

**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
OFFICE OF CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
Honolulu, Hawai'i**

April 24, 2026

145-day Exp. Date: May 09, 2026

**Board of Land and
Natural Resources
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i**

Regarding: Conservation District Use Application (CDUA) OA-3992 for the O'ahu Subsea Cable Project

Applicant: Humuhumu Services, LLC and Starfish Infrastructure, Inc.
Agent: Tanya Copeland of ICF

Location: Offshore of Barbers Point Beach Park, Honouliuli, 'Ewa, O'ahu
Tax Map Key: Submerged Lands seaward of (1) 9-1-026:027

Area of Use: Approximately 35,488-ft²
Subzone: Resource

Exhibits:

- A** Location Map
- B** Project Area Site Photos
- C** Aerial Overview of the Nearshore Project Area
- D** Schematic of Horizontal Directional Drilling and Plan/Profile Drawing

Summary

This is a broadband-related permit application which involves the development of infrastructure relating to broadband service or technology. Pursuant to the Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) §27-45, this application must be processed within 145-days of receipt of a completed CDUA. The project involves the installation of six subsurface landing pipes utilizing Horizontal Directionally Drilling (HDD) initiating mauka of the shoreline. The six punchout points are makai of the shoreline, upon submerged land that lie within the Conservation District. In addition, three subsea cables are proposed to extend from three punchout points into territorial waters and beyond.

This application does not include any terrestrial project components that are outside of the Conservation District. Discussions on project components or site conditions for the terrestrial portions of the proposed project will be used only to provide context for the CDUA review.

Description of Area / Current Use (Exhibit A & B)

The project site exists on the southwest side of O'ahu within the submerged waters offshore of Barbers Point Beach Park within the ahupua'a of Honouliuli, 'Ewa. The project area lies within the Resource subzone of the Conservation District makai of Tax Map Key: (1) 9-1-026:027.

Barbers Point Beach Park is on a 7.4-acre parcel within an industrial area (James Campbell Industrial Park) of Kapolei and provides the only beach access and park space within an approximately 2-mile radius. Park amenities include restrooms, showers, parking, and picnic areas. While swimming is typically not recommended due to strong currents, dangerous shore break, and the presence of rocks and reef, surfing and day use of the picnic area and recreational fishing from the shoreline is common at the beach park. Additionally, Barbers Point Lighthouse is located about 500 feet west of the beach park and is a popular attraction of the area.

Marine and Nearshore Biological Resources

The offshore waters in the project area are classified as Class A marine waters as defined by the Department of Health. Class A waters, in which the objective is to protect recreational uses and aesthetic enjoyment, while also ensuring the protection and propagation of fish, shellfish, and wildlife.

Biological resources in marine waters include marine and nearshore habitats, essential fish habitat (for pelagic species, bottom fish and seamount groundfish, crustacean, and coral reef ecosystems), and federal and state threatened or endangered species including six endangered species of whale, five species of threatened or endangered sea turtles, the endangered the Hawaiian monk seal, the Giant Manta Ray, and the Oceanic Whitetip Shark.

The nearshore benthic habitat between the shoreline and the proposed HDD exit points consists of alternating areas of flat limestone pavement and sand channels. The overall vicinity of the HDD exit points consists of a nearly flat fossil limestone reef surface that terminates in a steep sloping face. The end of the sloping reef face has flat plains of white calcareous sand. The sand plains have patches of seagrass interspersed with expanses of "mud weed".

The EA states dive surveys completed in March 2025 found that three of the six HDD exit points had benthic substrate comprised of sand that avoid coral and seagrass within a 49-foot radius of the exit point. Three of the six HDD exit points are located on hard bottom consisting of limestone fossil reef that has turf algae, macroalgae, and small scattered corals. One of the HDD exit points on hard bottom avoided coral and two of the HDD exit points had small and sparsely distributed coral colonies comprised of cauliflower coral and lobe coral.

The project area is within the National Marine Fishery Services Endangered Species Act (ESA) designated critical habitat for the false killer whale and Hawaiian monk seal and proposed critical habitat for green sea turtle. Two ESA listed marine fish species have the potential to occur in the project area: the giant manta ray and oceanic whitetip shark.

