Bill 71 (2025)
Testimony

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Testimony in SUPPORT of BILL 71 (25)
RELATING TO SHARED STREETS

HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL MEMBER TOMMY WATERS, CHAIR & PRESIDING OFFICER

Hearing Date: November 5, 2025 Room Number: City Council Chamber and Videoconference

Fiscal Implications: The Department of Health (DOH) defers to the City and County of Honolulu, Department of Transportation Services (DTS) for fiscal implications of implementation.

Department Position: The DOH supports Honolulu City Council Bill 71 (25), which addresses provisions related to shared streets, adds new definitions for "Designated Shared Street Area," "Non-Motorized Users," Shared Street," and "Traffic Calming Measures," and establishes the process and rules for Designated Shared Street Areas.

Department Testimony: Shared Streets provide a safe, accessible, and efficient space for all users of designated shared street areas, with priority given to pedestrians and other non-motorized users. Despite Hawai'i's favorable climate, geography, and reputation for active outdoor living, only 25% of Hawaii residents, in 2023, met federal guidelines for physical activity.[1] Safe, accessible, and walkable community spaces that encourage physical activity can

[1] Hawaii Health Data Warehouse, Hawaii State Department of Health, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2019.

promote better health outcomes. Regular physical activity reduces the risk for serious chronic diseases and conditions such as obesity, heart disease, and diabetes.[2]

Welcoming, safe and accessible places for people to gather and be active are often lacking in under-resourced communities. "Shared Streets" programs, also known as "Open" or "Play Streets" can remedy this by allowing community members to gather, socialize, walk, run, bike, skate, dance, or participate in other activities on streets temporarily closed to motorized traffic. Shared Streets initiatives are one way to combat preventable chronic conditions, in a way that emphasizes community engagement and enjoyment of existing, and often underutilized, municipal infrastructure. If implemented regularly, Shared Streets have been shown to increase rates of physical activity in communities at a relatively low cost to cities.[3,4]

For example, since its inception in 2008, the New York City Summer Streets program found that 24% of attendees who reported that they did not routinely engage in moderate- or vigorous-intensity physical activity would be engaged in the equivalent of 26–68 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity at Summer Streets.[5] Summer Streets served as an enticement for New Yorkers, including those who did not ordinarily meet physical activity recommendations, to engage in physical activity. In a comparable program in St. Louis, Missouri, over 50% of adult participants surveyed reported achieving 75 minutes or more of physical activity at the event. In Pennsylvania, 97% of participants in a comparable Open Streets program met the recommended 30 minutes of daily physical activity[6] and 39% of participants were found in the same study to have met the recommended 150 minutes of weekly physical activity, in just one day.

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[2] CDC *About Physical Activity*. 2021.
[3] 3 Carlson, J., Sallis, J., Engelberg, J., Black, M., Sanchez, J., & Ryan, S. (2014). Evaluation of San Diego's First CicloSDias Open Streets Event. http://sallis.ucsd.edu/Documents/Pubs_documents/cicloSDias%20 full%20report%20FINAL%202_13_2014.pdf
[4] CicLAvia Research & Evaluation Group: Progress Report 1
[5] Wolf, S. A., Grimshaw, V. E., Sacks, R., Maguire, T., Matera, C., & Lee, K. K. (2015). The impact of a temporary recurrent street closure on physical activity in New York City. Journal of Urban Health, 92(2), 230–241. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11524-014-9925-0
[6] 1 Engelberg, J. K., Carlson, J. A., Black, M. L., Ryan, S., & Sallis, J. F. (2014). Ciclovía participation and impacts in San Diego, CA: The first CicloSDias. Preventive Medicine, 69, Supplement, S66–S73

The DOH, in partnership with the Kauai County Planning Department supports the Kauai Play Streets[7] program, which, since its inception in 2022, has been successful in expanding access to low-stress activity spaces for keiki and their families to engage in physical activity, particularly in rural communities.

By repurposing public assets such as streets, and opening them up to people, a Shared Streets program fosters community belonging. Shared Streets also help to normalize active transportation, such as biking and walking, which has potential to increase everyday physical activity. The DOH supports this measure to address and define provisions related to Shared Streets that will support the health and wellbeing of communities across O'ahu.

Offered Amendments: None

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

[7] https://www.playstreetskauai.com/