of nonnative pests to the affected or adjacent aquatic or terrestrial habitats. Implementing both a litter-control plan and a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point plan (HACCP – see https://www.fws.gov/policy/A1750fw1.html) can prevent attraction and introduction of nonnative species.
5. Project construction-related materials (i.e., fill, revetment rock, pipe, etc.) should not be stockpiled in, or in close proximity to aquatic habitats and should be protected from erosion (e.g., with filter fabric, etc.), to prevent materials from being carried into waters by wind, rain, or high surf.
6. Fueling of project-related vehicles and equipment should occur away from the aquatic environment and a contingency plan to control petroleum products accidentally spilled during the project should be developed. The plan should be retained on site with the person responsible for compliance with the plan. Absorbent pads and containment booms should be stored on-site to facilitate the clean-up of accidental petroleum releases.
7. All deliberately exposed soil or under-layer materials used in the project near water should be protected from erosion and stabilized as soon as possible with geotextile, filter fabric or native or non-invasive vegetation matting, hydro-seeding, etc.

Attachment B: Invasive Species Biosecurity Protocols

PIFWO Invasive Species Biosecurity Protocols
(Updated February 2022)

The following biosecurity protocol is recommended to be incorporated into planning for your project to avoid or minimize transportation of invasive species with potential to impact to fish, wildlife, and their habitat. Cleaning, treatment, and/or inspection activities are the responsibility of the equipment or vehicle owner and operator. However, it is ultimately the responsibility of the action agency to ensure that all project materials, vehicles, machinery, equipment, and personnel are free of invasive species before entry into a project site. Please refer to the resources listed below for current removal/treatment recommendations that may be relevant to your project.

1. Cleaning and treatment:
   Project applicants should assume that all project materials (i.e., construction materials, or aggregate such as dirt, sand, gravel, etc.), vehicles, machinery, and equipment contain dirt and mud, debris, plant seeds, and other invasive species, and therefore require thorough cleaning. Treatment for specific pests, for example, trapping and poison baiting for rodents, or baiting and fumigation for insects, should be considered when applicable. For effective cleaning we offer the following recommendations prior to entry into a project site:
   a. Project materials, vehicles, machinery, and equipment must be pressure washed thoroughly (preferably with hot water) in a designated cleaning area. Project materials, vehicles, machinery, and equipment should be visibly free of mud/dirt (excluding aggregate), seeds, plant debris, insects, spiders, frogs (including frog eggs), other vertebrate species (e.g., rodents, mongoose, feral cats, reptiles, etc.), and rubbish. Areas of particular concern include bumpers, grills, hood compartments, wheel wells, undercarriage, cabs, and truck beds. Truck beds with accumulated material are prime sites for hitchhiking invasive species.
   b. The interior and exterior of vehicles, machinery, and equipment must be free of rubbish and food, which can attract pests (i.e., rodents and insects). The interiors of vehicles and the cabs of machinery should be vacuumed clean particularly for any plant material or seeds.

2. Inspection:
   a. Following cleaning and/or treatment, project materials, vehicles, machinery, and equipment, must be visually inspected by its user, and be free of mud/dirt (excluding aggregate), debris, and invasive species prior to entry into a project site. For example, careful visual inspection of a vehicle's tires and undercarriage is recommended for any remaining mud that could contain invasive plant seeds.
   b. Any project materials, vehicles, machinery, or equipment found to contain invasive species (e.g., plant seeds, invertebrates, rodents, mongoose, cats, reptiles, etc.) must not enter the project site until those invasive species are properly removed/treated.
3. For all project site personnel:

   a. Prior to entry into the project site, visually inspect and clean your clothes, boots or other footwear, backpack, radio harness, tools and other personal gear and equipment for insects, seeds, soil, plant parts, or other debris. We recommend the use of a cleaning brush with sturdy bristles. Seeds found on clothing, footwear, backpacks, etc., should be placed in a secure bag or similar container and discarded in the trash rather than being dropped to ground at the project site or elsewhere.

