

A row of red and white buses with 'Hele On' branding parked in a lot. The buses are decorated with colorful graphics, including a large handprint and the text 'Hele On'. The background shows trees and a blue sky with clouds. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark blue filter.

# Hawai'i Mass-Transit

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Created by Kari Sochor



The public transport system on the Big Island is called the "Hele-on bus"

To *Hele* means to cause to move, set in motion; to start, as a clock. "Let's hele," means "Let's go!"

This bus can get you around the whole of the island and using it is free!



# History before the Hele-ON



Prior to the Hele-on, public transport was provided by the “Sampan Bus” system. The first sampan bus was created by a local Hilo taxi Driver named *Fukumatsu Kusumoto*, in 1922. He converted a Ford by expanding the passenger area with wooden benches. Some buses could hold up to 12 people.



By 1971, the Sampan bus system was 20 years old, and Hilo Councilman James Souza sponsored a bill to create a County transportation system to address the transportation needs of people in the area.

In 1973 the county transportation system official launched on November 29, with one bus that ran from Waiohinu to Hilo, and was supported by Councilman Dante Carpenter, who eventually became mayor in 1984.

By 1975, Hawaii Mass-Transit Agency bought out the “sampan” bus system and began providing services for the County of Hawaii as the Hele-On bus.

# So why Hele-ON?

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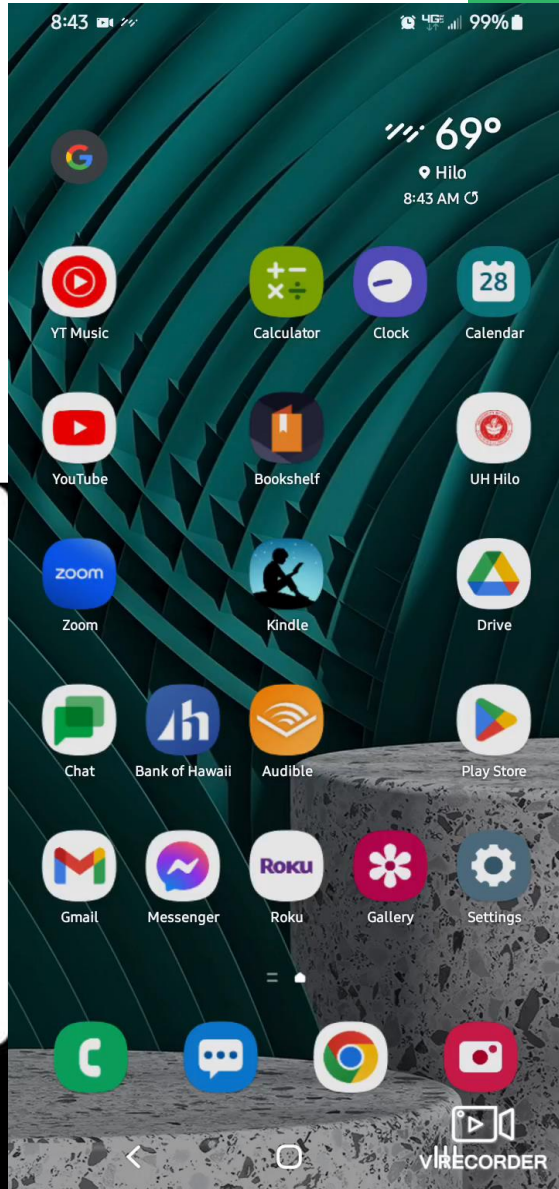
Olan Carpenter, Dante Carpenter's wife, came up with the name "Hele-On" after learning the Hawaiian Pidgin phrase meaning, "to get out of here" or "to move along".

On December 15, 1975, the first bus ran a 36-mile round trip within Hilo, serving Keaukaha. There were no scheduled stops, passengers made stop requests or would flag the bus while enroute, and the bus driver would choose a safe place to stop. At some intersections in the city, the bus was unable to negotiate some turns without having all other vehicles cleared, and that first trip took 2 hours and 40 minutes to complete.

