

**CULTURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
COUNTY OF HAWAI‘I**

**MINUTES
May 14, 2025**

MEETING LOCATION:

Hybrid in-person and interactive video conference through Zoom with live observation through YouTube. The in-person location was held at the Hilo Planning Department Conference Room, 101 Pauahi Street, Suite 3, Hilo, HI 96720.

The full YouTube video of this hearing can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ee-9P2Z2MMI>

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT VIA ZOOM: Matthew Clark (Chair), Desmon Haumea (Vice Chair), Kealohanuiopuna Kinney, and Aaron Spielman.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT IN PERSON: Janet Six

COMMISSIONERS EXCUSED: Roberta “Ku‘ulei” Keakealani and Nicole Lui.

ALSO PRESENT: Jean Campbell, Deputy Corporation Counsel; Kevin Sullivan, Planner V; Kim Tanaka, Planner IV; and Ashley DeVera, Board Secretary.

Chair Clark called the Cultural Resources Commission (CRC) meeting to order at 10:06 a.m. A quorum was established with five members in attendance. It was announced that pursuant to Act 220, Session Laws of Hawai‘i 2021, which amended the Sunshine Law to allow meetings to be remotely conducted online, effective January 1, 2022, the Cultural Resources Commission meetings will be held online, with an in-person location for the public to provide testimony. The meeting can be viewed live online, and a link to YouTube can be located on the County website, as well as links to reports and surveys reviewed at this hearing. Commissioners were reminded that only one person may speak at a time and were asked to raise their hands to be recognized before speaking.

Commissioners were asked to introduce themselves and in accordance with the Sunshine Law, identify any member(s) present within the household. All members reported being alone in their location.

Staff introductions were made.

There were no addendums or supplemental agenda items.

STATEMENT(S) FROM THE PUBLIC

At 10:09 a.m., Chair Clark opened the floor to receive public testimony. Procedures for testimony were provided. There is a three-minute time limit on each agenda item; statements must relate to items on the agenda. There was one public testifier on Zoom.

Jojo Tanimoto [*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 15:12*]

Public testimony closed at 10:35 a.m.

BUSINESS OF THE COMMISSION

1. Hawai‘i Department of Transportation (HDOT) Historic Bridge Program, 2024 Inventory Update (PL-INT-2022-001460)

Approval of correspondence to HDOT regarding updates to the Hawai‘i Island Historic Bridge Inventory.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 4:35*] This agenda item was called to order at 10:09 a.m. There were three team members from HDOT in attendance. There was one member of the public present on Zoom and public testimony was provided after the presentation.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 5:36*] Mr. Kevin Sullivan contact HDOT and discussed the concerns raised at the last meeting regarding the individual bridges brought up by Jojo Tanimoto. Following the discussion, staff formulated a letter for the Commission to forward to HDOT, excluding those specific bridges.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 7:40*] Mr. Sullivan presented the status of individual bridges. He noted that on the list, any item labeled as a “program comment bridge” would continue to be considered individually pursuant to Section 106 and was not included in the letter. The broader discussion regarding cultural landscapes and related considerations was addressed in the correspondence letter.

Ms. Pua Aiu clarified that “program comment bridge” are not evaluated individually unless they are on the exceptional list. None of the bridges discussed are on that list. Any bridge constructed after 1945 is evaluated as part of a group. A context study was conducted for all bridges, and each state was required to develop a list of exceptional bridges exempted from the program comment process. The State of Hawai‘i identified one hundred (100) bridges on its exceptional list, however, the three (3) bridges in question Makahuna Bridge, Honokoa Bridge, and Kawaihae Uka Bridge were not included. These three (3) bridges were evaluated in 2013 and determined not to be exceptional at that time.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 12:46*] Mr. Sullivan provided the proposed correspondence letter to the Commissioners for their review. This letter was intended as the Commission’s response to HDOT regarding the historic bridge inventory item. Chair Clark requested any comments or discussion from HDOT, but HDOT had no comments. Chair Clark then invited Ms. Tanimoto to provide her testimony.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 18:37*] Chair Clark opened the floor to the Commissioners for discussion. He acknowledged that the historic bridge inventory survey was intended to streamline the repair process for bridges when federal funding is involved. He noted that Chapter 6E and Chapter 343 would still need to be adhered to as part of any bridge repair project.

