

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

May 23, 2017

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

It has now been five months since the Planning Commission started their engagement in the review of the Departmental Draft General Plan. I am certain none of you imagined that at this point you would still be in the throes of this review process. I want to express deep appreciation for Chairman Keawe continuing to maintain an open and transparent public platform for this review process. And to each of the Commissioners extend a warm thank you for your patience and willingness to listen and navigate your way through an enormous range of possibilities provided by the public for what our island community could achieve under the guidance provided by this General Plan.

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. We, on the community side, understand the brevity of your role. Once the General Plan leaves your chambers, it will then be in the hands of the County Council. The County Council's job is not to scrutinize every word, but rather to take a look at the document as a whole and determine its worthiness. Therefore, it is incumbent on each one of you to carefully examine and understand the details of this plan before you send it off to the Council.

As you know, the community has also worked hard on its side to make this a better plan. However, I personally don't think this process is yet complete. I believe there is an opportunity still before us to develop a better understanding of the issues and take a more educated and systematic approach to workable solutions. I think we can use this point in time not to gather more information or input, but rather to deepen our understanding of what is actually in the plan and the best options for moving forward. Finding a structured way to do this would provide an opportunity for both the Commissioners and the public to learn, to build consensus, and come out the other end with a stronger and more directed General Plan that we all believe in. And, in the end, this learning opportunity will be better equip the Commissioners to address all the issues that come across their desks during their tenure.

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 to make this decision? Is this perhaps a good time to build a deeper understanding of the document we have in hand? To understand the complexity of the issues laid out in the Plan, and the nuances when applied to this island setting? In reviewing the latest Departmental Draft released on May 12, which includes the incorporation of four out of five sets of supplemental changes, this seems like the appropriate time to invest in learning, understanding and dialoguing, *then* identifying the answers we are looking for. In the long run I think you will find this small investment of time will more than pay for itself in terms of what we get in return.

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