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Subject: General Plan Testimony
Date: Saturday, January 11, 2025 9:30:48 AM

Big Island General Plan

This General Plan is highly vague at times. In some of their explanations, they do not use the exact title but abbreviations, which takes time to research what they want to implement. They should have these abbreviations in the glossary.

They need to be a lot clearer about what they want to do because it looks like they want to "cluster" us in living and take some of our rights away.

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1.m Review the Code and consider amendments to encourage site clustering of development in order to avoid critical environmental areas and assets.

What do they mean by "encourage site clustering"? What does "site clustering" even mean? How will this affect community living?

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9.f Study the feasibility, issues, and opportunities related to the development of a TDR program to strategically preserve open space and achieve density to remain consistent with the land use pattern in accordance with the General Plan Land Use Maps.

TDR is the Transfer of Development Rights

It seems the TDR program allows the county full rights to say where homes can and cannot be built and whether private land is restricted. This restricts the right to build houses on private lands. If the county decides that property shouldn't be developed, we will lose our rights to build on privately owned land.

"A TDR program seeks to preserve landowners' asset value by moving the right to build a house from a location where development is prohibited (e.g., for environmental reasons) to a location where development is encouraged."

"In the place where development is encouraged under TDR, zoning is changed to permit more units to be built." This sentence explains a TDR program talks about building "more units" not houses, and gives the county full rights to tell people where they can and can not build homes, even if they and that they can only build "units".
<https://njaes.rutgers.edu/highlands/transfer-development-rights.php>

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They mention TDR program again

12.f Study the feasibility, issues, and opportunities of a TDR program to incentivize development away from high-risk hazard areas.

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The General Plan talks many times about "high-density, Prioritize an increase in density" for multi-families 13.2, 13.4, 13.8, it seems this goes with the TDR program. To "cluster" us up into housings.

13.10 Development of TODs and TNDs are encouraged within locations of the urban centers shown on the General Plan Land Use Map. These locations are approximate and become fixed during rezoning.

They don't give any ideas of how they will increase public transportation. The bus system has been breaking down for years and is very rarely on time. They are not clear on what they mean by this at all. They just say "are encouraged."

Big Island's public transportation needs to be addressed. How can the island create better public transportation? They don't explain how they want to help public transportation.

Big Island's infrastructure also needs to be seriously addressed because traffic is increasing monthly without any sign of helping the infrastructure to accommodate the increase in traffic.

How can they help the infrastructure with a mountain on one side and a cliff on the other, with many of our roads? They don't offer any ideas.

TNDs - Traditional Neighborhood Development

TOD - Transit-Oriented Development

<https://fifthave.ca/benefits-and-drawbacks-of-transit-oriented-developments/>

Drawbacks and Challenges of Transit-Oriented Development

1. **Decreased Affordability and Property Values:** The increased demand for housing in TOD areas may lead to rising property values and rental costs, potentially displacing existing low-income residents.
2. **Displacement of Marginalized Communities:** Gentrification can occur in TOD neighborhoods, pushing out long-time residents and causing social and economic disruptions.
3. **Social and Cultural Homogenization:** The emphasis on mixed-use developments might inadvertently lead to the homogenization of local cultures and businesses, eroding the unique character of the community.
4. **Increased Pressure on Infrastructure:** High-density developments can strain existing infrastructure, such as transportation networks, water, and sanitation systems, necessitating costly upgrades.
5. **Unequal Distribution of Benefits:** Without inclusive planning and involvement of all stakeholders, the benefits of TOD might disproportionately favor certain segments of the population.

13.13 Support master planning by public and private institutions and landowners which emphasize TOD, affordable housing, and mixed-use development.

What is their "Master Plan"? Why should it be supported?

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13.44 The development or designation of new resort areas should complement the character of the area; protect the environment and natural beauty; respect existing lifestyles, cultural practices, and cultural resources; and provide shoreline public access.

The Big Island needs homes for its residents. It does not need more resorts because the island is having resource issues with the developments here now, and many more years of already-approved developments have not been completed yet.

