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3.19 SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS

This section provides an analysis of the potential adverse and beneficial effects of the Honoapiʻilani Highway Improvements Project (the Project) and the Build Alternatives on socioeconomic conditions. The analysis is based on the assessment of effects presented in previous sections of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as well as concerns raised during public outreach to the community and direct outreach to local businesses.

3.19.1 Regulatory Context

On January 20, 2025, President Trump signed Executive Order (E.O.) 14148 –Initial Rescissions of Harmful Executive Orders and Actions and E.O. 14154 – Unleashing American Energy. The E.O.s revoked E.O. 14096 – Revitalizing Our Nation’s Commitment to Environmental Justice for All (April 21, 2023). Subsequently on January 21, 2025, President Trump signed E.O. 14173 – Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity. This E.O. revoked E.O. 12898 – Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (February 11, 1994). On February 25, 2025, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) published an Interim Final Rule removing the CEQ’s National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) implementing regulations, effective April 11, 2025 (90 Fed. Reg. 10610). As a result of these actions, all federal environmental justice requirements are revoked and no longer apply to the federal environmental review process. FHWA, FTA and FRA’s Joint NEPA regulations (23 CFR part 771) and the agencies Interim Final Guidance on “Section 139 Environmental Review Process: Efficient Environmental Reviews for Project Decision-making and One Federal Decision” (12/17/2024) do not require an environmental justice analysis. Accordingly, no analysis of environmental justice is included in this Final EIS. Any purported environmental justice impacts were not considered in the federal decision. Social, economic, and community impacts will continue to be disclosed where applicable in accordance with 23 CFR 771.

3.19.2 Methodology

This section provides a broad socioeconomic overview of the project area and its regional setting. The FHWA and the Hawaiʻi Department of Transportation (HDOT) conducted extensive public outreach, including direct outreach to community stakeholders, during preparation of this Final EIS.

The following methodology was used to conduct the analysis of socioeconomic conditions:

- Identify appropriate study areas
- Identify existing income and demographic characteristics of the study area
- Determine if the Project would result in any effects (beneficial or adverse) on the socioeconomic conditions within the study area. This includes the following:
 - Consider measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate any adverse effects of the Project
 - Consider potential offsetting benefits to the affected populations



3.19.2.1 Data Sources

The primary source of data used for this analysis is the U.S. Census Bureau's 2018-2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, which was the most current data available at the time. The ACS data provides estimates by census tract averaged across a 5-year span collected between official U.S. Census Bureau decennial counts.

HDOT collected the ACS data for four levels of geography for comparison (FIGURE 3.19-1):

- The State of Hawaiʻi
- Maui County, which comprises the islands of Maui, Molokai, and Lānaʻi
- West Maui Census Tracts 314.02, 314.04, 314.05, 315.01, 315.03, 315.04, 315.05, and 320¹
- The project area (Census Tract 320)

Although there can be some variation in the data, U.S. Decennial Census information is also used in setting some of the broader demographic characteristics where applicable.

3.19.2.2 Socioeconomic Conditions Analysis Areas

The analysis evaluates local and regional potential effects of the Project (FIGURE 3.19-1):

- **Regional effects** are direct or indirect effects on regional mobility. For the Project, regional effects occur in West Maui and primarily for users of Honoapiʻilani Highway, which includes both West Maui residents and those who commute to West Maui from other parts of Maui. Most notably this includes the population centers of Kahului, Wailuku, and Kīhei.
- **Local (neighborhood) effects** are direct or indirect effects on local communities. The Project's local effects study area includes the people and communities within the ahupuaʻa that may be directly affected by the Build Alternatives. This includes the areas from the southern end of Ukumehame near Pāpalaua Wayside Park to the beginning of the existing Lāhainā Bypass in Launiupoko.

3.19.3 Affected Environment and Demographic Profile

TABLE 3.19-1 provides an overview of the population of the State of Hawaiʻi, Maui County, West Maui Region, and Census Tract 320. TABLE 3.19-2 provides an overview of the housing profile for the State of Hawaiʻi, Maui County, West Maui Region including Census Tract 320 which encompasses the project area (red hatching on FIGURE 3.19-1, with blue hatching showing the approximate project area). Census Tract 320 is the smallest level of demographic information available given the very low population of this rural area and there are no block groups defined within this census tract. As shown on FIGURE 3.19-2, the geographical boundaries of Census Tract 320 extend beyond the project area to include Southeast Lāhainā and the Central Maui communities of Māʻalaea and Kīhei. As a result,

¹ Although Census Tract 308 is sometimes considered part of the geography of West Maui, much of its population is geographically isolated and situated north of Kahului and is therefore unlikely to use the project area for access. Therefore, Census Tract 308 was not included in the statistics for West Maui.



most of the population and economic activity in the census tract is located well outside the project area.

