

## Section 3.3 | Community Plan Map and Subareas

The community plan designations described in the previous section are applied to a map, known as the community plan map, to guide growth and preservation decisions throughout the planning period.

During individual project reviews, planners use the community plan map to determine if a project is compatible with the community's vision for that area. Likewise, developers and landowners must use this map and the community plan designations in the previous section to design their projects to meet the community's vision and needs.

The community plan map is also used to help the County plan for future services and infrastructure like roads, transit, water and wastewater systems, and parks.

For the purposes of this Plan, the South Maui community is divided into six subareas:

**Subarea 1:** Mā'alaea/Keālia

**Subarea 2:** North Kīhei

**Subarea 3:** South Kīhei

**Subarea 4:** Wailea

**Subarea 5:** Mākena

**Subarea 6:** 'Āhihi-Kīna'u/Kanaio

South Maui's linear shape results in each subarea varying in size, and all run mauka toward makai, with most development occurring within one mile of the coastline. They help to tell the story of South Maui by grouping communities together from north to south, with the majority of residents living in the North Kīhei, South Kīhei and Wailea subareas. These subarea delineations are not historical, political, or regulatory boundaries. It is also important to note that Kīhei is not a traditional place name, rather it is a remnant from the Kihei Sugar Plantation and associated camp and wharf in the region. Most North Kīhei, South Kīhei, and Wailea subareas are within the Kula moku, more specifically Kula Kai.

## Subarea 1: Mā'alaea/Keālia

Subarea 1 is located in the northwestern portion of the Community Plan area, bisecting the ahupua'a of Ukumehame and Waikapū. Its northern boundary borders Pōhākea Gulch then follows the coastline south along Honoapi'ilani Highway and North Kīhei Road until it reaches the southern end of Keālia National Wildlife Refuge. This roughly 5,000 acre subarea is largely unoccupied, containing only Mā'alaea Village and Harbor, with a population of 370 residents. Subarea 1 contains several recreational areas including portions of the historic Lāhainā Pali Trail traversing Kealaloloa Ridge, the Maui Ocean Center and the Keālia National Wildlife Refuge. Covering over 600 acres, the Refuge is one of the largest remaining natural wetlands and coastal salt marshes in the Hawaiian Islands<sup>10</sup> and home to a variety of native and endangered water bird species. Meaning "the salt bed,"<sup>11</sup> the Keālia area was once used by Native Hawaiians in the production of salt.

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<sup>10</sup><https://www.fws.gov/testimony/hr-3176-kealia-pond-national-wildlife-refuge-hr-3292-cat-island-national-wildlife-refuge>

<sup>11</sup> Retrieved from [ulukau.org](http://ulukau.org)

## Subarea 2: North Kīhei

Covering over 17,000 acres, Subarea 2 is the largest geographical subarea. Its northern boundary borders Kūihelani Highway and to the south follows the Kūlanihākoʻi Gulch to the coast just north of the Kōʻieʻie Fishpond. Kūlanihākoʻi Gulch was named for the lake in the heavens that would overflow and fall to the earth as rain<sup>12</sup> and likely flowed into historic wetlands near the fishpond. Subarea 2 contains former Alexander and Baldwin sugar plantation lands, and this rich agricultural past is present today with some of the area still used for agricultural and ranching purposes. The coastal portion of Subarea 2 includes beaches and the Kenolio Recreational Complex, offering space for community events, meetings and recreational programs. Nestled between the mauka agricultural lands and beaches are mostly single-family homes; this subarea has a population of 9,170 residents.

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<sup>12</sup> University of Hawaiʻi, Hilo. Wehewehe Hawaiian language resources. Retrieved from <https://hilo.hawaii.edu/wehe/?q=k%C5%ABlanih%C4%81koi>

### Subarea 3: South Kihei

Subarea 3 covers roughly 6,400 acres. Its northern boundary follows the lower portion of Kūlanihākoʻi Gulch, and Kilohana Drive is the southern boundary. Referred to as Kamaʻole in the Kihei Civic Development Plan, which means “childless” or “barren”,<sup>13</sup> the name reflects the region’s previously undeveloped inland character. Today, Subarea 3 is the commercial, service and residential center of the Plan area. It has a resident population over 17,000 and includes communities and planned developments mauka of Piʻilani Highway. While Subarea 3 is the most populous, it maintains the characteristic small-town feel of the community plan area.

Subarea 3’s coastline has many recreational resources, and its many beaches and corresponding beach parks are popular with residents and visitors alike. It also contains wahi kūpuna resources like the active Kalepolepo Fishpond. It is estimated Kalepolepo fishpond was built in the 1400s and was repaired in the late 1500s under the order of Umi-a-Līloa.<sup>14</sup> During the repairs, Kōʻieʻie fishpond was renamed to Kalepolepo, meaning “the dirt”, from all the dust rising in the air.

