



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Hawaii Federal-Aid Division

July 22, 2009

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Box 50206
Honolulu, HI 96850
Phone: (808) 541-2700
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<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hidiv>

In Reply Refer To:
HDA-HI

Mr. Don Hubner
Endangered Species Biologist
NMFS Pacific Islands Regional Office
1601 Kapiolani Blvd., Suite 1110
Honolulu, HI 96814

Dear Mr. Hubner:

Subject: Kūhiō Highway Short-Term Improvements; Kuamo‘o Road to Kapa‘a Temporary
Bypass Road Project (FAP No. NH-056-1(50))
Wailua, Island of Kaua‘i
Request for Consultation under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) proposes to authorize construction of the Kūhiō Highway Short-Term Improvements; Kuamo‘o Road to Kapa‘a Temporary Bypass Road Project that is located in Wailuā of the Island of Kaua‘i.

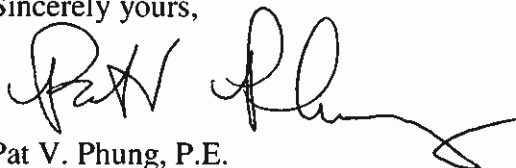
Enclosed is documentation associated with the project to initiate informal consultation under Section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). As described in the enclosed documentation, the proposed action will have no effect on ESA listed marine species known to inhabit the project area along this eastern coastline of Kaua‘i. There is no designated critical habitat in the project area.

The highway widening portion of the project will not affect marine species along shoreline areas due to improvements being situated well away from the shoreline. Best management practices will also be implemented by the contractor to minimize construction related effects on the marine environment. The relocation of existing electrical overhead utility lines underground will cross under the Wailuā River as indicated in the enclosed documentation. The route of electrical lines under this River will occur within the State of Hawai‘i, Department of Transportation’s existing right-of-way, and will be located outside coastal waters. The relocated utility lines would cross about 60 to 80 below the surface water of the River, and thus have no effect on marine species.



We request your concurrence with our 'no affect' determination under Section 7 of the ESA. If you have any questions, please contact me at (808) 541-2305 if have any questions regarding this consultation request.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pat V. Phung', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Pat V. Phung, P.E.
Transportation Engineer

Enclosure

cc: Darell Young, HDOT, HWY-P
Ronald Sato, Wilson Okamoto Corporation

**KUHIO HIGHWAY SHORT-TERM IMPROVEMENTS
KUAMOO ROAD TO TEMPORARY BYPASS ROAD
Section 7 Consultation with NMFS
Project Summary
July 2009**

The State of Hawai'i (State), Department of Transportation (DOT), Highways Division is proposing to implement widening improvements to Kūhiō Highway along an approximately 0.64-mile section of highway in the Kawaihau district on the island of Kaua'i. This highway project (Federal Aid Project No. 56A-01-06) is collectively referred to as the "Kūhiō Highway Short-Term Improvements; Kuamo'o Road to Temporary Bypass Road Project".

In addition to the highway widening, the State DOT is also planning to relocate existing overhead utility lines (electrical, telephone, and cable) underground as part of mitigation measures for endangered and threatened sea birds present in the area based upon consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Existing overhead utility lines along the highway corridor would be relocated underground starting from an area just north of the Temporary Kapa'a Bypass Road (near Aleka Loop) and proceed southbound down to the Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative's (KIUC) Lydgate Substation at South Leho Drive. This utilities relocation would extend about 1.70 miles in length, and is being included as part of the highway widening project.

A. Project Background

This project initially started with just highway and accessory improvements between Kuamo'o Road and the Temporary Kapa'a Bypass Road without the relocation of existing overhead utilities underground. However, during consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as part of Section 7 under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA), they recommended that the overhead utility lines along this corridor be relocated underground. The USFWS were concerned with the presence of the following three pelagic seabird species within the project corridor particularly near Wailuā River: 1) Newell's Shearwater (*Puffinus auricularis newelli*); 2) Hawaiian Petrel (*Pterodroma sandwichensis*); and 3) Band-rumped Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma castro*).