Ms. Aiu confirmed that the bridge inventory identifies whether a bridge is considered historic and whether it meets the qualifications for a historic designation, without requiring a full study at the time of a proposed repair or replacement. She also clarified that a Section 106 review would still be required. She added that the qualifications for determining historic significance are generally consistent between Chapter 6E and Section 106. If a bridge is eligible under one, it is typically eligible under the other.

She further explained that the Area of Potential Effect (APE) could include the surrounding space the bridge crosses, but such considerations are better addressed at the project level rather than through the inventory process.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 20:48*] Chair Clark shared that while assisting staff with drafting the letter, he reflected on the archaeological and anthropological concept of landscapes of movement. He explained that this concept refers to structures of movement within a landscape from faint trails to major highways that shape how people move through and perceive the land. He emphasized that many of these bridges evolved from early Hawaiian trails that circled the island and followed coastal routes.

In traditional times, arriving at a kahawai (stream or gulch) would often slow travel and mark a significant natural barrier. These areas also served as political boundaries, such as ahupua‘a, ‘ili, or smaller land divisions. They were often places where travelers paused, sometimes left offerings, and shared stories or mo‘olelo that are still passed down today.

Chair Clark observed that as travel became faster, bridges represented one of the final design evolutions that allowed for more rapid movement across the landscape. He noted that bridges have now become structures that elevate travelers above the space, often removing the opportunity to reflect on the significance of the place, the boundaries being crossed, and the communities being entered. He expressed interest in exploring ways to convey the history, space, and meaning of these places to the living community, and how that understanding connects to the past.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 23:31*] Mr. Sullivan addressed the Commission and noted that staff, in consultation with Ms. Tanimoto, is planning to bring a discussion item to the Commission later in the summer. The discussion would focus specifically on Kawaihae, the region, its landscape, and related cultural concerns. The intent is to engage in a broader conversation about how to better address the community’s concerns regarding cultural significance, protection, preservation, and storytelling.

Mr. Sullivan emphasized the importance of considering how to manage ongoing development, whether related to the harbor or the region in general, while ensuring compatibility and sustainability within the cultural landscape.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 25:05*] Commissioner Kinney commented that he appreciated the intention of the letter and supported the recommendations, stating that they were appropriate. He expressed hope and opportunity for increased community engagement, allowing the community to contribute ideas on how to approach these bridges and the surrounding spaces.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 26:04*] Vice Chair Haumea commented that the State of Hawai‘i has lost much of its value in our cultural identity and that people are often misinformed for misled. He emphasized that the stories connected to these places are vital for future generations, particularly for children who need to understand the significance of the places they encounter. He stated that Hawai‘i is a sacred place, and culturally, there is a need to view development with greater sensitivity. He mentioned the importance of preserving the stories of these places and noted that Kawaihae is a historically significant port, where King Kamehameha once housed his ships. He also mentioned that the sandalwood industry transversed these bridges and that such historical connections should be identified and acknowledged.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 28:43*] Commissioner Kinney motioned to approve the language in the letter; seconded by Vice Chair Haumea. No discussion occurred. A roll call vote was taken and passed unanimously with five aye votes (Spielman, Kinney, Haumea, Six, Clark).

This matter concluded at 10:35 a.m.

