

**Frequently Asked Questions and Answers**  
August 2006

***Q1. Is anybody actually doing anything about the traffic situation in West Maui besides just talking about it?***

A1. Yes, LBN is working closely with the State DOT to make changes in the traffic control system in West Maui. The DOT, in turn, is working with Austin Tsutsumi & Associates (ATA), the Honolulu-based consulting firm that was hired by Intrawest to synchronize the traffic signals from Shaw Street to Lower Honoapiilani Road. Their Optimization Study has now been completed.

***Q2. What about this study?***

A2. The study by ATA involved actual on site traffic counts over an extended period of time, and an analysis of the traffic signal timing.

***Q3. What happened as a result of this study?***

A3. The DOT implemented all aspects of the report by ATA, as all lights were "optimized" per their recommendations. (Note: Launiupoko was not included in the study but has also been "optimized" by the DOT.) Traffic signals that were running on a 2-cycle, AM/PM system were supplemented with a third, mid-day cycle to create a 3-cycle system to better reflect actual traffic. Lights close together have been synchronized to work in sequence to appropriately increase the length of "green" time on the highway at key intersections.

***Q4. What has been done since this implementation?***

A4. Further refinement has included incrementally increasing "green" time on the highway at Shaw Street and Launiupoko from 140 seconds to its current 240 seconds.

***Q5. I understand that all of West Maui intersections have sensors imbedded in the roadbed? What role do they play?***

A5. The sensors communicate with the traffic lights, alerting the lights that there is a car or cars on a side street. The sensors are connected to computerized switches at each intersection with controllers set up so that they “favor” the highway. The highway will always remain “green” until the sensor detects automobiles on a side street. The light will continue on its cycle but when that cycle is up, the light on the highway will turn red allowing the side street traffic to move.

The cars on a side street that trigger the sensor do not have a “green” immediately, as they have to wait for the green light on the highway to finish its pre-programmed cycle time. If there are no cars on the side streets the highway traffic lights will remain green until they are interrupted. The sensors will know how many cars there are on a side street and will stay “green” for as appropriate amount of time, depending on how many cars there are.

***Q6. What would happen if there were no sensors?***

A6. A lack of sensors would create chaos, as lights would be going into “normal” cycling modes even if there were no activity on the side streets thereby, significantly and needlessly, slowing down traffic. For example, at streets with limited traffic such as Halawai Street or Hinau Street, traffic lights would just continually cycle “green/yellow/red” stopping traffic every few minutes for no reason. This concern would be even more apparent at night when there is much less traffic. The sensors assure that the lights on Honoapiilani Highway will allow traffic to run most efficiently.

***Q7. OK! Why am I still backed up, bumper to bumper, every day, coming into Lahaina, from the pali tunnel through to Papalaua?***

A7. There are many reasons:

1. West Maui has only one main highway -- That highway is often in an over capacity situation, particularly in peak afternoon travel times. That increased amount of traffic, heading into Lahaina, can and does overwhelm even perfectly timed traffic signals.
2. Lahaina is a town with schools, homes and businesses that generate a significant amount of local circulation traffic -- That local traffic is forced to mix with visitor traffic because there is only one highway and only one way to get around. Because local traffic is circulating within the community, it needs to be able to make left turns at the intersections along the highway so the traffic light timing must allow for this which will, subsequently, slow down the main highway.

3. There are 25,000 rental cars on the island of Maui -- To add to the highway congestion, major airlines flights from the West Coast tend to land in the same general time block each day, putting hundreds of rentals cars on the highway at the same time. Maui averages over 200,000 visitors each month. A significant increase in the number of time shares, over the past few years are generating many more people coming and going more often. Maui is a first class tourist destination and place to buy vacation property.

**Q8. Why can't we just adjust the lights to stay green even longer to allow for better flow?**

A8. It is a delicate balancing act to increase the green on the highway without severely backing up traffic on the side streets all over West Maui and causing gridlock everywhere else. Maui's a small island with a delicate balance. If you push on one part of the system, other parts will suffer. We have to be careful and prudent in making system adjustments.

Also be mindful that in pedestrian crossing areas such as Launiupoko, if the green is too long, they may assume that the light is not going to give them a "walk" cycle and they may make a dangerous dash across the highway or "jaywalk" away from the intersection.

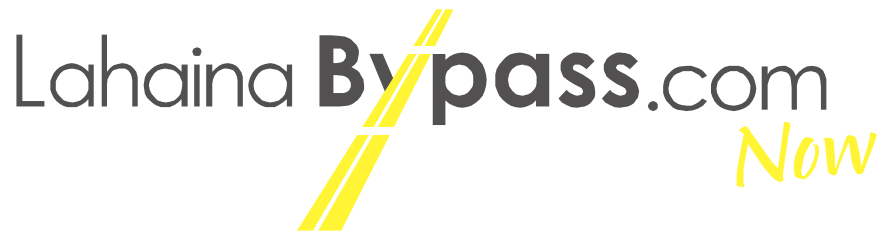
The DOT is working diligently to address this problem. It should also be noted that the computer software, in the controllers, has certain on how much latitude the DOT has in making adjustments.

**Q9. Is the DOT using the latest traffic control software and is the Maui DOT Office able to control the light timing here on Maui without outside contractors or approval from Honolulu?**

A9. The DOT has assured LBN that their software is the latest version and less than a year old. They have also said that by the end of this year, the Maui DOT office expects to have in place all of the equipment and software to be able to instantly make traffic control decisions from their office when and if needed.

**Q10. What has been the most visible improvement in West Maui traffic control since the implementation of the Optimization Study?**

A10. The traffic lights from Lahaina Cannery at Kapunakea Street, going south all the way through to Shaw, are now synchronized to "roll green" all of the way through, allowing for a faster and less frustrating trip. Many residents have called LBN to



comment on how “pleasantly surprised” they are to see all of those “greens” in front of them.

Prior to the optimization, you could get a red light at the different intersections and could only go one block at a time. This synchronization is a big step in the right direction but it has to be noted, as was explained before, cars on the side streets will interrupt those “greens” so that side street traffic can also move.

**Q11. What is LBN’s conclusion on the ability of traffic lights to speed up West Maui traffic?**

A11. The Optimization Study, funded by Intrawest, has an 18 month duration that ends in November 2007. ATA, in conjunction with the DOT, with input from LBN, is working during this “trial and error” phase to try every possible solution to maximize traffic flow within the limits of common sense and safety.

There is only so much traffic timing adjustments can do, considering how many cars are on our one highway during peak periods. It may not appear so, but our lights, going in and out of Lahaina, are, indeed, synchronized. But even with synchronization, traffic still has to be allowed to move on our side streets and also allow for left turn green arrows. Again, with the high volume of cars, all of this will slow down the Honoapiilani Highway.

Nevertheless, by when this study ends in November of 2007, every possible avenue will have been explored. The traffic lights are just a small part of what it will take to “fix” West Maui traffic, but it’s a start. It’s a small step that we are taking right NOW. Other LBN initiatives have been tackling the more comprehensive, long term issues involving the Bypass itself and a series of alternate road possibilities.

West Maui’s traffic has everyone’s attention now. The bottom line is that even with optimum signal timing on Honoapiilani Highway, we still desperately need to build the Lahaina Bypass and plan for alternatives to how we travel.