

HĀMĀKUA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN
ACTION COMMITTEE
COUNTY OF HAWAI'I

DRAFT MINUTES
October 1, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

Acting Chair Brad Kurokawa called the meeting of the Hāmākua Community Development Plan (CDP) Action Committee (AC) to order at 5:00 p.m. This meeting was held in person at the Honomū Gym and online via the Zoom platform.

The full YouTube video of this meeting can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R3TXMDpeSfM>

ROLL CALL

Members Present (in person): Brad Kurokawa (Chair), Mahealani Maikui (Vice Chair) arrived at 5:13 p.m., Tawn Keeney, Robert Nishimoto, and Ben Dalalaidao.

County Staff (in person): Maryam Palma and Jessica Lahip

County Staff (via Zoom): Janice Hata

There were approximately five (5) members of the public in attendance – (5) in person and (0) via Zoom.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY ON AGENDA ITEMS [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 3:41]

There was no public testimony at this time.

BUSINESS:

1. Division of Aquatic Resources – Presentation from Ryan Okano on the Makai Watch program and its relevance to stream flow and ocean connectivity. Followed by discussion and potential decision making.

This item was called to order at 5:05 p.m. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 4:31]

Ryan Okano of the State Division of Aquatic Resources gave a presentation on the vital connection between stream health, native species, and ocean ecosystems. He described how upland streams and coastal fisheries are biologically linked, explaining that reduced stream flow impacts native species such as 'ōpae, hīhīwai, and limu, along with the larger fish that depend on them. Okano highlighted that land-based activities, especially agricultural practices—play a major role in stream quality, as grading, soil disturbance, and runoff can carry sediment and pollutants into waterways. He also clarified his agency's jurisdiction, noting that while the Division of Aquatic Resources manages aquatic species, other agencies such as the Department of Health and the Commission on Water Resource Management oversee water quality and stream flow regulation. To address these interconnected issues, Okano introduced Kahawai Watch, a new initiative modeled after the Makai Watch program, which aims to involve community members in monitoring and caring for streams. Committee members discussed declining rainfall trends, the cumulative effects of agricultural runoff, and erosion from farming near gulch edges. They expressed strong interest in supporting community education and interagency coordination to protect watershed health. Okano

encouraged collaboration moving forward and noted that the program is currently seeking funding to expand its outreach and implementation.

This item was closed at 5:31 p.m.

- 2. Pāpa'ikou and Pepe'ekeo and Bus Stop Shelters Update** – Action Committee Member Ben Dalauiao will provide an update on bus shelters along Hele-On routes, with focus on Pāpa'ikou and Pepe'ekeo areas, followed by discussion and potential committee decision making.

This item was called to order at 5:32 p.m. [*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 31:59*]

The Committee reviewed ongoing concerns regarding the need for safer, covered bus stops in the Pāpa'ikou and Pepe'ekeo areas. Planning staff reported that the Mass Transit Administration (MTA) is moving forward with modifications to Route 80 to include new stops at the Kalaniana'ole Elementary School bus shelter and the Kulaimano Elderly Housing shelter. These changes are intended to provide sheltered waiting areas for riders and address immediate community safety concerns. Additional shelters are also being planned near Pinky's Store in Pāpa'ikou and by the Pepe'ekeo Post Office. Staff confirmed they had checked in with the Hawai'i Department of Transportation (DOT) and that the bus shelter near Kimura General Store is expected to be installed sooner than the one in Pepe'ekeo, as coordination and site details for the latter are still being finalized. Committee Member Dalauiao reiterated residents' frustration with ongoing delays and emphasized the importance of lighting and protection from weather for early-morning and late-evening riders. The Hāmākua CDP Action Committee agreed to keep the issue on the agenda for regular updates and to consider raising it with the County Transportation Commission or other relevant bodies to maintain momentum.

Cory Harden provided testimony suggesting that the issue of the bus shelters could be brought to the attention of the County's Transportation Commission which advises on transportation-related matters. Planning Staff responded that they were unsure if the Transportation Commission was currently active but agreed to look into it. [*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 40:21*]

This item concluded at 5:41 p.m.

- 3. Hakalau Infrastructure Projects** – The Action Committee will discuss sending a formal letter to the Department of Public Works (or appropriate agency) requesting updates on the following Hakalau infrastructure projects:

- Ka'ahakini Stream Bridge & Embankment Closure in Kolekole Park Update
- Hakalau Stream Bridge & Hakalau Beach Park Lead & Paint Mitigation Update

This item was called to order at 5:42 p.m. [*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 41:15*]

The Committee received updates on major infrastructure efforts in Hakalau, including the Ka'ahakini Stream Bridge and embankment and the Hakalau Stream Bridge rehabilitation. Planning Staff reported that the Hakalau Bridge project had officially started, with Phase 1 addressing repairs to the lower bend, followed by lead paint mitigation and replacement of metal structural supports with

concrete through 2027. The Department of Public Works (DPW) is also reviewing design packages for the Ka'ahakini Bridge, coordinating with the Department of Land and Natural Resources on required permits. Chair Kurokawa asked for clarification on whether the bridge and embankment work are being treated as one project, as erosion from stormwater runoff has blocked access along the Old Māmalahoa Highway near Kolekole Park. Discussion noted the community's interest in reopening this route and restoring park access. Planning staff will follow up with DPW to clarify whether the embankment and bridge improvements are being managed as one project or two separate projects and report back to the committee.