2. Report from Permitted Interaction Subcommittee Regarding Site Visit Conducted for the Waiaka Bridge Realignment (PL-CRC-2023-000007)

Location: Ahupua‘a of Lalamilo and Keanuiomano, District of South Kohala, Hawai‘i Island
TMK: (3) 6-5-001:015, 033, 6-6-001:011, and 077

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 30:16*] This agenda item was called to order at 10:35 a.m. There were no members of the public present on Zoom and no public testimony was provided.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 31:41*] Commissioner Spielman provided his report from the permitted interaction subcommittee’s site visit for the Waiaka Bridge realignment project. He explained that the existing Waiaka Bridge would be removed and replaced with a roundabout. A portion of the new roundabout would include a bridge, but the current bridge would be repositioned and modified from its existing configuration. The project is expected to take approximately eighteen (18) months and will include the construction of a temporary road and temporary bridge, followed by the roundabout and final permanent bridge.

Commissioner Spielman met with representatives from WSP, the engineering firm managing the project, along with HDOT Highways Division, and TJ Kalaniopio from Hawai‘i Preparatory Academy (HPA), facilities manager. The group reviewed the project area, site plan, visible orange markers, and discussed the project in general.

He noted that the CRC is concerned not only with the bridge itself, but also with Waiaka Stream and the surrounding areas. Discussions included important and effective mitigation measures, including cultural and archaeological monitoring during both fieldwork and construction. The group also discussed the inclusion of interpretive signage to educate the public, not just about

the bridge, but also the stream and its historical significance. Commissioner Spielman expressed interest in connecting the architects and engineers with Commissioner Keakealani to support this effort. The engineering team planned to draft interpretive signage and share it with the CRC for review.

The CRC expressed a desire to remain a consulting party as the project progresses and requested to be provided with updated project drawings and information as they become available.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 37:09*] The project is located near Waiaka Church, which was originally built by Father Damien. The church later burned down and was rebuilt. It was noted that HPA may have photographic documentation, and there may be community members with mo‘olelo relating to the area. Although the Waiaka Church is located outside of the project area, remnants of its foundation and modern gravestones are visible in the general vicinity.

While no existing burials or graves have been identified within the project area, it is considered to fall within the boundaries of HPA. The CRC had previously recommended consultation with lineal descendants, including Mrs. Barbara Robertson, whose family is from Waimea.

The existing stream gauge was identified as a historical feature within the project area. The CRC recommended that the project include restoration of any damage to the existing rock wall located along the general project boundary. The engineering team agreed that this could be included as part of the final restoration phase of the project.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 39:59*] Commissioner Spielman also noted that the area experiences high traffic volume, including large trucks. During the temporary construction phase, some tight turns are expected, but traffic flow should be maintained.

The demolition of the existing Waiaka Bridge would be carried out using standard concrete removal methods involving machinery and tools. The team would need to exercise caution when removing the middle pier, which is anchored on lava rock at the stream bed, to avoid damage to the stream.

He added that the area south of Kawaihae Road, including the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) property, is not suitable for construction staging. Instead, a separate property located further east will be used for that purpose.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 56:01*] Looking at the east side of the bridge, there are two armature structures supporting two (2) eight-inch water lines, which runs from Waimea down towards the coast. These lines will have to be bypassed first and then either preserved or reestablished in place for the new bridge.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 1:01:36*] Commissioner Spielman concluded his report. At the next meeting in June, the Commissioners could discuss, ask questions, or take any necessary actions. Mr. Sullivan noted that there will be a determination from the State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD) which staff will forward.

This matter concluded at 11:08 a.m.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

1. Approval of minutes of the meeting held on March 12, 2025.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 1:04:07*] Vice Chair Haumea motioned to approve the minutes as circulated; seconded by Commissioner Spielman. No discussion occurred. The minutes were approved without opposition with a unanimous aye voice vote.

2. Next meeting tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, June 18, 2025.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 1:05:23*] Mr. Sullivan reported that there is one new Commissioner who had been sworn in. There is an upcoming orientation, and she will be available to attend the June meeting. He also noted that there is one more vacancy on the CRC.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Vice Chair Haumea and seconded by Commissioner Six. The meeting was adjourned at 11:12 a.m. with a unanimous aye vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley DeVera, Board Secretary

A T T E S T :

Matthew Clark, Chairman
Cultural Resources Commission