Sea Turtles: The Project area extends through proposed critical habitat for Green Sea Turtles so, they are likely to be found in the nearshore waters of the Project area. The green sea turtle has been documented to nest along 'Ewa Beach within 5 miles of the cable landing site. The

deeper, offshore waters of the Project area do not contain important foraging resources or nesting habitat, and green sea turtles are unlikely to be found there, though they may transit through those regions before and after the nesting season, which ranges from April through October. Similarly, hawksbill sea turtles could also be encountered but this possibility is remote. The deeper, offshore waters of the Project area do not contain important foraging resources or nesting habitat for hawksbill sea turtle

Hawaiian Monk Seals: Endemic to Hawai'i, the Hawaiian monk seal is the most endangered seal species in the world. Marine habitats are used for foraging, resting, thermoregulation, and social interaction. Diet studies indicate that they forage at or near the seafloor and prefer prey that hides in the sand or under rocks. Foraging occurs in depths from 3 feet to at least 1,640 feet and in a wide variety of marine habitat types. Designated critical habitat in the Main Hawaiian Islands includes marine areas from 0 to 656 feet in depth that support adequate prey quality and quantity for juvenile and adult monk seal foraging. The Project area extends through designated Hawaiian monk seal critical habitat, and it is possible that monk seals occur in the project area.

Main Hawaiian Islands Insular False Killer Whale: There is a small, discrete population (less than 200 individuals) that lives exclusively in nearshore waters of the Main Hawaiian Islands and is the only false killer whale population protected under ESA. NMFS published a final rule to designate critical habitat for the Main Hawaiian Islands insular false killer whale by designating waters from about -140-10,500-foot depth contour around the main Hawaiian Islands from Ni'ihau east to Hawai'i. The Project area extends through designated habitat for this false killer whale population, and it is possible that this species occurs in the project area.

ESA-listed Marine Fish Species: The Giant Manta Ray and the Oceanic Whitetip Shark are both classified as threatened in 2018, has no critical habitat designation and are migratory in tropical, subtropical waters. It is possible both species may be encountered in the project area.

Historic and Cultural Resources

To avoid potential impacts on submerged cultural resources, a records search and desktop review of sonar data collected during cable route surveys was utilized to identify and avoid potential or previously recorded submerged cultural resources. Three potential submerged resources offshore of Barber's Point were identified: the Arthur, a British brig reported lost near Barber's Point in 1796; the Liliu, a schooner reported lost in 1877; and an unknown submerged cultural resource. All are outside of the area of potential effect for the project.

Proposed Land Uses

Project Description (Exhibit C)

Six subterranean steel conduits, approximately 7 inches in diameter known as landing pipes are proposed to be installed utilizing Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) methods with the bore commencing at a point on land within Barber's Point Beach Park, continuing beneath the beach and surf zones, and existing at a point on the seafloor approximately 4,300 to 5,400 feet from the shoreline, punching out in waters of about -49-71 feet in depth.

The three subsea fiber optic cables would be installed using a special purpose cable laying ship that will lay the cables on the seafloor following a surveyed and engineered route in the Pacific Ocean extending from the landing pipe exit point. Articulated pipes composed of iron pipe segments would be installed around the submarine portion of two fiber optic cables from the exit point of the landing pipes seaward for a distance of 82-feet. For the third fiber optic cable, up to 230 linear feet of articulated pipe could be utilized. The articulated pipe would provide additional abrasion and impact protection for the fiber optic cable and would not be secured to the seafloor. At three nautical miles, the fiber optic cables would extend another 112 to 133 nautical miles where the cables would connect to the cable trunk routes at a Branching Unit on the seafloor.

Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) and Cable Landing

HDD activities would take place mainly on land during daytime hours and no lights would be over the water during construction. The landing pipes would be installed by HDD, which would allow the landing pipes to be installed beginning at a point on land and bore beneath the beach and surf zones, exiting at a point in the ocean without any surface disturbance along the way.

The directional drilling would be guided by a drill head fitted with a steering tool, using magnetometers and inertial devices to track the direction of advance (horizontally and vertically) and the absolute location. The tracking system would be implemented continuously to verify the drill position and path. The HDDs would be advanced in 30-foot sections through the bore hole as it is created. Surveys would be conducted in 15-foot and 30-foot increments to verify the drill position and path.

The HDD machine would occupy the bore entry site, drilling steel casing into the ground at an angle of approximately 12 degrees. Once the HDD reaches the desired depth, the direction would level out as the drilling continues to push the landing pipe horizontally through the ground. When the landing pipe reaches the appropriate distance offshore, the drill head would be guided to the ocean bottom at approximately a water depth of approximately -50-71-feet. This operation would be repeated for each of the landing pipes.

After the bore hole is completed, the bore assembly, consisting of the drill bit and electronics, would be removed either by divers or the bore pipe would be withdrawn back to the bore site to remove the assembly before reinstalling the landing pipe into the completed borehole. The end of the bore pipe would be fitted with a one-way check valve to prohibit intrusion of debris into the pipe. The seaward end of the pipe would be left at a depth of approximately 3.2 feet below the ocean floor. The pipe would then be ready for cable installation.

