

Mori, Ashley

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, October 31, 2019 10:11 PM
To: General Plan
Subject: Comments on draft general plan
Attachments: general_plan_comments.docx

Hi,

I understand that the deadline for comments on the draft general plan is today, but I can't find any instructions on the website about *how* to comment. I've attached a document that contains some thoughts - I hope that can be accepted. Thanks for all your work in putting the plan together!

Aloha,
[REDACTED]

2019 NOV 1 AM 3 11
PLANNING DEPARTMENT
COUNTY OF HAWAII

128938

ZERO WASTE

It's great to see that Zero Waste goals are part of the plan. I suggest that the plan contain an additional policy or action in this area: to identify and overcome regulatory barriers to waste reduction. For example, I understand that it's currently not legal to take organic waste from events to be composted on a farm, and that state health department rules prohibit serving food and drinks into a customer's own container. I'm sure there are good reasons behind these rules, but they need to be updated to enable recycling of valuable nutrients and to reduce the use of throwaway containers.

TRANSPORTATION

I strongly support the improvement of mass transit and facilitation of walking and biking. I currently bike around Hilo and have commuted between Puna and Hilo in the past. I don't feel particularly safe on my bike and others often comment that they would try biking but they're scared of the traffic. Biking is cheap, clean, and good for you, so let's make it also not deadly.

Current problems with mass transit obviously include low frequency and limited routes, but also:

- The time it takes for Puna-bound buses to get out of town
- Not knowing more than a day in advance whether you can take a bike on the bus (and sometimes getting incorrect information about that)
- It can be hard to recognize buses when they all look so different – makes it easy to miss them
- Lack of information about whether a bus is running late or will show up at all
- Lack of sheltered bus stops

With our low-density development of course it's going to be difficult to have comprehensive transit options, but surely it would be possible to make bus commuting from HPP convenient and reliable enough to be a no-brainer for many more people.

How can more children walk and bike to school? Fixing that would take so many cars off the road and also help educate the next generation to not be so reflexively car-dependent.

AGRICULTURE

"Prioritizing Agriculture and Food Security" contains many great goals/actions/ideas for facilitating local agriculture. There are also many other ag-related items throughout the Plan, and in addition there many other agencies and organizations involved in local agriculture. It's not clear to me that efforts are well-coordinated, which could lead to missed opportunities and

people working as cross-purposes. Is there anyone within the state, county, UH or elsewhere whose job it is to know everything that's going on and understand the wider context?

3.18: Why not just make ag exemptions conditional on filing taxes as a farmer (require a schedule F)?

548-a-1: Why on Earth would the right to operate a B&B depend on the productivity class of the land? Farming productive land isn't guaranteed to be profitable on its own, so allowing complementary activities could be what keeps good farmland in production. If we're worried about good farmland going to waste, let's address that problem directly instead of in this very roundabout and potentially counterproductive way.

BIOFUELS

309- "Support research and development of viable biofuel projects that will supply renewable transportation fuels or power for Hawai'i Island in ways that are community-supported, sustainable, ecologically sound, and complimentary to food production."

This makes sense, and there are some interesting opportunities here. Oil palms have been shown to grow and produce well at elevations up to about 3000 ft on the Big Island, and they are resistant to many pests and diseases. They can grow on vacant ag land including land that is currently covered in invasive species, so they don't have the notorious sustainability and habitat loss problems caused by palm oil production in Asia.

There are currently about 100 acres of mature oil palms on the island, producing fruit that can be processed into cooking oil and used for biodiesel and animal feed, to name just a few uses. Although these initial, pilot plantings are of palms only, it is also possible to graze cattle among the trees and to interplant with shade-tolerant food crops.

At the moment the main barriers to wider production are (1) nursery facilities for growing seedlings (seedlings are vulnerable to disease until they are a few months old), and (2) processing facilities for the fruit. The Hawai'i Oilseed Producers co-op (HOSPRO) is working to overcome these barriers, and would welcome opportunities to partner with the county to implement policy 309.