

From: [Michael Klekner](#)
To: [Planning LPC Testimony](#)
Subject: Testimony re: SMA Use Permit 07-019 on April 23
Date: Monday, April 20, 2026 4:18:13 AM
Attachments: [Site M testimony 4-23-2026.pdf](#)

Aloha,

Please find attached written testimony in opposition to the time extension request for SMA Use Permit No. 07--019, scheduled for Thursday, April 23, 2026 consisting of 7 pages.

Maloa.

Michael Klekner
The Villages at Mauna Lani #624

Letter re: Leeward Planning Commission
Hearing April 23, 2026
By: Michael Klekner

Leeward Planning Commission
County of Hawai'i Planning Department
25 Aupuni Street, Suite 1301
Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

Re: Opposition to 10-Year Extension of SMA Use Permit No. 07-019
Application No. PL-SMA-2026-000087
Leeward Planning Commission Hearing, April 23, 2026

To: Leeward Planning Commission

From: Michael Klekner
Villages at Mauna Lani, # 624

Although there are many very good reasons to deny a time extension for the above referenced permit, I wish to address only two here, one procedural and one on the inadequacy of the 2007 traffic study.

1. The V-1.25 zoning at Site M was not properly approved and should not be allowed, requiring the Commission to deny the application.

Site M is a 150 acre parcel mauka of North Kaniku Drive. In 1985 an application was filed with the State Land Use Commission to re-zone approximately 654 acres of what is now the Mauna Lani Resort to an urban district. An environmental assessment was prepared and approved and the reclassification was approved March 3, 1986.

In 1986 Site M was zoned multiple family residential, RM-4, or 10 units per acre, similar to the zoning for the 5 residential developments along N. Kaniku Drive including The Villages.

The 1986 master plan for the resort approved three beach front locations for resort development (V-1.25). Coming down Mauna Lani Drive if you go right at N. Kaniku Drive you arrive at the Fairmont Orchid. If you go straight, you reach the Auberge. If you go around the traffic circle, you are on S. Kaniku Drive heading towards Honoka'ope Bay, now 49 Black Sands Beach.

But, RM-4 is not the current zoning for 21 per cent of Site M because of a corrupt bargain made in 2000 when the then Planning Director approved an administrative "non-significant zoning change" (NZC 00-04) whereby 32.519 acres of RM-4 zoning at Site M was traded for V-1.25 high intensity hotel resort zoning at Honoka'ope Bay, now Black Sands Beach.

Letter re: Leeward Planning Commission
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The Planning Director's reasoning for this "swap" as stated in a letter dated August 17, 2000 (Pages 1 and 2 attached) was: "... The original amount of land area for each zoning district remains the same. The relocation of the affected zoning districts from one area to another will not result in any increase in zoning densities."

This reasoning is spurious because it totally ignores the impact of moving the resort density from the south side of the resort to the north side, thereby doubling the environmental impacts along N. Kaniku Drive. Now 2/3rds of the density, traffic, and environment burdens of the resort are placed on N. Kaniku Drive, a considerable change from the master plan. In doing so, the Planning Commission, the County Council, and the public were deliberately bypassed. In effect, the Planning Director was saying "the public be damned."

As a result of this "swap", Site M could now be develop as a full service resort hotel complex with full beachfront amenities at a location a couple of miles inland from the beach with no beach nor direct access to any beach. Sadly, a beach can't be seen from Site M. Highly unusual from a planning standpoint, and makes little sense from a commercial or common sense viewpoint.

This "swap" was a corrupt bargain deliberately done in secret to avoid public scrutiny. The "swap" required a zone change, a new environmental impact report, and properly noticed public hearings before the Planning Commission and County Council because the impacts of the "swap" on N. Kaniku Drive were never considered in 1986.

Given the highly suspect manner by which the V-1.25 zoning arrives at State M, perhaps consulting Corporation Council for its opinion on the propriety of the "swap" is a necessary prerequisite before the Commission takes any action on this application.

2. The traffic study relied upon by the applicant is inadequate.

Moving the Black Sands Beach resort zoning to Site M significantly realigned the traffic patterns within the resort. With a hotel at Honoka'ope Bay, resort traffic was divided into three routes: At the traffic circle one could go straight to the Auberge, left to Honoka'ope Bay, or right to the Fairmont Orchid. Now two thirds of all resort traffic is diverted to one two lane road designed for for much less capacity. This represents a significant deviation from the 1986 approval, done in secret and never approved by the Planning Commission and the County Council.

The traffic study originally prepared for SMA Use Permit No. 07-019 was inadequate when prepared and is even more inadequate some 20 years later. The trip analysis was conducted in October 2007 and late February 2008, not peak resort occupancy periods. Properly, a trip study should have been conducted between December 15 and 31, and then in January to account for the annual seasonal increase tourists.

Letter re: Leeward Planning Commission
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Let's consider what is actually occurring with the traffic on N. Kaniku Drive between Mauna Lani Drive and Ho'Ohana Street. Please refer to the attached arial photograph of the resort from the traffic circle to Ho'Ohana Street.