While Census Tract 320 has a reported population of about 1,000 residents, the project area population is likely between 100 and 150 residents (with almost all in Olowalu). This estimate is based on an average household size of between two and three people per household and the presence of approximately 21 pre-subdivision homes and approximately 26 homes that were constructed more recently, with 38 houses in Olowalu and 9 houses in Ukumehame (as estimated from the most recent available aerial imagery).



FIGURE 3.19-1. Local and Regional Areas of Effect

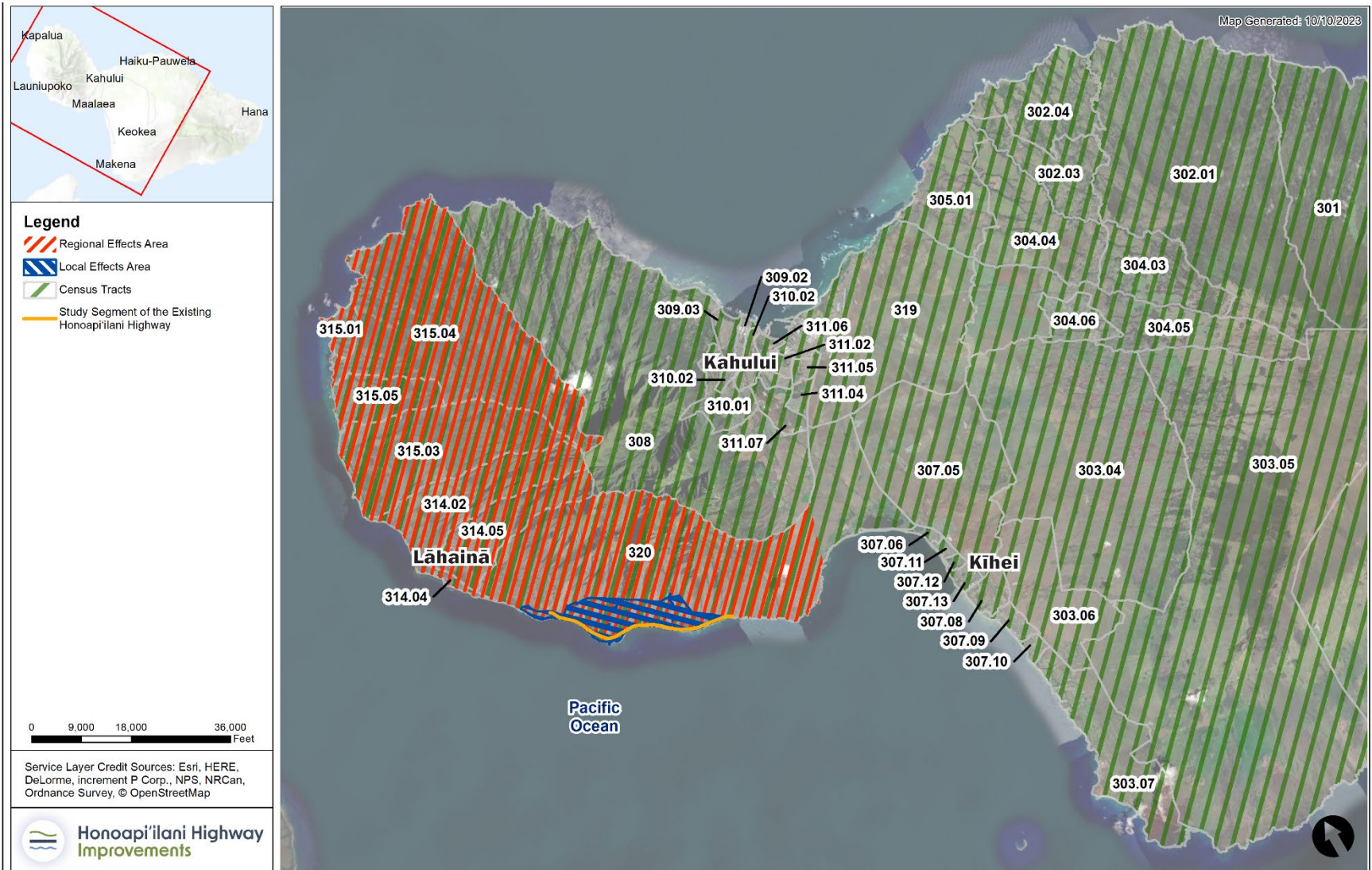




FIGURE 3.19-2. Census Tract 320 Compared to Project Area

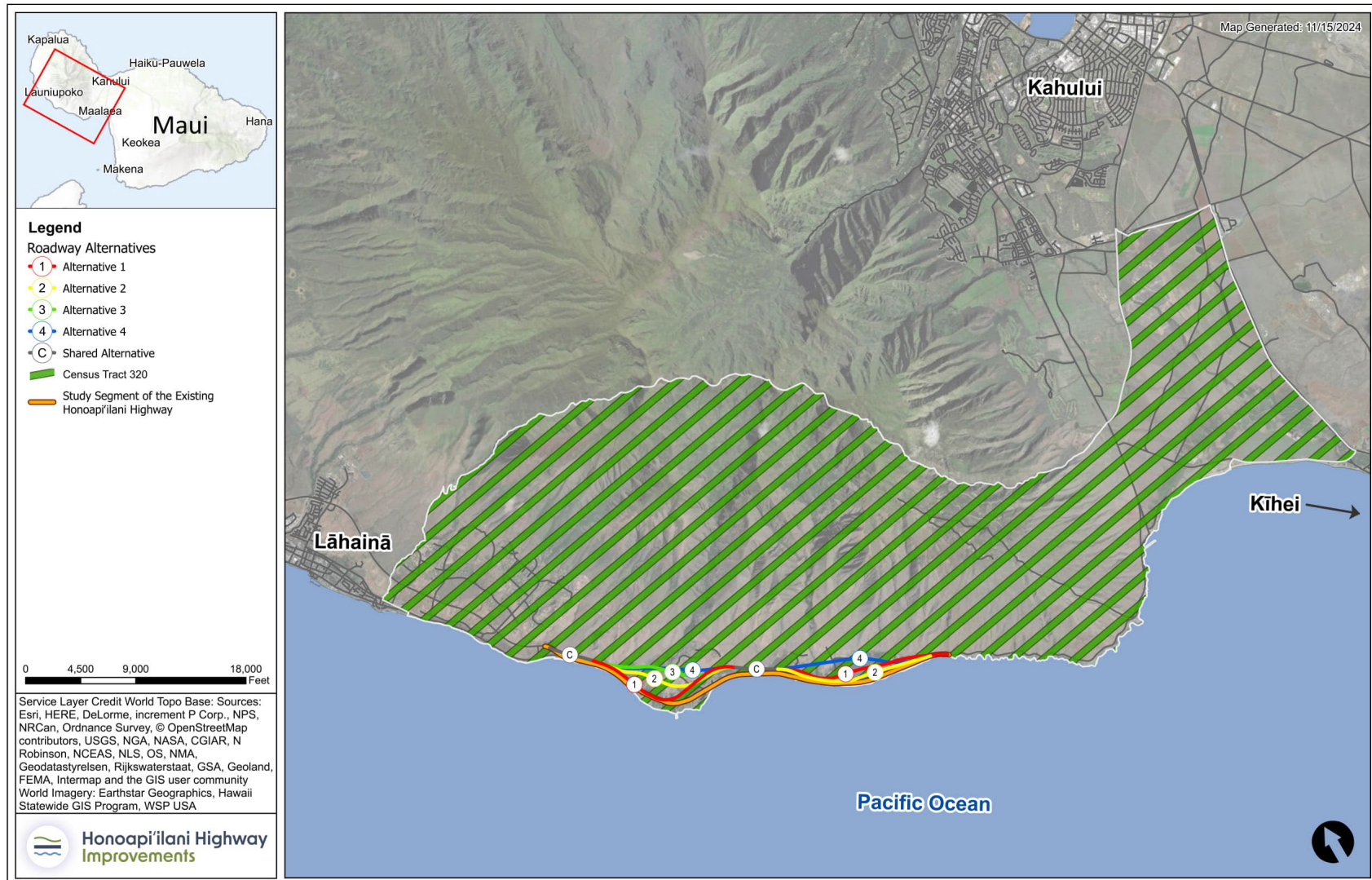




TABLE 3.19-1. **Population Overview**

CATEGORY	STATE OF HAWAII ¹	MAUI	WEST MAUI ⁴	PROJECT AREA (TRACT 320)
Total Population 2020 ¹	1,453,498	164,568	23,477	1,112
Total Population 2010 ²	1,360,301	154,834	22,508	994
Percentage change	6.98%	6.41%	4.31%	11.87%
Average Household Size ³	2.92	2.96	3.16	2.26
Median Age ¹	40.8	42.4	44.1	54.6
Age Distribution (Percentage)¹				
Less Than 5 Years	5.32%	5.27%	5.21%	3.78%
5 to 19 Years	17.50%	18.07%	17.00%	10.79%
20 to 64 Years	57.78%	57.46%	60.04%	57.73%
65 or More Years	19.41%	19.20%	17.75%	27.70%

¹ Data derived from Table DP1 (Decennial Census – 2020)

² Data derived from Table P1 (Decennial Census – 2010)

³ Data derived from Table S1101 (ACS 5-Year Estimates – 2022)

⁴ West Maui includes Census Tracts: 314.02, 314.04, 314.05, 315.01, 315.02, 315.03, and 320. CT 315.02 was divided into 315.04 and 315.05 for 2020 Census data.

TABLE 3.19-2. **Housing Overview**

CATEGORY	STATE OF HAWAII	MAUI	WEST MAUI	PROJECT AREA (TRACT 320)