Horizontal Directional Drilling Fluid Management

HDD drilling fluid (a non-toxic, inert material, typically a solution of bentonite clay and water) would be circulated into the bore hole to prevent it from caving in; the fluid would coat the wall of the bore hole to minimize fluid losses to permeable rock and soil types. Drilling fluid also serves as a lubricant for the drill head and carries the cuttings (pieces of drilled rock, sand, and other materials) back to the entry pit, where the cuttings are removed so the drilling fluid can be recirculated into the bore hole. Drilling fluid would be used for drilling all conduits, except for the final approximately 30 feet of the bore hole offshore. The drilling fluid would be changed to water

at the end of the bore hole installing the landing pipes; this would minimize the release of drilling fluid into the ocean floor when the drill bit exits offshore.

Drilling fluid and cuttings generated by directional drilling for the landing pipes would be pumped back to the landing site where it would be run through a mixer separator. Cuttings would be removed from the landing site and trucked to a permitted landfill for disposal on a regular basis throughout HDD drilling operations. The separated drilling mud would be reused in the bore process while drilling is ongoing and spent drilling fluid would be trucked to a permitted landfill for disposal at the conclusion of the HDD activity.

Prior to drilling, the geologic characteristics of the substrate would be evaluated to determine the most appropriate route for the landing pipe installation. During drilling, the potential for losing drilling fluid to the substrate would be assessed by monitoring the volume of the drilling fluid that is returning to the bore entry point and monitoring for changes in the drilling fluid's pressure.

For inadvertent releases below the tide, it would be impractical to contain and collect releases because of the wave energy in the surf zone. The wave energy in the surf zone would quickly dissipate the drilling fluid. If releases are detected in the water, measures would be implemented to minimize and control the release. If a release into the water column is discovered, the drilling would stop to allow any plume to dissipate before continuing until cloudy water was again observed. This process would continue until the bore worked its way past the release point.

Use of HDD for installation of the landing pipes would avoid disturbance to benthic habitat in the shallower nearshore area. Installation of the landing pipes and subsea cables could result in the temporary, localized suspension of sediments and the potential release of bentonite drilling fluid into the water column during operation of the HDD. The amount of seabed disturbance around each HDD exit point would be up to 10 feet by 10 feet.

Submarine Cable Laying and Installation

The marine segments of the cable system would be installed using a special purpose cable laying vessel. These cable ships are approximately 492-feet in length and would operate at speeds of 1 to 5 knots throughout the majority of cable installation activities in open ocean waters, but speeds vary depending on weather, seabed, and location. Marine operations are typically a 24 hour per day operation.

The submarine portion of the fiber optic cable would be laid on the seabed; no trenching or burying would be required. Cable laying activities consider the seabed profile, cable type, and benthic characteristics. Prior to the cable-laying operation, all data from the route surveys were studied and a cable laying plan was developed.

One or two support boats would be required to assist the cable ship during the nearshore landing operation. The support boats would be smaller vessels, sourced from local entities. Positioning of the cable ship at the exit point for the landing pipe would be accomplished using thrusters. Once the cable ship is properly positioned, it would begin laying out cable while personnel attach suspension floats at regular intervals, as required, to allow the cable to be floated toward the subterranean HDD conduit by divers, a small motorboat, and/or other means.

Once the cable reaches the HDD conduit, the floats would be removed, allowing the cable to sink and enter the HDD conduit at the proper angle. Divers would feed the cable into the open subterranean HDD conduit by attaching it to a pilot line. The cable would then be pulled through the HDD conduit toward the beach manhole by a winch or other suitable method. Once sufficient fiber optic cable has reached shore, the cable would be secured onshore, the remaining floats would be removed to allow the rest of the cable to sink to the sea bottom. With the cable correctly positioned on the seabed, in the HDD conduit and anchored, the submarine portion of the fiber optic cable would then be spliced to the terrestrial cable.

Subsea fiber optic cables laid on the seafloor would contact or displace a very small area of seafloor habitat along the cable path. The physical effects resulting from cable-laying activities would be limited to the area around the less than 2-inch diameter cables except where articulated pipe would be used on the approach to the HDD exit points.

Impacts on coral and seagrass have been minimized through project design and by micro-siting the HDD exit points utilizing dive surveys to help identify locations with low coral and seagrass cover.