1. The first trouble spot is when Mauna Lani Drive meets the traffic circle. In the afternoon there is usually backup on Mauna Lani Drive as the numerous rental cars from the airport arrive. Backups occur, sometimes significant backups as tourists stop and wait at the entrance to the traffic circle while figuring out what to do next.

2. You transition from Mauna Lani Drive to N. Kaniku Drive by making an immediate right turn at the traffic circle. Once you make the right turn onto N. Kaniku Drive, it is only about 1/4 mile to Ho'Ohana Street. N. Kaniku Drive is only a two lane road with no left turn lanes. but there are two driveways that require a left turn lane: one at Foodland, and at The Villages. Cars making left turns necessarily cause traffic to back up. Now it matters more for the Foodland driveway because of the volume of traffic entering and leaving. This is especially true in the afternoons when the newly arrived tourists go to the market and service employees leave for the day — Fridays after 3 especially.

The problem is that the Foodland driveway is only 382 feet from the right turn at Mauna Lani Drive, and as a result traffic backups often impact Mauna Lani Drive and they can be expected to increase with a hotel traffic at Site M. This needs to be studied. .

3. What about truck traffic? In the mornings Mauna Lani Drive is heavy with delivery trucks servicing the resort's hotels, the market, restaurants, and stores. There needs to be a 2026 traffic study on the impact on truck traffic created by the Site M hotel on the already fragile road system along N. Kaniku Drive.

4. The original traffic study required a traffic signal at the intersection of N. Kaniku Drive and Ho'Ohana Street, making the Mauna Lani the only resort on the Big Island with a traffic light. That is not a good omen that all is well at the Mauna Lani Resort and should require a traffic study to meet 2026 conditions. Some 20 years have passed and the development along N. Kaniku Drive has changed considerably and the traffic increase has been consistent with that development. It is only one-quarter mile from Mauna Lani Drive to Ho'Ohana Street on what is essentially an already congested two lane country road. The distance is not great, the current traffic congestion noticeable, and a red light stopping traffic going north can only increase that congestion. Given that 20 years has past with no effort to develop Site M, at a very minimum a traffic study meeting 2026 standards is required before any extension of time can be granted.

Letter re: Leeward Planning Commission

Hearing April 23, 2026

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CONCLUSION

Before the Commission can approve any extension, it should first determine whether the V-1.25 hotel zoning now at Site M was properly approved since neither the Planning Commission nor the City Council approved that change from the original master plan for the resort. Further, although I only addressed the need for a new traffic study, there are other significant environmental issues that require an updated environment assessment. That said, the 2007 traffic study, if implemented today, will have severe negative impacts on the resort in general and N. Kaniku Drive in particular.

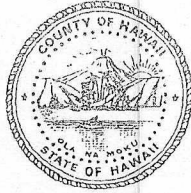
Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Klekner", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael Klekner

Villages at Mauna Lani, # 624

Stephen K. Yamashiro
Mayor



Virginia Goldstein
Director

Russell Kokubun
Deputy Director

County of Hawaii

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

25 Aupuni Street, Room 109 • Hilo, Hawaii 96720-4252
(808) 961-8288 • Fax (808) 961-8742

August 17, 2000

Ms. Anne L. Mapes
Belt Collins Hawaii Ltd.
680 Ala Moana Boulevard, 1st Floor
Honolulu, HI 96813-5406

Dear Ms. Mapes:

**Non-significant Zoning Change Application (NZC 00-04)
Tokyu Corporation and Sea Cliff Development LLC
TMK: 6-8-22:10; 6-8-33:3-11, 34-48, 52 and
Portions of 1, 2, 12, 13, 20, 21, 32, 33, 49, 50, 53**

This is to acknowledge receipt on August 8, 2000, of your request filed on behalf of Tokyu Corporation and Sea Cliff Development LLC for a determination of a non-significant zoning change in accordance with Section 25-2-45 of Chapter 25, Hawaii County Code, and Planning Department Rule 8.

Your request is to adjust the boundaries of two areas without increasing the zoning densities for those areas. Specifically, the following are the zoning districts and land areas involved:

1. Multiple Family Residential – 4,000 square feet (RM-4) to Resort-Hotel 1,250 square feet (V-1.25): 32.519 acres
2. V-1.25 to RM-4: 32.519 acres

Although the zoning boundaries will be transferred from one area to another, the original amount of land area for each zoning district remains the same. The relocation of the affected zoning districts from one area to another will not result in any increase in zoning densities.

Req to 7646
AUG 21 2000

Ms. Anne L. Mapes
Belt Collins Hawaii Ltd.
Page 2
August 17, 2000

Upon review of the request, we have determined that it complies with the criteria set forth in Section 25-2-45 (a)(1) of Chapter 25, Hawaii County Code, for determining non-significant zoning changes. The transfer of zoning districts from one area to another will not result in an increase to the current zoning districts. We, therefore, administratively grant the requested non-significant zoning changes.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Norman Hayashi of this office at 961-8288.

