

Kakaako demo will offer a vision for future of traffic

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The "complete street" event will show how all types of travelers can safely get along

By Marcel Honoré

On Sunday, as part of a daylong event promoting more pedestrian and bicycle travel, a stretch of Cooke Street will become what organizers hope could be the future of traffic on Oahu.

Using tubular barriers for curbs, special striping tape for lanes, benches, 40 large trees, hundreds of plants and other temporary materials, Cooke between Hale-kau-wila and Auahi streets will morph into what transportation planners call a "complete street." The road there will be redesigned to show how motorists, cyclists and pedestrians could all better coexist.

Most of the demonstration area won't be open to vehicle traffic, but it will showcase bike lanes, traffic circles, shorter distances for pedestrians to cross, places to sit and park bicycles — even a human-sized chessboard for outdoor activity, organizers say.

The demonstration, funded by Kame-ha-meha Schools, "is a first-time ever for the city of Hono-lulu," said Nata-lie Iwasa, president of the nonprofit Cycle on Hawaii.

It comes as the city looks to ramp up its own islandwide complete streets program, which would gradually redesign Oahu roadways to be more bike- and pedestrian-friendly as the dollars become available. City leaders have put \$500,000 toward the effort since the new policy was passed last year, and some hope to provide \$5 million more in next year's transportation budget.

In recent weeks they've held community meetings for feedback and "walk-audits" to raise public awareness for the program.

Erin Kinney, development manager for Kame-ha-meha Schools, declined to say how much the Cooke demonstration cost.

The face-lift there Sunday is part of "Hele on Kaka'ako," an event put together by Cycle on Hawaii along with public agencies, businesses, nonprofits and health care groups. "Hele (Move)" will close about a mile and a half of Kakaako's streets to cars from 5 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday so that bicyclists, pedestrians, skateboarders and others can use the whole space.

"This is just a good way to encourage people to come out and be more physically active," Iwasa said.

From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., the event will also include a 5-kilometer run, bike shows, live music and other attractions.

City Transportation Services Director Michael Formby said, "We believe the demonstration project will educate pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists about what a planned multimodal street could look like. It is intended to facilitate a greater and fuller use of streets by all."

Formby said the department is open to the idea of a long-term demonstration project at Cooke that would be open to the public.

The Cooke demonstration comes as Kame-ha-meha Schools and other developers gear up for a large-scale Kakaako redevelopment project.

The roadway will be restored after Sunday, but organizers hope to redo the complete streets project at Cooke for about two weeks in October — this time opening it to traffic — and then share their analysis of the project with city officials.

For more information on Hele on Kaka‘ako, visit cycleonhawaii.org.

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