

State of Hawaii  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96819

February 26, 2021

Chairperson and Members  
Board of Land and Natural Resources  
State of Hawaii  
Honolulu, Hawaii

Land Board Members:

SUBJECT: Board Briefing on Pohoiki Boat Ramp Puna District, Island of Hawaii, Hawaii.  
This is a Non-Decision Making Item

**BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:**

The 2018 Kilauea Lower East Rift Zone volcanic eruption deposited large quantities of volcanic debris and black sand in Pohoiki Bay, filling in the entrance channel and turning basin for the Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation's ("DOBOR") Pohoiki Boat Ramp, located in the Puna District on the Island of Hawaii.

The Pohoiki Boat Ramp is the only boat launch ramp within the Puna District for small vessels and emergency responders, with the nearest boat launch ramps at Wailoa Small Boat Harbor in Hilo, approximately 32 miles to the north, and Kaulana Boat Ramp, approximately 69 miles to the south. Pohoiki Boat Ramp is a lifeline for the local Puna community providing ocean access for subsistence fishing as well as support for a once thriving commercial fishing industry. Since ocean access was cut off in 2018 due to the volcanic eruption, fishermen have been forced to launch their vessels primarily from Wailoa Small Boat Harbor in Hilo, resulting in enormous fuel costs required to trailer their vessels to/from Hilo as well as travel via the ocean to fishing grounds located offshore of Pohoiki Bay. Many fishermen have been forced to close their businesses and/or sell their vessels due to the economic hardship of the large fuel costs.

DOBOR representatives and consultants have evaluated various alternative sites along the Puna coastline for new viable boat ramp sites; however, due to the high, rocky sea-cliff nature of the coastline and rough ocean conditions, very few locations have been determined to be viable. Pohoiki Bay offers a unique location with land formations that provide natural protection from rough ocean conditions and prevailing currents, which is why Pohoiki Bay was selected for construction of a boat ramp in the 1970s.

After investigations into alternate sites to construct a new boat ramp facility and several community meetings with local boaters and fishermen, it was determined that Pohoiki still offered a viable location for ocean access along the Puna coastline.

The following table shows the projects that are being considered as alternatives at Pohoiki Bay, including budgetary cost estimates:

Project Name	Description	Cost Estimate*
Pohoiki Boat Ramp Excavation & Dredging	Excavation (above water) and dredging (below water) of volcanic debris/black sand from entrance channel and turning basin and place removed material on the adjacent beach along Pohoiki Bay	\$2,500,000
Pohoiki Boat Ramp Entrance Channel Improvements	Installation of permanent containment structures to protect entrance channel from shoaling	\$6,000,000
New Pohoiki Boat Ramp Facility	Construction of new boat ramp facility on north side of Pohoiki Bay	\$28,000,000

\*Cost estimates are for budgetary purposes and subject to change based on final design and permitting requirements.

Conceptual plans for these projects are attached as Exhibit A. Note that the scope of work for each project may change depending on final design and permitting requirements. A brief PowerPoint presentation will be provided by DOBOR on the proposed alternative projects. Construction of any selected alternative project will be contingent on availability of funds.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW REQUIREMENTS – COMPLIANCE WITH HRS CHAPTER 343:

Any project implemented will comply with the applicable provisions of HRS Chapter 343, and Title 11, Chapter 200.1, Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR), regarding environmental assessments and impact statements. The following is presented to discuss the appropriate environmental review requirements for the proposed project alternatives:

##### Pohoiki Boat Ramp Excavation and Dredging

This project may qualify as exempt from the applicable provisions of HRS Chapter 343 and HAR Chapter 200.1 under the Exemption List for the Department of Land and Natural Resources, concurred on by the Environmental Council on November 10, 2020 as follows:

General Exemption Type 1, Part 1, Item 1:

*“Removal of boulders, rocks, hazardous trees, marine debris, and other similar hazards necessary to maintain lands and waters in a safe condition.” and;*

General Exemption Type 1, Part 1, Item 3:

*“Maintenance dredging of small quantities of material from existing launching ramps, navigation channels, and berthing areas, not to exceed their originally designed depths and as permitted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Honolulu District, under a Nationwide Permit 35 (Maintenance Dredging of Basins), with disposal of dredged material at approved landfill sites or the placement of sand on adjacent areas in accordance with Haw. Rev. Stat. § 205A-44.”*

General Exemption Type 1, Part 1, Item 1 applies to the removal of volcanic debris/black sand within the entrance channel and turning basin that is currently above sea level.

