

# THE DISASTROUS DESTRUCTIVE INVASIVE ARMY CORPS ALA WAI FLOOD MITIGATION PLAN

## “Be Careful What You Wish For - Hoping For The Best, But Ending With The Worst”

Why is it that great ideas for major public works projects - that should make residents of Oahu happy - end up as disasters? What goes wrong?

Take a look at our *Rail project* (HART). The need for a commuter transportation solution to link Honolulu to Kapolei was undeniable. Then just 51% of voters who were asked supported the rail proposal - at a cost of just \$3 billion. Now it has become our greatest public works disaster that is running many years late and with costs now estimated at \$10 billion for construction alone and unknown billions to operate and maintain.

Why was an archaic 1850's era steel-on-steel railway technology chosen when innovative 21<sup>st</sup> century technologies are widely available? Especially when we had demonstrated *ZERO* competency in building or running such a massive scheme? With electric and hybrid buses available at low cost that could run on dedicated bus-only roadways, some even elevated, why were they rejected when the costs would be a mere fraction of \$10 billion? And we had vast experience with running an island-wide bus system that was admired nationwide?

We think that the problem lies in how planning is done here. Instead of appointing an independent completely neutral expert commission to devise selected options and then present them to the rigors of many public meetings of all stakeholders, we fell into that old trap of *politicians and powerful vested interests capturing the entire process*. With secrecy and vilification of any critics, this system is sure to deliver the **WORST**. And they know that, once started, these absurd construction projects can never be stopped or cut short. The costs of merely building our HART rail now amount to \$10,000 per island inhabitant and perhaps more than \$50,000 per taxpayer. And mega-taxes to operate and maintain the driverless trains and security-free stations. Good Grief! Didn't anybody study San Francisco's infamous failing BART rail system?

So, let's now peek at the latest giant public works catastrophe on Oahu - *the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Ala Wai Flood Risk Mitigation Project*. An unbelievable colonial-style military assault on our beautiful Hawaiian local environment. Six giant catchment area concrete “detention basins” (aka dams) requiring massive maintenance - by who? And over three miles of four-foot-high graffiti - covered reinforced concrete walls on both sides of the beautiful and beloved Ala Wai Canal. Called by many “Rail 2”. Get it?

The project languished in the bowels of USACE for about 20 years until about 5 years ago, when hints that Federal Funding might suddenly become a real possibility. And, Lo, about \$350 million was allocated to this newborn project, with another \$125 million still needed in City and State Matching Funds. With great secrecy the plan was presented a few years ago at several Community Presentations. No other options were offered. Questioners were asked to take a look at 1,000+ pages of the infamous Environmental Impact Statements (EIS's) and submit testimony to USACE. There were never any replies sent to the hapless citizens and nobody ever got to see what others had submitted.

So today the **WORST** is upon us. High-powered propaganda that the Sky Is Falling with massive rainstorms coming “any day now”. And hysteria over “Waikiki Must Be Saved” - “Hurry While The Funds Are There” etc.

Only one real public meeting has been held so far - at a packed Manoa Gym on March 19<sup>th</sup> (see photo below). A public relations disaster for USACE with hostile protests and not a single supporter offering any positive comments. But nonetheless the City and State are now full-on supporting the project with committed co-funding. Get those hundreds of concrete trucks rolling! The Military Occupation Begins!

Perhaps only a *court injunction* can stop this monster now?



USACE Manoa Public Meeting - March 19, 2019

At the same time the City’s much heralded Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency propaganda machine is now full throttle with public meetings, press releases, glossy reports and scaremongering media stories. This week the news that *Waikiki Beach Will Soon Be Flooded* was covered worldwide by print, online and TV media. The Waikiki Neighborhood Board is emoting in the media that “We Can’t Be Destroyed By A Hurricane Like New Orleans”, “Start the USACE project immediately” and so on. Critics of the plan are labeled Enemies of Waikiki.

Trouble is the USACE Flood Plan offers ZERO PROTECTION from any ocean threats! Nothing to stop 10-15-foot storm surges flooding Waikiki from the beachfronts. Nothing to stop a sudden tsunami. And worse, the 4-foot concrete walls along both sides of the Ala Wai Canal will not only fail to stop a major ocean surge rushing up the canal but will make flooding in Waikiki much worse because all of the 50-plus street drains will be compromised by the walls and almost certainly will fail when electric pumps lose power.

What to do? Competent critics and community protesters want the USACE project *stopped and re-designed*. Politicians say “We Must Secure The Funding First” - then ask for revisions. But the funding is only for the current specific plan as submitted. Any changes would require major revisions and entirely new environmental impact studies.

