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American Heart Association | American Stroke Association

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Testimony in OPPOSITION to Bill 8 "Relating to Complete Streets"

The American Heart Association opposes Bill 8.

Bill 8 has a number of issues that would virtually gut Honolulu's existing Complete Streets law passed in 2012. Bill 8 would require that every project's Complete Streets checklist be brought before the Council for approval before the project can receive funding. However, the Complete Streets checklist is completed during the planning and design phase for most projects, which means the project must have already received this planning and design funding. The bill also requires that the Complete Streets design standards and guidelines developed by the City departments be brought before the Council for approval. That would mean that every individual project would have to be brought before the Council for approval. It would add significantly to the schedule of every project and it would represent an extremely high volume of projects having to be brought before Council.

The prevalence of those who are obese in our communities has risen to epidemic proportion. Nearly 50 percent of U.S. adults and 65 percent of adolescents do not currently get the recommended amount of physical activity each day. And only 5 percent report any kind of vigorous activity.

To compound the problem, traditional transportation and community planning often overlooks the effect on health and as a result, we rely too much on cars. Our communities are frequently "recreational deserts" without green spaces or connected walking and biking routes. Integrating health objectives within transportation and community planning would create more active communities, more balanced transportation systems and a cost-effective opportunity to improve public health.

We must make opportunities for physical activity more accessible. People who are sitting throughout their day have roughly twice the risk of having heart attacks, heart surgeries, strokes, or other cardiovascular events compared to those who are more active.

Studies have found that building pedestrian/bike trails reduces health care costs associated with physical inactivity. For every dollar invested in building these trails, nearly \$3 in medical cost savings may be achieved. Additionally, linking different parts of the community with trails and walkways opens up the opportunity for community integration, more efficient land use, lower traffic congestion, and better quality of life.

The American Heart Association feels that the Oahu Bike Plan, City budgeting, and project specific planning processes provide opportunity for public input and robust Council involvement. The City is also required to update the bike plan every five years, so there are frequent opportunities for the public to share input into the plan and the City Council has approval power for every update.

Respectfully submitted,
Donald B. Weisman

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Hawaii Government Relations and Communications Director

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