

COUNTY OF HAWAII
GENERAL PLAN (GP) PUBLIC WORKSHOPS 2024
Questions and Answers

North Kona General Plan Public Workshop, August 28, 2024

Climate Change

Q: Why is there such a huge emphasis on climate change in the General Plan?

A: This is the first General Plan that addresses climate change. We have many reports from the federal to state level on the existing impacts of climate change in various ways. We are experiencing impacts from climate change like heat index, the loss of natural habitats, and invasive species, and it is important for the General Plan to address that in planning for the next 25 years.

Land Use

Q: Why not add a Public Access, Open Space, and Natural Resources Preservation Commission (PONC) designation to clarify and avoid future confusion?

A: For land use designations, all the identified lands are classified as conservation areas due to their environmental importance and the limited allowable uses under the PONC provisions.

Q: Is there a process for changing the land use pattern allocation guide (LUPAG) designations after the General Plan adoptions?

A: Yes, it is called an interim amendment, and it is outlined in the current 2005 General Plan in Section 16.2.

Q: Could the General Plan's focus and prioritization of containing growth within the existing "urban areas" be made more definitive and stronger?

A: We aimed to address this by focusing on distinct density areas, rather than designating one large urban expansion zone. This approach allows us to concentrate on the different types of density within each area.

Q: Fire breaks are critical to reducing a fire's impact on lives and structures, who is responsible for maintaining the government-owned lands? Are there state or federal funding for this?

A: Wide open land typically falls under State jurisdiction and is managed by the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), which has mitigation funds available. Alternative options include trails and mass transit. Additionally, firebreaks can serve as egress routes during wildfires or other natural disasters, and many of these initiatives are eligible for federal funding.

Q: Could you clarify the difference in use between rural versus agricultural designation particularly related to short-term vacation rentals (STVR)?

A: STVRs are regulated by the zoning code, and the General Plan does not determine their locations.

Q: The North Kohala Community Development Plan (CDP) group has collectively submitted detailed comments on the land use maps, tax map key (TMK) by TMK, who do we need to talk to, so we get this right in the final?

A: Some of the public comment suggestions have been incorporated into the land use maps for that area. We welcome further discussions, but please submit any remaining comments by September 26 or during the Planning Commission process.

Q: Why haven't the changes to the land use maps been specifically identified with their locations, especially those involving large landowners like Hokulia?

A: A Land Use Change Map is now available for viewing. This interactive map highlights all areas with proposed land use changes in color, while unchanged areas are displayed in white. By zooming in and clicking on a polygon, you can access detailed information, including the parcel number, changes from the 2005 LUPAG to the 2024 General Plan Land Use (GPLU), state land use designation, and zoning district. You can access the map directly on the interactive website by clicking on 'Change Map' in the menu bar.

Q: The world is experiencing hundreds of wildfires, some of which have caused residents to run for their lives, how is the General Plan addressing this activity?

A: Wildfires are a growing concern globally. The plan addresses wildfire risk through several key strategies aimed at enhancing community safety and building resilience. By addressing climate mitigation and adaptation strategies, the plan aims to reduce factors that contribute to increased wildfire risks, such as prolonged droughts and changing weather patterns. The plan promotes responsible land use patterns, such as discouraging development in high-risk areas and incorporating buffer zones between development and natural areas prone to fire. The plan also encourages mitigation and preparedness efforts, such as landscaping practices, community education, and emergency response plans. Additionally, the plan highlights the importance of interagency coordination across the Fire Department, Civil Defense Agency, and federal partners to enhance wildfire preparedness, management, and recovery efforts.

Q: How does or can the General Plan support infrastructure concurrency as demanded in the Kona CDP?

A: The General Plan aligns with and supports infrastructure concurrency requirements by promoting policies that ensure development is in sync with

critical infrastructure improvements. Infrastructure concurrency is key to prevent the overburdening of existing systems. In the GP, primarily in the Land Use and Transportation sections (see Policy 11.4, Action 11.c, and Policy 19.7). The plan advocates for the timely and strategic expansion of infrastructure to accommodate growth, ensuring that developments are supported by adequate transportation, water resources, and emergency response systems. The GP also highlights cross-collaboration between state, county, and private sectors to ensure that infrastructure improvements align with projects. The GP also emphasizes sustainable growth management by connecting infrastructure to land use and zoning decisions. In this way, the plan aims to ensure growth happens in areas where infrastructure is already sufficient or can be sufficiently upgraded.

Q: None of the components of the Kona CDP have been implemented to date. How will the General Plan help promote and buttress the Kona CDP ordinance? Please provide a specific example of where the two will intersect and how the public can be assured that a successful interface will occur.

