

Ka'ū CDP Action Committee
General Plan (GP) Questions and Answers
Thursday, September 19, 2024

Biocultural Stewardship

Q: Why is there a large emphasis on stewardship in the General Plan?

A: Stewardship plays a prominent role in the plan because of the island's deep connection to its natural and cultural resources, as well as the growing need for sustainability and resilience. In terms of biocultural stewardship, stewardship reflects the Hawaiian value of mālama 'āina (caring for the land), which is central to the island's heritage. The plan recognizes the vital role that traditional knowledge and practices play in managing natural resources, and it seeks to integrate these practices into land use and resource management.

As Hawai'i faces increasing threats from climate change, such as sea level rise, more frequent storms, and changing weather patterns, stewardship ensures that development is balanced with environmental conservation. The plan emphasizes responsible land management to protect ecosystems, water resources, and native species while promoting sustainability. The plan also highlights the importance of community-based stewardship, encouraging residents to take an active role in managing their environments. This approach fosters a stronger sense of ownership and responsibility toward preserving the island's resources for future generations. Stewardship ensures that our island's unique natural resources, such as forests, coastlines, and agricultural lands, are managed with a long-term perspective. This is crucial to sustaining the island's economy, cultural identity, and ecological health.

Land Use

Q: We talk about agriculture, but we are giving away agricultural lands.

A: There is a strong emphasis on protecting local agriculture and agricultural lands to ensure food security, economic sustainability, and the preservation of the island's rural character. The Natural designation was added under the agriculture section as a broad category of open space that can include agricultural uses. LUPAG designations of Open and Extensive Agriculture were considered as appropriate candidates to transition to the Natural designation. Many of these include high altitude native forest areas and some historic lava flows that have not been able to support agriculture uses that are not already in state land use conservation. Further, for lands with existing County Zoning as agriculture, then those agriculture uses continue to be allowable.

Q: Why is Oceanview proposed as rural in the General Plan Land Use Map? Is there a way to keep Oceanview in agricultural land use?

A: The Ka'ū CDP notes Oceanview as a rural area, which is the reason for it being reflected as rural in the Final Recommended Draft GP. One of the priorities in the draft is to maximize and better utilize our rural areas. The purpose of the rural designation is to support smaller lot residential and agricultural uses.

It is important to note that the GP cannot alter zoning or State Land Use designations. Combining lots does not affect density unless a rezoning occurs. Rezoning is a separate process.

Q: What is the difference between the General Plan Rural land use designation and the Residential zoning district?

A: The GP Land Use Map delineates the areas of *future* land use types and is intended to be forward-looking long-range guides subject to existing zoning and State Land Use Districts.

The Rural land use designation is usually outside the urban growth areas (UGA). Rural areas typically contain low density residential development and support small-scale commercial development and agricultural land uses. The dwelling density in rural areas can be up to 4 units per acre. Within the rural designation, possible zoning includes Family Agriculture (1a) and Residential Agriculture (1a).

The Residential zoning district is defined in the Zoning Code of the Hawai'i County Code (Chapter 25). The GP does not change existing zoning or subdivisions. The requirements for RS-15 (Single-Family Residential District with a minimum building site area of 15,000 square feet), is specified in the Zoning Code. In areas that have RS-15, the GP Land Use Map may propose a future land use designation of low density urban (LDU).

Q: How are coral reefs designated in the policy maps?

A: The data regarding coral reefs comes from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Transportation

Q: Why are vehicle miles traveled (VMT) mentioned in the General Plan if they are not discussed in the CDPs?