The near-shore landing operation would occur during daylight hours and suitable conditions (calm weather and minimal swell) and is anticipated to take approximately 1 day. The cable ship and support boats would comply with applicable federal and state regulations and conventions addressing navigational safety, safe operations, and pollution prevention measures.

The submarine cable does not contain materials that would be harmful to water quality; therefore, no long-term marine water quality impacts from the cable laying activities are expected to occur.

Mitigation and Best Management Practices (BMPs)

No ocean waters would be closed to ocean activities such as boating, surfing, diving, and swimming during the cable-laying process (approximately 0.5 day, depending on weather conditions). During the cable installation process (approximately 1 day), no nearshore ocean waters would need to be closed between the shoreline and the subsea exit point for the landing pipe.

During installation, an approximately 328-foot safe zone would be created around the installation area. This area would be patrolled using small boats or jet skis, to keep patrons and vessels out of the work area. Additionally, a Local Notice to Mariners would be prepared in accordance with U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), District 14 requirements. The USCG would issue the Local Notice to Mariners to alert other vessels of the cable ship's presence, expected time in the area, and contact information.

Construction activities would be temporary and would not result in the permanent alteration of habitats, including designated critical habitat in the project area. Implementation of avoidance and minimization measures would reduce any potential impacts on protected species present during construction

BMPs would be implemented prior to surface-disturbing activities and would be inspected and maintained throughout the construction period. An Inadvertent Drilling Fluid Release [IDFR] Contingency Plan has been prepared to address the facilitation of proper response, containment and clean-up in the unlikely event an inadvertent drilling fluid release was to occur.

The project requires a Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification (inclusive of the USACE authorization). BMPs required by the CWA Section 401 Water Quality Certification will be adhered to during project construction and operation. The project will also follow appropriate measures recommended by National Marine Fishery Services and/or the US Fish and Wildlife Services with respect to protecting water quality. With the IDFR Contingency Plan and compliance with federal and state water quality regulations, the project is expected to have less-than-significant impacts on marine water quality during construction and operation.

All infrastructure at the cable landing site would be installed underground and would not affect public use of the shoreline or beach. Landing pipes would be installed by HDD methods beneath the shoreline, ensuring no disruption to beach access, public recreational activities, or the general shoreline area at Barbers Point Beach Park.

Purpose and Cost

The purpose of the project is to provide connectivity between Hawaii, the continental United States, other Pacific Islands, Australia and Japan and to support the Hawai'i Broadband Initiative by improving the States' broadband infrastructure through increased telecommunications speed and improved reliability. The Hawai'i Broadband Initiative was launched in 2011 with the ultimate purpose of ensuring that all citizens of Hawai'i have access to high-speed broadband at affordable prices. The 2020 DBEDT updated plan notes transpacific connectivity as the state's broadband "lifeline" that is achieved primarily through the use of submarine fiber optic cable. The major benefit of the proposed action would be providing critical infrastructure of broadband for the State of Hawai'i for multiple purposes, including innovation, economic development, healthcare, education, public safety, research, public services, and entertainment.

The cost to construct the Project is estimated to be between approximately \$55 and \$57 million, which is expected to generate state and local tax revenue from construction expenditures and income taxes on construction and operations wages. Construction and operations costs would be covered through private investment.

Other Alternatives Considered

Other than the no action alternative, the only alternative considered within the Conservation District but eliminated from detailed study was an alternative alignment for the landing pipes. To reduce impact to seagrass, landing pipe 3 was relocated to the north that is consistent with what is described for the proposed action.

Summary of Comments

The Office of Conservation and Coastal Lands (OCCL) referred the application to the following state agencies for review and comment: the Department of Land and Natural Resource's Oahu District Land Office (ODLO), Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR), Division of Conservation &

Resource Enforcement and the Aha Moku Council; the Department of Transportation (DOT); the State Department of Health (DOH); and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA).

The application was also provided to the City and County of Honolulu's Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP), Parks and Recreation (DPR), and the Makakilo/Kapolei/Honokai Hale Board; and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) as well as the Kapolei Public Library.

Comments were received from the following agencies and have been summarized by staff as follows:

Department of Land and Natural Resources

O'ahu District Land Office

Any work and/or use of state land makai of the title boundary and/or certified shoreline shall require a disposition from the Board of Land and Natural Resources.

Applicant's Response

1. The mapped shoreline was proposed for certification and was published in *The Environmental Notice* on February 8, 2026, initiating a 20-day comment period.
2. The application for a perpetual non-exclusive submerged land easement was submitted to the Land Division on January 28, 2026, and is currently under review.
3. The Applicants expect to provide a preliminary plan (easement map) and legal description as a supplement to the easement application in the next 1 to 2 weeks. [mid-March]
4. The Applicants look forward to participating in a future meeting of the Board of Land and Natural Resources to request approval of the proposed state land disposition.

