

KONA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN
ACTION COMMITTEE
COUNTY OF HAWAII

FINAL MINUTES
October 14, 2025

Call to Order

Chair Charles Young called the meeting of the Kona Community Development Plan (CDP) Action Committee (AC) to order at 11:56 a.m. This meeting was held in person at the West Hawai'i Civic Center, B2 Conference Room and online via the Zoom platform.

The full YouTube video of this meeting can be found here:
<https://youtu.be/J0QDEW87zPQ?si=TxgqVJZxFIOL1HjR>

Roll Call

Members Present (in person): Charles Young (Chair), Nancy Pisciocchio (Vice Chair), John Pelletier, Raymond (RJ) Kirchner, and Charla Thompson

Members Present (via Zoom): None

Members Absent: David Huerta, Roselyn Molina, and Heather Korotie

Planning Department Staff Present (in person): Kawelo Kalili and Janice Hata

Planning Department Staff Present (via Zoom): Maryam Palma

There were approximately 9 members of the public in attendance (3 in person and 6 via Zoom).

Approval of Minutes

Chair Young called for approval of the July 8, 2025 and September 9, 2025 meeting minutes. Committee Member Pisciocchio moved to approve both sets of minutes, and the motion was seconded by Committee Member Pelletier. The motion to approve the July 8 and September 9, 2025 minutes was carried unanimously. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 3:24]

Public Testimony on Agenda Items

Janice Palma-Glennie testified on Business Item 3, expressing concerns that revising the Kona CDP now would be premature and could undermine the community-based framework created through years of collaboration. She urged the Committee to focus on fully implementing the existing plan, cautioning that reopening it could divert resources and shift priorities away from community needs. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 5:05]

Business

1. Keauhou Aquifer System Area Groundwater Adaptive Management Plan – Chair Young will provide an update on recent efforts, followed by a Committee discussion.

This item was called to order at 12:05 p.m. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 8:46]

Chair Young provided an update on recent efforts related to the Keauhou Aquifer System Area Groundwater Adaptive Management Plan (AMP). He reported that the adaptive management team has been meeting regularly over the past two and a half months and has established four expert working groups focused on:

1. Hydrology – examining groundwater sources and related hydrological conditions;
2. Ecology – identifying biological indicators and key species;
3. Contamination and Pollution – assessing water quality concerns; and
4. Cultural Issues – gathering input from cultural advisors (meetings still in progress).

Chair Young noted that preliminary reports have been developed by the first three groups, while the cultural report is pending completion. The final draft of the AMP will be prepared once all four groups complete their reviews and establish priorities for implementation. Key findings included uncertainty about aquifer behavior, nutrient contamination concerns, and identification of species (limu, 'ōpae'ula, damselflies) as ecological indicators. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 11:12]

Committee discussion covered integration of new monitoring wells into the AMP, the relationship between the AMP and possible State designation of the aquifer as a critical water use area, and potential future desalination options. Chair Young noted that while current withdrawals remain below sustainable yield, continued monitoring and coordination are essential to prevent overuse. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 15:35]

Public Testimony:

- Keola Childs urged proactive action on water availability to support housing development. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 21:19]
- Janice Palma-Glennie supported pursuing State designation of the Keauhou Aquifer as a critical water management area and suggested the AC send a letter of support. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 30:18]
- Josephine Keli'ipio raised concerns about water use by data centers. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 33:04]
- Jeff Zimpfer cautioned that sustainable yield estimates may underestimate localized impacts, emphasizing the need for continued vigilance. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 34:40]

This item concluded at 12:32 p.m.

- 2. Proposal to Submit Testimony on Bill 63 Relating to Dwellings** – The Hawai'i County Council is considering Bill 63, which would allow residential dwellings in the industrial-commercial mixed use (MCX) district. Committee Member Pelletier will present proposed comments for Action Committee consideration. If supported, the Committee will submit testimony to the Council. Link to Bill 63: <https://records.hawaiicounty.gov/Weblink/0/doc/1106820/Page1.aspx>

This item was called to order at 12:32 p.m. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 36:32]

Committee Member Pelletier presented an overview of County Council Bill 63, which would allow residential uses in Industrial-Commercial Mixed (MCX) zoning districts to promote workforce housing near jobs. He summarized related discussions at Planning Commissions, noting Civil Defense's recommendation for setbacks between MCX and general industrial zones for safety. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 37:59]

Committee Member Pelletier shared a map of Kona's MCX areas and explained that while the bill's intent to create "live, work, play" communities is positive, simply permitting housing may not achieve this goal. He suggested the Action Committee provide constructive feedback, including:

1. Adding recreational uses to the list of permitted activities in MCX zones,
2. Removing single-family residential to encourage higher density,
3. Prohibiting short-term vacation rentals, and
4. Including conditions for affordable and workforce housing

[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 41:17]

Committee Member Pelletier moved to draft a letter submitting the Action Committee's comments on County Council Bill 63. The motion was opened for discussion. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 45:08]

Committee Member Kirchner opposed allowing housing in industrial areas due to safety, noise, parking, and infrastructure issues. Committee Member Pisicchio agreed that the bill lacks the comprehensive planning and multimodal design of transit-oriented developments (TODs).