A: The General Plan sets the policy guidance for the CDPs, special area plans and urban plans, and functional plans. Those plans then inform regulatory measures (County Code and Administrative Rules) which help implement the GP. Permits and the County's Capital Improvements Program (CIP) are also implementing mechanisms of higher-level planning efforts. The proposed Final Draft supports the Kona CDP, but it is not the role of the GP to implement any of the CDPs.

For example, Policy 13.5 in the draft states, "Rezoning that promote infill are encouraged and should be conditioned to ensure connectivity to the surrounding developments and, where applicable, to provide mixed-use opportunities to make the area more pedestrian-oriented."

This policy comes primarily from the Kona CDP Policy LU-2.8 2.b.ii, "Rezoning that promote infill are encouraged. The concept of infill is to connect two or more pre-existing developments. Infill is usually associated with small-scale developments of 20 acres or less that have been leapfrogged by the surrounding or adjacent developments. Infill rezoning should be conditioned to ensure connectivity to the surrounding developments and, where applicable, to provide mixed-use opportunities to make the area more walkable."

Q: Is there any effort to revegetate our coastline or setbacks?

A: Yes, the plan addresses coastal restoration efforts as part of the Biocultural Stewardship Chapter (Chapter 2). In this element, there are supporting strategies focused on protecting and maintaining coastal ecosystems and communities.

Transportation

Q: How are evacuations and natural disasters addressed in the General Plan? Are these topics discussed within the transportation and infrastructure components of the draft?

A: The draft General Plan includes policies and actions for establishing evacuation routes, while the Community Development Plan (CDP) identifies alternative routes. We focus on creating access routes for the community, such as bike trails, pedestrian paths, and mass transit facilities, which can be utilized in emergencies without increasing capacity. We are exploring connections between communities and identifying opportunities to enhance public access and mass transit. Our goal is to improve the flexibility of using these facilities during emergencies, without increasing their capacity for everyday use.

Q: Transportation funding is planned through the Hawai'i Department of Transportation (HDOT), Long-Range Transportation Plan, and Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The General Plan does not discuss funding or timing for road projects. Can you prioritize road projects so that HDOT will have guidance from the County regarding the importance and relative need for each road project? For example, can you identify the highest priority for providing safe, emergency ingress/egress to and from Waikōloa Village?

A: Yes, the General Plan sets the policy direction and guidance to inform agency functional plans and other regional plans for Hawai'i Island. The Capital Improvements Program (CIP) budget controls the funding of road projects.

Q: How can we develop a parking plan for Kailua that serves local businesses?

A: A parking plan for Kailua may be developed as an action item from the CDP or urban development plan, both of which fall under the General Plan within the County's planning system.

Q: Evacuations from natural disasters are not accounted for in the transportation portion of the plan, is that accurate? If they aren't accounted for in the General Plan, how is the County preparing for the inevitable next evacuation order?

A: The General Plan addresses evacuation routes in the Transportation section. Under Objective 17, there is a proposed action to explore the potential of multimodal trails to serve as evacuation routes during emergencies. Under the Mass Transit objective, there is an action to, "Designate new connectivity points for local traffic roads and create redundant routes for existing highways, utilizing existing routes where possible, that can also serve as emergency and evacuation routes." Objective 22 contains an action focused on engaging with owners of private roads and community groups to identify and develop road management agreements that mitigate road closures to provide emergency

evacuation routes. While the GP does not specifically outline an evacuation plan, it sets the policy guidance for County action regarding evacuation routes in emergencies.

Public Facilities

Q: Zero waste by 2045 is a goal in the General Plan. What are the ideas to reduce waste (e.g., plastic water bottle ban and refill stations)? What other things could be done?

A: Objective 33 regarding the County's zero waste goal largely comes from the Hawai'i County Zero Waste Plan (2021). Some of the waste reduction strategies that are highlighted for the County to act on include composting, construction and demolition, plastics, electronics, and abandoned vehicles. Key actions would include developing and implementing programs, forming partnerships, and increasing or creating funding mechanisms.

Housing

Q: Does the current zoning code allow for options shown from the missing middle housing, if not, will zoning changes be proposed to support this?

A: The zoning code does allow the missing middle, but the challenge is the infrastructure cost.

Implementation

Q: Do the various sections, like recycling have timelines for implementation?

A: There is no descriptive timeline other than the objective of achieving zero waste by 2045.

Q: It is obvious that not all the goals and objectives in the General Plan can be completed in twenty years. Could these items be broken up into short and long-term actions to guide which items should be worked on first? How does the budget and financing coordinate the priority of projects in the General Plan?