General Exemption Type 1, Part 1, Item 3 applies to the removal (dredging) of volcanic debris/black sand within the entrance channel and turning basin that is currently below sea level.

The dredging portion of this project will remove material accumulated within the previously existing navigational channel and turning basin and will not exceed the original design depth, as required to be

covered under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (“USACE”) Nationwide Permit 35 (Maintenance Dredging). However, should the USACE determine that the proposed project does not qualify for coverage under a Nationwide Permit 35, the above exemptions will not apply and an Environmental Assessment (EA) will need to be prepared in accordance with HRS Chapter 343 and HAR Title 11, Chapter 200.1.

#### Pohoiki Boat Ramp Entrance Channel Improvements

As this project will involve the construction of new, permanent structures in the water to protect the entrance channel from shoaling, the preparation of an EA or EIS (if appropriate) will be required.

#### New Pohoiki Boat Ramp Facility

This project will require extensive improvements including excavation within the newly deposited lava flow on the north side of Pohoiki Bay to create an in-land turning basin and entrance channel, construction of a stub breakwater, new boat launch ramp and loading dock, a new access road to the site, and a vehicle/trailer parking area. Due the extensive nature of the project, it is anticipated that an EIS would need to be prepared.

#### FUNDING AND PROCUREMENT:

Funding is authorized under Act 49, Session Laws of Hawaii 2019, Item H-12 and other appropriations approved by the legislature for which funds have not lapsed. Funds are also available from the Federal Emergency Management Agency for disaster relief, which covers up to 75% of eligible costs.

The implementation of any proposed project will comply with Budget Execution Policies issued by the Governor through the Department of Budget and Finance.

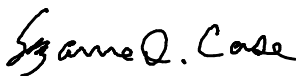
All procurements will be made in accordance with State Procurement Code, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 103D. A consultant has been selected to provide planning and environmental permitting services; however, a contract cannot be executed until the environmental review requirements for each proposed alternative project is determined.

Respectfully Submitted,



EDWARD R. UNDERWOOD, Administrator  
Division of Boating & Ocean Recreation

APPROVED FOR SUBMITTAL:



SUZANNE D. CASE, Chairperson  
Board of Land and Natural Resources

Attachment:

A. Conceptual Plans for Proposed Projects at Pohoiki Bay

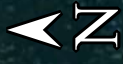
**Project: Pohoiki Boat Ramp Excavation and Dredging**  
Scope of Work: Excavate (above water) and dredge (below water) volcanic debris/black sand accumulated within existing entrance channel and turning basin and place excavated/dredged material on adjacent black sand beach.  
Estimated Construction Cost: \$2,500,000