The State DOT is now planning to relocate existing overhead utility lines underground as part of mitigation for this project. Developing plans for the relocation of overhead utility lines into underground duct lines has involved a coordinated effort between State DOT, U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highways Administration (FHWA), KIUC, Hawaiian Telcom, and Oceanic Time Warner Cable. Based upon this coordination, the relocation of overhead utility lines will now extend beyond the highway widening corridor and proceed down to the KIUC's Lydgate Substation.

B Project Location

The project is located along the Kaua'i's eastern coastline in the Wailuā area of the Līhu'e and Kawaihau Districts. All project improvements would primarily occur along the State DOT's Kūhiō Highway corridor and total about 1.70 miles in length. Kūhiō Highway (Route 56) is a part of the National Highway System and provides a critical connection between the communities of Līhu'e and

Kapa'a which are the two largest urban centers on Kaua'i. Figure 1 includes a location map showing the general project corridor.

C. Project Need and Objectives

The project was initiated by the State DOT to relieve existing and future projected traffic congestion along Kūhiō Highway in the Wailuā community. This project is intended to provide short-term improvements to address existing traffic congestion along the project corridor. A long-term solution is being developed separately by the State DOT under the Kapa'a Relief Route Project to address regional improvements for East Kaua'i. The need to provide improvements to Kūhiō Highway within the Wailuā area can be summarized into the following main reasons.

1. Address existing traffic congestion occurring along Kūhiō Highway.
2. Address projected increases in traffic volumes along Kūhiō Highway due to future growth in population, employment, and visitors to the region.
3. Increase safety along the project corridor for pedestrians, joggers, and bicyclists.

D. Project Description

The project consists of constructing the following three main areas of improvements identified below. Figures 2 to 6 show the general roadway plans for these improvements.

1. Widen Kūhiō Highway from the Temporary Kapa'a Bypass Road to Kuamo'o Road.
2. Extend the right-turn storage lane along Kuamo'o Road.
3. Relocate various existing overhead utility lines underground from South Leho Drive to the Temporary Kapa'a Bypass Road.

Highway Widening and Kuamo'o Road Improvements

Kūhiō Highway will be widened to add a second southbound through lane from the Temporary Kapa'a Bypass Road southbound (toward Līhu'e) to Kuamo'o Road. The widening length is about 3,400 linear feet or 0.64 miles. Adding a second southbound travel lane will then create a total of four (4) lanes for Kūhiō Highway comprised of two northbound and two southbound lanes. The widening will be constructed within the State DOT's existing right-of-way which is predominantly 60 feet wide. This right-of-way increases up to about 130 feet near the Temporary Kapa'a Bypass Road, and up to about 77 feet near Kuamo'o Road. Some easements would be obtained for certain accessory highway improvements and utilities needed outside the State right-of-way.

As part of the highway widening, existing intersections along the project corridor would be modified to improve operating conditions and traffic flow. The intersections along the highway include: 1) Temporary Kapa'a Bypass Road; 2) Lanikai Street; 3) Haleilio Road; 4) Papaloa Road; and 5) Kuamo'o Road.

Kuamo'o Road would be improved by extending the existing right-turn storage lane further inland to provide more storage capacity for cars making right-turns onto the highway to travel southbound towards Līhu'e. Starting from its intersection with Kūhiō Highway, this right-turn storage lane would be

improved to extend it up to a total length of about 650 feet inland (mauka) including the taper. This existing storage lane is about 350 feet with taper from the intersection with the highway.

Utilities Relocation

Existing electrical, telephone, and cable overhead lines along the highway from the area of the Temporary Kapa'a Bypass Road southbound down to Kuamo'o Road would be relocated underground as part of widening improvements. From Kuamo'o Road, existing overhead electrical, telephone, and cable lines along the highway would also be relocated up to KIUC's Lydgate Substation situated at South Leho Drive.

This relocation of overhead utilities would occur over a total length of about 8,200 linear feet or 1.55 miles. Of this total, about 3,400 feet (0.64 miles) would occur as part of the highway widening improvements. The remaining approximately 4,800 linear feet (0.91 miles) would only involve relocating the overhead utility lines. The existing wooden utility poles serving these overhead lines would be removed, however, existing poles used for street lighting along the highway would remain. From the Temporary Kapa'a Bypass Road southbound to Kuamo'o Road, relocated utility lines would be routed along the mauka (inland) side of the highway. The utility lines would be located either within the State DOT right-of-way or within a 15-foot-wide easement obtained from affected landowners.