Total units	561,066	71,439	12,971	1,001
Percentage Owner Occupied	58.8%	58.6%	52.6%	67.1%
Percentage Renter Occupied	41.2%	41.4%	47.4%	32.9%
Percentage Vacant	12.6%	21.5%	38.7%	53.0%

Source: Table DP1 (Decennial Census – 2020)

Maui has a population of about 165,000 people, with 23,500 living in West Maui and about 1,000 living in Census Tract 320. Like the state overall, Maui's population grew about 7% between the 2010 and 2020 U.S. Decennial Census, while West Maui and Census Tract 320 grew by 4.3% and 11.9%, respectively. Residential development in the Lāhainā area provided the most significant growth in the area. The population of Lāhainā and growth patterns have been fundamentally altered by the devastating wildfires that destroyed most of the community in 2023. The near-term rebuilding and the long-term stabilization of the community and its growth and development pattern would be expected to eventually bring the regional population back to the pre-wildfire baseline. Tract 320 itself is primarily outside of the wildfire area's core.

Census Tract 320 has a household size of 2.26 people per household and a median age of 54.6. This reflects an older population with more empty nest households compared with West Maui (3.16 people per household and a median age of 44.1), Maui County (2.96 people per household and a median age of 42.4), and the state (2.92 people per household and a median age of 40.8).



Household characteristics generally indicate that more than half of Hawaiʻi households own their home. And this percentage is much greater within Tract 320, where over two-thirds of the homes are owner-occupied. Census Tract 320's much higher percentage of vacant housing units (53% compared to just over 12% for the state as a whole) indicates that there are a high number of vacation homes in the project area.