Please see this petition: <https://www.change.org/p/help-big-island-resources-and-infrastructure-stay-safe-for-all-who-live-here-and-visit>

The West Hawai'i Sanitary Landfill, the only remaining landfill on the Big Island, is forecast to reach capacity within the next 20 to 25 years." <https://bigislandnow.com/2023/09/17/big-island-now-poll-no-27-results-more-than-one-solution-needed-to-help-extend-life-of-west-hawaii-landfill/>

"Hawai'i Water Supply Closely Monitored As Severe Drought Continues by Big Island Video Newson Nov 6, 2023 at 3:28 pm STORY SUMMARY HAWAII COUNTY - Officials say a special focus will be placed on the South Kohala Water System, which is more susceptible to drought conditions." <https://www.bigislandvideonews.com/2023/11/06/water-supply-closely-monitored-as-hawaii-CA-BBI-under-severe-drought/>

HECO issues rolling power outages around Big Island by: Emily Cervantes Posted: Feb 13, 2024 / 05:11 PM HST Updated: Feb 13, 2024 / 09:12 PM HST Hawaiian Electric initiated rolling outages for Big Island after several large generators became unavailable and reduced output Tuesday night." <https://www.khon2.com/local-news/heco-releases-conservation-alert-for-big-island/>

- 13.e Amend Zoning Code to:
- Establish a TOD overlay zone project district with a minimum size of 15 acres.
 - Create a TND overlay zone for existing zoned lands within identified residential and commercial zoning districts.
 - Allow for residential uses in ML and MCX zoning districts.
 - Support innovative uses of alternative energy, agriculture, aquaculture, and others, in MCX zoning district

What does the i. sentence mean, exactly?

What does ML and MCX stand for? These are not in their glossary, and I can't find them online.

- 14.1 Support the State Land Use reclassification to Rural in alignment with the General Plan Rural designation.

What is the General Plan Rural Designation?

- 14.2 Support reclassification/rezoning of appropriate General Plan Rural designated areas where an intermediate land use and a well-defined buffer between Urban and Productive Agricultural areas are consistent with the surrounding uses and rural character.

What is the "reclassification/rezoning of appropriate General Plan Rural designated..."?

Why does it need to be supported?

How will they support it?

- 4.4 Rural-style residential-agricultural developments, such as new small-scale rural communities or extensions of existing rural communities, should be incentivized to cluster in appropriate locations.

They want to "cluster" residents because the word "cluster" is used a many times in this General Plan. How will this affect community living, exactly?

- 14.b Amend the zoning districts currently listed as Family Agricultural District (FA) and the Residential and Agricultural Districts (RA) to be consistent with the Rural designation and to allow for home occupations that do not negatively impact rural character.

Would this mean the county would have the right not to approve homes on "Rural Designated" lands?

- 15.f Update the Real Property Tax Code for agricultural land uses that result in actual production or other public benefits, such as native forestry and the ecosystem services that result from well managed rangelands.

What does this mean? Will they increase taxes? We need farmers to want to work and afford life without increased taxes.

- 15.g Amend the Zoning Code to require Plan Approval for commercial open area recreational uses in the Agricultural District.

How do they want to Amend the Zoning Code?

- 15.i Develop standards and guidelines for buffer areas located adjacent to agricultural lands.

What does this mean? What kind of guidelines?

- 16.6 Provide for present traffic and future demands, including the development of mass transit programs for high-growth areas by both the private and public sectors.

How will they do this? Traffic keeps increasing monthly, and the roads are incredibly narrow, with a cliff on one side and a mountain on the other in many different areas all over the island.

How will they develop mass transit programs? What would this look like?

- 17.4 Land use applications shall identify as early as possible any existing or potential active living corridors that should be incorporated into the County's open space network.

Who decides what a living corridor is? Is this the county's way of taking private land areas?

- 17.5 Ensure that existing active living corridors that are publicly owned or available by easement are properly identified and that their access elements are secured and documented.
b) "Acceptance" by the County of the responsibilities detailed in the grant of easements should require County Council action and a dedicated funding source.

What does b) mean exactly?

- 9.2 Increase arterial capacity through prioritization of alternative means of transportation, such as mass transit, bicycle, and pedestrian systems.

What does this mean? What is their plan? How will they make "prioritization of alternative means of transportation"?

- 19.6 Use traffic demand management to aid in reducing traffic congestion by targeting an increase of active transportation mode share to 10 percent (bicycling, walking, micro-mobility)

What do they mean by "Use traffic demand management to aid in reducing traffic congestion"? Will they somehow limit cars and use buses, bikes, or walking?

