

# Column: On right path with bikeways, walkways

By Eduardo Hernandez

*Dec. 22, 2024*



Eduardo Hernandez

When it comes to pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in the City and County of Honolulu, a more balanced analysis of public

policy is needed. Certainly, much more than was recently outlined in Richard Borreca's "On Politics" column, which was short on facts and policy, even solutions ("\$80M for 2 paths for walkers, bikers? Bridge too far," Star-Advertiser, Dec. 8).

Let's look back and see why investing in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure must be a priority for our transportation future, not only in Honolulu, but across Hawaii.

According to a recent report published by the Hawaii Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice: Between fiscal years 2019 and 2024, 66.3% of the Hawaii Department of Transportation (HDOT) budget went toward projects that expand vehicle capacity, while just 1.5% was directed toward reducing vehicle travel through alternative transportation options, such as bicycles. This imbalance has led to a transportation system that exacerbates the very problems it aims to solve: higher emissions, more traffic and unmet needs for those relying on non-automotive forms of transportation.

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Reducing vehicle miles traveled has direct connections to various health, safety and environmental outcomes. Reducing vehicle travel can improve air quality, cut greenhouse gas emissions, reduce traffic congestion and enhance public safety. One of the report's conclusions is: "Ultimately, our government's transportation budget should reflect the need for an equitable system that prioritizes not just vehicles, but the well-being of Hawaii's entire population."

This year's landmark *Navahine v. HDOT* settlement should be required reading for policymakers, elected officials and anyone who writes about transportation policy in Hawaii. Some highlights it boldly states: "Complete Streets" policies are, by court order, to be prioritized by HDOT for all road

projects beginning in 2025; mandates a \$40 million investment in a public EV charging network by 2030 and; requires HDOT to work collaboratively with the counties to complete pedestrian, bicycle, and transit networks statewide.

These goals have been established because the state agreed with the plaintiffs that our Hawaii Constitution requires them. Also, in Honolulu, voters amended the City Charter in 2006, requiring the city Department of Transportation Services to prioritize making the city more bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly.

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According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, nearly a quarter of adults report that they do not engage in any physical activity outside of their jobs, and sedentary lifestyles are an important reason that two-thirds of U.S. adults are overweight or obese. These diagnoses also disproportionately affect Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders.

Columnist Borreca creates “us vs. them”

societal divisions when he writes, “How much do you want to bet that this won’t be the last you see of those folks with their hands out?” But a more apt question would be: How much less traffic, serious injuries and death do you want to see for your friends and family?

By improving bicycle and pedestrian facilities, transportation agencies create opportunities for people to exercise recreationally and build exercise into their daily routine by bicycling or walking to work, shops and services. In turn, this helps people to achieve the health and cost-saving benefits that cycling offers.

And even if you never ride a bicycle, by simply being more aware that roads are shared public resources and our Complete Streets statutes are based on international and national standards, everyone can have a better understanding of one’s own responsibility for safety. It will save lives.

**Eduardo Hernandez is advocacy director for the Hawaii Bicycling League.**



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**rigormortis**

11 hours ago

seeing we have a flat southern coast, it would be great to have a covered bike lane, lights, security, bathrooms, and water stops. have parts of it already from stadium to waipahu

1 Report

**GetAlong**

14 hours ago

Bicycle paths aren't for everyone, but they are for someone. The important part is that they are complete and safe. For instance, they go from someplace to someplace without ending in arbitrary, dangerous intersections forcing the bicyclists into sharing the road with autos.


1 Report

**Margaret8**

16 hours ago

1% of the population ride bikes. Complete Streets is a total scam and cars have no plan b. Leave the important streets alone. Keep Ala Wai Blvd the way it is. It's one of the only streets that we really need as Kapiolani and H I are almost always congested. Lots of communities use it as

a major artery to bypass and access Waikiki to hotels, businesses, harbors, parks, Ala Moana and beyond. It is one of the only streets that works well and already has a bike lane and two sidewalks. With Kalakaua closed off most weekends and Kuhio Ave being narrowed, it's ridiculous. Wish the focus and funds could be transferred to improving McCulley bridge or building a secondary road in Makakilo,


  Report 

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## erahl

*1 day ago*


Mr. Hernandez, I am a veteran of multiple Century Rides, and commuted to work by bicycle for ten years. But my situation was unique. I had a locker to keep clean clothes, and a shower at my workplace. Not many would-be bike commuters enjoy that type of advantage. Bringing Honolulu to an Amsterdam level of bicycle consciousness is going to require a lot more than increasing the number of dedicated bike lanes.

 3  Report 

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## Paco3185

*1 day ago*

It must be over - the fat ladys are 

  Report 

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## WS808

*1 day ago (Edited)*

“Also, in Honolulu, voters amended the City Charter in 2006, requiring the city Department of Transportation Services to prioritize making the city more bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly.”

Misleading. Leaving aside the fact that we don't need a New York City transplant telling us what we voted upon, the precise wording of 2006 Ballot Question 8 was NOT so definitive:

“Should one of the priorities of the Department of Transportation Services be to make Honolulu a pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly city, and should the powers, duties, and functions of the Director of Transportation Services include bikeway systems?”

The 2006 vote did not “require” making bicycle-friendliness the ONLY priority. At most, it made it

maintain the same priority. At times, it made it  
"A priority." Moreover, nothing in the amendment  
actually "required" bike lanes on major roadways;  
it was nonspecific as to location of "bikeway  
systems". It certainly did NOT require bike lanes  
obstructing traffic and defying common sense.

In short, NOBODY voted for the madness you  
advocate.

 3  Report 

**kiragirl**

*1 day ago*

Yep! The same thing as the rail.  
MISLEADING!

 1  Report 

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**WS808**


*1 day ago*

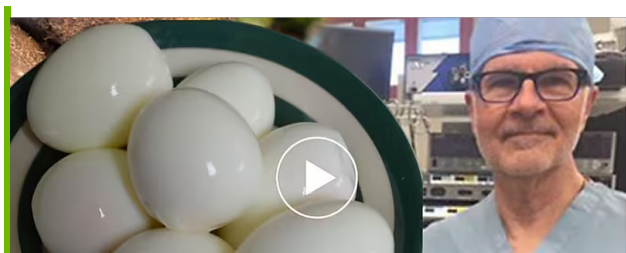
"The Eddie" has not even started yet, but HNN  
reports that there ALREADY has been a bicyclist  
accident up there.

What will it take to BAN ALL bicyclists from ALL  
major roadways and sidewalks, REMOVE ALL  
bike lanes and Biki stations, RESTORE traffic  
lanes and street parking, and make our streets  
COMPLETE again? Nobody voted for this  
madness.

What will it take for bicyclists to get some  
common sense and STAY OFF ALL major  
roadways? How many more of them have to get  
whacked before they learn?

Want to bike? Buy a Peloton and stay home.  
Much safer for everyone, and you.

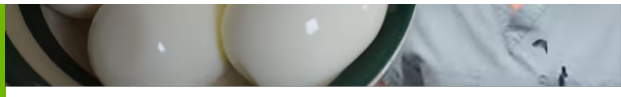
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