



Building and connecting community The Ala Moana Pedestrian Bridge Opens

"In the past, Hawaiians relied on the resilience of the land division that we know as the ahupua'a, and they relied on that to provide everything they needed in resilience, from the mountain valley to the bounty of the ocean via clean streams, and this bridge is really a symbol of that vision of what we can call our 21st century ahupua'a," said Jon Nouchi, deputy director of the City & County of Honolulu Department of Transportation Services, at the opening of the Ala Moana elevated walkway on May 22. "It emphasizes our city, and all of our partners committed to enhance that walkability and connections in our neighborhoods from mauka to makai."

"From our perspective, this quintessential pedestrian bridge literally connects Kaka'ako Mauka to Kaka'ako Makai, extending the safe walkability of this well-planned live, work, play community for kama'aina and

visitors alike" said HCDA Executive Director Craig Nakamoto. "We acknowledge and appreciate the DOT, the state and city partners, and the private partners for turning an idea into reality."

Three people were killed and four others injured when a truck crashed into them in January 2019, at the intersection of Ala Moana Boulevard and Kamake'e Street. The fatal accident ignited the conversation for a safer way to cross the busy six-lane boulevard.

Senator Sharon Moriawaki observed that the pedestrians' lives were tragically lost. "They were there in a curb, and you know, this truck just rammed into them, and we lost three lives," she said. "And from that, we changed laws. But it's not the laws, it's people, and it's the environment. It's how we all bring it together."

"What is a bridge?" asked Kahu Kordell Kekoa. "In our Hawaiian language it is alahaka, and that alahaka is a place where it helps you to get from one place to the other, over a difficult time span, over a difficult geographical span. All of those in our English language is the word bridge. Everything that you've heard everyone talk about so far has been about, 'let's span something that was difficult to get to





Building Community *continued*

something.' That is where we stand today."

"The Ala Moana Pedestrian Bridge has been eagerly anticipated by many," said Ed Sniffen, HDOT director. "Our partners in this project have done a fantastic job of building a walkway that will not only serve as a pedestrian and bike safety measure but as an aesthetic addition to the corridor."

"You know, they say it takes the village. No! It doesn't take a village. It takes committed partners," said Moriwaki. "So, thank you, Howard Hughes, thank the DOT. Thank you, Ed, for taking the initiative to get Federal Highway money so that we paid just a small portion."

The Hawai'i Department of Transportation (DOT), with its contractors, built the \$26 million bridge with a \$17.8 million Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) transportation federal grant, and \$6 million from Howard Hughes. The state covered the balance.

"Connecting our community has always been at the heart of Ward Village, which is why the new elevated walkway is such a meaningful step forward," said Doug Johnstone, president of the Hawai'i region for Howard Hughes. "Our collaboration with the state DOT and the Federal Highway Administration has helped create a welcoming, safe link



between Ward Village and Ala Moana, expanding access to public parks and improving the pedestrian experience. We're excited to continue building on this momentum with the upcoming expansion of Victoria Ward Park next year."

"I'm so pleased, and I'm looking forward to using the park," said Moriwaki. "It's not just a bridge, it's a park, and it's really beautiful, so I really encourage you all to use it."

"It shows that we are not limited to dreaming minimally, that we can dream big, and we can achieve realistically these big dreams," said Nouchi. "Our federal, state, city, and community partners are aligned and unwavering in their commitment, in our commitment to safety and projects which enhance already great communities."

The site was selected, in part, because the Hawai'i region for Howard Hughes was willing to dedicate land on the mauka side of Ala Moana to construct an elevated walkway and the HCDA owns the land on the makai side.

Construction of the elevated pedestrian walkway began in May 2022. It was completed and open on May 22, 2025.

Men at Work

For some, construction cranes are an eyesore, they may not like the idea of change or development in general, but among national murmurs of a possible recession in the future, we love cranes.

For us, construction cranes perched in the skyline, hard at work in Kaka'ako and around the state represent jobs for local people, new homes being built, the dreams of a new business space becoming reality, economic development, education, possibilities and potential.

There are currently four major new buildings: Alia, Kalae, Park at Ward Village and Ulana Ward Village under construction in Kaka'ako, in addition to park improvements and other community infrastructure projects.

The Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation continues to relocate utilities for the Honolulu Rail Transit Project along Halekauwila Street, and construction at the Lili'uokalani Center is nearing completion.

On the calendar

June 4

The next HCDA Board meetings will be held. For more information about HCDA, the public hearings or board meetings visit <https://dbedt.hawaii.gov/hcda/>.