- 19.7 Concurrency reviews should incorporate reduction in vehicle miles traveled to mitigate traffic impacts (e.g. the level of service) and achieve sustainability and demand management goals.

What does this mean, "Concurrency reviews should incorporate reduction in vehicle miles traveled..."? Do they want to limit our driving and vehicle miles? Do they want to take away our right to travel? How will they do this? This doesn't seem legal, if this is what they want to do.

- 19.a Continue to adopt the County Street design manual as the County's complete street design program/policy.

- 19.b Amend the County Code to incorporate complete street design.

What is the County Street design manual? I don't see this information in the General Plan.

- 19.d Identify all roles for interdepartmental collaboration in delivering a truly multimodal transportation system.

A multimodal transportation system consists of more than one source of transportation to get to the destination. So, do they mean we will have to take a bus and our car to get to where we want to go? What do they mean exactly?

- 20.e Adopt a Complete Streets ordinance.

What is a "Complete Streets ordinance"?

22.7 Develop roadway standards to accommodate emerging technology for connected and automated vehicles.

The Big Island has power issues and cannot handle all its current power needs. It does not have extra power to connect many electric vehicles, which will only add to its power issues. Plus, if there is a big storm and we lose power, those electric cars cannot run, their batteries do not decompose well, and the island needs a new way to take care of rubbish because there is only one landfill on the island. These cars will only add to the many issues the island already has.

"Hawaii Island is in the enviable position of having a landfill with anywhere from 20 to 100 years of capacity left to take in trash. But the island still wrestles with significant issues like plastic products that are no longer being recycled." <https://www.waste360.com/landfill/hawaii-deals-with-burgeoning-waste-management-problem>

"Hawaiian Electric is reporting that several large generators on the Big Island are experiencing a range of issues and may lead to the need for rolling outages if supply does not meet demand."
https://www.reddit.com/r/BigIsland/comments/1bnuar3/hawaiian_electric_is_reporting_that_several_large/?rdt=52660

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25.5 Encourage the clustering of developments to reduce the cost of providing utilities.

How will "clustering developments" reduce the cost of utilities? We all use the same power whether we live clustered up, like the county wants, or not.

The solution to help power the island is not "clustering" everyone. It is asking homeowners/resorts/vacation rentals to purchase solar panels, use wind turbines, or use other natural ways to create their own power. If everyone tries to step up, we can all make good chances together.

This petition offers other solutions <https://www.change.org/p/help-big-island-resources-and-infrastructure-stay-safe-for-all-who-live-here-and-visit>

25.6 Develop short- and long-range capital improvements programs and plans for public utilities within its jurisdiction that are consistent with the General Plan.

What are "capital improvement programs"?

25.7 Maintain an Asset Management Program aimed at utilizing maintenance plans to prolong the life of our utilities as well as reduce whole-life costs.

What is their Asset Management Program?

25.a Develop and adopt an Impact Fees Ordinance to aide in the expansion of public utilities.

What is an "Impact Fees Ordinance"?

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26.5 Ensure the highest quality of water is reserved for the most valuable end-use.

What do they consider "the most valuable end-use" for water?

The Rosewood Resort waters its white coral road to keep the dust down. They use hundreds, if not thousands, of gallons to water their road, even when there are signs to conserve water. Has the county looked at the resort's wasteful water use? Are the resort's water use more "valuable" than residence use?

26.6 Encourage the design of large development projects (200+ units) in the North Kohala, South Kohala, North Kona, South Kona, and Ka'u Districts to be as water neutral as reasonably possible through water conservation, recharge, and reuse measures to reduce the water footprint.

How can 200+ units be water-neutral? Do they want to develop more resorts that seem to use water as they want, even when it's incredibly wasteful, and the county doesn't look at this?

26.7 Promote best practices in sustainable water collection and use for private water systems.

What does this mean, "for private water systems"? Are they planning private water systems used only by private communities or resorts?

Why hasn't the county considered new inventions to help the island's water issues?

Inventions that capture grey water to use in toilets <https://ecofriend.com/innovative-products-designed-capture-reuse-gray-water.html> I'm sure there are many new inventions that could help the island if they only start to look for them.

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26.e Maintain the water master plan to consider water yield, present and future demand, alternative sources of water, guidelines, and policies for the issuing of water commitments.