Division of Conservation & Resource Enforcement

No comments

Department of Transportation

No comments

Office of Hawaiian Affairs

OHA would like to inquire whether HRS 6E review will be done for the project. The Final Environmental Assessment (FEA) completed in October 2025 indicates that an archaeological literature review and field inspection (ALRFI) was completed in March 2025 for HRS 6E compliance and that an archaeological inventory survey (AIS) was recommended. However, the testing strategy was pending SHPD acceptance. OHA would like an opportunity to review the AIS results when they are ready and to be provided with SHPD comment letters.

OHA also asks that the applicant provide a map of the project area, depicting proposed improvements in relation to any previously identified sites. While the ALRFI was discussed in the FEA, the ALRFI was not provided with the FEA nor were there any maps showing previously identified sites. The FEA states that there are at least 78 previously identified sites within a 0.5 mile radius of the project area and that there were 15 newly identified potential

historic properties during the field inspection. The project area is known to have underground karst systems and sinkholes that contain burials or faunal remains; thus, we have concerns about where the landing sites will be located.

Applicant's response

1. Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD) was initiated on April 11, 2025 with submission of a Literature Review and Field Inspection report, HRS 6E Submittal Form, and other supporting information and the project was assigned HICRIS Project No. 2025PR00447.
2. In response to the HRS 6E Submittal, SHPD requested that an archaeological inventory survey (AIS) and architectural reconnaissance level survey (RLS) be completed for the Project.
3. AIS testing was completed in January 2026, and the AIS report is currently in-progress. Upon submission of the report to SHPD for review and acceptance, the Applicants will concurrently provide a copy of the AIS report to OHA. The AIS report will include the requested maps of the project area in relation to previously identified sites.
4. Prior communications from SHPD dated June 23, 2025, and November 19, 2025, have been forward to OHA, along with the O'ahu Subsea Cable Draft AIS, as requested.

City & County of Honolulu

Department of Planning & Permitting

The cable landings portion of the project, mauka of the certified shoreline, requires a SMA Major Permit and Shoreline Setback Variance. The DPP has previously provided comment on the draft EA.

Applicant's response

1. The mapped shoreline was proposed for certification and was published in *The Environmental Notice* on February 8, 2026, initiating a 20-day comment period.
2. The Applicants completed an archaeological inventory survey (AIS) for the Project in January 2025, and the AIS report is in-progress.
3. Upon receipt of the certified shoreline map and submission of the AIS report to the State Historic Preservation Division, the Applicants will be submitting concurrent applications for a SMA Major Permit and Shoreline Setback Variance through the HNL Build online application portal.
4. The Applicants look forward to coordinating with DPP on review of our upcoming applications.

Analysis

Following review and acceptance for processing, by correspondence dated December 26, 2025, the Department found that:

1. The proposed use is an identified land use in the Resource subzone of the Conservation District, pursuant to the Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR) §13-5-22, P-6 PUBLIC PURPOSE USES Not for profit land uses undertaken in support of a public service by an agency of the county, state, or federal government, or by an independent non-

governmental entity, except that an independent non-governmental regulated public utility may be considered to be engaged in a public purpose use. Examples of public purpose uses may include but are not limited to public roads, marinas, harbors, airports, trails, water systems and other utilities, energy generation from renewable sources, communication systems, flood or erosion control projects, recreational facilities, community centers, and other public purpose uses, intended to benefit the public in accordance with public policy and the purpose of the conservation district. Please be advised, however, that this finding does not constitute approval of the proposal;

2. Pursuant to HAR §13-5-40(a), a Public Hearing shall be required;
3. In conformance with the Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 343, as amended, and HAR Chapter 11-200.1, the Final Environmental Assessment has been reviewed and accepted by the Department. The FONSI was published in the October 8, 2025, issue of the Environmental Notice; and
4. The Conservation District portion of this project does not lie within the Special Management Area.

Public Hearing

A Public Hearing was held at the 'Ewa Beach Public Library on February 11, 2026, to accept any public testimony related to this project. Two members of OCCL staff and two members of the applicant's team attended the public hearing that was to commence at 5:15 pm. No one from the general public attended the meeting.

Conservation Criteria

The following discussion evaluates the merits of the proposed land use by applying the criteria established in HAR §13-5-30.

- 1) *The proposed use is consistent with the purpose of the Conservation District.*

The objective of the Conservation District is to conserve, protect, and preserve the important natural resources of the state through appropriate management and use to promote their long-term sustainability and the public health, safety and welfare.