A: In the implementation section, the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) serves as a tool to prioritize the goals and objectives outlined in the General Plan, as well as any agency plans, by aligning them with policies and actions.

Q: Could the General Plan document be revised to compromise two volumes? Volume one being the bones of the key objectives, policies, and standards for all growth decisions, and volume two being all the background issues (e.g. challenges, opportunities, detailed beliefs, and planning principles).

A: We received opposing feedback on this question. After years of debate and considering all the input and needs for the General Plan, the current format was chosen. Some people wanted more information, including history and

process details. In 2019, the document focused solely on policy language, which left many confused and asking for more justification. By 2023, we incorporated feedback that helped shape the current draft.

Q: Can the public and County Council make comments and changes, that can be included in the final General Plan, or does that require a change in the law?

A: This is outlined in Section 16.1 of the current 2005 General Plan. The Planning Commission submits its recommendations to the County Council, which can adopt the General Plan with or without amendments. If certain changes are not adopted as outlined in Section 16.1, those changes could be addressed through the interim amendment process after the plan is adopted.

Q: How does the plan implement aspirational goals? For example, the plan identifies emergency access for high-risk hazard communities as a high priority. How is that objective reflected in transportation infrastructure actions?

A: The aspirational goals of the plan are intended to provide a high-level integrated direction for the county. The objectives and guidelines in the plan then set measurable, achievable, and time-bound milestones toward accomplishing the goals. A policy is a type of regulatory implementing measure that defines boundaries, development parameters, and measures intended to implement the broader goal or objective. The actions of the plan are a type of non-regulatory implementing measure that requires subsequent decisions and/or the allocation of resources.

Emergency access for high-risk hazard communities, including fire risk, is identified as a priority in the GP (e.g., Policy 12.11, 22.9). The following are transportation actions that support this priority in the GP:

Action 17.b: Explore the potential of multimodal trails to serve as evacuation routes during emergencies.

Action 20.d: Designate new connectivity points for local traffic roads and create redundant routes for existing highways, utilizing existing routes where possible, that can also serve as emergency and evacuation routes.

Q: The implementation slide shows the county planning system in the order of the General Plan (overarching), CDPs, and County Code. Is this the order that development plans, subdivision plans, and the County Code should look to for guidance?

A: Yes, the General Plan provides the policy guidance for the Community Development Plans and other planning documents to align with. The County Code and capital and operating budgets are regulatory measures that implement the policies in the GP.

Outreach and Engagement

Q: How can the Planning Department improve outreach?

A: We continually strive to improve outreach and do as much as we can. We send e-blasts to those on our email lists, publish newspaper articles, issue press releases, make radio announcements, distribute flyers, post on social media and our website, and engage with neighborhood organizations and word of mouth. We're always open to new ideas and opportunities for expanding our efforts.

Q: Throughout the draft General Plan, many statements address civic and community engagement, listening and incorporating comments and concerns from Native Hawaiians. There has been no discussion in staff reports or development proposals. How will this high-level goal of engagement be woven into staff reports in a meaningful and consistent way?

A: We have received thousands of public comments from the community, including Native Hawaiians, and have incorporated them into the policies, actions, goals, and objectives of the General Plan. Staff will then use the General Plan to inform future background and recommendation reports for specific applications.

South Hilo General Plan Public Workshop, August 29, 2024

Climate Change

Q: How is the current storm surge different now than it has been in the past?

A: As our climate warms, water expands and sea levels rise. When storms occur, they exacerbate flooding, as the increased wave energy further impacts our infrastructure and community.

Q: How much have temperatures increased in recent years? What is the proof of warming temperatures? How many years of temperature data are used to prove that temperatures are rising?

A: Global temperatures have risen significantly over the years, with the past decade being the warmest on record. According to NASA and NOAA, the global average temperature has increased by approximately 1.1°C (2°F). Scientific evidence of warming comes from various sources, including satellite data, weather stations, ocean buoys, and ice core samples, which all confirm a steady rise in temperatures over the last century. Climate models and long-term datasets, often using over 100 years of data, are essential in establishing this trend. In the context of the County's General Plan, rising temperatures are a critical concern. Climate change affects sea-level rise, weather patterns, and local ecosystems, all of which impact land use,

infrastructure, and community resilience. The plan includes policies aimed at climate adaptation and mitigation, ensuring that our county is prepared for the challenges of warming temperatures and their effects on the island's unique environments and communities.

Q: Why are invasive species a part of climate change?

