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Community Plan Advisory Committee
South Maui Community Plan Update
c/o Department of Planning
2200 Main Street
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Sent via email

Aloha CPAC Members

Re: South Maui Community Plan Update – Kihei Mauka & North Kihei Area of Change

This submittal will provide summary information related to the “Small Town” designation within the North Kihei Area of Change of the South Maui Community Plan (SMCP) referred to as Kihei Mauka.

Background.

During early community outreach efforts as part of the formulation of Maui Island Plan in the early to mid-2000s, North Kihei was consistently identified as a logical area to accommodate future urban growth. Recognizing the need to have a well planned community, Kaonoulu Ranch and Haleakala Ranch initiated a cooperative planning effort to evaluate the suitability of the region to accommodate future community growth. For purposes of describing the area it was referred to as “Kihei Mauka”.

The area was evaluated and analyzed as part of the formulation of the Maui Island Plan resulting in approximately 583 acres being included within the Maui Island Plan’s Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). The area is above Pi’ilani Highway, between the Maui Research and Technology Park (MR&TP) and the area above the Ohukai Street. See attached MIP description and map.

Haleakala Ranch Company and Kaonoulu Ranch LLLP are multi-generational family owned ranches established in 1888 and 1916 respectively. The identification of Kihei Mauka as a growth area presents an opportunity to address future community needs while also protecting the integrity and legacy of the remaining lands of both ranches. See attached Land Holdings Map as Regional Map.

Natural Land Characteristics

Topography. Most of the area is comprised of gentle sloping lands with elevations ranging from approximately 100 to 225 feet above sea level. The area is bounded by Waiakoa Gulch to the north and Waipulani Gulch to the south, with the central portion being dissected by Kulanihako`i Gulch.

Agricultural Lands. The area is not considered prime Agricultural Land. The majority of the properties are rated as “E” by the State of Hawaii Land Study Bureau, on a scale of “A” to “E”, with “A” being the higher quality lands and “E” being the lowest.

Flora Fauna. A botanical and fauna study examined the area in 2010 and noted that the vegetation throughout the area is dominated by just two non-native plant species, kiawe and buffelgrass. The four native Hawaiian plant species recorded, kumuniu, koali awahia, ‘ilima and ‘uhaloa, although of uncommon or rare occurrence on the property, are widespread and common in Hawaii in general. According to the study, no federally listed Endangered or Threatened native plants (USFWS, 2009) were encountered during the course of the survey nor were any species that are candidate for such status seen. No special habitats or rare plant communities were seen on the property.

Archaeology. Archaeological surveys were conducted on 516 acres of Kaonoulu Ranch owned lands in 2008 and 427 acres of Haleakala Ranch owned lands in 2010. The surveyed area was approximately 360 acres larger than the current Kihei Mauka area.

A number of military and ranching era sites were recorded along with some pre-contact features. On Kaonoulu Ranch, there were 8 pre-contact features, 6 of which were clustered in the upper reaches of Kulanihako`i Gulch, outside of the current UGB area. They predominantly consisted of temporary use and habitation sites: rock shelters with petroglyph components, enclosures, platforms, a mound, and a wall. Three sites were interpreted as temporary habitation sites bearing anthropomorphic petroglyph features. One potential habitation/workshop site and an agricultural mound was located within the current UGB area.

The survey on Haleakala Ranch lands led to the identification and documentation of 15 archaeological sites, 5 of which were determined to be Pre-Contact. Preservation was recommended for three of the sites: a possible heiau dating to between 1450-1650, a Pre-Contact workshop with WWII military use, and rock art within the gulch. A preservation plan would need to be prepared and accepted by the State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD). The preservation plan will be prepared in consultation with Native Hawaiian organization or individuals.

The possible heiau site has been set aside in the master plan with a larger than normal buffer, allowing for the options of passive preservation or the possibility of providing interpretative or educational opportunities.

Growth Area Rationale:

Logical growth area. Kihei Mauka is located adjacent to a number of existing and planned facilities: Kulanihako`i High School, Maui Research and Technology Park/Kihei Charter School, and existing and planned light industrial areas. Being in North Kihei, it will have less of an impact on Pi`ilani Highway than other potential areas further south. Importantly, and as noted above, the area is not considered prime in terms of Agricultural productivity.