What do we want? Certainly, stopping the project is a much better alternative to rushing ahead with the current catastrophic USACE plan that would forever ruin the historic beauty of our 90-year-old Ala Wai Canal.

We already know what the best solution would be - *floodgates* at the ocean entrance to the canal that can be shut quickly as needed plus *high-power pumps* beside them that can preemptively lower the canal water levels to cope with predicted floodwaters from the catchment area and also move vast quantities of water right out to the ocean. **PUMPS AND GATES NOT WALLS!**

The project is VERY COMPLEX and requires much study to understand what it contains. We are also getting mixed messages from City and State Climate Change appointees. We are being told to be afraid, very afraid, of Ocean Storms ahead at the same time as we are being told to support the USACE Ala Wai plan that will do nothing at all to protect us against the ocean. And much of it is still only *conceptual*, with no construction details.

We suggest some essential home study:

1. The official USACE website:

[www.poh.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Civil-Works-Projects/Ala-Wai-Flood-Risk-Management-Project/](http://www.poh.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Civil-Works-Projects/Ala-Wai-Flood-Risk-Management-Project/)

2. The excellent and comprehensive Stop Ala Wai Project website:

[www.stopalawaiproject.com](http://www.stopalawaiproject.com)

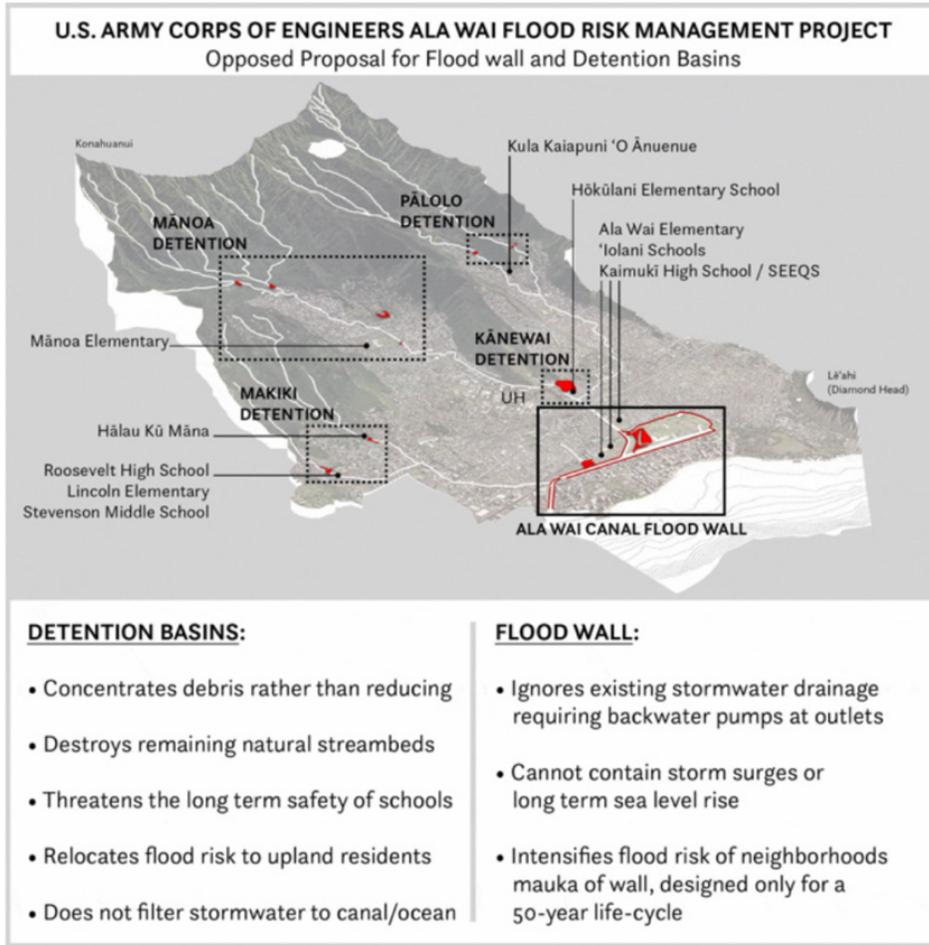
3. The outstanding Ala Wai Centennial Memorial Project website:

[www.alawaicentennial.org](http://www.alawaicentennial.org)

Excerpt attached below (*courtesy of Sean Connelly*):

Summary of the opposed USACE Flood Risk Management Proposal (above) with detail of flood wall and stormwater drainage outlets potentially requiring pumps for storm surge and sea level rise. Courtesy Ala Wai Centennial Memorial Project.

**The USACE proposal does not promote public health and safety**



A visual summary of USACE proposal (above) with detail of flood wall and stormwater drainage outlets potentially requiring pumps for storm surge and sea level rise.

