

Kauai Planning Commission  
4444 Rice Street, Suite A473  
Lihue, Kauai 96766

February 28, 2017

Honorable Chairperson, Honorable Commissioners and fellow residents of Kaua'i:

In standing back and taking a good hard look at where we have been with the General Plan Update process over the last nearly two years, I would like to ask each Commissioner to reflect on the importance of this moment. Over the next few weeks, or possibly months, you will be determining the fate of our island ohana for the next 15 years+, and by doing so the future of the island for generations to come. Although you are not the last stop in the chain of command, the direction you provide will be enormously important to the final outcome. My question to each of our Commissioners is this: are you ready to take on the responsibility of signing off on the General Plan, and if not, what do you need to prepare you make this decision?

May I offer some suggestions on how to move forward on this count:

1. Request a completed copy of the Draft General Plan with red line proposed changes before you make any further motions to ensure you (and the community) understand the multiple layers of changes in the context of the whole document.
2. For any section or sector that you don't feel you have enough information on which to make a decision, or requires further discussion and input, kindly request to form a sub-committee under the Planning Commission. For instance, I strongly suggest a sub-committee be formed for the *Implementation and Monitoring* section, which in my estimation is far from complete.
3. Push for greater involvement by our State Legislators in the process by sending them each a complete hard copy (including red lined proposed changes), then meet with each one of them at the end of the legislative session (May). Many of the challenges addressed in the General Plan are state-based and given Kaua'i is one legislative district, is it incumbent on the Planning Dept. to keep our Legislators informed. Nadine Nakamura for instance, who sits on the Affordable Housing Committee at the State level, is a perfect example of someone who should be informed and engaged, including possible participation is a housing sub-committee under the County Planning Commission.
4. In turn, ensure our Legislators keep the State and Governor informed and up-to-date on the General Plan process. Many of the sector issues are on State

lands and/or under State jurisdiction, and, as such, the State needs to understand the issues and work cooperatively with Kaua'i County.

Naturally, with suggestions like these, the next question is always this will take time, so, "Who pays?". None of the above suggestions require consultant expertise or participation. County Planning Dept. staff are certainly more than capable of organizing and fulfilling all of these requests. It seems like this should be an automatic part of the process.

**Action:** I hope the Planning Commission will consider making a motion to ensure the above four recommendations are realized.

#### DIRECTOR'S REPORT SUPPLEMENTAL #2

In addition to the above comments, I have reviewed the Director's Report Supplemental #2 and appreciate the great strides the Planning Department has taken in continually trying to improve the Draft General Plan. In particular, the new descriptive language pertaining to transportation, land-use, housing (2-23), and watersheds (2-5) is greatly improved, although the translation into actions still remain without much merit except for the reference to "Partnership Needs" for the watershed sector (2-5, 2-6) and transit-ready section (2-46).

#### WATERSHED SECTOR

In the *Watershed* sector I strongly disagree with the wholesale removal of the "Permitting Actions and Code Changes" and replacement with a weaker set of recommendations (2-10). Much of what was lost in this section pertains to establishing standards for land development that lessens the impacts on critical natural functions within the watershed. Also, by removing the "assisting with State efforts to end driving on beaches" action only leads to further degradation of beaches and coastal resources.

**Action:** Please do not accept these changes, but rather retain the set of Permitting Actions and Code Changes in the watershed section as presented in the January 2017 Departmental Draft.

#### AGRICULTURE SECTION

In regards to the proposed changes to the Ag sections, pg 2-86 to 2-91. The addition on pg 2-86 of two paragraphs on Kauai's long tradition of agriculture is a important historical perspective and respectful of Hawaiian culture with emphasis on when all of that began to change with the introduction of sugar.

It appears that there is to be a deletion on pg 2-88 regarding Food Self-sufficiency. It would be replaced with Supporting Farmers and Access to Healthy Local Food. The paragraph to be eliminated is one which contains a metric which could be used going forward to compare today's self-sufficiency with the future growth of food self

sufficiency. Twenty one thousand acres is the amount of land needed to provide food self-sufficiency for 70,000 people. This acreage includes produce, animals and dairy. Currently of those 21,000 acres 19,000 are in seed, coffee and forestry production. Four hundred forty three acres are in taro production. It appears that scant acres are being used for locally grown food. By eliminating that section we lose facts regarding goals for the future.

**Action:** Combine the two paragraphs or eliminate the second paragraph.

In regards to the section on Promoting Food Self-Sufficiency (2-88), specifically the statement "expand the development and commercialization of marine aquaculture", I urge you to think carefully about the implications of land-based aquaculture and hope that you will promote the use of closed systems rather than those that discharge into freshwater or the marine environment. For those aquaculture operations located in the marine environment, even though they would be in state waters and under the jurisdiction of Department of Aquatic Resources (DAR), the potential for environmental impacts on fisheries resources, habitats, water quality, and correspondingly Kauai's fishing and recreational community should be considered when determining the placement of these operations. This is an example of how and when the County should take an active role interfacing with the State in relationship to activities that will be affecting our community.

**Action:** The recommendation under the *Hawai'i 2050 Sustainability Plan* to expand the development and commercialization of marine aquaculture should be taken under careful consideration in terms of the placement and type of operation to ensure controls in regards to impacts on the environment.

#### IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING SECTION

Under the section on "Implementation Agencies" (3-3), specific to the description of the role of the Planning Commission, I believe it should read "The Planning Commission hears, reviews and makes recommendation to the County Council on amendments and/or updates to the General Plan (add the underlined "and").

**Action:** Add the word "and" in the above sentence.

In regards to the Planning Department description in this same section, self-reporting/self-assessment is often seen as a conflict of interest. I suggest you change the section that now reads "The Department will have primary responsibility for monitoring and reporting on General Plan progress" to "A cross-sectoral and community-based evaluation team will have primary responsibility for monitoring and reporting on General Plan progress, meeting twice yearly to identify progress towards meeting established milestones, and every two years to conduct a comprehensive assessment."

**Action:** Please change who has responsibility for monitoring and reporting from the Planning Department to a cross-sectoral, community-based evaluation team with a regular schedule for evaluating milestones and comprehensive assessments.

## INFRASTRUCTURE MAPS

Finally, in the section on Infrastructure Maps (5-26 to 5-32), I disagree with the removal of the "location of wells, pumps and pipelines from all infrastructure maps". This is an important part of the discussion on water, water access and water rights that has not been adequately addressed in this plan. Maintaining the locations of these assets on the map have important implications for agriculture, land development and community access to water and therefore should remain on the maps.

**Action:** Retain the location of wells, pumps and pipelines on all infrastructure maps.

Thank you for your willingness to take on the task of continually improving the General Plan to meet our current and future needs, while maintaining consideration of the need to retain the rural character that makes Kauai a unique and beautiful place valued by its residents.

Respectfully,  
Anne Walton  
Judy Shabert