

HĀMĀKUA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN
ACTION COMMITTEE
COUNTY OF HAWAI'I

FINAL MINUTES
February 4, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Mahealani Maikui called the meeting of the Hāmākua Community Development Plan (CDP) Action Committee (AC) to order at 5:02 p.m. This meeting was held in person at the Honoka'a Complex and online via the Zoom platform.

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

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0g_o4DdUJig

ROLL CALL

Members Present (in person): Mahealani Maikui (Chair), Tawn Keeney, and Ben Dalalaidao

Members Present (via Zoom): Brad Kurokawa (Interim Vice Chair), Robert Nishimoto, Maile Lavea-Malloe

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

County Staff (via Zoom): Janice Hata

There were approximately ten (10) members of the public in attendance – seven (7) in person and three (3) via Zoom.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Committee Member Keeney moved to approve the December 3, 2025 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Interim Vice Chair Kurokawa and passed unanimously. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 3:34]

PUBLIC TESTIMONY ON AGENDA ITEMS

No public testimony was provided at this time. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 5:07]

BUSINESS:

- Hawai'i Department of Transportation (DOT) Update on Roadway Safety and Hakalau Bridge Repairs** – Hawai'i DOT will provide an update on roadway safety concerns on along Hawai'i Belt Road on the Hāmākua Coast, including the status of repairs to the Hakalau Bridge. Discussion and potential action to follow. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 6:20]

Representatives from the State of Hawai'i Department of Transportation (DOT), including Clifford Corpuz and Rob Lee, provided updates on roadway repairs along Hawai'i Belt Road (Route 19). DOT reported that temporary repairs are underway at approximately eight locations between Mile Markers 4 and 15 to address roadway dips caused by settlement and erosion. Work was progressing near Mile Marker 12.5 and is anticipated to be

completed by the end of February 2026. DOT noted that two locations near Mile Markers 4 and 14.8 will require geotechnical evaluation before permanent repairs can be designed and constructed, which may take four to six months. Committee members asked questions regarding repair locations and timelines.

Committee Member Dalauidaio raised concerns regarding bus shelter conditions and rider safety along the corridor. DOT clarified that bus shelters are managed by Hawai'i County Mass Transit, not the State.

2. Letter Regarding Request for Information on Special Permit Process – The AC will discuss and consider submitting a letter regarding Planning Department's Special Permit Process. Potential action to follow. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 29:25]

The Committee reviewed a draft letter requesting clarification from the Planning Department regarding the Special Permit process. Committee members discussed concerns related to discretionary review authority, consistency of permit decisions, and public understanding of the process. Public testimony emphasized the need for clearer notification procedures and greater transparency regarding permitting decisions. Planning staff explained that public notice requirements include mailed notices to surrounding property owners and public hearing postings through official County channels. Staff also clarified that Special Permits are reviewed using established criteria and include opportunities for public testimony before the Planning Commission. Committee members stated that the intent of the letter is to request additional information to improve community awareness rather than address specific projects. Members agreed that the letter aligns with CDP goals related to transparency and public participation.

Committee Member Keeney made a motion to submit the draft letter to the Planning Director. The motion was seconded by Chair Maikui and passed unanimously.

3. Letter of Appreciation Kawainui Makai Acquisition – The AC will discuss and consider submitting a letter of appreciation to Nā 'Āina Kai regarding the PONC acquisition of the Kawainui property. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:07:12]

Committee members discussed the recent acquisition of the Kawainui Makai property through the County's Public Access, Open Space, and Natural Resources Preservation Commission (PONC) program. Background information was provided regarding the property's cultural, environmental, and shoreline access importance to the Hāmākua community. The Committee acknowledged the cooperation of Nā 'Āina Kai Botanical Garden in facilitating the sale to the County. Members discussed the significance of preserving coastal access and protecting natural resources for future generations. It was noted that stewardship responsibilities are expected to be managed by the Makahanaloa Fishing Association. Committee members expressed appreciation for the collaborative preservation effort. Members agreed that sending a formal letter of appreciation recognizes community stewardship and supports CDP resource protection policies.

Committee Member Keeney made a motion to submit the letter of appreciation to Nā 'Āina Kai Botanical Garden. The motion was seconded by Chair Maikui and passed unanimously.