TABLE 3.19-3 summarizes labor force and economic characteristics for the same levels of geography, which generally indicates that Tract 320 has a population that has more education, higher incomes, and a lower level of people below the poverty level than West Maui, Maui, or Hawaiʻi as a whole.

TABLE 3.19-3. Labor Force Characteristics

CATEGORY	STATE OF HAWAIʻI	MAUI	WEST MAUI	PROJECT AREA (CENSUS TRACT 320)
Total Labor Force (Age 16+)	760,387	86,911	13,234	460
Percentage High School Education	95.72%	95.52%	95.78%	97.73%
Percentage Higher Education	41.98%	36.90%	34.43%	48.80%
Percentage Private Sector/Self Employed	78.90%	86.20%	92.32%	87.50%
Percentage Public (local, State, federal)	21.10%	13.80%	7.68%	12.50%
Average commute time (minutes)	22.6	22.7	18.61	21.8
Median Household Income	\$94,814	\$95,379	\$102,438	\$121,667
Per Capita Income	\$42,683	\$42,607	\$53,034	\$74,464
Persons Below Poverty Level	9.60%	9.30%	8.81%	7.00%

Source: Table DP03 (ACS 5-Year Estimates – 2022)

From a broader regional context for Maui County, a substantial proportion of Maui residents rely on the existing highway for their daily commute, for accessing the beaches and resources of West Maui, and for accessing the commercial, government, and transportation hub of Central Maui. Commuting (Journey to Work) census data emphasizes the demand for this transportation route. As shown in **TABLE 3.19-4** census data estimates show that for the West Maui area, about 3,327 workers (about 25%) are commuting from the Central Maui census tracts.