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<sup>13</sup> Retrieved from [ulukau.org](http://ulukau.org)

<sup>14</sup> Cordy, Ross (2000). *Exalted Sits the Chief*. Mutual Publishing: Honolulu.

## Subarea 4: Wailea

Covering approximately 1,500 acres, Subarea 4 is the smallest in the community plan area. Its northern border runs along Kilohana Drive and to the south is bounded by Kauhaki Street. Described as the “City of Flowers” in the Kihei Civic Development Plan, Subarea 4 was developed as a master planned resort community and this legacy remains today. Subarea 4 is a popular visitor destination with many shops, resort hotels, and a golf course set inland from the many beaches and protected bays running along its coastline and a resident population of 1,380. The name “Wailea” comes from the ka’ao (legend) of the Hawaiian goddess of canoe builders, Lea, who appeared in the body of an ‘elepaio<sup>15</sup> and would fly over this beautiful, beach filled portion of the coast. Thus, the area was known as “wai-Lea” or the “waters of Lea”.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Beckwith, M. Hawaiian Mythology. Retrieved from [ulukau.org](http://ulukau.org)

<sup>16</sup> Retrieved from [ulukau.org](http://ulukau.org)

## Subarea 5: Mākena

The southernmost populated portion of the community plan area, Subarea 5 covers approximately 4,000 acres. Its northern border is Kauhaki Street, and it extends just past 'Āhihi-Kīna'u/Kanaio Preserve parking lot. Part of the once thriving Honua'ula coastal region, today Subarea 5 is home to roughly 100 residents. Mākena means “abundance.” The region’s name refers to the wealth of marine resources off the coast.<sup>17</sup> Reminders of Subarea 5’s historical past can be found today in the Palauea Cultural Reserve located in the subarea’s northern end. The Reserve protects at least 14 native plant species and 13 archaeological complexes.<sup>18</sup> Subarea 5 also contains the 1164.4-acre Mākena State Park, an extremely popular destination for residents and visitors known for its large white sand beach and prominent Pu'u Ōla'i cinder cone, the tail of Puuoinaina.

In the 'Alalākeiki channel, between Kaho'olawe and the moku of Honua'ula, sits Molokini, a crescent shaped islet. One mo'olelo describes the origin of Molokini and Pu'u Ōla'i, as a mo'o (a large lizard or dragon) named Puuoinaina. Puuoinaina lived most of her life on Kaho'olawe, where she took two brothers as her husbands. Until one day she fell in love with Pele's lover, Lohiau, angering Pele. When Puuoinaina heard that Pele was angry with her, she ran into the sea. As Pele was on her way to visit Lohiau she came upon Puuoinaina stretching from Kaho'olawe to Mākena. Enraged with her rival, Pele cut Puuoinaina in two with her tail becoming Pu'u Ōla'i and her head becoming Molokini. There is an effort to preserve and solidify this mo'olelo as a Traditional Cultural Property (TCP) with the National Park Service.

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<sup>17</sup> Pukui et al. 1974:142. Retrieved from: [https://mauicounty.gov/DocumentCenter/View/128302/080521-Agenda-Item\\_D1\\_Draft-AIS\\_May2021\\_Makena-State-Park-Improvements](https://mauicounty.gov/DocumentCenter/View/128302/080521-Agenda-Item_D1_Draft-AIS_May2021_Makena-State-Park-Improvements)

<sup>18</sup> Coleman, Holly K., Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Research Division. *Palauea*. Retrieved from: <https://19of32x2yl33s8o4xza0gf14-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/Palauea-Information-Sheet.pdf>

## **Subarea 6: 'Āhihi-Kīna'u/Kanaio**

Subarea 6 is the southernmost portion of the community plan area and has no resident population (Socio-Economic Forecast Report, 2021). Most of the subarea is designated as Park or Open Space. It contains an abundance of wahi kūpuna (inclusive of natural resources) including the 'Āhihi-Kīna'u Natural Area Reserve, Keone'ō'io Bay and portions of the Hoapili Trail. The 1,238-acre 'Āhihi-Kīna'u Natural Reserve was the first Natural Reserve Area designated in the state. It contains marine ecosystems with healthy coral reefs, rare anchialine ponds, dry land forest, numerous archaeological sites, and lava fields from Haleakalā's last eruption 200-500 years ago. Keone'ō'io Bay, or LaPerouse Bay, was where the first European, La Pérouse, stepped foot on Maui's shores. Today, the area around the bay contains remnants of coastal settlements, heiau and some of the most well-preserved portions of Hoapili Trail.