

From: [Janet Six](#)
To: [WPCtestimony](#)
Subject: 12/5/24 Special General Plan Meeting
Date: Thursday, December 5, 2024 2:51:15 PM
Attachments: [Testimony.pdf](#)

Aloha,

Attached is my written testimony regarding the General Plan proposed zoning changes from conservation to recreation along the Hilo coast.

Mahalo nui,
Janet Six

Janet Six, Ph.D
355 Kalanianaʻole Street #217
Hilo, Hawaii 96720

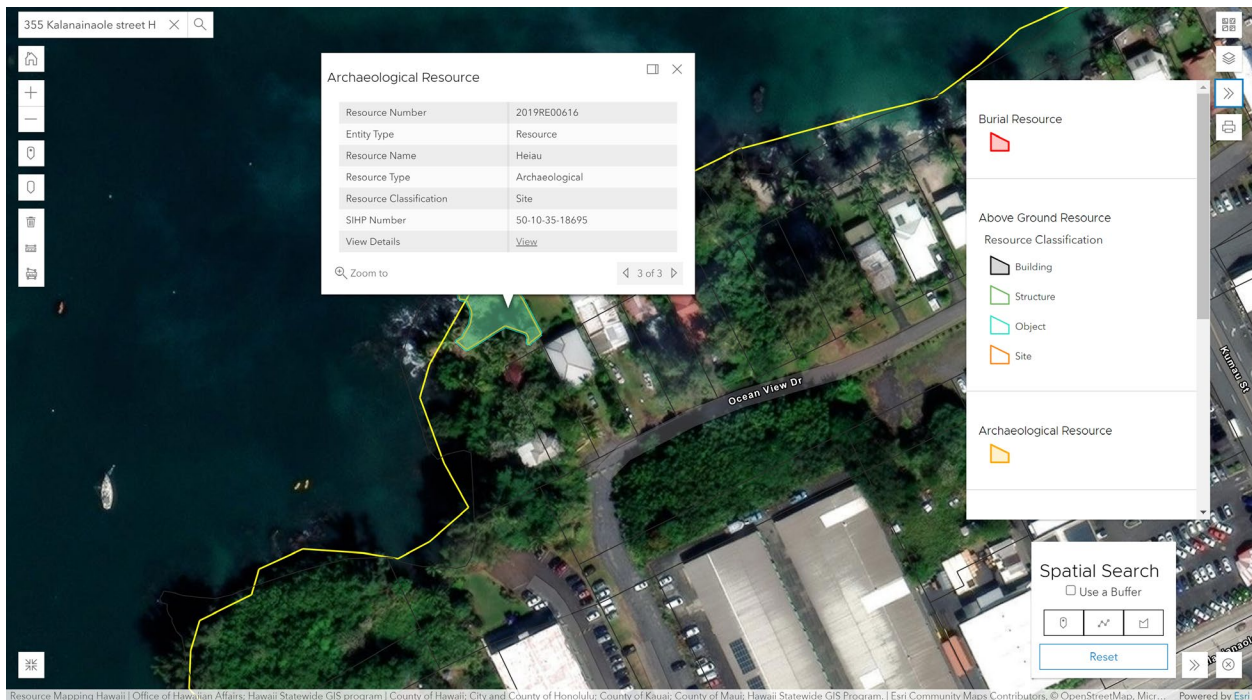
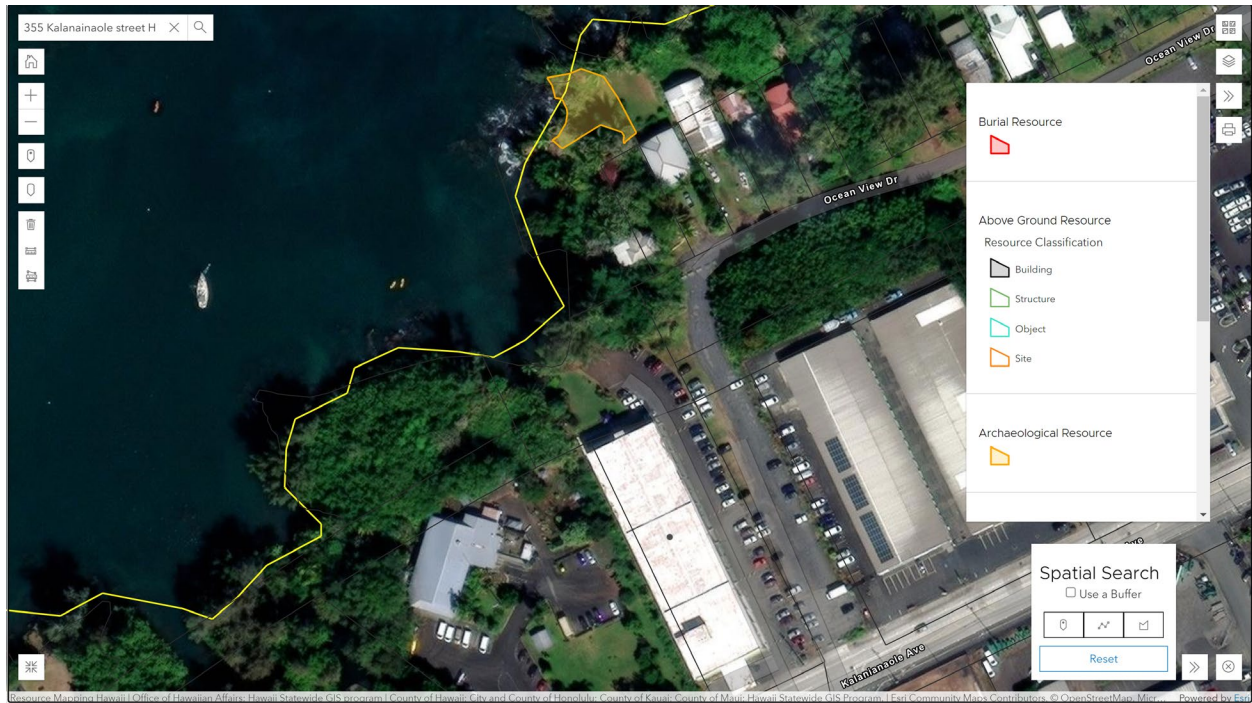
To: Hawaii County Windward Planning Commission