TABLE 3.19-4. **Central Maui Communities Commuting to West Maui**

WEST MAUI CENSUS TRACT OF EMPLOYMENT	TOTAL WORKERS	CENTRAL TO WEST MAUI COMMUTERS	PERCENTAGE WEST MAUI	PERCENTAGE DRIVE BY CAR
Census Tract 314.02	2,145	498	23.22%	94.0%
Census Tract 314.04	3,495	645	18.45%	82.8%
Census Tract 314.05	770	169	21.95%	55.6%
Census Tract 315.02	870	130	14.94%	95.4%
Census Tract 315.03	5,155	1,700	32.98%	79.9%
Census Tract 320	650	185	28.46%	99.5%
TOTAL	13,085	3,327	25.43%	83.0%

Note: Workers are those from the following census tracts:

Kahului: 319, 311.03, 311.01, 311.02

Wailuku: 310, 309.01, 309.02, 309.03

Kihei: 307.06, 307.05, 307.07, 307.08, 307.09, 307.10

TABLE 3.19-5 provides information on employment by occupation. This information underscores the significance of the tourism economy in West Maui as well as for the county and state.

TABLE 3.19-5. **Employment by Sector**

CATEGORY	STATE OF HAWAII	MAUI	WEST MAUI	PROJECT AREA (CENSUS TRACT 320)
Agriculture	1.23%	1.44%	0.55%	0.44%
Construction	6.90%	7.16%	4.46%	15.01%
Manufacturing/Wholesale Trade	4.74%	3.71%	2.31%	2.43%
Retail Trade	10.43%	11.33%	9.74%	8.39%
Transportation, Warehousing, Utilities	6.16%	5.23%	2.41%	11.26%
Information	1.42%	1.18%	1.48%	0.66%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	6.14%	6.38%	8.11%	7.28%
Professional Services	10.04%	10.08%	11.30%	9.27%
Education, Health, Social Services	20.97%	17.54%	11.68%	11.26%
Accommodation, Food Services, Recreation, Arts and Entertainment	14.69%	21.31%	33.81%	18.10%
Other Services, Public Administration	4.05%	4.50%	4.74%	3.31%
Public Administration	8.19%	4.74%	2.82%	2.65%

Source: Table DP03 (ACS 5-Year Estimates – 2022)



3.19.4 Reasonably Foreseeable Effects

Regional Effects

The Project would benefit the region as a whole through the increased reliability and resilience of this critical transportation connection to the civic, and commercial centers of West and Central Maui. All commuters would benefit from the Project's overall purpose in creating a more reliable and sustainable transportation link to West Maui.

Local Project Area Business Effects

There are a small number of businesses in the project area that could be affected by the one or more of the Build Alternatives. None have owners or employees that live in the project area. Potential beneficial effects include traffic reduction, less congestion, and easier left turns in and out of businesses, particularly for those that are already destination locations with users who pre-plan their trips. Potential adverse effects include the loss of pass-by customers. Certain agricultural businesses could be displaced by one or more Build Alternatives, which would require acquisition of the parcel where the use is occurring.

TABLE 3.19-6 summarizes the businesses that were identified in the project area.

TABLE 3.19-6. **Project Area Business**

BUSINESS	SECTOR	LOCATION
Leoda's Kitchen and Pie Shop	Food/Retail	Olowalu
Olowalu General Store	Retail	Olowalu
Farmers Market/Olowalu Juice/Butterfly Farm	Retail	Olowalu
Kamala's Kitchen	Food Truck/Retail	Olowalu
Olowalu Plantation House	Hotel/Banquets	Olowalu
Camp Olowalu	Camping/Rentals	Olowalu
Maui Paintball	Active recreation	Olowalu
Living Earth Systems Farm	Agricultural	Olowalu
Ukumehame/Maui Sod	Agricultural	Ukumehame
<u>El Toro Soysia Turf - Maui Grass Farm</u>	<u>Agricultural</u>	<u>Ukumehame</u>
Mauna Kahālāwai Watershed Partnership	Light Industrial	Olowalu

HDOT interviewed the owners and managers of businesses that have the potential to be adversely affected by the Project (if they responded to agency requests for an interview). The interviews were conducted in July 2023 and gathered general information on the business, the number of employees, and how the highway could negatively or positively affect their businesses. HDOT discussed the potential business decisions (for example, relocating a mobile food truck) or possible mitigation measures to offset project impacts with owners or managers who expressed concerns about negative impacts.

