

**Name:** Maui Tomorrow  
**Agenda Item:** C. Subarea 2 | North Kihei  
**Date Received:** 5/16/23

To: South Maui CPAC

From: Maui Tomorrow

Re: Testimony for May 17, 2023

Date: May 16, 2023

Severe and frequent flooding in Kihei, and significant pollution of near shore waters (including high fecal coliform issues) is a critical problem which the CPAC has already documented and discussed in the Policy and Action Item portions of the draft Community Plan. Two major drainages which contribute to this problem are the Kulanihako'i and Waipu'ilani gulches, which flow through and between Haleakalā Ranch and Ka'ono'ulu Ranch properties. These properties are currently designated as Agriculture, but the property owners are seeking a much more intensive designation as "Small Town Center" in the new plan. These properties hold the key to solving the serious flooding and off shore pollution problems encountered in Kihei.

To highlight the seriousness of the pollution problems, please find below a map, from the Southwest Maui Watershed Management Plan, 2019. This map shows the location of existing cesspools that impact both the Kulanihako'i and the Waipu'ilani gulches, near and along their headwaters upcountry. The gulches in question are the two northern most gulches shown in the image below.



This same plan discusses the importance of aquifer recharge, reduction of sediment loads, protecting riparian corridors, among other things. Per the plan, “In Kihei, the Kulanihako’i, Waipuilani, and Keokea gulches are prone to surface water flooding. Both public infrastructure such as roads and bridges and private property are damaged during storm events by sediment laden stormwater.”

The South Maui CPAC holds in its hands the ability to take a major step toward resolving these issues through proper designations and policies in the new draft plan, particularly with the Haleakalā Ranch property and a portion of the Ka’ono’ulu Ranch property, which are sandwiched between Kulanihako’i and Waipu’ilani gulches.

The area between the gulches represents a prime location for public acquisition in order to construct a major flood control and aquifer recharge project. If done utilizing permaculture techniques, maintenance costs can be minimized, and a beautiful open space area can be created.

One point we would like to make concerning land development and the map designations you will be deciding upon is that vacant land should be looked upon as a limited resource. Once

the resource is spent (i.e. planned for development) you will never get it back. Now is the appropriate time to properly designate this land, so as not to preclude an elegant solution to some serious problems.

Maui Tomorrow would recommend that the area between the two gulches remain designated as Agriculture, and that efforts should be undertaken with the County and/or State to acquire adequate property to implement a flood control, recharge and permaculture project for these two major drainages. Should the plan designate these properties for more intensive development, public acquisition would likely be precluded, due to increased land value, and a great opportunity would be lost.

In terms of providing land for residential development, some portion of the area mauka of the existing Ohukai neighborhood, at a suitable distance from Kulanihako'i and its tributaries, could be utilized for affordable and workforce housing development, perhaps including a small area for neighborhood oriented retail. This would be more consistent with the Maui Island Plan than what is proposed in the updated draft map.

While the policies contained in the draft plan on the topics of flooding and nearshore pollution are quite good, the South Maui Community plan policies and action items are much more likely to actually be implemented if they are also reflected in the land use map. You now have before you an opportunity to set the stage for implementation of those good policies. You may hear that mitigation efforts could be included in a private sector project, but history has shown that this approach has had poor results. To insure a long lasting resolution to flooding, recharge, and pollution problems, land use designation that does not increase the cost of public acquisition is recommended.

Mahalo to all the CPAC members for all the hard work you're doing, and also for the opportunity to submit our thoughts and suggestions.