BILL 48 (2025)
Testimony

MISC. COM. 136(26)
ZONING (ZON)

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WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Testimony in SUPPORT of BILL 48 (25)
RELATING TO PEDESTRIAN MALLS

HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON ZONING AND PLANNING
COUNCIL MEMBER ESTHER KIA'AINA, CHAIR

Hearing Date: April 2, 2026
9:00 AM

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 48 (25), which would establish a portion of Chaplain Lane as a pedestrian mall closed to vehicular traffic with certain exceptions. The measure further authorizes the DTS to control and coordinate the use of the newly established Chaplain Lane pedestrian mall.

Department Testimony: The designation of Chaplain Lane as a pedestrian mall will create a safe, welcoming space for residents and visitors to walk, gather, and move freely. Accessible pedestrian environments are associated with increased daily walking and overall physical activity, contributing to improved cardiovascular health and reduced chronic disease risk.

Despite Hawaii'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,

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

accessible, and walkable community spaces that encourage physical activity can promote better health outcomes. Regular physical activity reduces the risk for serious chronic diseases and conditions such as obesity, heart disease, and diabetes.[2]

The design of our built environment is a critical determinant of health. Streets, sidewalks, and public spaces directly shape the physical activity levels, mental well-being, and safety of the people who live, work, and visit in our communities. Research consistently demonstrates that access to pedestrian infrastructure with features like pedestrian malls, protected walkways, and car-free zones, which promote regular physical activity, reduces sedentary behavior, and contributes to lower rates of chronic disease.[3] [4] Investing in active transportation infrastructure is one of the most cost-effective, population-level interventions available to government. When communities prioritize safety, walkability, and accessibility it becomes easier for residents to incorporate physical activity into their everyday life.

Healthy communities are built on environments that make the healthy choice the easy choice. Establishing the Chaplain Lane pedestrian mall is a tangible, place-based investment in the health, safety, and quality of life of Honolulu residents. The DOH strongly urges the Committee on Zoning and Planning to pass this measure and looks forward to continued collaboration with the City and County of Honolulu in building a healthier Hawaii.

Offered Amendments: None

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

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[2] CDC *About Physical Activity*. 2021.

[3] Sallis, J. F., Floyd, M. F., Rodríguez, D. A., & Saelens, B. E. (2012). Role of built environments in physical activity, obesity, and cardiovascular disease. Circulation, 125(5), 729–737. https://doi.org/10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.110.969022

[4] Maddock, J. E., Ramirez, V., Heinrich, K. M., Zhang, M., & Brunner, I. M. (2012). A statewide observational assessment of the pedestrian and bicycling environment in Hawaii, 2010. Preventing Chronic Disease, 9, 110096. https://doi.org/10.5888/pcd9.110096