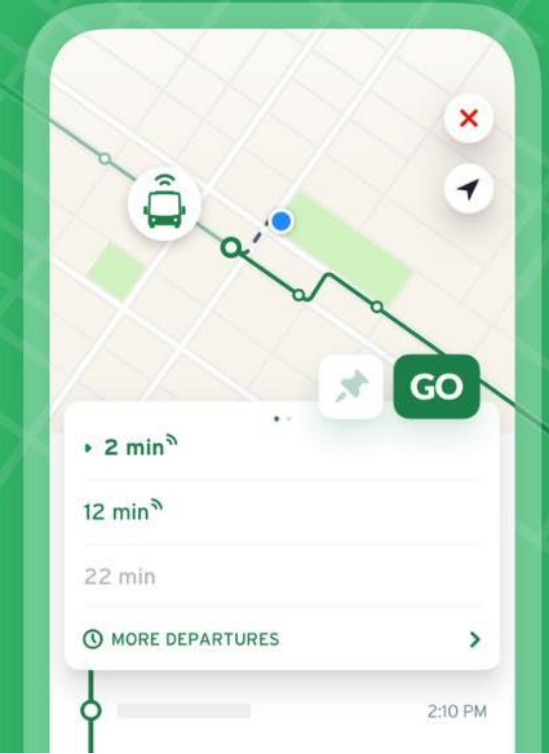
# Why Ride?

- It's FREE!
- Reduce Environmental Impact
- Safer and Reliable
- Accessible
- Social engagement

# TRANSIT APP



Plan your trip.  
Track your ride.



SCAN ME

Making Hele-On more reliable by using the Transit App.

Get bus schedules, maps, and live time updates to catch connecting routes!

# Bus Schedules that Service Hawai'i Schools

The Hele-On Bus offers several schedules and routes, including ones specific for school.

Discover what bus schedule and route best fits you, go to [Hele-On Bus Schedules and Maps — Hele-On - A Service of the County of Hawai'i Mass Transit Agency \(heleonbus.org\)](https://heleonbus.org)

SCHOOL	ADDRESS	NEAREST BUS ROUTE
<b>Hilo Complex</b>		
Ernest Bowen de Silva Elementary	278 Ainako Ave, Hilo, HI 96720	102
Haaheo Elementary	121 Haaheo Road, Hilo HI 96720	1, 60, 80
Hilo High	556 Waianuenue Avenue, Hilo HI 96720	2/Blue, 102
Hilo Intermediate	587 Waianuenue Avenue, Hilo HI 96720	2/Blue, 102
Hilo Union Elementary	506 Waianuenue Avenue, Hilo HI 96720	2/Blue, 102
Kalaniana'ole Elementary & Intermediate	27-330 Old Mamalahoa Highway, Papaikou 96781-0028	1, 60
Kapiolani Elementary	966 Kilauea Avenue, Hilo HI 96720	10, 11/Red, 103
Kaumana Elementary	1710 Kaumana Drive, Hilo HI 96720	2/Blue
Keaukaha Elementary	240 Desha Avenue, Hilo 96720	101
Connections Public Charter School *	174 Kamehameha Ave, Hilo, HI 96720	1, 2/Blue, 10, 11/Red, 40, 60, 80, 101, 102, 103, 104
Ka 'Umeke Ka'eo Public Charter School *	222 Desha Ave, Hilo, HI 96720	101
Ke Ana La'ahana Public Charter School *	160 Baker Ave, Hilo, HI 96720	101
<b>Laupahoehoe Complex</b>		
Laupahoehoe Community Public Charter School *	35-2065 Old Mamalahoa Hwy, Laupahoehoe, HI 96764	1, 60, 80
<b>Waiakea Complex</b>		
Waiakea Elementary	180 W. Puainako Street, Hilo 96720	10, 11/Red, 40, 103
Waiakea High	155 W. Kawili Street, Hilo 96720	10, 11/Red, 103
Waiakea Intermediate	200 W. Puainako Street, Hilo 96720	10, 11/Red, 103
Waiakeawaena Elementary	2420 Kilauea Avenue, Hilo 96720	103
<b>Honokaa Complex</b>		
Honokaa Elementary	45-534 Pakalana Street, Honokaa 96727	1, 60, 76/Green, 80
Honokaa High & Intermediate	45-527 Pakalana Street, Honokaa 96727	1, 60, 76/Green, 80
Paauilo Elementary & Intermediate	43-1497 Hauola Rd, Paauilo, HI 96776	1, 60, 80
Waimea Elementary	67-1225 Mamalahoa Hwy	75, 76/Green, 80, 301
Waimea Middle Public Charter Community School *	67-1229 Mamalahoa Hwy, Waimea, HI 96743	75, 76/Green, 80, 301
<b>Kealakehe Complex</b>		
Holualoa Elementary	76-5957 Mamalahoa Hwy, Holualoa HI 96725	No Transit Service
Kealakehe Elementary	74-5118 Kealakaa Street, Kailua-Kona 96740	1, 203