The property and business owners of the local businesses are a mix of larger business groups and small businesses.



Leoda's Kitchen and Pie Shop

Leoda's Kitchen and Pie Shop is a popular roadside destination for Honoapiʻilani Highway travelers. It has a strong brand and web presence and is a unique tourist attraction in West Maui. The shop is owned by a prominent Maui restaurant group that owns three other restaurants in Lāhainā. All the restaurants, including Leoda's, remained temporarily closed after the devastating Lāhainā wildfire until early in 2024.

Leoda's has about 30 employees who all live outside of Olowalu. When the shop is open, it operates seven days a week from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.



HDOT met with the general manager and corporate owners of the restaurant. Overall, they felt that the Project would benefit the operations and continued success of their restaurant. While they acknowledged that the current highway brings a high volume of prospective customers by Leoda's front door, a more orderly and less congested road frontage would offset the current lack of visibility for all through-drivers and improve safety. The restaurant owners shared that a local "scenic route" status would be the best outcome related to the Project. They preferred the mauka alignments (and specifically identified Build Alternative 1 as their least favorite) to emphasize the separation. They would like to see wayfinding signage that directs interested drivers to the Olowalu scenic route and also preferred that drivers should be able to use the existing highway from both the north and the south.

Olowalu General Store



The Olowalu General Store is the only convenience retail store between Lāhainā and Māʻala. The busy shop serves through-travelers, locals, beach visitors, and customers from Leoda's Kitchen and Pie Shop and the Farmers Market. Immediately adjacent to Leoda's and anchoring the shared retail building, the independently owned general store has about 12 employees. It is open seven days a week between 5 a.m. and 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday.

The Olowalu General Store is owned by a local family who took over the store directly from the original owner, who opened the store to serve plantation workers in 1932. HDOT met with the owner and a co-worker family member as well as the property manager to discuss the Project and its potential effects on the store. Since the traffic on the existing highway is their primary source of customers, there is immediate concern that all Build Alternatives could reduce the number of pass-by travelers who are attracted to the store. On the other hand, they felt that the reduction in pass-by traffic would be offset by reduced traffic congestion as a



result of the Project. They felt turning in and out of the parking area for the store is very difficult and the road has too many crashes in this area. For any new highway alignment, the store owners requested that wayfinding signage would be provided to direct interested customers to Olowalu shops.

The store owners expressed other concerns, including current and future road disruptions and closures, the status of the proposed fire station in Olowalu (there is no official plan at this time), and the homeless encampments in the area. They would like to see the Project improve these conditions.

Farmers Market, Olowalu Juice, and Butterfly Farm



The Farmers Market attracts a steady customer base of through and local visitors as a roadside attraction along Honoapi'ilani Highway. The market serves a mix of pass-by and local traffic customers including users of Camp Olowalu, the Olowalu Plantation House, area beaches, and customers from Leoda's Kitchen and Pie Shop or Olowalu General Store. The Farmers Market has a broad inventory of local, Maui, and Hawaiian products, including some produce, with a more extensive offering of prepared foods and other goods. The operators also run a food truck-style juice stand, and a small tourist attraction, Butterfly Farm. The business has an active website including e-commerce.

While HDOT was not able to have an in-person interview with the operators of the Farmers Market, they were able to share some of their thoughts in initial telephone conversations. They expressed concerns that the Project's Build Alternatives would have an adverse effect on attracting pass-by customers to their facility. Because the market is not a permanent structure, the operators indicated the market could potentially be relocated to a more favorable location to improve access and visibility.

Kamala's Kitchen



This is a pizza food truck vendor co-locating with other roadside retailers in Olowalu Center. It is owned and operated by Da Kine Maui, LLC, which is based in Pā'ia in Central Maui and has other business interests in Maui-based food production and retail. The owners did not respond to a request to meet with HDOT.

The food truck serves a mix of pass-by and local traffic customers including users of Camp Olowalu, The Olowalu Plantation House, area beaches, and customers visiting Leoda's Kitchen and Pie Shop



and the Olowalu General Store. Because Kamala's Kitchen is a mobile business that could adapt to potential market changes resulting from the Project, adverse effects are not likely.