What is their "water master plan"?

26.n Develop water conservation and stormwater management guidelines for commercial, industrial, and residential properties.

What would "management guidelines" look like? Would resorts be prioritized over residences?

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27.6 Pollution shall be prevented, abated, and controlled at levels that will protect and preserve public health and well-being through the enforcement of appropriate Federal, State, and County standards

27.7 Ensure municipal wastewater systems serve designated Urban Growth Areas (UGA) with the capacity to accommodate projected population growth.

27.9 Prioritize developing a multipronged approach to wastewater infrastructure funding, including proactively seeking grant funding for wastewater system expansion, improvements, and new development

27.11 Ensure that wastewater systems and improvements are designed and functioning to maximize system efficiencies, prevent accidental leaks or spills, and provide sanitary, reliable wastewater treatment that is not negatively impacting natural resources.

They don't mention the pollution that cesspools are causing daily. People can use many kinds of toilets to stop using cesspools today.

Why hasn't the county considered new inventive toilets to use to help the wastewater system? Like the Cinderella Incinerator Toilet to help stop pollution from cesspools and help with the wastewater system? <https://cinderellawco.com/en-us>

There are many new inventive toilets these days that can help the island's wastewater system, and the Cinderella Incinerator Toilet can also help conserve water.

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27.15 Prioritize the use of gray water in areas connected to County water and not connected to County wastewater.

Why doesn't the county start looking for new inventions to help the island instead of traditional sources when the island's population is steadily growing and needs new ideas to help? They could start considering using inventions like these:

<https://ecofriend.com/innovative-products-designed-capture-reuse-gray-water.html>

<https://newsroom.ucla.edu/stories/gray-water-clean-up-yoram-cohen-271642>

<https://www.greenprophet.com/2015/04/10-inventions-to-save-earths-water/>

27.a Prioritize areas where on-site wastewater treatment should be converted to sewer and establish financial tools such as improvement districts to aid in implementation.

27.b Prioritize areas where wastewater treatment facilities are necessary to facilitate future growth and utilize financing tools such as community facilities district (CFD) or tax increment financing (TIF) to aid in implementation.

[Big Island](#)

‘Acute Problems’ Plaguing Big Island’s Wastewater Treatment Systems Prompt EPA Crackdown <https://www.civilbeat.org/2024/04/acute-problems-plaguing-big-islands-wastewater-treatment-systems-prompt-epa-crackdown/>

Why doesn’t the county start considering the Cinderella Incinerator toilet or other inventions to help with the wastewater treatment issues? <https://cinderellaeco.com/en-us>

27.i Streamline the sewer connection loan program.

What is this loan program? Is the island going into more debt because of it?

27.j Develop wastewater cost valuation in service fees (similar to the water model fee structure).

27.k Develop a criteria-based infrastructure prioritization tool to develop new or expand existing municipal wastewater systems. Base these priority areas on designated urban growth boundaries, urban zoning and density, population trends and anticipated growth, health/safety, and environmental factors

27.l Implement innovative wastewater systems at a cost-effective scale for small communities.

If the county starts considering new inventions and types of waste treatment toilets, like the Cinderella Incinerator Toilet, wastewater treatment costs would be considerably lowered.

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27.p In collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, develop a water resource strategy for efficient agricultural water use and reuse.

Why doesn’t the county start to consider using grey water inventions? <https://www.environmental-expert.com/articles/the-power-of-greywater-recycling-a-sustainable-solution-for-the-future-1138822>

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28.11 The County shall ensure that golf course developments develop and implement grading and site preparation plans to:

Why is the county still considering more golf courses when the island has water issues, power issues, landfill issues...?

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28.b Conduct a feasibility study to create a County Stormwater Utility before the County reaches MS4 requirements.

28.c Update the DPW Storm Drainage Standards to reflect current data and to incorporate strategies and standards of green infrastructure and low-impact development.

28.d Develop drainage master plans from a watershed perspective that considers non-structural alternatives, minimizes channelization, protects wetlands that serve drainage functions, coordinates the regulation of construction and agricultural operation, and encourages the establishment of floodplains as public greenways.

Why doesn’t the county start looking at new, innovative drainage solutions for the island? <https://www.randrmagonline.com/articles/90645-innovative-solutions-for-effective-storm-water-management-in-urban-environments>

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30.4 Continuously improve the use of broadband communications and digital technology to educate and provide public services with a focus on digital access.