A: Invasive species are affecting our island, along with storm surges along the coast that are damaging our infrastructure. Climate change has already had an impact, and we are focusing on the future to find ways to mitigate these effects.

Land Use

Q: Why was a Hilo CDP not done, when Hilo has the most population?

A: Given the process of adopting the General Plan, it may be considered that Hilo would better benefit from an urban development plan rather than a regional plan, although this is still to be determined. The latest Hilo CDP is dated 1975. Further, the greater Hilo area has several other planning documents and tools that other towns and regions do not have and that help to guide development in and around Hilo. These include but are not limited to: the City of Hilo Zone Map (HCC 25-8-33), Downtown Hilo Multimodal Master Plan, Banyan Drive Redevelopment Authority Plan, EnVision Downtown Hilo, Hilo Bayfront Trails Master Plan, DHHL Master Plans for each of its areas (like Panaewa and Keaukaha), University of Hawaii in Hilo Master Plan, State Airport Master Plan, etc.

Q: I saw that there is a goal to have parks within a ten-minute walk. While this is a great goal that has been achieved in several areas, it seems like a trade-off from one well-maintained park in a larger area versus several small, sad, unmaintained parks. Waikōloa is a prime example of this. How is this being discussed and resolved?

A: Objective 35 states, "Park facilities are located within a 10-minute walk in urban areas and a 10-minute drive in rural communities." This objective speaks to the County's effort to increase recreational opportunities across the island. The County strives to have a variety of recreational facilities that vary in size from large regional to small community and neighborhood parks. The maintenance and improvement of public facilities are key priorities of the GP. Strategies such as maintaining an asset management program, diversifying funds for recreational facilities, and coordinating state and county capital improvements are mentioned in the plan to support this.

Q: I noticed that our property is being zoned for natural and recreation from low density urban. What does that do to the value of our property? Are we going to be compensated, to quote your draft "zoning must be updated in certain areas to

reflect shifting trends and land use preferences”? Who’s deciding? Does it include property owners?

A: The future land use maps, or the LUPAG map, do not affect zoning, and the existing entitlements remain in place. We are focusing on future growth and its potential locations. The CDP identified areas for adjustment, and that input was incorporated into the General Plan. Additionally, it allows for the possibility of rezoning in the future.

Q: What is “smart growth development” and “smart growth principles”? Does this refer to smart cities, ala UN Agenda 21?

A: The smart growth principles benefit our island. Our biggest challenge is housing, compounded by a lack of infrastructure. By establishing urban growth boundaries in each urban area, we can promote higher density development and focus on improving infrastructure (e.g., wastewater, water, etc.) and making investments to achieve these goals in each geographic area.

Implementation

Q: How can a layperson compare the old plan with the changes in this draft? Specifically, I would like to compare the map changes and the rationale for the shifts.

A: The changes can be viewed in the policy rationale document. A Land Use Change Map is now available for viewing. This interactive map highlights all areas with proposed land use changes in color, while unchanged areas are displayed in white. By zooming in and clicking on a polygon, you can access detailed information, including the parcel number, changes from the 2005 LUPAG to the 2024 General Plan Land Use (GPLU), state land use designation, and zoning district. You can access the map directly on the interactive website by clicking on 'Change Map' in the menu bar.

Q: How can the County identify and acquire more coastal parkland, and make managed retreat effective to protect our parks, roads, and infrastructure?

A: We have an active PONC that assists the County in acquiring private properties for conservation. This has effectively facilitated the preservation of coastal properties and their unique resources. Regarding managed retreat, we need to consider infrastructure such as Ali'i Drive and Bayfront Highway, which have been impacted. We must plan for their rehabilitation to withstand coastal surges, ensuring that these roadways are designed to protect them and continue functioning as multi-modal passageways.

Q: This is rather late in the General Plan drafting process, how will comments be addressed at this late stage?

- A: The final recommended General Plan will be submitted to the Planning Commission. All comments received from July 29th to September 26th will be collected and provided to the Planning Commission for their review. They will hold public hearings and make recommendations to the County Council, which will then deliberate and formulate its recommendations.

Outreach and Engagement

Q: How will the Hilo community be engaged on a regular basis given that there is no CDP Action Committee?

- A: There are numerous organizations and associations throughout the community that are highly involved in planning efforts impacting the Hilo community. Many have been engaged throughout the process, including but not limited to civic organizations, community groups, each of the DHHL neighborhoods, and more. All Hilo residents are welcome and encouraged to subscribe to the General Plan and other planning-related email notifications. The Planning Department also has 3 active social media accounts. Our Hilo office is open for those who would like to come in and talk with staff.

