

Oral Testimony of Carl Imparato on behalf of the Hanalei-to-Ha'ena Community Association and the Kauai Community Coalition's Tourism Work Group
March 14, 2017

It was very disappointing that the January 2017 Draft of the General Plan did not acknowledge the extent of the problems associated with uncontrolled growth in tourism, or propose any credible solutions to the problem.

But it is even more disappointing that even after these problems were pointed out in public testimony, nothing at all has been done to address this matter.

The Draft proposed no policies and no actions to keep tourism growth to a level appropriate for Kauai's rural character, infrastructure, communities and residents. Despite the need for policies to throttle down the expansion of the tourism industry, the Draft's entire approach to "growth management" is to encourage and accommodate all growth.

In both our December and our January comments, the HHCA and KCC raised the concerns that Kauai in general, and Hanalei-to-Ha'ena in particular are drowning in a sea of negative impacts due to ever-increasing numbers of tourists. The situation is particularly serious for the north shore, where:

- Residents are already far outnumbered by tourists
- Tourist traffic already overwhelms our roads, bridges and parking capacity
- Tourist activities are already crowding out residents at parks and beaches; and
- Safe evacuation of the tsunami hazard zone is no longer possible due to the ever-increasing number of tourists and tourist vehicles.

We asked that the Draft be updated to address tourism growth, and to acknowledge that local communities' concerns and visions should be paramount, on issues from community development and character to bike paths and protection of critical viewplanes.

We proposed close to two-dozen policies and actions to restore balance, to manage growth, to protect the character of Kauai's communities, to increase public safety, to protect quality of life, and to respect local communities' desires.

But absolutely nothing was done to correct glaring problems in the Draft.

The only substantive change was actually to make matters worse, by retreating from the November draft's action to discontinue designating Princeville Phase II as future resort, to January's action to give the developer 5 more years, and then retreating further to February 28th's action to give the developer 10 more years to get LUC and County zoning changes from Ag to Resort.

Maybe you do not believe what we are saying. If that is so, I ask you to at least take the time to read the documented numbers in our written testimony, and then follow up as to why there have been no proposed corrections to the Draft.

We demonstrate that the Draft General Plan misrepresents the present state of affairs:

- The Plan says that tourists increase the population by 20%, but the number is more like 35 to 40%.

We demonstrate that the Draft General Plan's forecast conceals the magnitude of tourism's future growth and problems, claiming that tourism over 2015 to 2035 will increase by only 8.4%...

- But that forecast is just 1/11th of the recent growth rate.
- That forecast means that total growth in tourism over the next 20 years will be less than Kauai experienced in just two recent years.
- That forecast predicts that the tourism level we actually experienced in 2016 won't occur until 2025.

Please do not let this charade continue.

- Please insist that the Draft General Plan be revised to reflect reality regarding both present conditions and projected future tourism growth.
- Please take the time to read our January 31 comments and recommendations.
- And then, please insist that the General Plan include substantive policies and actions that will protect Kauai in general, and the Hanalei-to-Ha'ena communities in particular, from the impacts of that growth.