

State sifts plans to shift the sands of Waikiki Beach

We're smarter than we used to be. Now we know better than to build hotels and other structures smack on the shoreline, where surf and currents erode and rebuild beaches over long seasonal cycles.

Unfortunately, we did not recognize — or respect — that fact in throwing up a wall of hotels on Waikiki Beach in the post-statehood tourism boom.

The beach was situated literally at the hotels' doorsteps — which led to hotel owners' alarm when the sand went into its natural cycle of recession, which led to the construction of seawalls and groins to try to hold the sand in, which led to more erosion . . .

Which led to the \$10 million Waikiki beach-widening and stabilization project now being planned by the state.

There's little question something needs to be done. For one thing, there is no beach in front of the Halekulani Hotel, where waves slap against a seawall.

Under other circumstances, it's arguable that the "something" to do would be to rip out the existing seawalls and groins, and let Mother Nature do her thing.

Can't do that at Waikiki — unless someone invents a hy-



9/8/91

ISLAND LAND

Andy Yamaguchi
Advertiser land use writer

Land-use meetings

Waikiki Convention Center Authority, 11 a.m. tomorrow at 19th-floor conference room of Grosvenor Center mauka tower. Regular meeting.

State Commission on Water Resource Management, 6 p.m. Tuesday at Maui's Kahului Library, public hearing on proposal to designate Iao Aquifer as a water management area, which would place stricter regulatory controls on water use from that source.

draulic jack big enough to lift each hotel and set it back down 20 yards or so mauka.

So the project engineers are, in effect, planning around the hotels and existing seawalls. They're a given. Now make the best of it.

Five groins currently jut into the ocean between Fort De-Russy and San Souci Beach,



Advertiser file photo

Three years ago, a bulldozer was ready to deposit new sand at Kuhio Beach in Waikiki to replace what was washed away by the ocean.

and more ocean structures would be added, under preliminary plans by the state Department of Transportation.

A number of configurations are being considered, but a common feature is the use of a groin or underwater shoal to build back the beach at the Halekulani. Another thought is to extend and/or heighten the crib seawall at Kuhio Beach.

Planners estimate that 130,000 cubic yards of sand — dredged from off Oahu's south shore, or manufactured from pulverized coral — would be added along the 1.3-mile beach, creating 350,000 square feet of new beach.

Some members of an advisory

committee to the state re-member that past efforts to "replenish" the beach sand resulted in the sand being carried out to sea, fouling the reefs.

At a meeting of the advisory committee Wednesday, Terry O'Halloran, president of The Ocean Recreation Council of Hawaii, told state officials he was "uncomfortable (because) it seems like what we're talking about is an engineering solution. . . . It appears it might be a high-cost, short-term solution."

"You're right in that it is an engineering solution — but we've got to start somewhere," replied Tom Fujikawa, project

manager for the state Harbors Division.

Elaine Tamaye, vice president for the ocean engineering firm Edward K. Noda & Assoc., a consultant to the state on this project, added, "We'd like to stay away from structures, but some areas need help."

The state will hold a public informational meeting on its preliminary plans Sept. 24 at 7 p.m. at Waikiki Elementary School.

After that, the concepts will be distilled into one working plan, which will be the subject of a draft environmental impact statement, a public hearing, a final EIS and a legislative budget request.