This item concluded at 5:47 p.m.

4. Proposed Amendment to the Planning Department's Public Notice Procedures Update (Communication No. 2025-02).

Although the proposed amendment to the Planning Department's Public Notice Procedures was listed as an announcement on the agenda, Chair Kurokawa initiated a discussion on the item.

This item was called to order at 5:47 p.m. [*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 47:09*]

Planning staff provided an update on the Committee's previously submitted letter recommending that the Planning Department expand public notice procedures to include email listserv notifications, in addition to the legally required newspaper postings. The letter was well received by Planning Director Darrow, who expressed support for the concept and noted its potential to increase transparency and accessibility for residents. Staff explained that they are currently working with Information Technology (IT) and clerical staff to determine how a listserv system could be integrated into the department's workflow, but that creating district-specific lists may exceed current staffing capacity. The Committee was informed that the proposed language will be forwarded to consultants working on the County's Zoning Code update, ensuring that it will be considered in the next revision cycle following completion of the General Plan update. Because that process may take a while, members discussed the need for an interim solution to improve public access to information more quickly. Options identified included incorporating the practice through the Planning Department's administrative rules or by issuing a Planning Director's memo that could guide staff procedures in the meantime. Committee members emphasized the importance of early and consistent notification for community engagement, particularly in rural districts where residents may not regularly access printed notices.

Chair Kurokawa made a motion to recommend that, as an interim measure, the Planning Department incorporate the proposed amendment through either an administrative rule or a Planning Director's memo, and that the correspondence be copied to all other CDP Action Committees. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Maikui and passed unanimously.

This item closed at 6:03 p.m.

124 **THIRD-PARTY REPORTS; GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS**

125 [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:02:39]

126 Council Member Heather Kimball was unable to attend the meeting to provide the Waipi'o Steering
127 Committee update. Vice Chair Maikui noted that the steering committee is currently working to schedule
128 its next meeting. Chair Kurokawa mentioned that Council Member Kimball had previously shared
129 several draft documents with members, including materials related to pedestrian access improvements
130 and a preliminary proposal to establish the Wahi Pana through coordination with the Cultural Resources
131 Commission and the Department of Research and Development. These efforts are intended to engage
132 community stakeholders in developing a framework for a countywide cultural and historical designation.
133 A more detailed update will be provided once the Waipi'o Steering Committee reconvenes.

134 **PUBLIC TESTIMONY ON MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

135 Corey Harden commented about improving access to public notice by looking up the permit applications
136 by Tax Map Key [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:05:30]

137 **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

138 Vice Chair Mahealani Maikui made a motion to approve the August 13, 2025 meeting minutes. The
139 motion was seconded by Committee Member Keeney and passed unanimously. [SEE YOUTUBE
140 TIMESTAMP 1:07:42]

141 **NEW BUSINESS** [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:09:00]

- 142 • Updates on bus shelters and accountability
143 • Planning Department public notice procedures update
144 • Waipi'o Steering Committee update
145 • Crossing flashing lights in Pāpa'ikou
146 • Pāpa'ikou Community center and safety improvements

147 **ANNOUNCEMENTS** [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:15:05]

- 148 • Action Committee Keeney reported on potential County acquisition of Kāwaiianui Makai property
149 (80 acres in Onomea). Rated highly by PONC Commission; pending purchase agreement
150 around \$6M.
151 • The Planning Department is seeking applicants for the Hāmākua CDP Action Committee and
152 requests assistance to get the word out to interested community members. The application can
153 be found on the Mayor's office website at: [https://www.hawaiicounty.gov/our-county/boards-and-](https://www.hawaiicounty.gov/our-county/boards-and-commissions/boards-and-commissions-application)
154 [commissions/boards-and-commissions-application](https://www.hawaiicounty.gov/our-county/boards-and-commissions/boards-and-commissions-application)

155 **ADJOURNMENT**

156 Chair Kurokawa adjourned this meeting at 6:24 p.m. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:23:56]

157 These minutes and all related documents are available in the Planning Department's [Hāmākua](#)
158 [Community Development Plan Action Committee folder](#) via the County of Hawai'i Public Documents
159 Repository. These documents may also be requested from the Planning Department by calling (808)
160 961-8288 or emailing CDP@hawaiicounty.gov.