

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, October 30, 2019 12:07 PM
To: General Plan
Subject: General Plan 2040 revisions to map
Attachments: Mahukona History and Values.docx

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PGNC
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Aloha Planners,

The following information (also attached) about the values of the land at Mahukona is taken primarily from the PGNC nomination papers asking to preserve the land between Mahukona and Kapa'a parks in open space. The land is currently #4 on the County's 2018 list for purchase, behind three projects that are already in the process of acquisition.

It adds substance to the reasons for why the land needs to be removed from the draft General Plan map.

Aloha, [REDACTED]

Mahukona – History and Values

General Description. The land and series of small inlets between the Mahukona Light and Kapa'a Park have been settled and publically used for 700 years. It harbored several canoe landings, villages and four spiritual sites including the deep water navigational Ko'a Holo Moana Heiau. During the mahele, the land was granted under royal patents to Lota Kamehameha (King Kamehameha V) and Princess Ruth Ke'elikolani. Transfer of the land to Western owners is not clear and has been challenged in court. Mahukona became one of Hawaii's first international ports, known as a supplier of fresh food to ships. In 1878 the Hawaii Kingdom approved construction of Hawaii's first railroad system, which was funded by King Kalakaua. In 1884 the railroad between Mahukona and Niuli'i brought 20,000 tons of cargo, 6,000 passengers, mail and news to Kohala and shipped out sugar and cattle until the 1950's. The town of 40 families and wharf system were closed after that. Though most structures are in ruins, at least 179 archaeological and historic sites, 23 burial sites, shrines and ancient trails are still intact. The land between the parks of Mahukona and Kapa'a was freely used by the public for fishing, gathering and recreation, aided by court-granted public vehicular access, up until 1989 when Chalon International, Inc. gated the coastal trails and road. Offshore, the sea floor is littered with one of the highest concentrations of marine debris and sunken ships found in Hawaii. It is a haven for snorkelers and divers.

Recreation and Education - Mahukona has been used continually for a variety of recreational activities including fishing, snorkeling, camping, picnicking, hiking/walking and is one of the few safe accesses for swimming and launching small boats on the entire coast. A variety of groups use the area for cultural and educational activities, including Na Maka'ala o Kohala and Na Kalai wa'a Moku o Hawai'i because of the navigational Ko'a Holo Moana Heiau, one of the few in Hawaii that is easily accessible with no intrusion of modern activities or buildings/development. From sunup to sunset the now-remaining public area is full of cars, people, swimmers, boaters, hikers and picnickers. It is THE most used of all recreation areas in the North Kohala district. Until the swimming pool was built in the 1970s virtually every Kohala youngster learned to swim at Mahukona.

Prior to 1989 all the lands surrounding the harbor were openly used by the public. Nishimura Bay was a major recreation area. Since then the foreign owner has fenced, signed and put rock barriers even on the public vehicular access gained by Hui Mamalahoa in three separate court cases in the 1980s. Through County Ordinance 93-109 and SMA Permit 341 public shoreline access became mandatory, but with delays in completing the resort and subdivision the owner has restricted access to self-issued permits since 1990. There is currently no public access agreement with the County or State.

Historic/Cultural preservation - Archaeological surveys commissioned by the owners located 179 sites at Mahukona. These sites are part of an interrelated and continuous settlement along the North Kohala coast which has the highest density of pre-contact sites in Hawaii. Although many surface archaeological surveys have been done at Mahukona, none have researched the cultural importance of the area.

Marlenajon Waihe'e Stafford, who was for many years the superintendent of adjoining Lapakahi State Historical Park and a founding member of Na Maka'ala o Kohala, testified before the Hawaii County Council in August 1993 saying:

"Mahukona contains a number of very significant cultural and religious sites. I was taught about some of them by the kupuna of Na Maka'ala O Kohala. I have also benefited from the wisdom of other honored kupuna: Henry Papa Auwae, who was taught the art of Hawaiian healing at Lapakahi, and Clive Luhiau, whose ancestors were the konohiki of Lapakahi. They lived at Mahukona and served as high priests at Kukuipahu Heiau.

"They have told me that Mahukona is linked to several important religious centers.

Among these are the healing center of Lapakahi, and the ancient heiau at Kukuipahu. These places have shared a symbiotic relationship from the beginning of time. Such a relationship is called ho'omana. It is the spiritual harmony that must exist between religious places. Therefore, Mahukona is essential to the spiritual existence of Lapakahi and Kukuipahu.

"If any of these three sites are altered in the wrong way, the ho'omana will be affected or destroyed. While it may be tempting to favor one version of history because it is convenient to do so, the citizens of Kohala and the Hawaiian race deserve to have all the facts brought forward before irreversible damage is done to our sacred places. These places have been in existence for over a thousand years. Certainly we must consider for more than a moment before we take action which may alter or destroy their value. Surely we must consult with every person who can help us understand the impact of what we are doing.

"At one time I believed that a Mahukona Lodge could coexist with sacred and cultural places. However, considering what I have been taught by the kupuna, any development which takes place there must, if it is to respect the religion and culture of the Hawaiian people, be undertaken with the utmost care. We must be absolutely certain that we do not destroy its spirituality in our eagerness for progress or profit."

Protection of natural resources – A recent University of Hawaii, Hilo report heavily criticized the impact development along the South Kohala Coast has and is having on ocean resources. Creating a significant buffer between development and the ocean along the more pristine North Kohala coast is critical to protecting reefs and other aquatic resources because development will eventually harm this area if no meaningful buffer (1000 m to 2000 m) is created. Also, these parcels are important to several endangered (listed) species: The Hawaiian Hoary Bat has been sighted and recently the Hawaiian Monk seals have been frequenting Mahukona. The sightings have prompted new signage by the State regarding care for these endangered animals.

These areas are important to the recovery of three endangered, endemic shrubs: acharanthes, ko'oloa'ula, and ohai. Common name - acharanthes; Family - Amaranthaceae; Genus Acharanthes; Species – mutica Common name - mutica; Family - Malvaceae; Genus - Abutilon; Species - menzesii Common name - ohai; Family - Fabaceae; Genus - Sesbania; Species - tomentosa

Preservation of coastal areas, natural beauty – The natural beauty and viewplanes along this area and the need to preserve this area in open space are recognized in multiple planning documents including the recent North Kohala Community Development Plan, adopted as County Ordinance 08-151 in November 2008. Also scenic beauty is a strong point in both the Northwest Hawaii Open Space Plan and the West Hawaii Regional Plan. Preservation of coastal scenic beauty was a major strategy point in the North Kohala Coastline Conference. The area is marginal grazing land and the community has expressed interest in re-establishing the native coastal dryland shrub and tree forest.

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