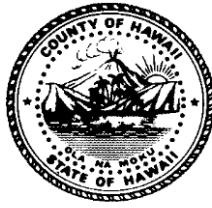


C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.
Mayor



Matthew Clark, Chair
Desmon Haumea, Vice Chair
Darde Gamayo
Roberta “Ku‘ulei” Keakealani
Kealohanuiopuna Kinney
Nicole Lui
Janet Six
Aaron Spielman

County of Hawai‘i

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

CULTURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

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MEMORANDUM

October 8, 2025

**TO: JEFFREY DARROW, DIRECTOR
PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

**FROM: MATTHEW CLARK, CHAIR
CULTURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION**

**SUBJECT: KONA OPEN SPACE NETWORK (KOSN) DRAFT PLAN
Location: North Kona, Hawai‘i Island
TMK: Various**

The Cultural Resources Commission (CRC), at its public meeting held on September 10, 2025, reviewed the Kona Open Space Network draft plan in consideration of Hawai‘i Island’s cultural resources in the North Kona area. Below is a summary of comments and recommendations offered by the Commission at the meeting.

- The CRC requests consideration of the distribution of archaeological sites within the hubs, especially where access routes intersect, and how these sites relate to one another. Given the numerous known and documented sensitive sites in the area, consider addressing the broader cultural landscape rather than focusing on sites individually as each site is connected, working together to create a larger landscape.
- Ensure that proposed access is appropriate and sensitive to cultural resources.
- Consider additional Public Access, Open Space, Natural Resources Preservation Commission (PONC) properties within the area, such as Puapua‘a Iki.
- Heiau and other sensitive sites, which have been and continue to be important places of ceremonial practice, carry an obligation of kuleana. Respectful conduct is expected at these locations. The commission noted that heiau holds the same cultural significance as

churches and strongly advised against including them in the open spaces of the plan to ensure the protection of these sacred sites.

- Commissioners expressed concerns regarding the use of the terms “*open spaces*” and “*recreation*” in the plan. They cautioned against encouraging walking and biking access to significant cultural areas, especially in areas that are not currently frequented.
- KOSN is urged to exercise great care in selecting methods to protect and preserve sensitive sites and burials. Interpretive signage may help educate the public, but Commissioners cautioned that signage is often disregarded and, without enforcement, may not prevent damage or desecration of sensitive sites.
- Digital tools such as QR codes or story maps could support interpretive signage and help to reduce vandalism of physical materials.
- The CRC recommends identifying funding sources and partnering with stewardship groups to assist in the management and maintenance of sites.
- Engage and inform the community throughout the development of the plan.
- Recognize that “links” should not be geographic features, but the stewards who hold the kuleana for caring for these sites.
- The CRC urges strong consideration of enforcement measures for the protection of sensitive areas.

The CRC expressed appreciation for the opportunity to comment and requested to be kept informed as the plan continues to develop.

KT:ad

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CC: KOSN