30.5 Siting of new communications facilities shall comply with performance standards and site colocation as stated in the Code.

30.6 Support projects that address service gaps in Hawai’i’s broadband infrastructure.

30.9 Alleviate barriers and assist broadband projects with navigating through the regulatory permitting process.

Does this mean an increase in cell towers? Have they researched health issues because of cell towers?

Cell towers point straight to roads, homes, and commercial areas...Because the island is mountainous, the tops of cell towers can be only a few feet from these areas.

On Palani Rd. and Queen K HWY, there are two cell towers whose tops are only a few feet from the HWY.

On Hualalai Rd., there is a cell tower facing a retirement home and it’s less than 100 ft away.

In Hawi town, there is a cell tower at a gas station. The top of the tower is directly across from residential homes.

Has the county checked these places to do any research on whether people are being affected by cell tower radiation before they keep allowing and agreeing to more cell towers?

<https://mdsafetech.org/cell-tower-health-effects/>

“Overall results of this review show three types of effects by base station antennas on the health of people: radiofrequency sickness (RS), cancer (C) and changes in biochemical parameters (CBP). Considering all the studies reviewed globally (n = 38), 73.6% (28/38) showed effects: 73.9% (17/23) for radiofrequency sickness, 76.9% (10/13) for cancer and 75.0% (6/8) for changes in biochemical parameters...Of special importance are the studies performed on animals or trees near base station antennas that cannot be aware of their proximity and to which psychosomatic effects can never be attributed.”

30.12 Plan for broadband infrastructure to support smart grid development

What is a Smart Grid? How is it good for the community?

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30.b Develop standards for the siting and construction of wireless telecommunication facilities.

Will there be any health and safety research and studies on what a safe distance and a safe number of cell towers should be for human bodies, trees, and animals?

30.i Pursue partnerships and funding for broadband initiatives and deployments

30.j Support the coordination of infrastructure projects between the public and private sectors to create areas for the deployment of broadband zones

30.k Seek federal and other opportunities for the funding of broadband infrastructure.

What is the broadband initiative?

What are broadband zones? Have they researched health and safety before seeking federal funding and wanting to support this?

30.l Support the State to develop a broadband dashboard to track progress and gaps that will inform decision-making in economic development on Hawai’i Island.

30.m Foster public-private partnerships to support the development and expansion of broadband infrastructure, including community networks.

Does this mean that they want to know where the gaps are to keep adding more cell towers?

Does this mean they want the public to support the development of cell tower expansion?

Where is the health and safety research for cell towers?

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31.a Create an asset management program.

31.c Develop and adopt an Impact Fees Ordinance to aide in the expansion of County services and facilities.

What would be an asset management program?

What is an Impact Fees Ordinance?

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33.2 Implement waste stream technology, such as recycling and upcycling and waste-to-energy to reduce the flow of refuse deposited in landfills.

33.9 Ensure that redesign plans for landfill and transfer stations provide adequate space for Resource Recovery (RR) Stations.

33.11 Site new solid waste/resource recovery facilities in appropriate areas that serve the needs of population centers and minimize and mitigate negative impacts on the environment or surrounding neighborhood. 33.12 Reduce illegal dumping and littering.

33.13 Minimize the amount of waste generated by County facilities.

33.a Evaluate and amend the County Code to integrate strategies to maximize landfill diversion and handle materials:

Has the county ever looked into new innovative ways to deal with rubbish:

"Benefits of waste-to-energy

Waste-to-energy technology offers an alternative to landfills, providing a cleaner, more efficient way of disposing of waste while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

" <https://biotru.com/what-can-we-use-instead-of-landfills/>

Different Alternative to landfill <https://bettermeetsreality.com/the-different-alternatives-to-landfill-waste-management-options/>

Top 29 countries that have been efficient in minimizing waste <https://www.openaccessgovernment.org/which-countries-are-the-most-efficient-at-minimising-waste/96037/#:~:text=Switzerland%20have%20100%25%20waste%20recovery%2C%20despite%20being%20in,while%20the%20other%2047%25%20is%20incinerated%20for%20energy.>

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35.f Update the County of Hawai'i Recreation Plan to reflect newly identified recreational priorities.