According to the applicant, the project has been designed and sited to avoid or minimize impacts to natural resources, the shoreline, benthic habitats (including corals and seagrass), protected species, and cultural resources and would not adversely affect public health and safety. The project most likely would have beneficial effects on the economic and social welfare of the community and state due to the improved telecommunication infrastructure that the project would provide.

- 2) *The proposed land use is consistent with the objectives of the Subzone of the land on which the use will occur.*

The objective of the Resource Subzone “is to develop, with proper management, areas to ensure sustained use of the natural resources of those areas”. Staff believes the proposed use is consistent with the objectives of the Resource Subzone and will ensure the sustainable use of the natural resources of the area.

The planned construction is designed to avoid or minimize impacts the shoreline, the seabed, marine waters, and other marine resources. The project is designed to have only temporary and localized impacts with the area returning to the existing conditions after construction is completed.

Staff believes there will be minimal effects if Best Management Practices (BMPs) are followed as outlined. The applicant has developed contingency plans with measures and protocols that would be implemented to prevent, identify, contain and properly respond to an inadvertent release of spills or hazardous materials management in addition to compliance with other regulations.

- 3) *The proposed land use complies with the provisions and guidelines contained in Chapter 205A, HRS entitled "Coastal Zone Management", where applicable.*

According to the applicant, the project complies with the requirements of the Coastal Zone Management Consistency Concurrence issued for the Nationwide Permit.

Recreational Resources: The project will utilize HDD for landing pipe installation, which would avoid direct impacts to the beach and shoreline. Public access to the shoreline would not be restricted. During subsea cable installation, access to the work area around the cable laying vessel would be controlled to maintain safe distances between the work area and ocean users. A Local Notice to Mariners would be published prior to the start of construction to advise mariners to avoid the work area during the cable installation (≈ 2 weeks).

Historic Resources: Maritime Heritage Resources Survey completed in 2005 identified submerged historic resources. The closest historic resource is over 1200-ft away from the subsea cable center line. Marine surveys conducted for the cable route(s) did not identify any potential submerged historic properties within the survey limits between the exit point for the landing pipes out to 3 nautical miles from shore.

Scenic and Open Space Resources: During construction involving the installation of support infrastructure there will be a temporary impact on coastal views due to the presence of construction equipment and support vessels in the water. Staff believes that the project design (i.e., use of the HDD process) encourages the protection and preservation of the quality of scenic and open space resources for this coastal site. The installation using HDD would ensure coastal landforms would remain unaltered and the project would not impact public views towards the ocean or along the shoreline.

Coastal Ecosystems/Marine Resources: The project is not anticipated to have significant adverse impacts on coastal ecosystems or marine resources. There will be no trenching or burial of conduits as the subsea cables shall be laid on the seabed. Dive surveys

were utilized to identify the most favorable (least impactful) locations to exit the landing pipes in the near-shore. Impacts to marine water quality are expected to be very low due to the small disturbance area and implementation of BMPs to minimize potential impacts to nearby coastal ecosystems.

Public Participation: Several statutorily-triggered public comment periods and public meetings are required prior to the issuances of state and county permit approvals. Early consultation was initiated during the development of the Environmental Assessment, followed by a 30-day comment period with the draft EA. According to the applicant, correspondences were sent to 40 individuals for the Cultural Impact Assessment and Ka Pa‘akai Analysis and a presentation was made to the Neighborhood Board on April 23, 2025. A public hearing was held at the ‘Ewa Beach Public Library on February 11, 2026, in the evening for the CDUA for the proposed project; no one from the public attended the meeting.

- 4) *The proposed land use will not cause substantial adverse impact to existing natural resources within the surrounding area, community or region.*

Barber’s Point Beach Park is located in Campbell Industrial Park. The surrounding area other than the shoreline is very industrialized with little open space or greenery. The project has been sited and designed to avoid substantial adverse impacts to existing natural resources. The subsurface HDD portion of the project would extend well below and beyond the shoreline and will not affect the coastline, lateral access or marine resources.

Staff believes the proposed land use will not cause substantial adverse impacts to existing natural resources. Any minor impact most likely will be short-term.

- 5) *The proposed land use, including buildings, structures and facilities, shall be compatible with the locality and surrounding areas, appropriate to the physical conditions and capabilities of the specific parcel or parcels.*

As the entire project segment located in the Conservation District will be entirely out of view, staff believes the project is compatible with the surrounding area and physical conditions of the site.

