

Nu‘uanu/Punchbowl Neighborhood Board –April 18, 2023

Karl Rhoads

Last meeting: March 21, 2023

1. In the last neighborhood board meeting, Board Member Kurashige requested the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards for utility poles along the Pali Highway. I contacted the State Department of Transportation (DOT) regarding this problem and will update the Board when I receive their response.
2. In the last neighborhood board meeting, Board Member Kurashige wanted to know why the helmet safety bill House Bill (HB) 1111 and its companion Senate Bill (SB) 1409 died. While HB 1111 was heard by the Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committee (JHA), the Chair of the Committee Representative Tarnas elected to defer the measure, stating that the DOT needed to submit stronger legislation and consult with the State Department of Health (DOH). Representative Tarnas was concerned that the measure infringed on civil liberties and that it would compel the State to pay for long-term care services for related head injuries. Since HB 1111 died in the House, the Senate Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts (TCA) chose not to hear the companion bill SB 1409, knowing it would only be deferred again at a later point.
3. The Red Light safety program is now in effect at the following locations:

Vineyard Boulevard and Palama Street – Live for Citations
Vineyard Boulevard and Liliha Street – Live for Citations
Vineyard Boulevard and Nuuanu Avenue – Live for Citations
Pali Highway and Vineyard Boulevard – Live for Citations
Pali Highway and School Street – Live for Citations
Likelike Highway and School Street – Live for Citations
Kapiolani Boulevard and Kamakee Street – Live for Warnings
Beretania Street and Piikoi Street – Live for Warnings
4. Last week, the Dept. of Health reported 959 new Covid cases with a 7-day average of 141 cases and 4 deaths. The highly contagious Omicron XBB.1.5 subvariant is now the most prevalent Covid variant in the U.S. Recently, the FDA decided to allow some people to get a second booster with one of the Covid-19 vaccines that has been updated to target the omicron variant.

These second booster shots will be limited to those age 65 and older who received their first shot of the bivalent vaccine at least 4 months ago, and for those with weakened immune systems who received one of these shots at least 2 months ago. The decision to authorize this second booster is expected to be officially announced within the next week. I encourage you to get your shots and boosters and continue to wear masks inside even where you don't have to.

5. Don't hesitate to call my office, 586-6130, with questions or concerns or email me at senrhoads@capitol.hawaii.gov