Q: What is the difference between the public workshops and community meetings? Will more specific district content be covered?

- A: The Hilo and Kona workshops, along with the webinar, provide a broad overview of the General Plan, and we will be reviewing each section. The community meetings will focus on the specific policies and guidance relevant to those communities, discussing the connections between the CDPs and other master plans, and how they have been integrated. You can also view the policy rationale document online.

Q: How will I be able to know whether my comments have been addressed or considered?

- A: The Planning Department has reviewed and considered all comments received and incorporated the feedback to the best of its ability while trying to strike a balance with the great variety and sometimes opposing comments received.

Online Webinar Workshop, September 5, 2024

Biocultural Stewardship

Q: Why is there no “Action” for protecting the public trust in the 7/24 draft GP?

- A: Addressing public trust, the Biocultural Stewardship chapter speaks to the duty to protect natural and cultural resources for future generations. Specific details are spelled out in the action portion of the Plan. Actions related to public trust resources start on page 42 of the document. It includes specific

actions from watersheds to wetland habitats. All of those are addressed by specific actions versus broad policy.

Q: “Public trust”, page 41, Biocultural Stewardship Policy 1.1, “Minimize and mitigate significant impacts, such as degradation, incompatible uses, or other threats to Native Hawaiian habitats and public trust resources.” Why are cumulative impacts not addressed as required in Hawai‘i Revised Statutes 343?

A: Cumulative impacts are inherent in the policy language. We welcome public comment on adding “cumulative” to the language.

Q: Has the Scenic Resources report been made available to the general public?

A: Yes, the Scenic Resources Protection Program and Strategies Report (2016) is available to the public. It can be accessed from the Planning Department’s Public Documents Repository:

<https://records.hawaiicounty.gov/Weblink/1/fol/134446/Row1.aspx>

The report is also linked on the Planning Department’s General Plan Comprehensive Review page, under “2024 Recommended Draft General Plan Workshops & Public Input”.

<https://www.planning.hawaiicounty.gov/general-plan-community-planning/gp/comp>

Q: Why is there no action stating that the county must protect these public rights of way throughout all decision-making processes?

A: Action 17.a would address including ROW from the Highways Act. “Develop and adopt a program to establish public access to historic and modern active living corridors and facilities that provide an island-wide route and connect to major destinations.” Further, the Highways Act gave ROW to the state which differs from county ROW. In this action, we seek to create a network of trails that can include these historic trails.

Land Use

Q: What criteria/guidance was used in establishing the ratios shown for the changes in the 2024 land use?

A: Guidance for the land use process came from the Community Development Plans (CDPs). For those detailed and specific, the County adopted what the CDP called for, given the robust, immediate, and regional community in those areas. CDPs and other land uses and master plans have guided the overall process of proposing what the County has now in the GP land use maps. Land use was not done to reflect particular percentages or ratios. The bar charts are a result of putting all of the guidance we used into the maps and reflect what

resulted from that work. This is further outlined in the land use methodology under the reports and resources section on the County's website.

Q: Are these maps available in the General Plan 2045? I am trying to follow along and see what the speakers are addressing.

A: Yes, in both the document and also on the [interactive website](#).

Q: Can you share some of the practical effects of more open land being classified as “natural” versus “extensive agriculture” compared to the 2005 LUPAG? Mahalo!

A: The intention was specific to extensive agricultural lands that fit the criteria. Higher elevations are one, ensuring those are preserved as that and, hopefully, not developed for urban use, even with agriculture designation. Natural describes the intention behind holding those lands in their current state, be it in agriculture such as pastured or forested lands. It does not change the underlying zoning. Existing zoning still applies to any of those lands as well as historic lava flows that are not productive to areas like that.

Q: Is one of the General Plan's goals to convert our towns and urban areas into 15-minute smart cities?

A: The GP does not speak to 15-minute cities. It speaks to what has been done with the community through CDPs and what they want for their community and their urban areas as well as the work done with the community through this GP process.

Q: Is there a process for changing LUPAG designations after GP adoption?

A: Yes, it is called the interim amendment process. It is initiated by the County Council to the Planning Director and Planning Commissions. It returns to the County Council if additional changes are needed after the adoption of the GP.

Q: Why is the entire Hokuli'a project being changed from Agriculture to Rural when there is a petition to accomplish the same before the state Land Use Commission which would ensure a Supplemental Environment Impact Statement would be prepared to help assure that no luxury homes would be built on the sacred, wahi pana of Pu'u Ohau, the entirety of which is a royal mausoleum where the grandmother of Queen Liliuokalani and King Kalakaua is buried?