From Kuamo'o Road, the electrical lines would be relocated underground within the State DOT right-of-way and would be routed under the Wailuā River using horizontal directional drilling (HDD) construction. Electrical lines would be placed about 60 to 80 feet below the surface crossing under the Wailuā River. The HDD construction of electrical lines would then continue up to an area situated at the southern corner of Kūhiō Highway with North Leho Drive. Telephone and cable lines would be attached to the new Wailua Cane Haul Bridge being constructed from the north bank of Wailuā River to the south bank.

From the corner of North Leho Drive, electrical, telephone, and cable utility lines would be placed underground and routed southbound along the highway to KIUC's Lydgate Substation. These utilities are planned to be located on the makai (seaward) side of the highway within a 15-foot-wide easement on a parcel of land owned by the State DHHL.

Construction Schedule and Funding

Construction of the project is planned to commence once environmental clearances are obtained, and ministerial permits obtained. Design work for this project is in progress and construction plans are being developed for final approval by pertinent government agencies in the Fall of 2009. The State DOT is planning to bid the construction of this project this year in the Fall of 2009 with construction planned to commence shortly thereafter.

The project is being partially funded by federal funds administered by the Federal Highways Administration and by the State of Hawaii funds for its construction. Federal funds made available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, also referred to as Federal Stimulus funds, will also be used for constructing the relocation of utilities underground. The estimated construction costs for highway widening, utilities relocation, and accessory improvements is about \$25.0 million.