4. Additional considerations:
   a. Consider implementing a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) plan (https://www.fws.gov/policy/A1750fw1.html) to improve project planning around reducing the risk of introducing or spreading invasive species.
   b. When applicable, use pest-free or low-risk sources of plants, mulch, wood, animal feed or other materials to be transported to a project site.
   c. For projects involving plants from nurseries (e.g., outplanting activities, etc.), all plants should be inspected, and if necessary, appropriately cleaned or treated for invasive species prior to being transported to the project site.
   d. Avoid unnecessary exposure to invasive species at a particular site (to the extent practical) to reduce contamination and spread. For example, if your project involves people or equipment moving between multiple locations, plan and organize timelines so that work is completed in native habitat prior to working in a disturbed location to reduce the likelihood of introducing a pest into the native habitat.
   e. Maintain good communication about invasive species risks between project managers and personnel working on the project site (e.g., conduct briefings and training about invasive species). Ensure prevention measures are communicated to the entire project team. Also consider adding language on biosecurity into contracts or permitting mechanisms to provide clarity to all involved in the project. Report any species of concern or possible introduction of invasive species to appropriate land managers.

For current removal/treatment recommendations please refer to the following:
Hawaiian Islands:

- Hawai‘i Island – https://www.biisc.org/

Species-Specific Biosecurity Protocols

Little Fire Ant (LFA)

The little fire ant (*Wasmannia auropunctata*), or LFA, is an invasive species with a painful sting that can inhabit many different environments. In Hawai‘i, it often infests agricultural fields and farms, damaging crops and stinging unsuspecting workers. Little fire ants are also highly disruptive to native tropical ecosystems and harmful to wildlife. Slow moving, but tiny and capable of foraging 24 hours a day with multiple queens per colony, LFA is a formidable threat to biodiversity, agriculture, and quality of life on tropical islands in the Pacific.

For more information about LFA including helpful guides and workshops for treating or detecting LFA, please visit www.littlefireants.com.

To reduce the risk of spreading LFA, the following biosecurity protocol is recommended:

Biosecurity Protocol for LFA

1. For projects involving plants from nurseries (e.g., outplanting activities, etc.), all plants should be inspected for little fire ants and other pests prior to being transported to the project site. If plants are found to be infested by ants of any species, plants should be sourced from an alternative nursery and the infested nursery should follow treatment protocols recommended by the Hawai‘i Ant Lab (https://littlefireants.com/wp-content/uploads/2020-Management-of-Pest-Ants-in-Nurseries-min.pdf).

2. All work vehicles, machinery, and equipment should follow steps 1 and 2 in the "Invasive Species Biosecurity Protocol" for (1) cleaning and treatment and (2) inspection for invasive ants prior to entering a project site.

3. Any machinery, vehicles, equipment, or other supplies found to be infested with ants (or other invasive species) must not enter the project site until it is properly treated (https://littlefireants.com/how-to-treat-for-little-fire-ants-for-homeowners/#recommended-bait-products) and re-tested. Infested vehicles must be treated following recommendations by the Hawai‘i Ant Lab (https://littlefireants.com/resource-center/) or another ant control expert and in accordance with all State and Federal laws. Treatment is the responsibility of the equipment or vehicle owner. Ultimately however, it is the responsibility of the action agency to ensure that all project materials, vehicles, machinery, and equipment follow the appropriate protocol(s).

4. General Vehicle Ant Hygiene: Even the cleanest vehicle can pick up and spread little fire ant. Place MaxForce Complete Brand Granular Insect Bait (1.0 percent Hydramethylnon; https://labelsds.com/images/user_uploads/Maxforce%20Complete%20Label%201-5-18.pdf) into refillable tamper resistant bait stations. An example of a commercially available refillable tamper resistant bait station is the Ant Café Pro (https://www.antcafe.com/). Place a bait station (or stations) in the vehicle and note that larger vehicles, such as trucks, may require multiple stations. Monitor bait stations frequently (every week at a minimum) and replace bait as needed. If the bait station does not have a sticker to identify the contents, apply a sticker listing contents to the station.