- 6) *The existing physical and environmental aspects of the land, such as natural beauty and open space characteristics, will be preserved or improved upon, whichever is applicable.*

No visible structures will be constructed in the Resource subzone of the Conservation District. The project when completed will preserve the natural beauty and open characteristics of the shoreline and ocean beyond.

- 7) *Subdivision of land will not be utilized to increase the intensity of land uses in the Conservation District.*

No subdivision of land is proposed under this CDUA.

- 8) *The proposed land use will not be materially detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare.*

By utilizing a proven construction method (i.e., HDD) that has been shown to be environmentally safe, and consistent with the protection of the environment; providing monitoring of environmental resources during all construction activities as well as monitoring to minimize or eliminate impacts to threatened or endangered species and by observing BMPs prescribed in the application and the Final Environmental Assessment, the proposed land use will not be materially detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare.

Customary & Traditional Practices

Articles IX and XII of the State Constitution, other state laws, and the courts of the State, require government agencies to promote and preserve cultural beliefs, practices, and resources of Native Hawaiian and other ethnic groups.

A Cultural Impact Assessment and Ka Pa‘akai Analysis was completed for the project and included with the final Environmental Assessment. Potential cultural resources in the Conservation District would be marine fisheries, limu, coral and other items that could be gathered along the shoreline or within marine waters. Traditional practices that may take place in the vicinity would include fishing, diving, gathering, ocean recreational activities and reflection.

During construction activities, lateral shoreline and ocean access shall remain open. Ocean activities such as boating, surfing, fishing, diving and swimming could still take place during the installation process while a small area immediately around the punch-out site would be patrolled and closed for safety reasons.

The HDD portion of the proposed project will extend deep underground and beyond the shoreline. Access, recreation, gathering of marine subsistence resources should not be affected by the project.

During the processing of this application, no comments nor objections to the use of the site were received. Neither the Office of Hawaiian Affairs nor the Aha Moku Council provided comments on the proposed land use. To the extent to which traditional and customary native Hawaiian rights are exercised, the proposed action does not appear to affect traditional Hawaiian rights; it is believed that no action is necessary to protect these rights.

Discussion

The proposed land uses that are covered under this Conservation District Use Application (CDUA) represent a portion of the overall project. The majority of the structural and development activities will occur *mauka* of the shoreline and therefore were not part of this review. This CDUA covers the installation of six subsurface landing pipes utilizing Horizontal Directionally Drilling (HDD) initiating *mauka* of the shoreline outside of the Conservation District, with six punchout points *makai* of the shoreline, upon submerged land that lie within the Conservation District. In addition, three subsea cables are proposed to extend from three punchout points within State marine waters into territorial waters and beyond.

The six subterranean steel conduits landing pipes are approximately 7 inches in diameter and are proposed to be installed utilizing Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) methods with the bore commencing at a point on land within Barber's Point Beach Park, continuing beneath the beach and surf zones, and existing at a point on the seafloor approximately 4,300 to 5,400 feet from the shoreline, punching out in waters of about -49-71 feet in depth.

The three subsea fiber optic cables would be installed using a special purpose cable laying ship that will lay the cables on the seafloor following a surveyed and engineered route in the Pacific Ocean extending from the landing pipe exit point. At three nautical miles, the fiber optic cables would extend another 112 to 133 nautical miles where the cables would connect to the cable trunk routes at a Branching Unit on the seafloor.

Horizontally Directionally Drilled (HDD) minimizes disruption to the surface by using a trenchless method, allowing for installation under challenging terrain and existing structures like highways, rivers and shorelines. There is minimal disruption to the environment as the procedure decreases risk of soil erosion, sedimentation and open trenches. The applicant has provided Best Management Practices (BMPs) that shall be observed that covers before, during, and after construction activities and provides contingency plans to deal with the unexpected during construction.

During construction activities, lateral shoreline and ocean access shall remain open. Ocean activities such as boating, surfing, fishing, and diving could still take place during the installation process while a small area immediately around the punch-out site would be patrolled and closed for safety reasons.

The purpose of the project is to create infrastructure to host future subsea fiber optic telecommunications cables to provide affordable, reliable and diverse internet connectivity to Hawai'i. Hawai'i relies on transpacific submarine fiber optic cables for the majority of broadband capacity required to connect us to the rest of the world. Broadband has been recognized as critical infrastructure to the State of Hawai'i for advancement in education, health, public safety, research and innovation, economic diversification and public services.