## Where to Catch the Bus?

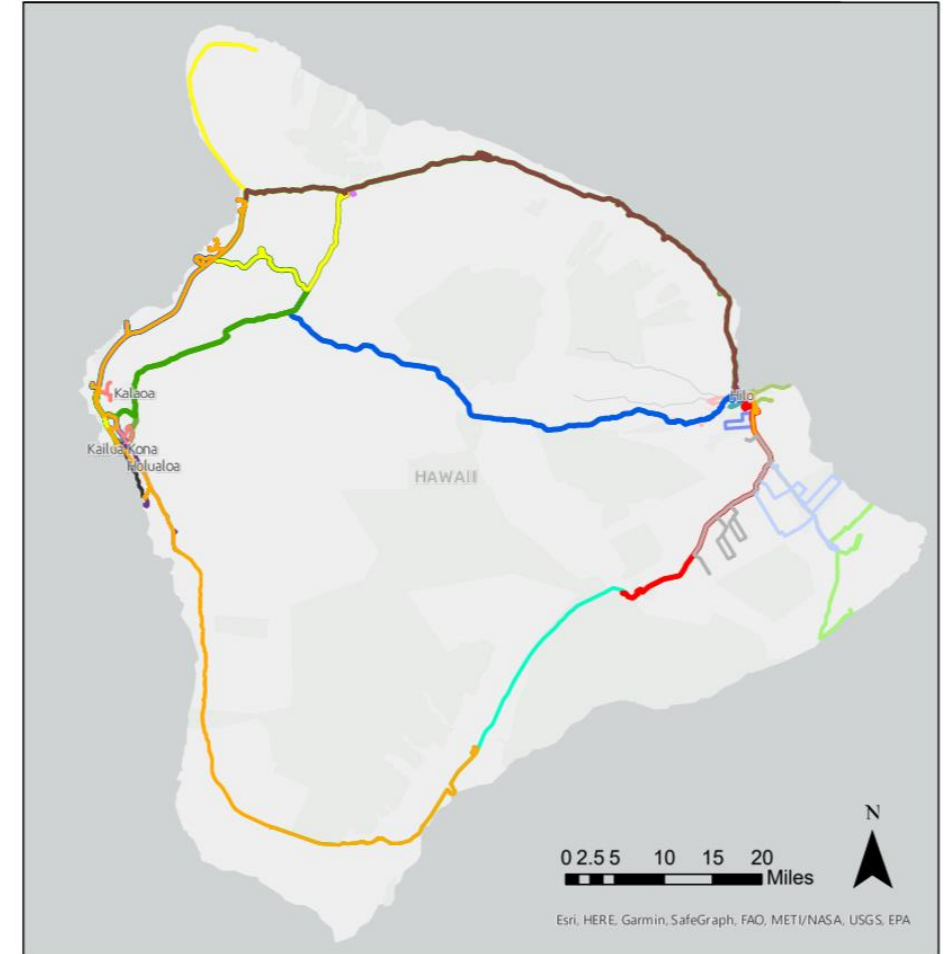
- There are many designated bus stops; such as the Mo'ohau Bus Terminal in Downtown Hilo, the stop located above Macy's at the Prince Kuhio Plaza, or the stop located on Banyan Drive.
- The bus currently operates on a "Flag-Stop" system, which means you can ask the driver to stop somewhere that is not a bus stop, and they will stop if it is safe. You can even flag them down to pick you up.
- Hawai'i County is currently working on adding another 41 new bus stops that are ADA compliant to help move away from the "Flag-Stop" system.



