

South Kohala CDP Action Committee
General Plan (GP) Questions and Answers
Monday, September 23, 2024

Climate Change

Q: With the rising population and increasing land prices, how are we going to manage and maintain our current resources? How is the plan going to implement what we need in the short term with our existing resources?

A: The General Plan is the County's policy guide for the long-range comprehensive development of the island. The GP is intended to guide the pattern of future development based on long-term goals. As a comprehensive plan, the GP is meant to be a broad framework for more specific planning. The plan is limited in the sense that it often relies on further implementation actions, such as zoning and budget ordinances, to move toward our goals and priorities.

Land Use

Q: Given the project location, how is it possible for 'Ōuli Farms to do agriculture?

A: If the area of land is zoned A-5a (Agricultural 5 acres), the landowner is allowed by right to subdivide the land into five-acre parcels. This is considered by right entitlement – approval is granted because the zoning allows for it. Rezoning land is a process that goes through the Planning Commission and County Council.

Q: What does Objective 14, “Maximize the use of Rural designated lands to preserve rural character and lifestyle,” mean? How does this apply to agricultural land and preventing the rezoning of agricultural land?

A: The General Plan focuses on overarching land use while a zoning designation addresses specific uses. Objective 14 of the plan is intended to better support the General Plan Land Use (GPLU) Rural designation, as much of our island is considered rural. This objective does not involve rezoning agricultural land to a different zoning district.

Q: Where does the language regarding “amending zoning districts” or “rezoning” come from and what does it mean? (Reference to page 98, Action 14.b)

A: To amend zoning districts indicates a change in the County Zoning Code (Chapter 25). To better utilize the GPLU Rural designation, action 14.b states that a Zoning Code amendment is needed. Specifically, it speaks to the need to update the zoning districts Family Agricultural (FA) and Residential

Agricultural (RA) to align with the Rural designation and allow types of uses that are not currently permitted in these districts.

Q: What is meant by retreats and lodges? (Reference to page 98, Action 14.a)

A: Currently, there is a lack of clear distinctions between those two types of uses and we want to better define those terms. This would require us to amend the definitions in the Zoning Code.

Q: Does the General Plan Land Use Resort designation include residential uses?

A: Yes, there are residential uses within the Resort designation. The GPLU Resort includes a mix of visitor-related uses such as hotels, condominiums hotels, single-family and multiple-family residential units, golf courses, and other typical resort recreational facilities, resort commercial complexes, and other support services.

Q: In the GP Land Use Map, the intersection of Kawaihae Road and Queen Kaʻahumanu Highway has been labeled as Urban Expansion. Why is it possible for Ōuli Farms to develop here?

A: The decisions that are being made right now are based on the 2005 General Plan. In the proposed plan, we tried to reduce or more specifically define urban footprints. We reviewed existing development in the Urban Expansion designation to identify areas that are built or at capacity and assign consistent urban designations. As mentioned earlier, the Ouli property is zoned for 5-acre agriculture lots, so they are allowed by right to do that.

Transportation and Infrastructure

Q: Are petitions a viable source for things like the Waikōloa Village roundabout?

A: Yes, petitions, questions, or comments regarding the Waikōloa Village roundabout may be submitted to the County Department of Public Works (DPW).

Q: While the General Plan emphasizes important topics such as conservation, sustainability, and climate change, the question remains – how will we fund all of this? What aspects of the plan can be streamlined or removed?

A: Implementation, including funding, is critical to achieving the goals and objectives set out in the General Plan. Implementation will rely on a combination of coordination actions by county departments, collaboration with state and federal agencies, community engagement, and strategic funding mechanisms. Funding for projects and initiatives comes from a range of sources including the County budget and Capital Improvements Program (CIP), which play a key role in funding infrastructure, public facilities, and other priority projects (e.g., roads, housing, water/wastewater systems). State and federal grants are an example of external funding that may fund large-scale

projects (e.g., disaster resilience initiatives, and transportation infrastructure). Public-private partnerships (PPP) and tax revenues are additional funding mechanisms that the County may pursue to implement projects and programs identified in the General Plan.

Q: Can you clarify the ownership exchange of roads in Waimea? (Reference to Hwy 190 and Hwy 19)

A: The State now owns certain roads in Waimea due to an exchange of roads that occurred in the County, which has also happened in other communities across the island. This exchange occurred in Waimea mainly so that the State has a complete route around the island. These roadways are also principal arterials, primarily managed by the State.

Process and Implementation

Q: When we give testimony, will it be recorded?

A: Comments will be recorded and uploaded to the Planning Department's YouTube channel. Questions and comments will also be transcribed in written form and uploaded to the department website. The Planning Department will not be making any further adjustments to the draft plan at this stage. Currently, we are accepting public input until September 26, 2024. Afterward, the plan will move to the Planning Commission, where there will be another opportunity for public input before the commission makes its recommendations to the County Council for the final decision.

