



Sustainable Cayman
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Press Statement

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George Town, Grand Cayman

Millions Already Spent on Outdated EIA as Government Pushes Forward With Unassessed Route, FOI Release Reveals

Sustainable Cayman has today released records obtained under the Freedom of Information Act relating to the East–West Arterial extension through the Central Mangrove Wetlands in Grand Cayman.

What these records reveal is straightforward but deeply concerning.

The route now being advanced is not the route that was assessed in the 2025 Environmental Impact Assessment.

Since late 2025, the alignment has been revised and extended from Woodland Drive to the north of the Paul Bodden Quarry. Internal correspondence confirms that these changes were made to reduce impacts on certain private parcels and to align more closely with existing development layouts. In doing so, the route now introduces new increased area impacts, including the proposed acquisition and division of land held by the National Trust for the Cayman Islands on behalf of the people of the Cayman Islands.

This is not a minor refinement. It is a fundamental shift.

The records indicate that revisions to the alignment were being actively developed from October 2025, several months before the current amendment process began. Yet instead of the assessment guiding the decision, the process now appears to be working in reverse. The Environmental Impact Assessment is being amended to fit the revised route. As the saying goes, measure twice, cut once – and here, the cutting appears to be happening before the measuring is complete.

The current amendment is incomplete in scope. It does not revisit alternative routes or fully assess cumulative impacts. It does not include new baseline studies, and at this stage, it does not include public consultation. The Department of Environment has already indicated that the scale of change is significant and may undermine elements of the original assessment.

Despite this, the project continues to move forward. This brings into focus a growing concern around cost and public value.

The Environmental Impact Assessment process has already required substantial public funding, with a reported budget of approximately CI\$4 million and close to CI\$2 million spent by the end of 2024. With the route now materially changed, further public funds will be required to amend and extend that work. The cost of the updated scope has been redacted.

At the same time, the original investment is being diminished. So where will this money come from?

For many residents of Grand Cayman, the financial strain is already real. The cost of owning and maintaining a vehicle continues to rise, while public transport options remain limited. People are asking for reliable, affordable ways to move around the island. They are not asking for more roads that deliver only marginal time savings.

And the wider effects are already being felt. More roads alone are not easing congestion. They are drawing more vehicles onto the network, increasing heat, placing additional pressure on drainage, and raising long-term flood risk. They are also widening inequality between those who can absorb these costs and those who cannot.

Sustainable Cayman has written to Cabinet and Caucus on multiple occasions, including formal correspondence supporting the evidence-based Route B2 recommended by the Environmental Assessment Board and National Conservation Council. To date, no formal response has been received.

The records now released also raise questions about the current alignment itself.

As shown in the revised boundary plan, the route extends beyond Lookout Gardens and shifts in a pattern that moves south and then sharply back north, passing above quarry lands and into areas of sensitive hydrology. This includes proximity to critical freshwater catchments and highly vulnerable wetland systems.

By contrast, the previously recommended Route B2 provides a direct and logical connection to Midland Acres, serving existing infrastructure while avoiding unnecessary fragmentation of the Central Mangrove Wetlands. Why pursue a more disruptive and less coherent alignment when a viable alternative already exists?

The Central Mangrove Wetlands are not spare land. They are part of Grand Cayman's natural infrastructure, providing flood protection, water regulation, and climate resilience. Once that system is fragmented, those services do not disappear quietly. They return as cost – in flooding, in infrastructure strain, and in long-term public expenditure.

Sustainable Cayman is therefore calling for one clear step.

Caucus must not proceed with Phase 2 of the East–West Arterial until there is full transparency on the revised alignment, its true cost, and its long-term impact, alongside a clear strategy to protect the Central Mangrove Wetlands in their entirety.

This is about ensuring that progress in Grand Cayman is properly measured, properly understood, and genuinely in the public interest.

Because if we get this wrong, the public will pay for it twice – once in fees, and again in the consequences.

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Founded in 2014 and officially recognised as a charitable organisation in 2022, Sustainable Cayman continues to provide practical, community-driven solutions to sustainability challenges, working toward a resilient future for the Cayman Islands.

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