State Park

Wailua River

KUAMOO RD

Coco Palms Resort

Wailua Shopping Plaza

Kaipopo Shopping Village

Wailua Bay View

Hale Aupuhi

Papaloa Rd

Kapaa Sands

Wailua Beach

Alakukui Beach

Alana Beach Resort

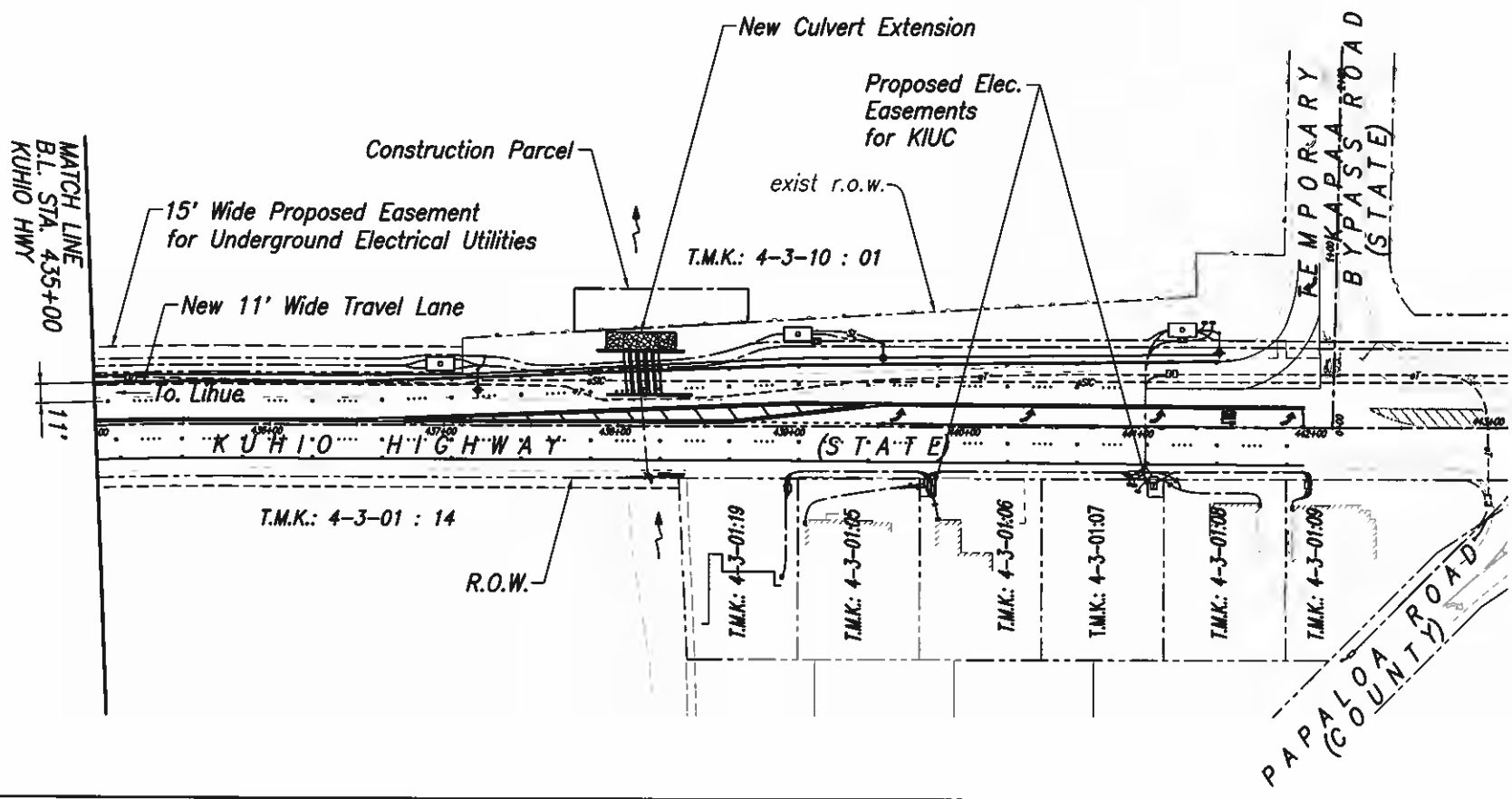
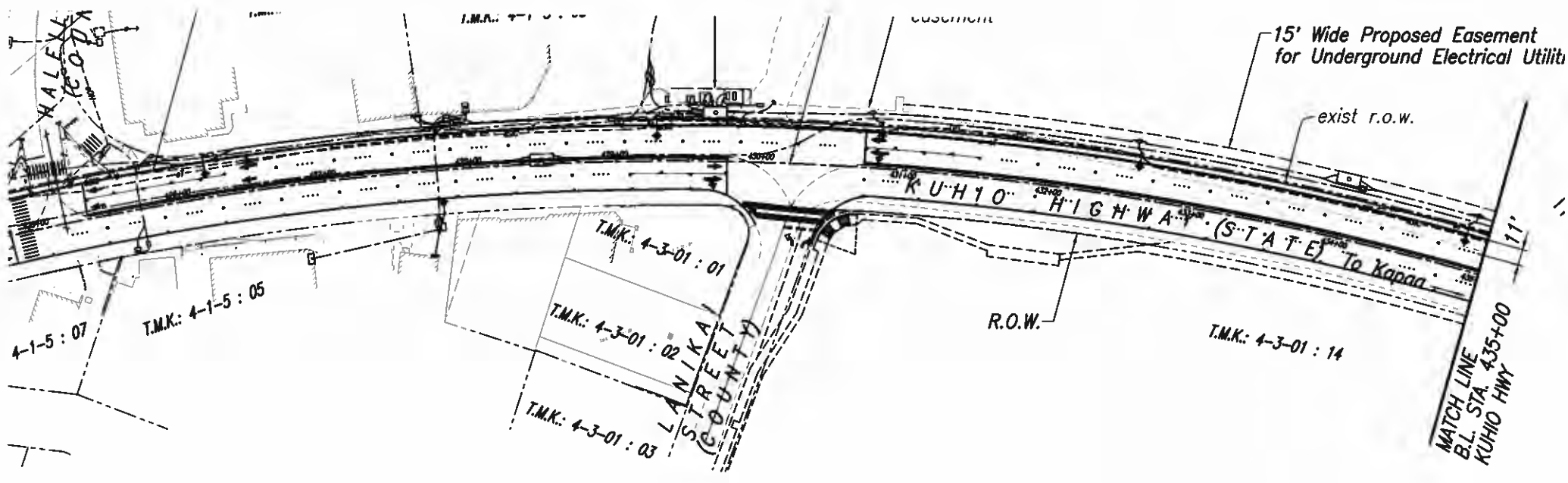
Wailua Bay

