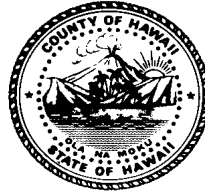


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Mayor



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HĀMĀKUA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN ACTION COMMITTEE

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April 30, 2026

Louis Daniele III, Chair
Windward Planning Commission
101 Pauahi Street, Suite 3
Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

**SUBJECT: Hāmākua Community Development Plan Action Committee Letter
Regarding Teppy Mountain Application (PL-SPP-2024-000075)**

Dear Chair Daniele III and Members of the Windward Planning Commission:

The Hāmākua Community Development Plan (CDP) Action Committee (AC), through its Permitted Interaction Group (PIG), conducted a review of materials associated with the Teppy Mountain application, including the Windward Planning Commission's findings dated February 17, 2026.

At the Hāmākua CDP AC meeting on April 1, 2026, at the Kula'imano Community Center, community members provided in-person testimony regarding the proposed project. The AC established a PIG to draft and present testimony at the Planning Commission's scheduled special meeting in May regarding the Teppy Mountain application.

The AC serves as a liaison between the community and decision-making bodies. In this role, the committee does not determine project preference but evaluates whether proposals align with the goals, policies, and framework of the adopted Hāmākua CDP. Based on this review, the committee provides the following findings regarding the project's consistencies and inconsistencies with the CDP.

The proposed project may align with the following CDP provisions:

1. Economy

The proposal may contribute to economic diversification by introducing opportunities that support local employment and economic activity. If appropriately designed, the project could support small business development and enhance local economic resilience. (*Economy Community Objectives*, p. 26)

2. Community-Based Planning and Rural Tourism

The CDP encourages community-based collaborative management and promotes appropriate rural tourism, including festivals that celebrate music, culture, arts, and agriculture. To the extent that the proposed event incorporates educational, cultural, or community-based elements, these aspects may be generally consistent with CDP objectives supporting alternative visitor experiences and local engagement. (*Community Objective 13*, p. 73)

3. Rural Tourism and Community Activities

The CDP promotes appropriate rural tourism and encourages festivals that celebrate music, culture, arts, and agriculture. To the extent that the proposed event incorporates educational, cultural, or community-based elements, these aspects may be generally consistent with CDP objectives supporting alternative visitor experiences and local engagement. (*Community Objective 13*, p. 27; *Assets*, p. 22)

The proposed project does not align with the following CDP provisions:

1. Section 1.4.2 – Core Values – Country/Rural Lifestyle (p. 21)

A central value expressed in the CDP is the preservation of Hāmākua’s rural lifestyle, including agriculture, peace and quiet, and controlled, appropriate development. The scale and nature of the proposed activities—including a multi-day festival with camping and amplified sound, as well as an industrial heavy equipment rental base yard—appear inconsistent with this core value and the intent to ensure that human activities remain in harmony with the area’s natural and cultural landscape.

2. Section 4.3 – Protection of Agricultural Lands and Open Space (p. 58)

The project appears inconsistent with the CDP’s priority to protect agricultural lands and maintain open space. The conversion or intensification of land use in areas designated for agriculture may undermine long-term agricultural viability and food security goals.

3. Section 3 – Preferred Land Use and Settlement Patterns (p. 35)

The CDP emphasizes concentrating development within existing town centers and designated growth areas. The proposed development may contribute to dispersed or non-contiguous growth patterns, conflicting with the CDP’s direction to avoid sprawl and maintain rural character. Additionally, the introduction or

continuation of industrial-type uses in agriculturally designated lands raises concerns regarding consistency with CDP guidance that such uses be located in areas appropriately zoned and supported by infrastructure.

4. Section 5 – Infrastructure and Service Alignment (p. 79)

CDP policies prioritize development in areas with adequate infrastructure, including water, wastewater, transportation, and emergency services. The proposed location does not appear to be supported by such infrastructure, raising concerns regarding long-term sustainability, community impacts, and the overall appropriateness of the proposed use in this area.

Additional Considerations

The justification that the proposed activities occupy only a small portion (approximately 1%) of a larger parcel and its “infrequent” duration does not adequately address the planning principle of compatibility between land uses. The location and proximity of incompatible uses, rather than their proportional size, determine their impact.

For example, proposed noise mitigation measures state that amplified sound will be directed mauka, away from neighboring dwellings. However, sound carries readily in this area due to topography and prevailing mauka-to-makai airflow, particularly at night. Allowing incompatible activities in this setting does not eliminate their impacts or their inconsistency with the CDP’s values and vision.

Infrastructure and Public Safety

The proposal includes activities involving the intentional use of open flame or fire. In the absence of an established water supply, fire suppression resources, and wastewater infrastructure, these activities raise specific public safety concerns. The lack of on-site infrastructure necessary to support emergency response and basic health and safety needs presents additional risk considerations that are inconsistent with CDP policies supporting safe and adequately serviced development. The proposed use may also increase reliance on off-site emergency services, including fire, police, and medical response, in an area not adequately supported by existing infrastructure.

Agricultural Integrity

The protection of prime agricultural lands remains a central value within the Hāmākua CDP, and any proposal impacting such lands should be carefully evaluated for long-term consequences.

Rural Character and Community Harmony

The CDP emphasizes that change within Hāmākua should be thoughtful and deliberate, and that human activities remain in harmony with the area’s unique natural and cultural landscape. The scale, intensity, and location of the proposed activities raise questions regarding consistency with these guiding principles. (Community Objective 3, p. 26)

Consistency with CDP Framework

The CDP serves as the guiding document for land use decisions and as a bridge between community values and decision-making processes. Deviations from its policies should be clearly justified and carefully weighed.

Conclusion

The Hāmākua CDP AC appreciates the opportunity to provide input on the Teppy Mountain application. While there are limited areas of potential alignment, the proposal presents multiple inconsistencies with key CDP policies—particularly those related to the protection of agricultural lands, rural character, appropriate land use patterns, and the provision of adequate infrastructure and services.

These inconsistencies should be carefully weighed by the Windward Planning Commission in its review of the application to ensure that any decision remains consistent with the adopted Hāmākua Community Development Plan. We are very concerned about the precedence that approval of this special permit application will set for not only Hāmākua but also the rest of Hawai'i island.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,



Tisha Mahealani Maikui (Apr 30, 2026 07:44:39 HST)

Tisha Mahealani Maikui, Chair
Hāmākua Community Development Plan Action Committee