# Accessibility

- Accessibility, in regards to public transit, is the quality of providing easy to use service to a location and the people who may use it.
- Riding the bus can make it easier to explore the island, access essential services, as well as employment, entertainment and social activities.
- The county is continuously working on making the Mass-Transit more reliable, safe, and trustworthy.
- Buses are now equipped with satellite GPS for real live-time updates!
- The Hele-On app, *Transit*, is a great way to get current bus route maps and live bus updates on locations and times!

## County of Hawai'i Mass Transit Agency Bus Routes



Route	
1: Hilo to Kailua-Kona	101: Keaukaha
2: Blue Line	102: Kaunana
10: Hilo to Ocean View	103: Waialeale Uka
11: Red Line	104: Mohouli
40: Hilo to Pahoa	201: Kona Trolley via Ali'i Drive
60: Hilo to Honoka'a-Waimea	202: North & Central Kailua-Kona
70: North Kohala to South Kohala Resorts	204: South Kona/Captain Cook
75: North Kohala-Waimea-SRR-Kailua-Kona	301: Waimea Circulator
76: Green Line	401: Hawaiian Beaches/Nanawale/Seaview
80: Hilo to South Kohala Resorts	402: Hawaiian Paradise Park/Orchidland/Hawaiian Acres/ Ainaloa
	403: Fern Acres/Fern Forest/ Eden Roc



# ADA Compliant

The Department of Transportation issues and mandates regulations regarding the accessibility of public transport, including supplementary paratransit services for individuals with disabilities.

To be ADA compliant, each bus stop must have bus boarding areas that are at least 5 feet wide parallel and 8 feet perpendicular to the street





# Racking up Rides with Hele-On Ka Ho'okele

HCEOC joined the County of Hawai'i Mass Transit Agency as a service operator for their new rural transit system, Hele-On Ka Ho'okele  
<http://www.heleonbus.org/hele-on-ka-hookele>

The service area for Hele-On Ka Ho'okele operates within the County Of Hawai'i area outside the primary service areas of Hele-On fixed route, Hele-On Kako'o paratransit, and Coordinated Services for the Elderly services

Hele -On Ka Ho'okele is currently free to the general public and primarily provides service to the nearest Hele-On fixed route bus stop. Call Transportation Office at (808) 731-7009 option 3 to see if your address is within the Hele-On Ka Ho'okele service area, or click here to register and schedule a ride online at <https://kahookele.tectransit.com/>



# HI-Bike

Check out [HIBIKE-Hawaii!](https://www.hawaiiislandbike.com/hele-on/) If you ride Hele-On Bus, ask the driver for a code and your ride is free on [HIBIKE-Hawaii](https://www.hawaiiislandbike.com/hele-on/). Learn more at <https://www.hawaiiislandbike.com/hele-on/>