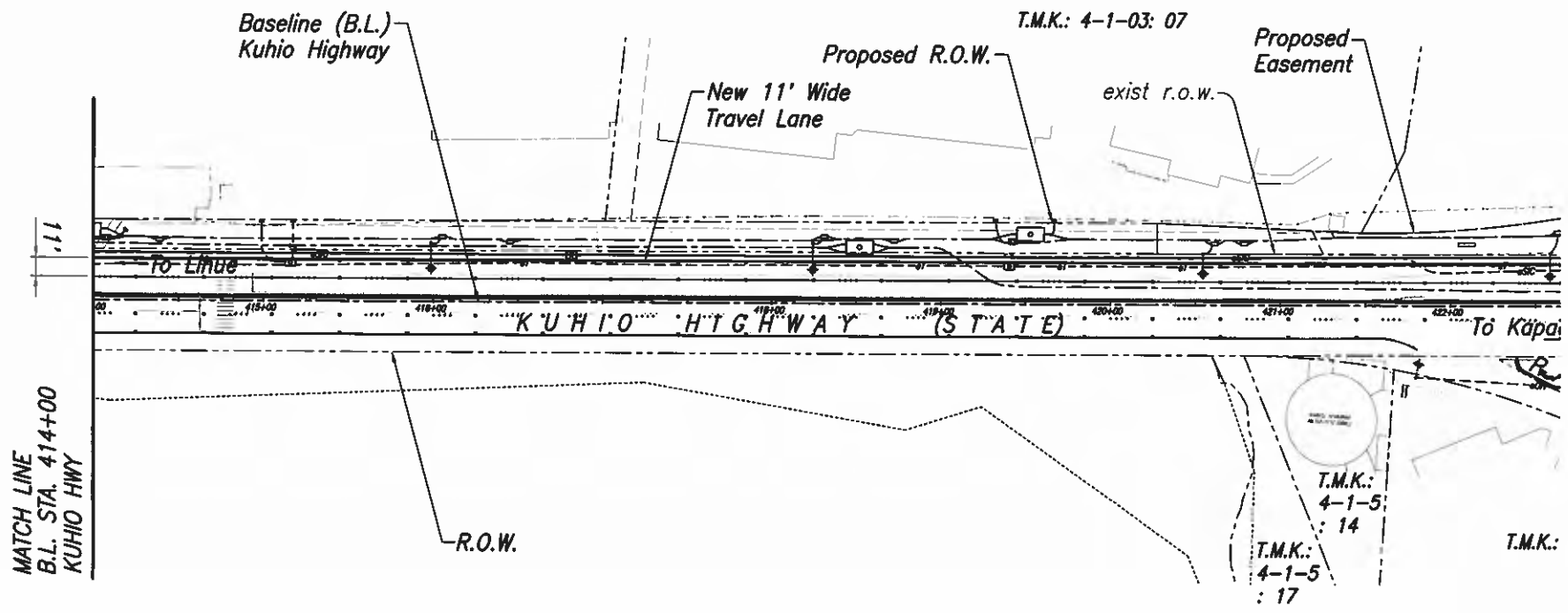
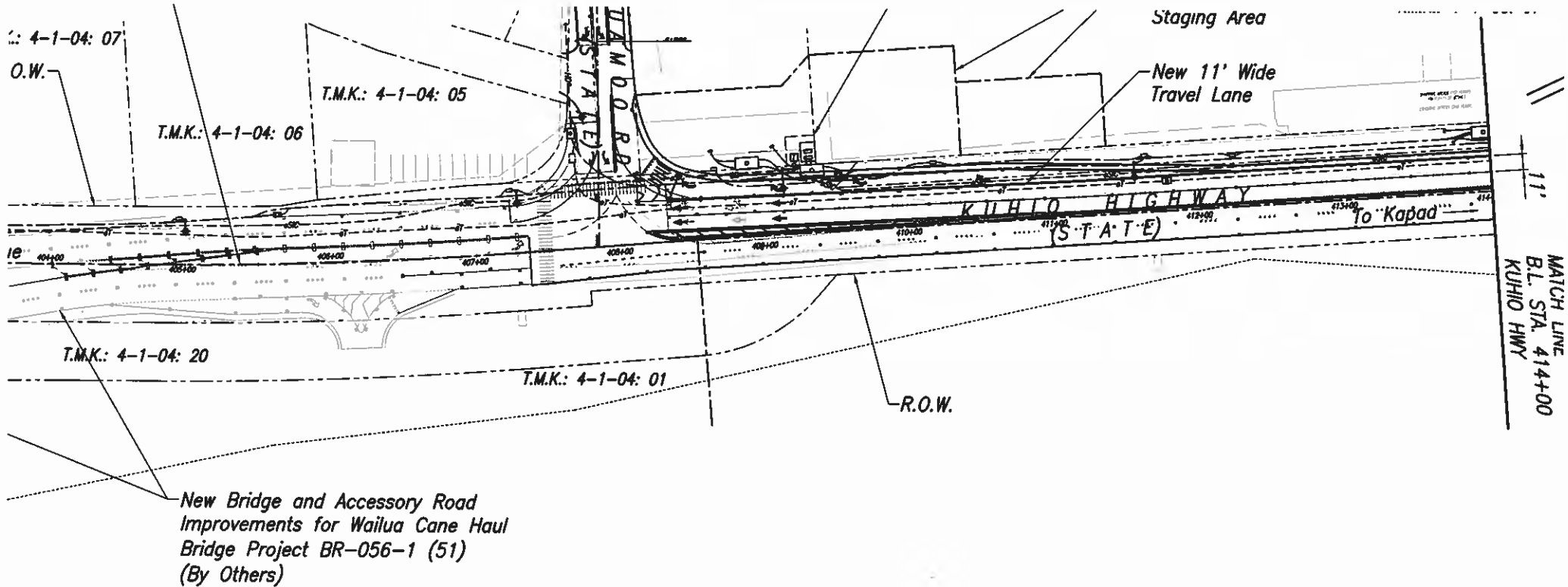
Islander on ti