**EXHIBIT A**

Legend

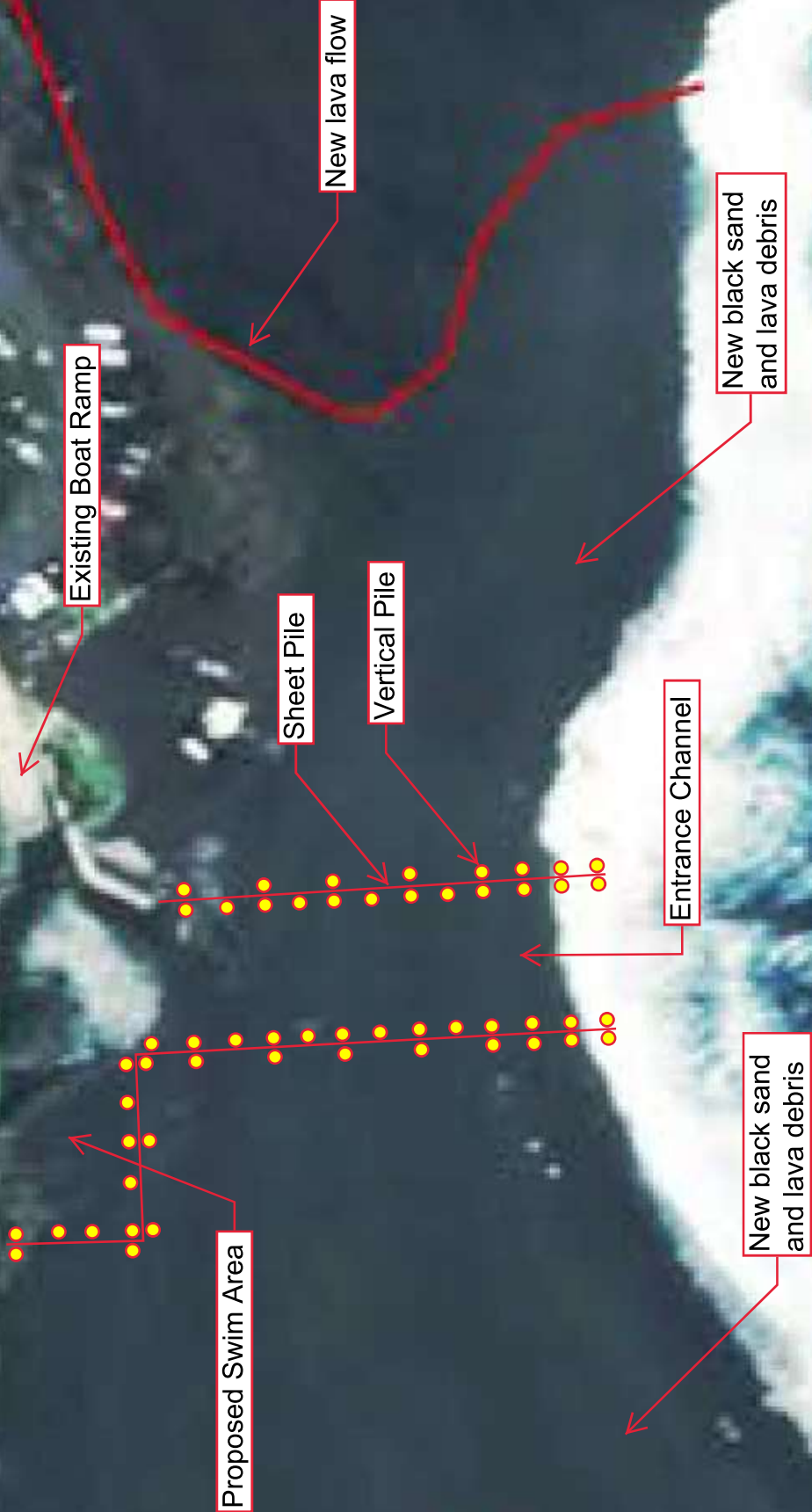
Appr. Excavation/  
Dredging Limits

Proposed Dredge Material  
Stockpiling Area



**Project: Pohoiki Boat Ramp Entrance Channel Improvements**

Scope of Work: Installation of sheet piles secured with vertical piles (or other containment structures) to protect entrance channel from shoaling.  
Estimated Construction Cost: \$6,000,000



**Project: New Pohoiki Boat Ramp Facility**

Scope of Work: In-land excavation in newly deposited lava flow for new turning basin and entrance channel, construction of stub breakwater, new boat launch ramp and loading dock, new access road and vehicle/trailer turn-around and parking area.