Kihei Mauka was consistently endorsed as an area appropriate to accommodate urban growth in all phases of the County sponsored efforts to gather public input during the creation of the Maui Island Plan, including Focus Maui Nui's grass roots Walkstory Planstory workshops, and reviews by the General Plan Advisory Committee, Maui Planning Commission, previous County Administrations and the Maui County Council.

Opportunity for Comprehensive long-term planning. Including Kihei Mauka in the SMCP provides an opportunity for long range planning of the area in a comprehensive manner. Future development of the entire area will be anticipated so that appropriate long-term planning for infrastructure and community facilities will take place.

Desired characteristics of future development can also be prescribed and incorporated into the planning standards for the area.

Limiting the Community Plan designation to only a portion of the area could lead to fragmented planning and an under estimation of future infrastructure and community needs.

Vision:

From the Maui Island Plan: *“The expansion area should be developed based on the concept of a network of compact, walkable neighborhoods with neighborhood commercial nodes concentrated in the village centers of Kīhei Mauka. ... A range of housing types should be provided with a significant percentage of multifamily units, and an emphasis on housing that is intended to meet resident needs.”*

Designation: Small Town Center:

The Planning Department's recommended designation for the area is Small Town Center. This designation allows for development of medium density neighborhoods and neighborhood commercial centers. The attached Conceptual Plan is indeed very conceptual and will be adjusted as additional public input and engagement occurs. Based on early comments from the KCA and others, the commercial areas will be somewhat lessened with an increased emphasis towards residential housing.

Urban Planning and Design:

Future growth within Kihei Mauka will utilize modern smart growth principles and up-to-date zoning tools to encourage complete and comprehensive community development. Some of the major objectives that have been included in the description of Kihei Mauka in the Maui Island Plan include the following:

- *“...progressively designed and safe pedestrian, bicycle, and ground transportation corridors will need to connect the project to the Kīhei High School, MRTP, and the rest of Kīhei.”*

- *“Enhanced north-south mobility mauka of Pi`ilani Highway will be key to ensuring efficient intra and inter-regional connectivity.”*
- *“Convenient public transit access should be provided to improve regional mobility.”*
- *“Drainage and sedimentation control systems will need to be constructed to mitigate the potential for flooding makai of the project and to prevent nonpoint source pollution from entering coastal waters. These measures can be combined with the growth area’s planned park, open space, and greenbelt and greenway systems.”*
- *“...since the site is a considerable expansion of the North Kihei area, the project will need to be developed in phases. Each phase should be planned with adequate public facilities and commercial services to meet resident needs.”*

Input from Kihei Community Association. We have had good dialogue recently with the KCA Design Review Committee (DRC) about planning for the area. Based on preliminary comments received from the KCA DRC, there appears to be fundamental agreement on their suggested development parameters, including that there should be no big box retail establishments and the use of roundabouts for major intersections instead of traffic signals.

Regional Drainage and Sedimentation Issues. The Ranches have been stepping up their efforts to raise the awareness of the multi-stakeholder context of regional drainage challenges as well as other modalities of landscape-level land management work that have been ongoing and being planned. The Ranches, including Ulupalakua, have supported the creation of a new conservation-oriented non-profit that will serve as a node of connectivity in the community and a conduit for funding for projects benefitting terrestrial and nearshore marine environments of South Maui. The Malama Haleakala Foundation was recently granted 501(c)3 status by the IRS and is currently building capacity and developing a list of priority projects to benefit the region and address very significant environmental concerns in our community. Michael Reyes, author of the South Maui Watershed Plan is the lead Director of MHF.

Regional Transportation. There has been recent discussion and testimony at CPAC meetings regarding the concept of a mauka bypass vs. a mauka north-south collector road; and whether and when planning should commence on this roadway.

It appears that the more realistic option contemplates enhanced north south connectivity within the future communities to be developed mauka of Pi`ilani. This would allow coordination with long-term development of *mauka* lands and would facilitate phasing and funding of portions of the roadway by adjacent land developers.

The concept of a transportation corridor within the future growth areas is supported by Jim Charlier, an internationally renowned transportation planner who emphasizes the importance of transportation connectivity and circulation within development areas as opposed to around or separate from communities.