County of Hawaii Planning Department

My name is Dr. Janet Six and I own a residential unit in Orchid Manor located at 355 Kalanianaʻole Street, #217, Hilo, HI 96720. I am also the Vice President of the Board of Directors for the condo association. Additionally, I serve on the Hawaiʻi County Cultural Resources Commission and work for the County of Maui as their Principal Archaeologist.

I have grave concerns with the proposed change in zoning of the parcels along the coast fronting our historic 1969 condo from “conservation” to “recreation.”

In addition to the historic building itself (Orchid Manor was the first condo ever built in Hilo) there are important cultural sites along the coast such as the heiau (outlined in orange) listed in the State Inventory of Historic Places (SIHP) # 50-10-35-18695 (Screen shots below are taken from the State Historic Preservations Divisions HICRIS database)



Since the general plan was conceived in 2005, numerous, compelling factors have changed. We live in a post COVID world where homelessness, substance abuse and mental health issues have skyrocketed.

According to the Hawaii Health Data Warehouse:

“Between 2022 and 2023, Hawai‘i and Kaua‘i Counties experienced 20% and 10% increases in total homelessness, while Maui County experienced a 5% decrease.

- *Hawai‘i County: Of the 661 unsheltered households surveyed, 18.5% cited a family/relationship conflict, and 15.7% cited being unable to afford rent as reasons for their current living situation (<https://hhdw.org/na-2023-point-in-time-counts/>)”*

According to a January 30th article published this year by Civil Beat:

“The Big Island’s homeless population has exploded in recent years. In 2019, 690 people were counted as homeless, a number that grew to 1,003 last year. <https://www.civilbeat.org/2024/01/a-birth-on-a-hilo-sidewalk-reflects-challenges-in-helping-a-growing-homeless-community/>”

I fear changing the zoning from conservation to recreation will encourage homeless individuals to move into areas that are hidden from street view. We witnessed this during COVID in the heavily wooded areas abutting Kuhio Kalanianaʻole Park. Residents at Orchid Manor have witnessed drug trafficking and experienced vehicle vandalism and theft. Many homeless individuals have mental health and/or substance abuse problems and I believe opening up more land for “recreation” will exacerbate the homeless problem.

Homeless camps create sanitation and safety issues for those who live along the coast. Additionally, law enforcement doesn't patrol or control any activity in this area leading to unsafe and uncomfortable situations for the residents of Orchid Manor – the majority of which are seniors. The conservation lot in front of Orchid Manor has maintained this area the expense of Orchid Manor owners for decades (TMK 2100679000)..

Expanding a park into a commercial area would not be beneficial to anyone. Keaukaha is a beautiful area with plenty of park space for all that want to enjoy it. Adding a narrow strip of park space along the coast would simply be a further drain on limited County resources with no obvious benefit to Hilo residents or its visitors.

A lot has changed since 2005, and I sincerely hope that you consider the importance of our personal safety and choose to leave these areas in conservation.

Mahalo and Aloha,

Janet Six, PhD.
Board Vice President
Orchid Manor Condo Association