A: The process for petitioning a change to the State Land Use is a different process regulated by the State Land Use Commission. The GP designation does not preempt, negate, or change any actions that may be required of the landowner through the state petition process including compliance with HRS 343.

Q: Why has 25,000 acres of Rural been added to the GP 2045 land use map? Where are these changes other than over 1,000 acres at Hokuili‘a?

A: As presented in the workshops, the rural designations were added to provide better transitions between agriculture and urban uses. The rural areas allow for smaller agricultural parcels and a mix of residential uses. The rural additions can be found on the Land Use Change Map online and should be marked in a range of mustard or yellow colors.

Q: Given the online “swipe” tool forces the general public into a game of seek-and-find, why has the Planning Department refused to provide a written list of changes between the current GP land use map and the draft GP 2045 together with the location of each change not been provided to the public, especially since the map changes between the 1989 and current GP were provided to the public during the comprehensive review process?

A: The Planning Department has a [Land Use Change Map](#) available for viewing. This interactive map highlights all areas with proposed land use changes in color, while unchanged areas are shown in white. By zooming in and clicking on a polygon, you can view detailed information, including parcel number, changes from the 2005 LUPAG to the 2024 GPLU, State Land Use, and zoning district. The map can also be accessed directly from the [interactive website](#) by clicking on “Change Map” in the menu bar.

Map changes were made based on CDPs and criteria outlined in the methodology reports, which substantiate the change proposed. They were done in an electronic map via GIS that merges many different layers including old and current parcel data, 2005 LUPAG, many of which are noted on the disclaimer of the extensive list of polygons. Not all land use designations follow TMK boundaries and there can be many polygons within 1 parcel.

Q: Why were the number of detailed land use maps reduced from 24 in the current GP to 6 in the 7/24 draft GP, thereby making it effectively impossible to compare printouts from the current GP .pdf with printouts from the 7/24 draft GP?

A: This was done to simplify the document itself, given that the data will always live and be available electronically. The online maps are a powerful tool that allows people to zoom in and out as needed for their specific uses.

Transportation

Q: Has anyone considered a train around the island by 2045?

A: There have been no talks about trains specifically. The County is working to build a transit network with the Mass Transit Administration’s (MTA) Mass Transit and Multimodal Master Plan from 2018 and the spoke and hub system that was presented in that plan.

Q: Are evacuations from natural disasters accounted for within the infrastructure & transportation components of the plan?

A: This needs to happen at a more detailed level for each county. While the GP supports that effort and policy, more work needs to be done on a community level to address that. The County has language that addresses active transportation corridors, in everyday use for biking, and from communities during times of disaster.

Q: Will the roadway and green infrastructure concepts be incorporated into DPW standards?

A: The GP has some standards laid out in terms of what is available. The County has the complete streets manual, titled County of Hawai'i Street Design Manual. The manual incorporates complete streets and speaks to green design in the landscape section and is adopted by resolution, allowing flexibility for DPW to use the manual. Some policies and actions speak to adopting updated ordinances, codes, and amendments to better incorporate alternative multimodal street options. Additionally, there are policies within the GP that speak to green infrastructure and stormwater management. This goes back to the discussion on one water in the utility section. While the County has wastewater and DWS, DPW manages stormwater. As a community grows, the County looks more at how they can better manage that stormwater.

Q: For mass transit, what type of transit will be used?

A: For the most part, when considering the bus system as a mass transit system, the General Plan references the 2018 MTA Mass Transit and Multimodal Master Plan, acknowledging that there is still much work to be done in this area.

Q: Before using any land for transportation, will the DOT do a title search to make sure it's a clear title?

A: The State Department of Transportation (HDOT) ensures that land acquisitions have clear titles. This question may be better directed to HDOT for further clarification.

Q: The roundabout in Pahoa has created traffic slowdowns by at least 20 minutes. Have studies been conducted on the efficiency of the existing roundabout? There are roundabouts planned for Waimea which would result in greater problems with congestion. Are there other considerations?

A: While we understand the frustration related to traffic slowdowns, it's important to clarify that the General Plan is a high-level policy document focused on guiding long-term growth and land use in the County of Hawai'i. Specific studies on traffic efficiency, such as the performance of existing or

planned roundabouts, fall under the purview of the State Department of Transportation (DOT) or the County's Department of Public Works (DPW), depending on the roadway jurisdiction. The 2 roundabouts in Puna (Ainaloa and Pahoa) were once 2 of the highest crash and personal injury intersections. The roundabouts may slow traffic to some extent during rush hours, but they also allow all connecting streets to continue to move.