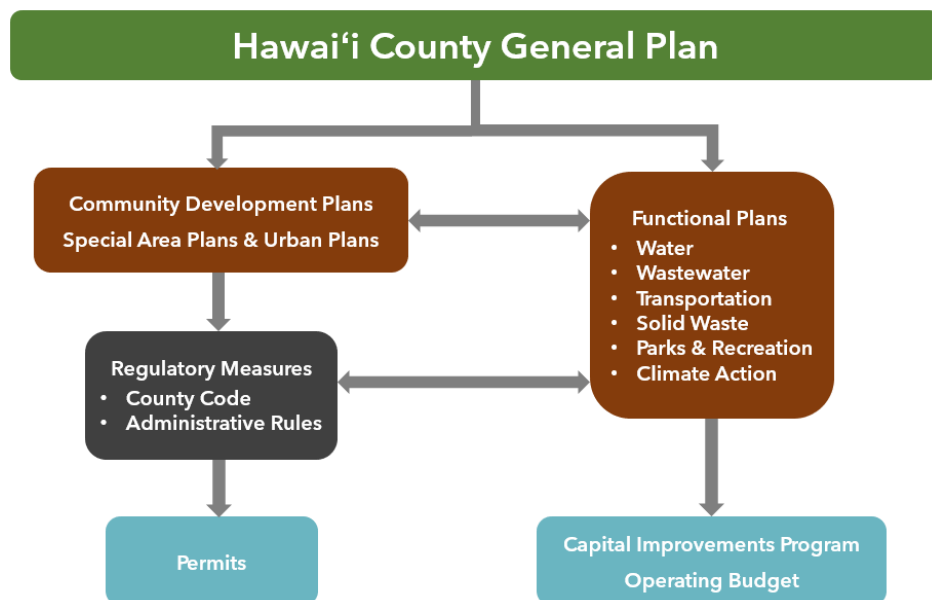
A: Reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) is a key strategy to promote sustainable development and mitigating the environmental impact of transportation. VMT measures how far people travel by car and it directly affects traffic congestion, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, and overall energy consumption. The Kona CDP discusses VMT as part of its transportation objective on street network connectivity. While not every CDP discusses reducing VMT, this

essential strategy is supported by other functional agency plans and initiatives that are considered during the GP comprehensive review process. Reducing VMT is also important in alignment with our land use policies as well as public health and safety.

Process and Implementation

Q: Where are the General Plan's recommendations/directives coming from? (Referencing the County Planning System diagram)

A: The Community Development Plans (CDPs) have been instrumental in shaping the vision, goals, objectives, and policies of the Final Recommended Draft GP. The current CDPs were developed after the adoption of the 2005 GP. The 2005 GP was organized to include specific island regions due to the absence of CDPs. The current recommended draft aims to incorporate and elevate policies from the CDPs that have an island-wide impact.



Q: Can the structure of the General Plan be further clarified? For example, explain the difference between the effect of guidelines and policies in the document.

A: The General Plan vision statement, goals, and objectives provide a high-level integrated direction for the island. Guidelines in the plan serve as strategic directions to inform decisions regarding topics such as land use, infrastructure, housing, and resource management. They primarily come from the Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS), Section 226 (Hawai'i State Planning Act). Guidelines help to ensure consistency in planning and implementation. There is no penalty for deviating from a guideline. Policies are a type of regulatory implementation mechanism of the GP. In the General Plan, future land use maps, policies, and standards guide the actions needed for initiating or adopting zoning ordinances, subdivisions, and public improvements or

projects. These actions must align with and implement the GP as required by the County Charter, Section 3-15.

Other

Q: What does kupuna have to say about the status of Punalu'u in regard to the General Plan? (This question was posed to committee member Jesse Ke)

A: Committee member Jesse Ke offered the following insights in response to this question.

- Listen to what each party has to say.
- We have the ability to communicate and work things out.
- Community can sit down and focus on making things better rather than just saying “no”.
- Simply saying “no” is not enough. It is important to explain the “why” behind the opposition.
- Sacred sites of Punalu'u should not be exploited.
- Focus on what can we do in order to work toward solutions.

Comment(s)

Public Access

- The shoreline area lacks public access. There are concerns with the State giving away shoreline areas.