YouTube recording: <https://youtu.be/F7pTSCj1Ons?si=fvDoCGmAmijS9es0>

Q: How was the General Plan sent out?

A: The draft was made available through the Konveio website as well as on the Planning Department website. The Konveio platform is a powerful tool that allows people to comment directly on the plan and interact with other comments. Konveio also allows people to view and comment on the GP maps. Importantly the platform allows the Department to analyze the public feedback more efficiently. We have tutorial videos on how to use Konveio. For people who do not want to use Konveio, we have hard copies available at the Planning Department and all public libraries. Emailed or written comments have been accepted as well.

Within the County, we maintain a listserv for various departments, allowing individuals to sign up for notifications about relevant updates. The draft was distributed across all listservs, accompanied by a press release, newspaper articles, and posts on social media. It was also shared with council members to pass along to their constituents.

Planning Department website: www.planning.hawaiicounty.gov/general-plan-community-planning/gp

Konveio: cohplanning.konveio.com/general-plan

Q: Will my comments mean anything? Is it worth the effort to submit comments?

A: All comments are important and treated equally. All comments received will be packaged and submitted to Planning Commissions to inform their review and recommendations.

Q: In the future, will public notices include information on how the General Plan will affect the community?

A: Press releases and public notices should include information on how the General Plan affects all of us. Staff will strive to include this type of information in public-facing materials. In past press releases from the Planning Department, we have included some context regarding the purpose of the General Plan and background information. We can improve on making this information more relatable to show the impacts on the average resident.

Q: Who follows up or tracks the implementation progress of the 2005 General Plan policies and actions? A new plan is being proposed, but what happens to the previous plan?

A: The current 2005 General Plan will remain in effect until a new plan is adopted. Progress and implementation status is reflected in the County's Annual Budget Report. The Implementation section of the draft General Plan speaks more specifically to implementation, monitoring, and reporting going forward.

Q: Did the Planning Department consult with cultural practitioners?

A: Cultural practitioners have been involved throughout the process, including but not limited to, the Cultural Resources Commission, DHHL, and each of their communities, and various practitioners who have attended public meetings, workshops, or other individual/group meetings.

Q: How can we trust something from 2005? There have been a lot of big changes from 2005 to now. This is just a piece of paper. We must move with the times, how is this plan going to help us do this?

A: The proposed plan contains concepts that the 2005 General Plan did not account for. The final draft aims to be more integrative and holistic, introducing new sections including climate change, broadband, and integrated systems. The proposed draft also contains a section on community health and wellness, which is focused on integrating health into land use and infrastructure policies.

General Comments

- Concerns with the General Plan being a template from ICLEI.
- There is interest in more information regarding emergency preparedness.
- Dissatisfaction with the Konveio platform and online commenting process. It is discouraging that people have to go online to read the General Plan. People who work do not have time to do that.
- The general plan is difficult to read and understand, especially for kupuna.
- Need to ask ourselves whether these things mentioned in the plan are needs vs. wants.
- We need to consider everyone's mana'o and the General Plan needs to reach a broader spectrum of people.

Addressing Climate Change for Island-Wide Health

- There are concerns regarding the section on historic sites in the General Plan, particularly its limited understanding of South Kohala's history. Native Hawaiian cultural practices in the region require greater attention, especially in preserving important sites in South Kohala. Protecting the viewsheds and pu'u is a key priority. There are also many concerns about the 'Ouli Farms development.
- There is interest in establishing a museum and archive in Waimea to preserve the area's heritage.
- Cultural legacy is lacking in the plan.
- There is a great need for more habitat and ecosystem protection.

Sustainable Development and Resilient Communities

- Many concerns about infrastructure and there is opposition regarding development in South Kohala.
- Affordability of land and increased taxes are key concerns for residents as many people and their families struggle to remain in Waimea.
- The plan lacks adequate industrial land use designations, which are crucial for advancing utilities, transportation, and related services.
- Concerns with redesignation of agricultural land in the proposed land use map.

Transportation Access and Mobility

- Concerns were raised regarding public access and trails.
- The General Plan proposes seven roadway projects for Waikoloa. There is a request that we prioritize a single second road for Waikoloa Village. The community urgently needs just one road and there is not enough in the budget for seven projects.
- Roundabouts are going to increase traffic.

Public Utilities

- There is inadequate water for development. Water is among the most pressing concerns.

- The South Kohala CDP is grounded in key values such as water, community, and safety. Water is one of the most critical issues, as Waimea’s kuleana is to protect and sustain the water resources of this area. Currently, there is insufficient capacity to meet the community’s water needs. The idea of “sustainable development” is challenged here, as everything upland (mauka) directly impacts the lowland (makai). Waimea is intrinsically connected to all things water related.

Public Facilities and Services

- The topic of health is limited in the plan.