Lydgate State Park

eho-Dr.

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T.M.K.: 3-9-02:

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KUHIO HIGHWAY
(STATE)

To Kapaa

R.O.W.

Proposed Easement
for Underground
Electrical Utilities

Construction Parcel
for Contractor/HDD
Staging Area

T.M.K.: 3-9-06

T.M.K.: 3-9-06: 25

NORTH LEHO DR
(COUNTY)

Baseline (B.L.)
Kuhio Highway

R.O.W.

T.M.K.: 3-9-04: 06

T.M.K.: 3-9-2 : 21

Wailua River Bridge

WAILUA
RIVER

KUHIO HIGHWAY
(STATE)

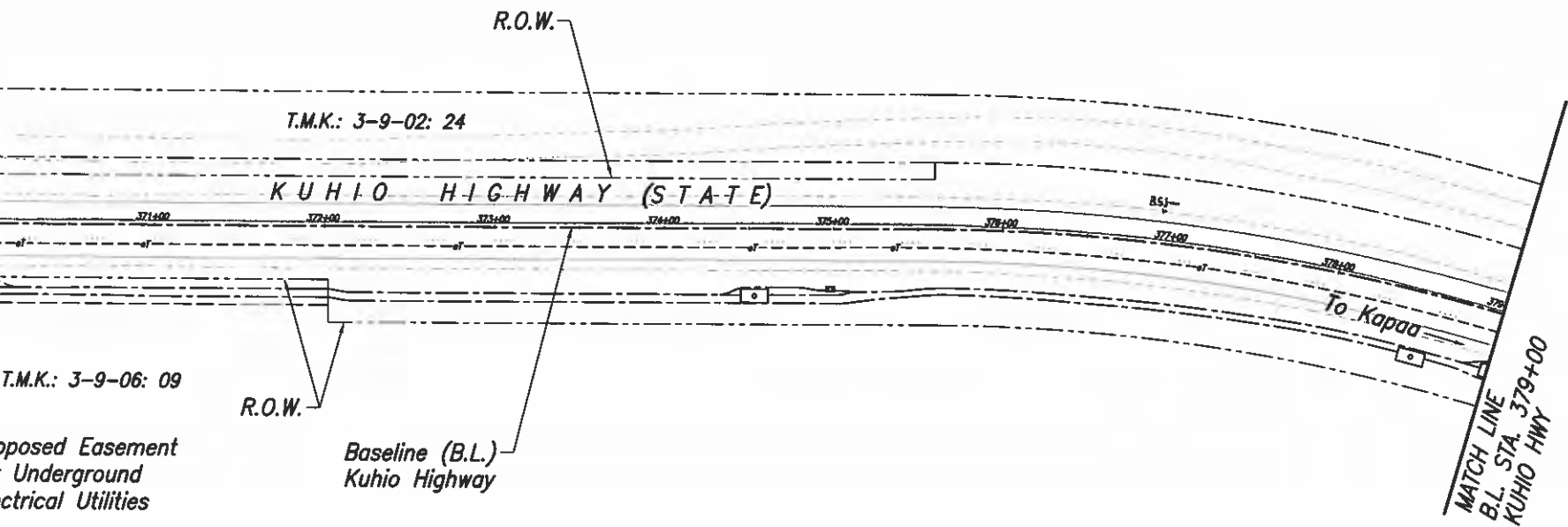
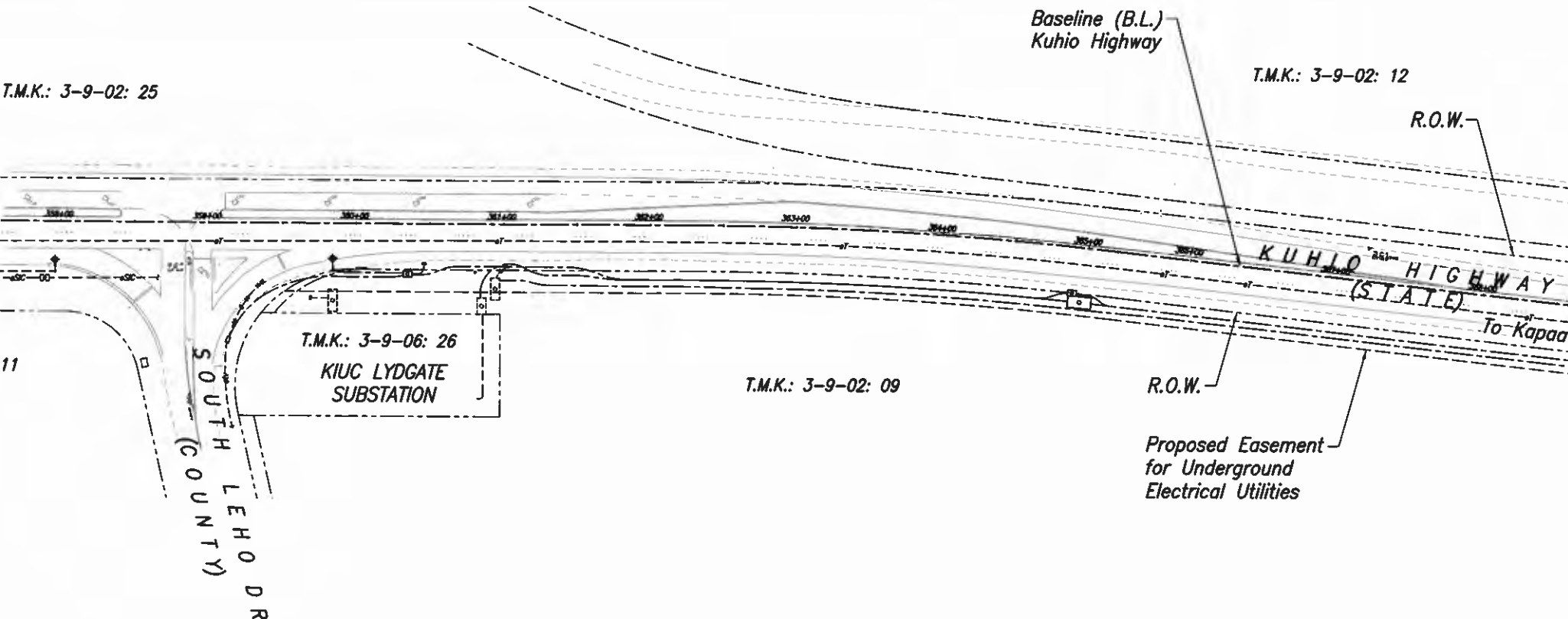
To Kapaa