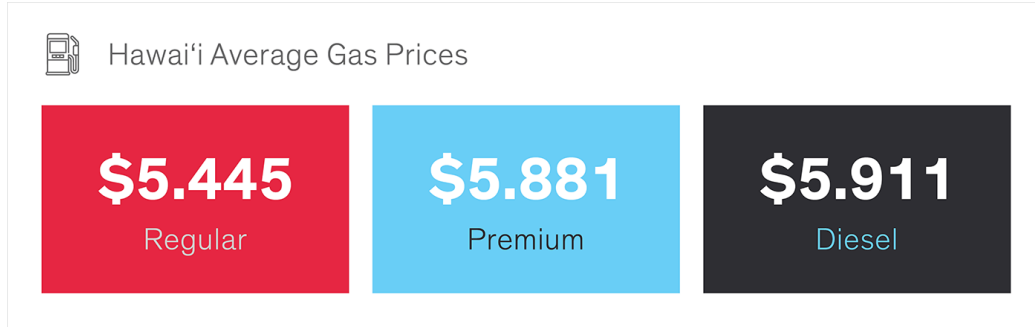


CAR

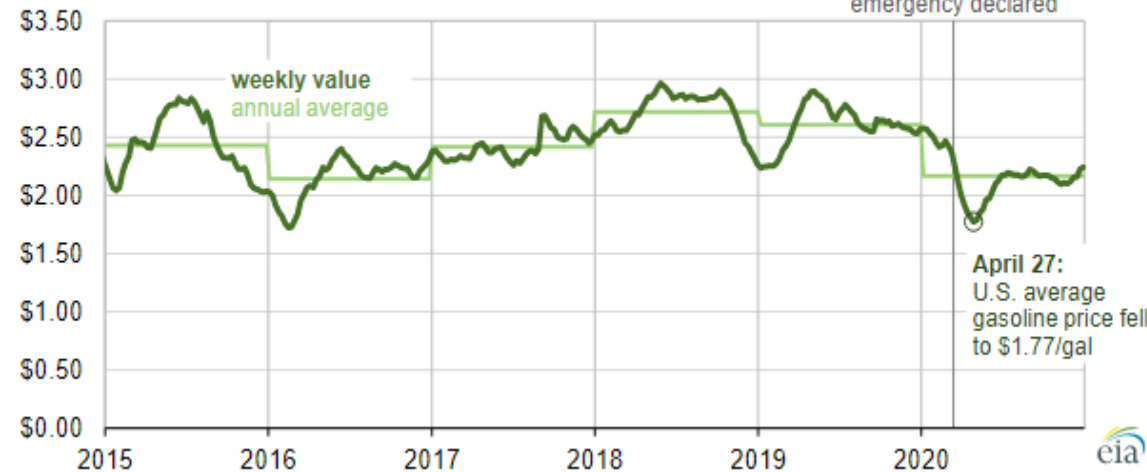
FREE

DAY

# Cost Effective Transportation



Weekly U.S. average regular gasoline retail price (Jan 2015–Dec 2020)  
dollars per gallon (\$/gal)



[U.S. Energy Information Administration - EIA - Independent Statistics and Analysis](#)  
[Regional gasoline price differences - U.S. Energy Information Administration \(EIA\)](#)  
[Why are Hawaii gas prices higher than the mainland's? \(hawaii.newsnow.com\)](#)  
[Cost of Living in Hawaii 2022 \(realthawaii.co\)](#)

How much do you think the average adult in Hawai'i spent on gas last year?

Research prices from around the island last year and calculate the average price and how much the average adult spent on 12g of gas/week of 1 year.

American Automobile Association Gas Mileage Calculator calculates that the average American driver spends about **\$3,000 per year** on gas. That **does not include** the yearly price of a car registration, safety check, or the monthly cost of insurance!

Gasoline prices differ over time and states. Differences in state and local taxes contribute to different gas prices.

Historically, Hawai'i lags behind the mainland when it comes to lowering gas prices. One main reason includes that **we're in a remote location.**

# Reduce your Environmental Impact

Go to <https://www.epa.gov/energy/measure-impact-your-energy-use-environment> and measure your impact.

Mass-Transit can help reduce air pollution and carbon emissions.

