

Mori, Ashley

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, October 30, 2019 5:04 PM
To: General Plan
Subject: Comment regarding the County of Hawai'i General Plan - Waipi'o Valley Lookout & Rim

Aloha kākou,

The County of Hawai'i General Plan includes a study regarding "developing a scenic route from Waipi'o Valley Lookout extending mauka to connect Mud Lane at the entrance of Waimea and a scenic park with a viewing area of Hi'ilawe Falls."

I am writing to respectfully request that the county postpone any discussion or study of a scenic route to the rim of Waipi'o Valley or scenic park near the rim of Waipi'o Valley.

At this time, Hawai'i Island is overburdened with tourists. Although we are all aware of the importance of the money brought in by tourism; the host culture, land and residents are exhausted and resentful. Existing problems relating to Waipi'o Valley, landslides, trespassing and tourism have not been solved. We must solve the current problems before stumbling in to additional situations we are obviously incapable of managing.

Any future of tourism in Hawai'i must be based in responsible, sustainable, and equitable eco-tourism. Another road and paved area for petrol guzzling cars, traffic and uninformed visitors is a step backward. It doesn't fit with our current collective understanding of the climate crisis and fragile island ecosystems.

Much of the land in the Waipi'o area is privately owned, thus purchasing land would be complicated- and most likely, contentious. Many residents have historical and genealogical ties to the area. This issue will inflame hurt and resentment which is already being felt across the island due to various unwanted and misguided development projects.

Rather than paving roads and building unwanted parking lots, we should be focusing on ways to restore native forests and mitigate the prior environmental damage caused by sugar cane plantations. Uniformed and unmonitored visitors have the very real potential to spread Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death (ROD). Many people will be tempted to trespass into other sensitive areas of the rimlands and valleys, further endangering themselves and fragile native ecosystems.

Pōhāhā I Ka Lani are responsible stewards in the Waipi'o area. They have a thoughtful, informed and nuanced plan to educate and monitor visitors. We need more indigenous led programs like Pōhāhā I Ka Lani. Perhaps additional funding or expansion of Pōhāhā I Ka Lani's current program would be a better alternative, as opposed to an unwanted and environmentally destructive scenic road and lookout.

Sincerely,

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COUNTY OF HAWAII