

Mori, Ashley

From: generalplan@hawaiiicounty.gov
Sent: Tuesday, October 08, 2019 10:53 AM
To: General Plan
Subject: Contact from the GP website...

2019 OCT 9 AM 8 08
PLANNING DEPARTMENT
COUNTY OF HAWAII

The following contact message has been sent:

Name: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED]

District: Puna

Message: Many members of the greater Volcano community are concerned about the impacts of the STVR legislation on our community. For over 100 years, Volcano has been a gateway community, providing needed services for people from all over the world to visit, stay, and enjoy Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. As the number one visited tourist attraction in the County of Hawaii there needs to be a mechanism to preserve the unique UNESCO Biosphere ecology while providing the much needed services to the millions of travelers wanting to experience the park and its surrounding areas. No one here wants a Resort Node plopped onto Volcano and the unintended consequences that might bring. Rather, some type of Tourist Destination Overlay District, with appropriate limits and guidelines to encourage sensible vacation rental accommodations and densities should be implemented. As much as we like to think Volcano is unique, this type of tool might be implemented in other smaller communities around the island as well. Honoka'a for visitors to the Waipio Valley, Honor for those visiting Akaka Falls, etc. If all visitors are forced to stay in Kona and drive over to see the volcano, they will take a quick peak, look at their watches, and decide they should start driving back to Kona before it gets to late. No restaurant meals, no gallery visits, no long hikes etc. As much as this would be bad for the restaurant, galleries, etc, it would also quickly be a detriment to the local residents. This quickly became evident last summer when the park closed during the eruption. With tourism down, some businesses closed permanently, some for a few months, and the rest with reduced days and hours, the impact to locals was immediate. Without tourists able to stay in our area, there isn't enough demand for many of the businesses which will force the local population to drive to Hilo for everything. By implementing some type of Tourism Desination Overlay mechanism in the general plan, it would allow the county council to amend the STVR legislation to align with that. Most of us here consider the Volcano area to stretch from Akatsuka Orchids past the village, to the Winery at the golf course and the overlay should encompass that entire area as well, rather than just the village itself. Having the vacation rental/lodging options spread out over the larger area, with appropriate restrictions and caps would prevent the village from becoming a dense tourist trap, preserving the local character as it is while still allowing access to the tourists who want to visit and experience the area.

Mahalo,
[REDACTED]

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