Public Utilities

Q: How does the plan incorporate the requirement that cesspools be replaced by other waste management systems?

A: The GP incorporates the State mandate requiring cesspool conversions by 2050 as part of its broader goals for environmental protection, public health, and sustainable infrastructure. The plan recognizes the significant environmental and public health concerns associated with cesspools, particularly their impact on water quality, and outlines several strategies to support the transition to more effective waste management systems. Strategies include infrastructure upgrades, including the expansion of wastewater treatment facilities and sewer systems and developing a multipronged approach to wastewater infrastructure funding. In addition, the GP supports land use policies that promote higher density development in areas where modern waste treatment systems are feasible, reducing the reliance on cesspools and encouraging the use of advanced systems like septic tanks, aerobic treatment units, and connection to public sewer systems. The County will work closely with the State Department of Health and other agencies to align local policies and infrastructure projects with the statewide mandate for cesspool conversion.

Q: Was it possible to calculate island-wide ongoing water reserves to guide future/usage development?

A: The General Plan considers and incorporates the County's Water Use and Development Plan into its strategies relating to water conservation. The Department of Water Supply (DWS) would be the agency to obtain any ongoing data collection information.

Q: Is there a section of the plan that addresses the environmental impact of current practices of County agencies like Public Works and how to mitigate adverse impacts with today's stormwater, especially Hōlualoa?

A: The General Plan addresses stormwater impacts and enhances County collaboration on water resources through a comprehensive approach aimed at protecting water quality, managing runoff, and improving coordination across agencies. The GP promotes the adoption of green infrastructure and low-impact development (LID) practices. Key policies include encouraging the

integration of natural features in urban design to absorb stormwater; supporting improvements in drainage systems to handle increased runoff in both urban and rural areas; and requiring new developments to implement stormwater management systems that meet current best practices to minimize downstream impacts on water resources.

The GP emphasizes collaboration between County departments, state agencies, and other entities involved in water management. It encourages coordinated efforts with the Department of Water Supply (DWS), the State Commission on Water Resource Management (CWRM), and other bodies to ensure that stormwater management aligns with broader water resource protection goals. This includes joint planning for flood control and stormwater infrastructure upgrades; sharing data and resources to monitor and manage water quality; and encouraging partnerships with community organizations to implement water stewardship programs and improve watershed health.

Public Facilities

Q: Does this plan go into any detail about zero waste plans for refuse?

A: It is more of a high-level look. Objectives speak to high-level policies to support zero waste. A more detailed plan still needs to be formalized.

Q: I don't see where hospitals and general healthcare access are included in your categories, nor do I see where affordable housing is described. Any comment?

A: The GP strongly supports the improvement of healthcare access and the development of affordable housing as critical components of creating a sustainable and equitable future for Hawai'i County. The plan includes policies aimed at improving the distribution of healthcare facilities across the island, especially in underserved areas. The plan also emphasizes collaboration with state and private healthcare providers to enhance services and attract more health professionals to the island. Affordable housing is another priority of the plan, which acknowledges the growing housing crisis and the need to provide more housing options for all residents. The plan supports a variety of strategies to increase the availability of affordable housing, including encouraging mixed-use developments and higher density housing in urban areas; encouraging workforce housing and affordable retirement communities; partnering with state and federal programs to secure funding for affordable housing initiatives; prioritizing the development of affordable housing near job centers, schools, and transit to ensure residents can easily access services and employment opportunities.

Housing

Q: Does the General Plan address the need for single-family housing?

A: Yes, single-family housing is addressed in the housing section (Section 4.5).

Q: Single-family housing is most needed for space with big families. How can this be done with a high cost of living?

A: The General Plan acknowledges the challenges that larger families face in securing single-family housing, particularly given the high cost of living in the county. The GP emphasizes increasing the availability of affordable single-family homes by encouraging developments that provide a range of housing options, including homes suited for large families. This includes policies that encourage the development of affordable housing through density bonuses, fast-tracked permitting for affordable projects, and partnerships with private developers. The GP also supports mixed-use developments and infill housing to increase supply in areas with existing infrastructure, reducing development costs and making housing more affordable.

Q: Is self-certification being considered for licensed architects to help the affordability of housing like Honolulu and other cities, counties, and states to speed up the permit process?

A: We recognize the challenges posed by the high cost of living and its impact on housing affordability. While the General Plan does not specifically address self-certification for licensed architects as a means to expedite the permitting process, it emphasizes several strategies to improve housing affordability and streamline development processes. The GP advocates for reducing barriers and delays in the permitting process to encourage the timely development of housing, especially affordable housing. The GP also encourages partnerships with private and nonprofit organizations to leverage resources and expertise in constructing affordable housing projects. These collaborations can result in cost-sharing and innovative approaches to housing development. The plan encourages flexibility in zoning and building regulations that can make it easier to develop housing, especially in areas designated for residential growth. By reducing regulatory hurdles, the County aims to create an environment where housing projects can move forward more efficiently.