Olowalu Plantation House Banquet Facility

Owned by the Olowalu Development organization, the historic Olowalu Plantation House is an oceanfront destination wedding and banquet facility located makai of the existing highway. While the facility's driveway is directly across from the main entrance of Leoda's Kitchen and Pie Shop and the Olowalu General Store, the facility itself is not visible from the road. All the Build Alternatives would improve access to the facility by reducing side-street congestion and difficulty in making turns—most notably improving left turns into the site from the south and northbound left turns out of the site.

Camp Olowalu

Camp Olowalu is a destination/reservation-based camping and cabin rental facility in Olowalu located makai of the highway and accessed from the same side road that serves the Olowalu Plantation House (both facilities are owned by the Olowalu Development organization). For the same reasons noted for the Olowalu Plantation House, there would be no adverse effect resulting from the Project.

Maui Paintball

Maui Paintball is an active recreational use providing a pay-for-use paintball-controlled environment. The business serves visitors to the region as well as locals, families, and businesses (that is, company outings). Maui Paintball is a day-to-day tenant on the property that is owned by Olowalu Mauka. It is a destination use and it is not directly accessible from the existing highway. Customers access the site from the cane haul road at its access point to the Olowalu Recycling and Refuse Convenience Center.

Build Alternative 1 would occupy the makai edge of the parcel. This would likely allow for continued use of the business but require a new access point. If there is a displacement of the use, the relocation assistance provided by the Uniform Relocation Act (Section 3.4, Land Acquisition, Displacement and Relocation) would be available to the property owners and tenants without discrimination. Build Alternative 2 would be mauka of the active paint ball area, so it would not likely affect its use or access. Build Alternatives 3 and 4 would cross the mauka edge of the property and would not affect the active area of the business or its existing access.

Regenerative Education Center/Living Earth Systems Farm

Regenerative Educational Center operates the Living Earth Systems farm just at the north end of Olowalu just south of the Olowalu recycling center. The farm is an agricultural and educational facility for sustainable food production. The farmer is a tenant of the Olowalu Development organization. Like Maui Paintball, the farm is accessed by the cane haul road that connects to the Olowalu Recycling and Refuse Convenience Center driveway.

All the Build Alternatives would require acquisition of a right-of-way across the properties where the farm operates, though not necessarily in a manner that would preclude its continued operation. Build Alternative 1 would occupy the makai edge of the parcel, which would allow for continued use of the business if an alternative access point were provided. Build Alternative 2 crosses just mauka of this point and would skirt the back side of the Maui Paint Ball facility but would leave much of the



agricultural use intact. Build Alternatives 3 and 4 would cross the middle of the property in a manner that could allow for uses on either side assuming access was provided for both sides of the new alignment. As discussed in Section 3.4, Land Acquisition, Displacement and Relocation, the extent of property acquisition, compensation to the property owner, and any relocation assistance to the farm operator would follow the procedural requirements of the federal and State regulations.

Ukumehame/Maui Sod Farm

In Ukumehame, two active sod farms with additional agricultural uses are located along Ehehene Street. Active use occurs on three to four parcels on either side of the street, although parcel records and direct outreach with the property owner and agricultural business owner would be required to fully define the extent of active uses. Build Alternatives 1, 2, and 3 would not affect these active sod farm properties. Build Alternative 4 would bisect these properties and could disrupt its continued operation unless there is a reconfiguration of the property and possibly adjacent properties. As set in Section 3.4, Land Acquisition, Displacement and Relocation, the extent of property acquisition, compensation to the property owner, and any relocation assistance to the farm operator would follow the procedural requirements of the federal and State regulations.

El Toro Soysia Turf - Maui Grass Farm

El Toro Soysia Turf - Maui Grass Farm is located on an approximately 12.77-acre parcel (48002115) off of Pōhaku 'Aeko Street in Ukumehame. Direct outreach during the Right-of-Way acquisition process with the property owner and agricultural business owner would be required to fully define the extent of active uses in the determination of land value. Build Alternative 1 would bisect this parcel and the property would likely require full acquisition. As described in Section 3.4, Land Acquisition, Displacement and Relocation, the extent of property acquisition, compensation to the property owner, and any relocation assistance to the farm operator would follow the procedural requirements of the federal and State regulations.