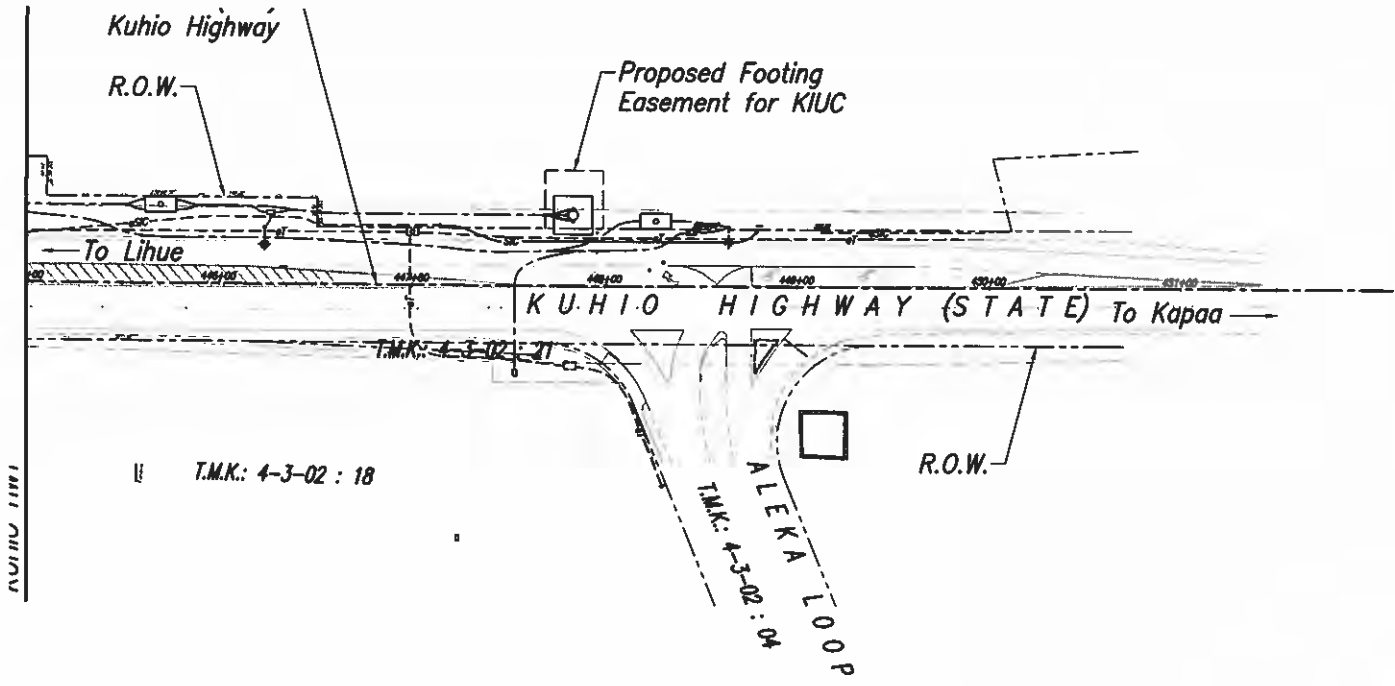
MATCH LINE
B.L. STA. 402+00
KUHIO HWY

R.O.W.

New Bridge and Accessory Road
Improvements for Wailua Cane Haul
Bridge Project BR-056-1 (51)
(By Others)

T.M.K.: 3-9-02: 25





TRUE NORTH
SCALE: 1" = 100'