5. Gravel, building materials, or other equipment such as portable buildings should be baited using MaxForce Complete Brand Granular Insect Bait (1.0 percent Hydramethylnon; https://labelsds.com/images/user_uploads/Maxforce%20Complete%20Label%201-5-18.pdf) or AmdroPro (0.73 percent Hydramethylnon; https://connpest.com/labels/AMDROPRO.pdf) following label guidance.

6. Storage areas that hold field tools, especially tents, tarps, and clothing should be baited using MaxForce Complete Brand Granular Insect Bait (1.0 percent Hydramethylnon; https://labelsds.com/images/user_uploads/Maxforce%20Complete%20Label%201-5-18.pdf) or AmdroPro (0.73 percent Hydramethylnon; https://connpest.com/labels/AMDROPRO.pdf) following label guidance.
7. Vehicles that have entered a project site known or thought to overlap with areas infested with LFA should subsequently be tested for LFA with baiting in accordance with protocol recommended by the Hawai‘i Ant Lab (https://littlefireants.com/survey-your-home-for-lfa/).

8. If LFA are detected, please report it to 808-643-PEST (Hawai‘i), 671-475-PEST (Guam), or 684-699-1575 (American Samoa). Please visit https://littlefireants.com/identification-of-little-fire-ants/ for assistance in identifying LFA.

Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB)

The coconut rhinoceros beetle (*Oryctes rhinoceros*), or CRB, is a large, horned scarab beetle native to Southeast Asia. An invasive pest where it occurs outside of its native range, the adult beetles primarily attack coconut palms by boring into the crowns to feed on developing leaves. It is also known to feed on bananas, sugarcane, pineapples, oil palms, and pandanus trees. The larval grub stage burrow into and feed upon decomposing mulch and vegetation. On most Pacific Islands it lacks natural predators, leading to severe declines and extirpations of palm species where it has become established. On Guam, researchers have recently documented a shift of CRB to the island's native and threatened cycad tree (*Cycas micronesica*) (Marler et al. 2020). In the Hawaiian Islands, CRB is a documented threat to archipelago's native *Pritchardia* palm species.

For more information about CRB including the current situation in Guam and high/low-risk areas on O‘ahu, please visit http://cnas-re.uog.edu/crb/ or https://www.crbhawaii.org/.

To reduce the risk of spreading CRB, the following biosecurity protocol is recommended:

Biosecurity Protocol for CRB

1. Never transport green waste between islands and minimize the creation, storage, and transport of green waste within O‘ahu, this also includes:
    a. Mulch, bark, compost
    b. Soil of any kind
    c. Potted plants of any kind

    Additional consultation is recommended if the project involves transportation of materials, soil, equipment, vehicles, etc. between islands.

2. If felling or trimming palms, contact CRB Response for a free inspection ((808) 679-5244 or email at info@crbhawaii.org)

3. Keep green waste whole until it is ready to be treated and removed.

   a. Chip green waste on site and transport it on the same day to a secure and managed green waste disposal site/facility.
   b. For chipped green waste in high-risk areas, re-chip prior to movement outside the infested area, treat with pesticide (when applicable), heat treatment (>130 degrees F), spread and dry, or store in sealed durable containers.

4. Minimize accumulations of green waste by regularly treating mulch piles or depositing it in sealed green waste bins. In low-risk areas, we also recommend thinly spreading mulch (less than 2 inches deep) and allowing it to dry (no irrigation).
5. If injured or dying coconut palm trees are observed or if CRB are detected, contact CRB Response at (808) 679-5244 or email at info@crbhawaii.org or online at https://www.crbhawaii.org/report

References Cited

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