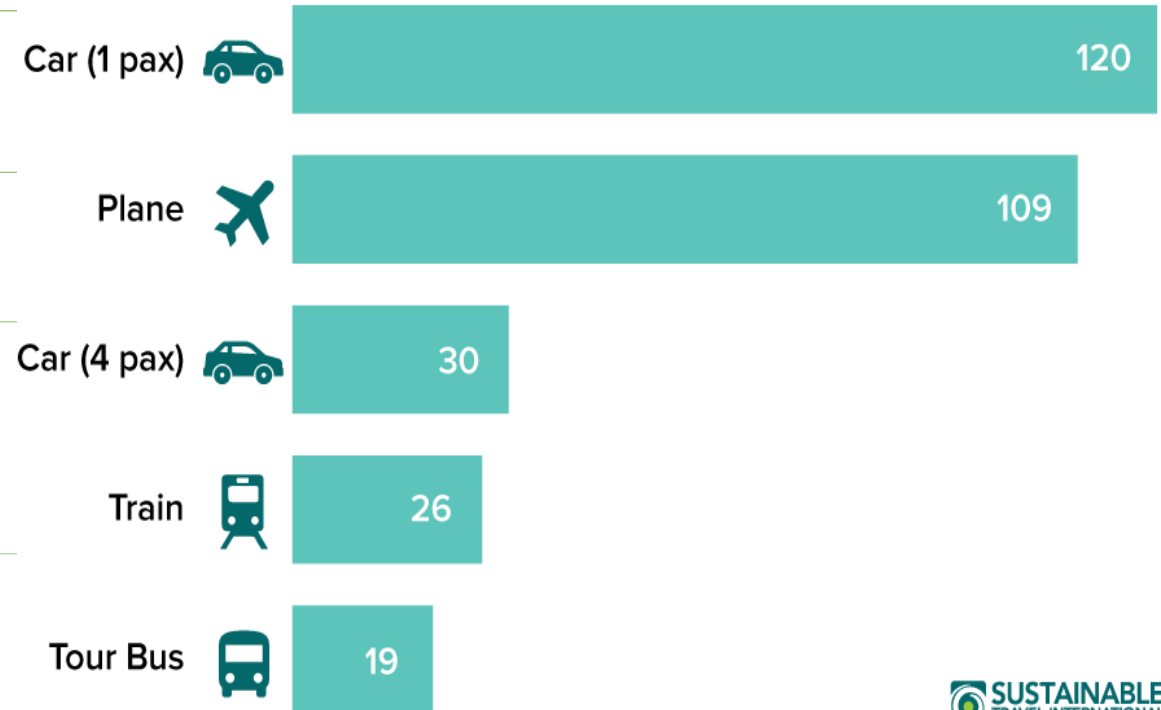
Private vehicles emit about twice as much carbon monoxide than public vehicles.

Mass transit reduces the number of cars on the road which in turn reduces the pollution caused by individual cars.

Hawai'i County just got 4 brand new hydrogen-powered buses and will be getting another 11 by July, moving towards its goal to be a Zero Emissions fleet by 2035-2036.

## Carbon Footprint of a 200 Mile Trip

pounds of CO<sub>2</sub>e emitted per passenger





State of HI Traffic  
Fatalities Jan. 1, 2022  
thru Nov. 9, 2022

# Safety Statistics

COUNTY	Motor Vehicle	Pedestrians	Motorcycle/Moped/ Scooter	Bicyclists	TOTAL
Honolulu	14	12	9 m/c's, 1 moped, 5 scooters Total – 15	4	45
Hawai'i	17	6	9 m/c's, 0 moped, 0 scooters Total – 9	1	33
Maui	6	4	5 – m/c's 0 – mopeds 1 - scooters Total – 6	1	17
Kauai	5	2	0 – m/c's 0 – mopeds 1 – scooters Total - 1	0	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>103</b>

Mass-Transit can be a safe and reliable mode of transportation.

Bus accidents are less common than regular car accidents.

According to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, only 16 people in the state died in bus-related accidents in 2020.

Hawai'i County is continuously working on making the buses safer and more reliable.

Create a visual graph/chart showing the fatality statistics between the different county's.

# Bus Facts

The average lifespan of a bus can be anywhere from 12 years to 500,000 miles.

The average bus can hold up to 58 people, 43 seated and 15 standing, with wheelchair accessibility for up to two wheelchairs.

The Hele-On bus has 24 different lines and routes that can be used to travel across the island, so *TAKE THE TRIP TODAY!!!*







**We want your  
feedback!**

Please follow this QR Code  
and fill out the  
Hele On Bus Comment Card.



**Mahalo for your participation**



**Telephone and Office Hours are Monday to Friday, 7:45 a.m.  
to 4:30 p.m.**

**Phone: (808) 961-8744, TDD/TTY: 711 through the Relay  
Service**

**Email: [heleonbus@hawaiicounty.gov](mailto:heleonbus@hawaiicounty.gov)**

***Take the Trip!!!***

We hope to see you on one of Hele-On family of services soon!  
Hawaii County, HI Mass Transit Agency |

<https://www.heleonbus.hawaiicounty.gov/home-transit>



# Meeting Bus Drivers and Riders

Riding the bus can be a great way to meet others and learn more about different cultures.

