



Managed Access for Ha'ikū Stairs

This document summarizes key elements of a managed access plan as envisioned by the Friends of Ha'ikū Stairs (FHS), focusing on access, parking, landowner permission, and community input. It builds off decades of community-based planning. Other managed access components have been previously addressed in FHS' 2021 conceptual feasibility plan and will be incorporated to a future iteration of the present plan.

Access

Vehicular access to the Stairs trailhead would be provided via the Old Ha'ikū Road, which begins at the end of the public Ha'ikū Road, near at the intersection of Kahuhipa Street and bordering the Kamehameha Preschool at He'eia. Following the Old Ha'ikū Road bypasses the residential neighborhood to minimize disturbances to homeowners.¹ Hikers would access the Stairs trailhead past the gated entrance at the top end of Kuneki and Makena Streets. The trailhead would be located on the Makapu'u (southern) side of Old Ha'ikū Road, prior to the entrance to Kamakau School.

Initially, we envision vehicular access to the trailhead to be provided by a shuttle service. Hikers would park off-site and check-in for their Stairs visit at a designated location. From there, they would board a shuttle van to the trailhead. From the trailhead, hikers would proceed by foot approximately a half mile to the base of the Stairs. The trail access route would traverse vacant, largely unimproved land. (Some clearing of brush would be required). The only significant built structure *en route* is the H-3 freeway. Hikers would pass underneath the elevated H-3 viaduct and cross an adjacent surface Hawaii Department of Transportation (HDOT) maintenance road. A portion of this surface road could also be potentially used by hikers to reach the base of the Stairs. The road is currently unused other than for occasional access and maintenance.

Parking & Visitor Registration

As noted, Stairs visitors would park off-site and access the trailhead via shuttle. The off-site location could be a leased storefront at the Windward Mall or another nearby retail venue with ample parking. Hiker check-in and safety briefings would take place there. Conducting these activities off-site would minimize disruption to residents and facilitate control of trespassing by restricting access to the trailhead. Parking and offloading facilities to accommodate shuttle vans, as well as limited parking for staff and volunteers would be built next to the trailhead. There is ample room to construct additional service facilities on this empty, generally flat, scrubland.

¹ The public section of Ha'ikū Road provides the main access road to Ha'ikū Valley from Kahekili Highway. It is a major commercial throughfare that serves high-traffic destinations such as the Haleiwa Joe's Ha'ikū Gardens restaurant, in addition to two schools, multiple residential subdivisions, and other businesses. Thus, the incremental Stairs-related traffic along this portion of the road would be negligible when set against existing use.



Once the Stairs operations are running smoothly and appropriate facilities can be built, a shift to on-site parking could be considered following community consultation. The preferred location for such on-site parking would be on the adjacent former Navy Landfill lot.

Landowner Permissions

Ha'ikū Road is a public road up until the gate outside the Kamehameha Preschool. No permissions are required to use it. From there, Old Ha'ikū Road is privately owned. The private landowners are willing to permit use of their property to access the Stairs. The only other landowner whose consent is required for Stairs access (besides the City and County of Honolulu) is HDOT. HDOT officials indicated a willingness to consider granting permission for pedestrian access when asked by FHS earlier this year. Governor Green has also signaled his support. Further discussions are required to finalize agreement, and a follow-up meeting will be held.

Community Input

Developing further iterations of this plan will require extensive community input from residents and other Valley stakeholders. The overarching goal is to minimize adverse impacts and allow public Stairs access with a minimum of disruptions. Soliciting community input will provide guidance to make better tradeoffs between potentially conflicting objectives. Finally, engaging with community concerns will highlight issues that allow for proactive problem-solving. An example would be to scheduling Stairs visits to avoid conflicting with school-related traffic (morning drop-off and afternoon pickup). FHS will continue to engage with residents and stakeholders individually, as well as soliciting input under the auspices of the Kāne'ōhe Neighborhood Board. We also envision convening one or more Community Town Halls, starting in Fall, 2023.

Security

An essential component of any managed access plan is an effective security plan that will eliminate trespassing. The goal should be close to 100% detection and interdiction of unauthorized intruders in real time, followed by arrests and citations for criminal trespassing. Because no single measure is likely to be foolproof, a multi-layered approach is required. Such approach should incorporate guards, barriers, remote monitoring technologies, posted signs and alarms, community policing, Honolulu Police Department (HPD) enforcement, and criminal prosecutions. These multiple layers of security provide redundancy to eliminate pressure on any weak points in the overall scheme.