The State Department of Transportation’s recently adopted South Maui Sub Area Transportation Plan recommends a more realistic version of a “bypass” project, which might be more accurately

call a Mauka North-South Collector. See attached map. The conceptual corridor would run through portions of the Maui Research and Technology Park along Ninau Street connecting through the Kihei Mauka Urban Growth Boundary. It is recommended that work to identify a route to connect to Veterans Highway be initiated as soon as possible.

Water. Ideally the area would be served by the County's water system. In the event the County is unable to provide water, the back up option would be utilization of a groundwater well that has been previously developed by the Ranches. The existing well has been constructed and tested. The water quality is slightly brackish and would need to be treated for potable consumption. A similar system is currently functioning to provide water service to the Hokulani Golf Villas residential project.

Land Use Forecast. Concerns have been expressed regarding the amount of land area that should be designated within the Community Plan. The argument is that the amount of land use areas designated in the plan should match the projected population growth for the area as expressed in the social - economic forecast prepared by the Department.

There should be some caution in relying too heavily or rigidly on the Department's land use demand forecast for the following reasons:

- It is based on economic forecasts which can be subject to changes based on worldwide trends or global events.
- While the forecast has been made for 10 or 20 years, the supposed planning horizon for the Community Plan, the updates of the community plans have not been timely, this plan is almost 30 years old. Relying too rigidly on the forecast numbers could result in an outdated or irrelevant plan if it takes 30 years or more for the next update to occur.
- The forecast did not account for pent up demand due to the existing housing shortage. The Hawaii Housing Planning Study estimated that the pent up demand need for housing units in Maui County for the years 2020-2025 was 10,404 units (SMS, Hawaii Housing Planning Study, 2019).
- It did not include numbers for vacancies and assumed every new house would be occupied by a local resident.
- Changing assumptions on variables such as household size, can lead to significant differences in results. The Department's forecast utilized a higher household size than actual existing conditions despite the discussion in the housing report indicating that future residents will want to be in smaller units and household sizes, thus requiring more units for the same amount of people.
- Based on past experiences, not all designated areas will necessarily be built out, in which case there could be a shortage of available growth areas. Just because an area is designated in the plan as a growth area does not guarantee that it will be developed.

Long term plans for Kihei Mauka will not materialize overnight. Maui's two primary master planned residential communities are located in Central Maui at Maui Lani and Kehalani and took almost twenty years from the start of County planning efforts to beginning of construction.

Maui Lani and Kehalani Project Districts are good examples of master planned communities.

- Including a large area and scale has assured that sites for schools, parks, roadways, shopping areas are anticipated for and constructed.
- Although conceived in the 70's and approved around 1990, they have not been completely built out and are still in process.

It is important to reiterate that the area will be developed in phases over time, concurrently with infrastructure development.

Next Steps:

It is important to note that the Ranches are not developers and will not be the developers of the projects within the Kihei Mauka area. However, their intent is to set the stage for positive future growth for the residents of South Maui through these collaborative planning efforts. As such, the next steps in the entitlement process will be initiated by others following the project vision and design parameters established through the Maui Island Plan and South Maui Community Plan Update Process.

Necessary future land use approvals include State District Boundary Amendments through the State Land Use Commission as well as Change in Zonings from the Maui County Council. These regulatory reviews will require processing of an Environmental Impact Statement which will provide for public review and detailed analysis of impacts related to infrastructure (transportation, water, wastewater, drainage, etc.) socio-economic and environmental factors, and archaeological and cultural resources. It is anticipated that a detailed set of conditions will be attached to the approvals ensuring compliance and implementation of a variety of mitigation measures and infrastructure improvements to accommodate the development. Once initiated, it is estimated that these approvals will take 3-5 years to complete. After completion of the entitlement phase it is estimated that master subdivision approval and detailed design of backbone infrastructure would take an additional 3-4 years, before construction on the first phase of development would occur. These timelines are theoretically possible but likely to be optimistic.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this information. I will be available to clarify any of the above information at the August 19, 2023 CPAC meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



Rory Frampton

Cc: J. Scott Meidell, President, Haleakala Ranch Company
Wendy Rice-Peterson, General Partner, Kaonoulu Ranch LLLP