4. Letter of Support for Public Access, Open Space, and Natural Resources Preservation Commission (PONC) Nominations – The AC will discuss and consider submitting letters of support for the following PONC nominations:

- Haina Makai
- Ka'awali'i Gulch in O'okala

[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:11:50]

The Committee reviewed nominations for the Haina Makai and Ka'awali'i Gulch properties for preservation through the PONC program. Members discussed the importance of preserving shoreline access, protecting natural resources, and maintaining culturally significant areas within the Hāmākua district. The Haina Makai property was described as a coastal area that provides shoreline access and supports traditional fishing practices, and members discussed ways to strengthen the draft letter of support. The Committee agreed that additional revisions were needed and that Chair Maiku'i and Committee Member Keeney would continue working on the language before bringing the letter back for further consideration.

The Ka'awali'i Gulch nomination was also discussed, with members noting its value as a natural resource and watershed area consistent with CDP preservation goals. Members expressed support for the Ka'awali'i Gulch letter as written and did not request any revisions. Overall, the Committee reiterated the importance of supporting preservation efforts that protect resources and access for the Hāmākua community.

Chair Maikui made a motion to work with Committee Member Keeney to revise and finalize language for a letter of support for the Haina Makai PONC nomination, and to forward the letter of support for the Ka'awali'i Gulch nomination as drafted. The motion was seconded by Vice Chair Kurokawa and passed unanimously.

Melvin Mason Jr. provided public testimony. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:33:37]

5. Proposed Nīnole Community Hub (TMK (3) 3-2-003-006) – The AC will discuss the proposed Nīnole Community Hub and consider submitting a letter of support. Discussion will include additional information provided by Christy Toledo. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:41:39]

Planning staff provided an overview of the committee's advisory role when reviewing conceptual development proposals and emphasized that recommendations must be grounded in CDP policies rather than direct project endorsement. Staff explained that the project is in the conceptual stage and no formal application has been submitted to the Planning Department.

Applicant Christy Toledo presented her proposal for a Nīnole Community Hub intended to support agricultural operations and provide community services. The conceptual project includes potential components such as fueling services, a convenience store, commercial

115 kitchen facilities to support local agricultural producers, and basic emergency and travel
116 support services such as water and ice. Ms. Toledo described the property as historically
117 functioning as a commercial hub and explained that the proposal aims to restore
118 community-serving uses.

119 Committee members discussed current zoning and General Plan designations for the
120 parcel, including its classification as Important Agricultural Land. Members explored
121 potential future General Plan amendments that could allow limited rural commercial or
122 neighborhood-scale uses. Committee members also discussed maintaining rural character,
123 scale, and compatibility with surrounding agricultural uses.

124 Planning staff advised that any committee correspondence should describe the conceptual
125 proposal, identify CDP policy consistencies and inconsistencies, and provide
126 recommendations for potential mitigation measures or community priorities. Staff also noted
127 that the letter should be addressed to the applicant rather than the Planning Department
128 because no application has been filed.

129 Committee members requested additional research regarding potential General Plan
130 designation pathways and recommended that the applicant continue working with Planning
131 staff and provide additional supporting information for future consideration.

132 Meizhu Lui provided public testimony. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:52:49]

133 **6. Election of Committee Vice Chair for 2026** – The AC will elect a Vice Chair for the
134 2026 calendar year. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:59:12]

135 Chair Maikui made a motion to nominate Committee Member Lavea-Malloe for Vice Chair
136 of the Hāmākua CDP Action Committee for 2026. The motion was seconded by Committee
137 Member Keeney and passed unanimously. Committee Member Lavea-Malloe accepted the
138 role of Vice Chair for 2026.

139 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

140 The Planning Department is seeking applicants for the Hāmākua CDP Action Committee and
141 requests assistance to get the word out to interested community members. The application can
142 be found on the Mayor's office website at: [https://www.hawaiicounty.gov/our-county/boards-](https://www.hawaiicounty.gov/our-county/boards-and-commissions)
143 [and-commissions](https://www.hawaiicounty.gov/our-county/boards-and-commissions) [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:05:43]

144 **ADJOURNMENT**

145 Chair Maikui adjourned this meeting at 7:08 p.m. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:06:16]

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