The county has sent out letters changing private Land Use Titles to recreational land. Why is it legal for the county to take private lands away from people to give their lands to recreation?

I heard these people would still have to pay the property tax on their land, which the county wants to turn into recreational land, is this going to happen?

35.i Develop best management practices for the development and maintenance of golf courses in collaboration with government, private and nonprofit agencies, and other stakeholders.

Golf courses use a lot of poisons to keep their lands weed-free, and these poisons runoff into the ocean, causing algae blooms and other pollutions. Will the county be addressing this?

35.i Develop and implement a cemeteries master plan for the siting of future cemeteries.

What is their "cemetery master plan"?

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36.b Develop a medical center TOD master plan and rezone it as a Regional Center TOD.

What is the TOD master plan?

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37.3 Prioritize new housing including the missing middle in or near mixed-use developments, urban growth areas with infrastructure, and near existing and proposed transit centers.

37.6 Vacant lands in the urban growth boundary (UGB) should be prioritized for residential and supportive uses before additional agricultural lands outside the UGB are converted into urban uses

37.c Assess and amend the land use and building regulations and explore fiscal opportunities to support universal design principles and ADA accessibility for more physically accessible housing.

The island's resources need to be addressed because many years in the making, developments have been approved to build more homes, and all of the island's resources are having serious issues today.

Before prioritizing more homes, the island's resources need to be addressed.

<https://www.change.org/p/help-big-island-resources-and-infrastructure-stay-safe-for-all-who-live-here-and-visit>

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38.1 Enable data-driven research to support and maintain a housing inventory program that monitors existing housing.

What are they going to monitor, and why?

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39.8 Encourage the development of workforce housing within or near urban growth areas and employment centers and require large new developments that create a demand for housing to provide affordable workforce housing.

Resorts on the island hire and bring in people from outside of the country. Then they house them. This takes away homes and jobs from locals. Why doesn't the county prioritize these jobs and homes for locals? Why don't the resorts on the island hire locals who are already here and house them?

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42.c Develop and adopt an impact fees ordinance that considers district specific needs and excludes urban core areas where infill is encouraged.

What exactly does this mean? What are "impact fees ordinance" and "infill is encouraged" mean?

42.d Develop a framework for a transition plan for changes in administrative leadership to ensure a smooth transition and continuity of operations.

Why does the county need a "transition plan for changes in administrative leadership"?

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44.f Partner with business associations, realtors, and the chamber of commerce to recruit small-scale manufacturers to establish retail locations in village and town centers to support reinvestment and match potential tenants with local landowners.

The shops in Kailua Kona town have trouble staying open because all the private parking lots are overcharging. Why isn't the county addressing this issue instead of wanting to bring in more businesses that won't be able to survive because private parking is taking a lot of money away from businesses?

I do not understand how to use their map that shows all the changes they want to make on the island.

I have heard the voices of people in person at the meetings who have received letters that state the county wants to change their Land Use Titles in this General Plan. How is changing

people's private Land Use Titles legal? This is not right.

Please look at their map because I was told that the county is changing high-end developers' Land Use Titles so they can develop easily.

Zendo Kern has helped high-end developers many times on the island. This planning director favors developers rather than the preservation of the land and community voices.

For example, 18,554 people signed a petition to Save Punalu'u from development. Hundreds of Hawaiian residents protested the housing project in Punalu'u, and still, "Planning Director Zendo Kern has recommended that the commission greenlight the development, writing in his [17-page report](#) to the panel that the project will not have any substantial adverse environmental or ecological effect" provided that best management practices are used to mitigate any impacts.

Kern recommended moving ahead without making the developers prepare an updated environmental impact statement or environmental assessment because the project did not meet the criteria set out in state law for such a requirement."

This man is not for conserving the land, nor does he support community voices.

Please look at the map he is a part of because this man favors high-end developers. If this map changes high-end developers' Land Use Titles to help them develop their land easily, it could be one huge way that he supports these developers, and this is not right for the island and the community.

<https://www.civilbeat.org/2024/03/hundreds-of-hawaii-island-residents-protest-proposed-housing-project-in-punaluu/>

<https://www.thepetitionsite.com/854/086/898/residents-who-oppose-the-resort-in-punaluu-ka%C5%AB/>

Thank you,
Rebecca Melendez