Recommendation

Based on the preceding analysis, Staff recommends that the Board of Land and Natural Resources APPROVE this Conservation District Use Application (CDUA) OA-3992 for the O'ahu Subsea Cable Project located offshore of Barbers Point Beach Park, Honouliuli, 'Ewa, O'ahu, seaward of Tax Map Key (1) 9-1-026:027, subject to the following conditions:

1. The permittee shall comply with all applicable statutes, ordinances, rules, and regulations of the federal, state, and county governments, and applicable parts of this chapter;
2. The permittee, its successors and assigns, shall indemnify and hold the State of Hawaii harmless from and against any loss, liability, claim, or demand for property damage, personal injury, and death arising out of any act or omission of the applicant, its successors, assigns, officers, employees, contractors, and agents under this permit or relating to or connected with the granting of this permit;

3. The permittee shall obtain appropriate authorization from the department for the occupancy of state lands;
4. The permittee shall comply with all applicable department of health administrative rules, and the applicable parts of HAR §13-5-42;
5. Unless otherwise authorized, any work or construction to be done on the land shall be initiated within one (1) year of the approval of such use, in accordance with approved construction plans, and shall be completed within three (3) years of the approval of such use. The permittee shall notify the department in writing when construction activity is initiated and when it is completed;
6. All representations relative to mitigation set forth in the accepted environmental assessment and management plan for the proposed use are incorporated as conditions of the permit;
7. The permittee understands and agrees that the permit does not convey any vested right(s) or exclusive privilege;
8. In issuing the permit, the department and board have relied on the information and data that the permittee has provided in connection with the permit application. If, subsequent to the issuance of the permit such information and data prove to be false, incomplete, or inaccurate, this permit may be modified, suspended, or revoked, in whole or in part, and the department may, in addition, institute appropriate legal proceedings;
9. Where any interference, nuisance, or harm may be caused, or hazard established by the use, the permittee shall be required to take measures to minimize or eliminate the interference, nuisance, harm, or hazard;
10. Obstruction of public roads, trails, lateral shoreline access, and pathways shall be avoided or minimized. If obstruction is unavoidable, the permittee shall provide alternative roads, trails, lateral beach access, or pathways acceptable to the department;
11. During construction, appropriate mitigation measures shall be implemented to minimize impacts to resources, utilities, and public facilities. Specific Best Management Practices (BMP) outlined in the Final Environmental Assessment (FEA) and the CDUA report shall be implemented during construction of the proposed project;
12. The permittee shall provide public notification to inform the public of the project;
13. The permittee acknowledges that the approved work shall not hamper, impede, or otherwise limit the exercise of traditional, customary, or religious practices of native Hawaiians in the immediate area, to the extent the practices are provided for by the Constitution of the State of Hawaii, and by Hawaii statutory and case law
14. Should historic remains such as artifacts, burials or concentration of charcoal be encountered during construction activities, work shall cease immediately in the vicinity of the find, and the find shall be protected from further damage. The Historic Preservation

Division shall be contacted (692-8015), which will assess the significance of the find and recommend an appropriate mitigation measure, if necessary;

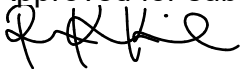
15. The use shall not adversely affect a federally listed threatened or endangered species or a species proposed for such designation, or destroy or adversely modify its designated critical habitat;
16. The activity/use shall not substantially disrupt the movement of those species of aquatic life indigenous to the area, including those species, which normally migrate through the area;
17. When the Chairperson is notified by the applicant(s) or the public that the project deviates from the scope of the use or are adversely affecting fish or wildlife resources or their harvest, the Chairperson will direct the applicant(s) to undertake corrective measures to address the condition affecting these resources. The applicant(s) must suspend or modify the activity to the extent necessary to mitigate or eliminate the adverse effect;
18. Where any interference, nuisance, or harm may be caused, or hazard established by the authorized activities/uses, the applicant(s) shall be required to take measures to minimize or eliminate the interference, nuisance, harm or hazard;
19. No contamination of the marine or coastal environment (trash or debris) shall result from project-related authorized activities/uses;
20. The Office of Conservation and Coastal Lands shall be notified in advance of the anticipated construction dates and shall be notified immediately if any changes to the scope of work are anticipated;
21. Other terms and conditions as prescribed by the chairperson; and
22. Failure to comply with any of these conditions shall render a permit void under the chapter, as determined by the chairperson or board.

Respectfully submitted,



K. Tiger Mills, Staff Planner
Office of Conservation and Coastal Lands

Approved for submittal:



Ryan Kanaka'ole, Acting Chairperson
Board of Land and Natural Resources

MC

Exhibit B: Project Area Site Photos



Barber's Point Beach Park



Exhibit C Aerial Overview of the Nearshore Project Area



Exhibit D Schematic of Horizontal Directional Drilling and Plan/Profile Drawing