Committee Member Pelletier acknowledged these concerns, noting his goal is to prompt the Council to consider safety, infrastructure, and design factors rather than to take a firm position for or against the bill. The Committee agreed the draft letter should be revised to stress caution and include stronger recommendations on safety and infrastructure. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 55:33]

Committee Member John Pelletier amended his earlier motion to instead send a letter to the Planning Director, with a copy to the County Council, expressing the Committee's reservations and caution regarding Bill 63. The letter would request that the bill be deferred until the Committee's concerns are addressed, specifically regarding infrastructure capacity, and mitigation of sound and air pollution if residential uses are allowed in industrial areas. Vice Chair Pisicchio seconded the amended motion, and the Committee voted unanimously in favor. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:16: 23]

Public Testimony:

- Janice Palma-Glennie commented on noise impacts and transportation concerns. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 47:36]
- Keola Childs shared on observation regarding TOD master planning and other considerations for further review. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 49:08]

This item concluded at 1:14 p.m.

3. Proposal to Begin a Comprehensive Review of the Kona Community Development Plan –

Committee Member Kirchner is proposing that the Committee initiate a comprehensive review of the Kona CDP to determine where updates or amendments may be needed. Discussion and potential action regarding next steps.

This item was called to order at 1:14 p.m. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:18:29]

Committee Member Kirchner presented a proposal to initiate a comprehensive review of the Kona CDP. He noted the County code requires a comprehensive review within 10 years of adoption and emphasized that the mandate is not discretionary. He cited substantial changes since adoption – shifts in demographics, the rise of remote work reducing traditional office demand, development patterns occurring farther north than the plan envisioned, and outdated baselines. Housing pressures were discussed in detail, including increased household size, on-street parking congestion that can impede emergency access, and price/rent escalation driven by constrained supply. Transportation issues centered on long-planned but unbuilt links and the need to revisit concurrency expectations that, in practice, have limited infill housing while pushing growth outward. Utilities and environmental concerns included wastewater treatment capacity, cesspool conversions, and water resource planning, with members stressing that trunk infrastructure should be publicly planned and delivered rather than piecemeal through private development. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:18:53]

Members generally agreed that the first step is to update the technical “backbone” studies that underpinned the original plan before launching broad community redrafting. Vice Chair Pisicchio supported initiating the review via a formal letter to the Planning Director and urged that the Committee be involved in scoping/RFPs for consultant work, so priorities are clear and current. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:34:14]

The Committee unanimously approved a motion by Committee Member Kirchner, seconded by Pisicchio, to undertake a comprehensive review of the Kona CDP as required by code and to request that the Planning Director initiate updates to the backbone studies (including water resources, wastewater strategy, transportation, housing and demographics, gray infrastructure/utilities, parks/public facilities, and financing/implementation). Each update should address current conditions

and provide 5-, 10-, and 15-year projections. Staff will draft a letter for the Chair's signature reflecting this action. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:54:46]

Public Testimony:

- Jeff Zimpfer commented on the petition that was filed to designate the Keauhou Aquifer as a groundwater management area. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:27:28]
- Janice Palma-Glennie questioned how the new push differs from past efforts. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:38:28]
- Keola Childs urged narrowing the request to infrastructure (especially water and wastewater). [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:46:27]
- Josephine Keli'ipio commented on soaring prices displacing local families. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:00:54]

This item was closed at 2:00 p.m.

Public Testimony on Matters Not on the Agenda

None.

Third-Party Reports; Government Officials

None.

Proposed New Business

- Update on the AC's testimony on Bill 63
- Update on Tree City USA designation progress
- Keauhou Aquifer System Area Groundwater AMP

Announcements

- Committee Member Pelletier provided an update from the meeting he attended regarding the Kona Airport Master Plan Update. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:05:30]
- Committee Member Pelletier met with County Parks & Recreation staff regarding the Kealakehe Regional Park Project. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:06:49]
- The Planning Department is seeking applicants for the Kona CDP Action Committee and requests assistance to get the word out to interested community members. The application can be found on the Mayor's office website at:
<https://www.hawaiicounty.gov/our-county/boards-and-commissions/boards-and-commissions-application>

Adjournment

Chair Young adjourned this meeting at 2:19 p.m.

These minutes and all related documents are available in the Planning Department's [Kona Community Development Plan Action Committee](#) folder via the County of Hawai'i Public Documents Repository. These documents may also be requested from the Planning Department by calling (808) 961-8288 or emailing CDP@hawaiicounty.gov.