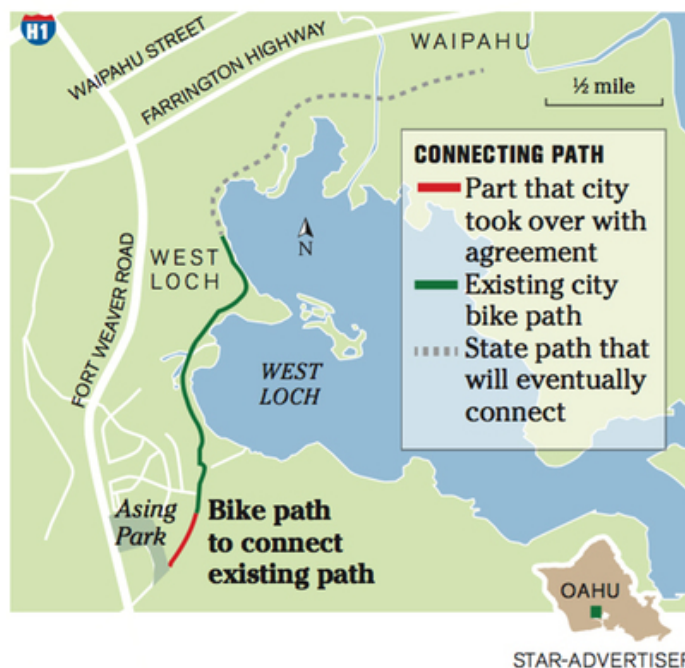




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Hawaii News

City takes charge of part of bike path



City officials have reached an agreement with the West Loch Fairways Community Association to maintain and assume liability for a portion of a popular bike path to provide safe access to the public.

When West Loch Fairways was built in the early 1990s, about 1,600 square feet of the bike path was constructed on the association's property. That portion was closed in

2005 due to the association's concerns with liability and maintenance. The agreement calls for an easement of that segment of the bike path and turns over liability and maintenance responsibilities to the city.

John Rogers, secretary of the community association and an avid biker, said residents were concerned that they would be held liable if someone was injured while using the bike path. Rogers, a resident since 1993, added that even though the portion of the path was closed, people still would use it.

"When the property was deeded, the association realized that there was a problem with the deed. We shouldn't be owning the bike path," Rogers said Monday at a press conference with Mayor Kirk Caldwell and other city officials. "For several years just nothing happened. This agreement has been a long time coming."

The bike path extends from Asing Park to the edge of Waipahu where officials say the state eventually plans to connect it to the Pearl Harbor Bike Path.

Caldwell touted the agreement as another way to increase bike mobility in Oahu's "car-centric" communities. He added that the easement was the best and least expensive way to resolve the issue.

"When you're talking about a large project like this (West Loch Fairways) and you're right on the border of the project, sometimes it's overlooked exactly how this is going to connect up," Caldwell said Monday. "But in the big scheme of things, this is a massive development, it's a manini thing that was overlooked."

City Councilman Ron Menor, who represents the area, said he hopes the agreement will pave the way for major improvements along the bike path, pointing out that it was built more than 20 years ago and has "fallen into disrepair."

City Transportation Services Director Mike Formby agreed that more bikers will now have an opportunity to safely use the path.

"It's an issue that has been on the table for a long time," Formby said Monday. "It's a win-win for bikers, for the association and for the public."

City officials plan to hold a meeting from 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday at Neal Blaisdell Center on other proposed bikeway and roadway projects, including updates on bikeways along King and South streets, as well as a proposed bike lane on Halekauwila Street.