Estimated Construction Cost: \$28,000,000

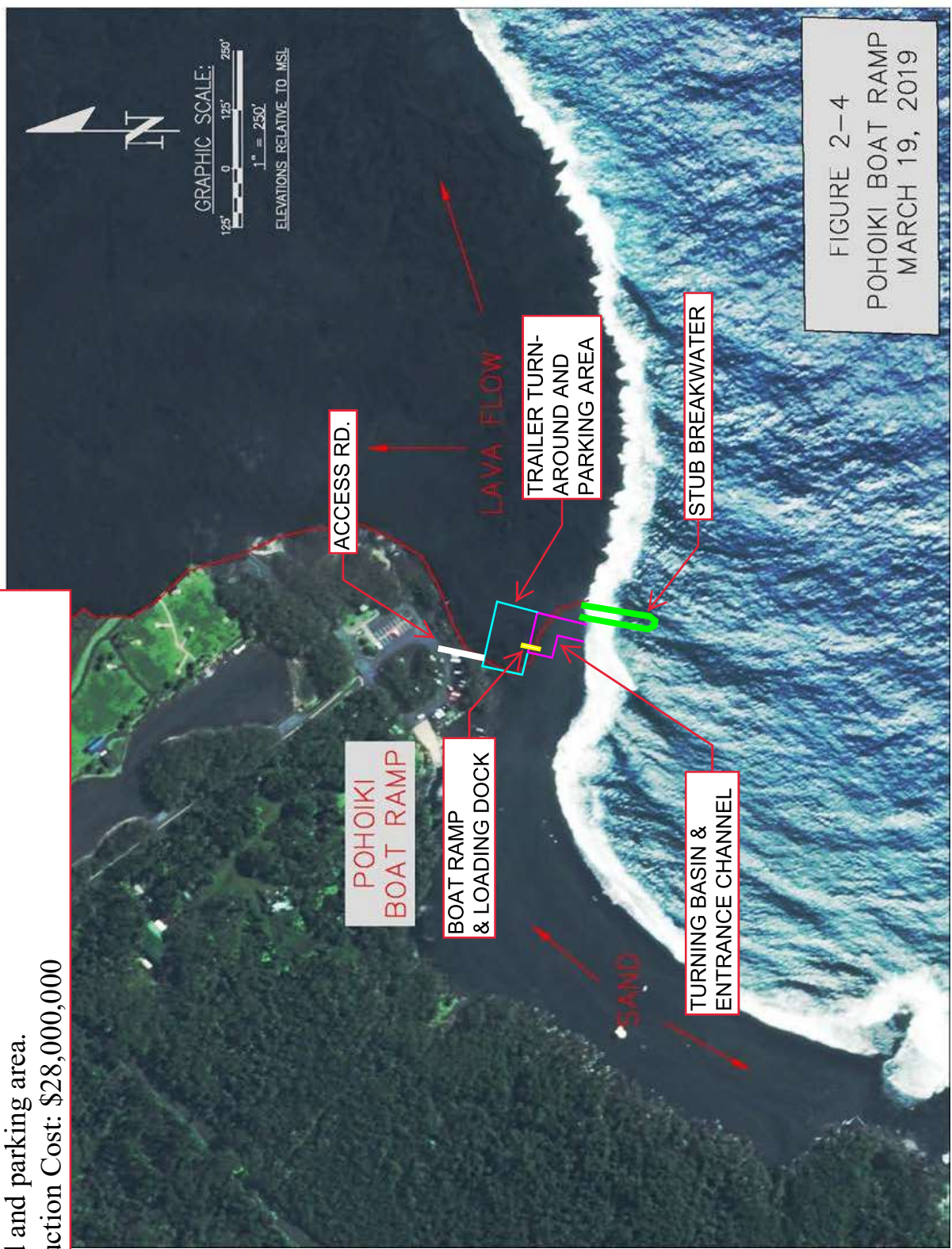


FIGURE 2-4  
POHOIKI BOAT RAMP  
MARCH 19, 2019