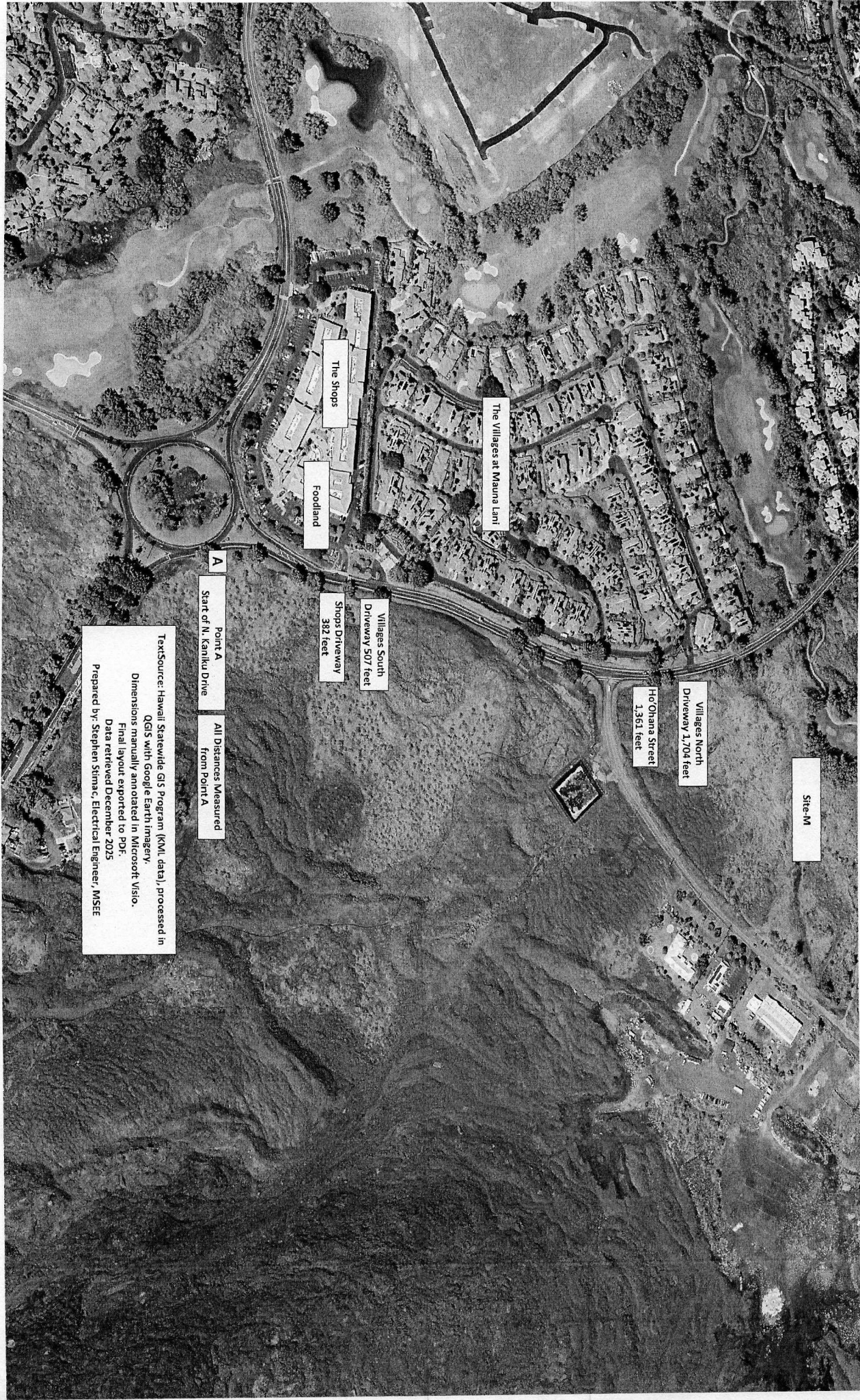
Sincerely,


VIRGINIA GOLDSTEIN
Planning Director

NH:pak

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cc: Hawaii County Council (w/ attachments)
Real Property Tax Division (w/ attachments)
West Hawaii Planning Office (w/ attachments)
Roy Uchida (w\ attachments and disk)
Ms. Sachiko Murano
Sea Cliff Development LLC



Site-M

Villages North
Driveway 1,704 feet

Ho'Ohana Street
1,361 feet

Villages South
Driveway 507 feet

Shops Driveway
382 feet

Foodland

The Shops

The Villages at Mauna Lani

Point A
Start of M. Kaniku Drive

All Distances Measured
from Point A

TextSource: Hawaii Statewide GIS Program (KWL data), processed in
QGIS with Google Earth Imagery,
Dimensions manually annotated in Microsoft Visio.
Final layout exported to PDF.
Data retrieved December 2025
Prepared by: Stephen Stimac, Electrical Engineer, MSEE