Q: Housing is being misused here and a lot of developments are developing high-end houses. How can this be prevented?

A: The General Plan acknowledges the growing concern regarding the need to promote more affordable and diverse housing options for residents. The GP includes several policies and strategies aimed at encouraging the creation of housing that meets the needs of the local population. The plan promotes the development of a variety of housing types, including multi-family units, affordable rental housing, and workforce housing, to meet the diverse needs of the community. This helps balance the market and prevents an overemphasis on luxury housing. The GP also emphasizes the importance of

increasing affordable housing through incentives, zoning changes, and partnerships with developers to prioritize housing that serves low- and moderate-income families.

Implementation

Q: What is in place in the General Plan to ensure implementation of components is realized in a timely manner? I.e., connectivity of Puna substandard subdivisions for mass transit, first responder response, and the general movement of people.

A: The GP outlines priority actions that are intended to help guide County investments. Another key element in the plan that supports implementation is collaboration with agencies. Implementation requires close coordination with various county and state agencies to align their efforts with GP goals. This collaboration is essential to improving things like mass transit and first responder response times. More specific plans such as agency functional plans (e.g., Mass Transit and Multimodal Transportation Master Plan) are supported by the GP and provide more detailed strategies and timelines for achieving specific goals, such as mass transit connectivity. The GP also includes a framework for regular monitoring, reporting, and review to ensure progress is being made. Through periodic updates and reports, the County can assess whether implementation is on track and adjust as needed.

Outreach and Engagement

Q: What makes this a “workshop” versus a presentation with a limited Q&A session?

A: A presentation was requested in previous Q&A sessions. In workshops and throughout the comprehensive review process, these sessions have been referred to as workshops and the County continues to use that terminology to be consistent with the GP review process (2005 GP, Section 16.1). Early in the process, the County provided hands-on workshops, charrettes, and community meetings with stations where people could walk around and have conversations with subject matter experts. The County is now at the point of proposing the final recommended draft and moving through the adoption process.

Q: How can members of the public get a hard copy of the current plan draft?

A: The Hilo and Kona County offices have copies available. If you would like to request one, please email your address to generalplan@hawaiicounty.gov.

Q: What is the address of the interactive website?

A: <https://cohplanning.konveio.com/final-recommended-draft-general-plan-2045?document=1>. Links are also available on the County’s website and the County’s Planning Department website.

Q: Will the recording of this webinar be available to the general public?

A: Yes, it is available on the Planning Department's website on the GP comprehensive review page:

<https://www.planning.hawaiicounty.gov/general-plan-community-planning/gp/comp>

Q: How do we know if our comments have been addressed or have been included in the draft 2045?

A: The Planning Department reviews and considers all comments received and incorporates the feedback to the best of our ability.

Other

Q: Is there any distinction between a long-term resident of Hawai'i Island (someone rooted in the community and its interests for the long term) vs. transient or short-term "residents"?

A: Yes, there is a distinction between long-term resident or transient or short-term stays on the island. Although not specifically addressed in the GP, it is addressed in the County Code and aspects of Hawai'i County's tax code as it relates to long-term residents as well.

General Comments

- Although all goals, policies, standards, and courses of action from the current General Plan were reviewed and evaluated for inclusion in the draft 9/23 and 7/24 GP 2045s, the General Plan Policy Rationale does not specifically identify which of these were included or excluded in the drafts. This lack of clarity makes it difficult for the general public and decision-makers to assess whether they agree with the Planning Director's recommendations. Transparent documentation of these decisions would support informed public discourse and decision-making.
- Land use around South Kona is marked for many changes into more housing, yet with no changes except for the increase of full-time residents have turned my husband's commute from 20-25 minutes to 40+ minutes in four years to North Kona. The time in which these decisions have been made and don't account for. How do these changes also take into account: moving the hospital from South Kona to North Kona, a death sentence for many illnesses, which was recently made public? The lack of sewer systems, and how many properties cannot be changed from cesspool to septic due to topography and have not been adequately addressed even though a deadline has been set. The roadways and how widening in many places is not a possibility. Water and lack of schools become questions that don't change quickly to accommodate changes. I ask because the answer above given was that it was by community input, which is generally driven by personal and business desires, not community wellness or even reality. Mahalo.