Mayor Kawakami signs six bills for West Kaua‘i Community Plan

LĪHU‘E – Mayor Derek S.K. Kawakami, accompanied virtually by the Kaua‘i County Council and the county Planning Director, signed six bills last week on the West Kaua‘i Community Plan.

“This is a monumental bill signing that is long overdue,” said Mayor Derek S.K. Kawakami. “These six bills represent over two years of hard work and thousands of man hours where our Planning Department went out into the West Kaua‘i community to listen and ask what their vision was for West Kaua‘i’s future. Thank you to all of those community members for sacrificing your own time, to former Mayor Carvalho and his administration for starting this endeavor, to our County Council for their hard work, and our Planning Department for seeing this all through.”

The West Kaua‘i Community Plan develops new recommendations for land use, housing, town character, public facilities, and infrastructure. Climate change, sea level rise, social equity, and historic and cultural resource protection are also addressed in this robust plan. During the bill signing ceremony, Planning Director Ka‘āina Hull further emphasized the plan’s main impact was focused on preservation.

“The West Kaua‘i Community Plan essentially provides guidance for additional housing and economic development, while preserving the form and character of the West Kaua‘i Community,” Hull explained. In the plan, there are specific ordinances that address key issues.
One key issue is the continuous and exponential impacts of climate change. "As a result, the West Kaua’i community is now the first zoning district in the State of Hawai’i that incorporates climate change and sea level rise exposure data into an ordinance that ensures any development in the community’s coastal edge area will be subject to mitigation or preventative measures."

The plan also recognizes West Kaua’i’s historic plantation camps and creates a zoning district specific to these communities, so that these homes can be preserved, repaired and updated.

The impacts on the salt makers and salt beds in Hanapēpē are also highlighted and addressed in the West Kaua’i Community Plan. The long-range goal has been set for the Department of Transportation, Airports Division, to consider removing the airport facility and its associated impacts on this beloved Hanapēpē area. The plan also launches an ordinance that requires any proposals for this site in the meantime to go through an extensive public hearing process that would allow interested parties such as the salt makers to intervene and be an official party to any such proposals.

“I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Planning Department, the Kaua’i County Council, Council Services staff, and everyone in the community who participated in the process for the development of the West Kaua’i Community Plan,” said Council Chair Arryl Kaneshiro. “After many years of hard work and dedication from our Planning Department and community, we have a vision for West Kaua’i that I believe we can be very proud of.”

“I would like to thank the Planning Department for their hard work and diligence over the last two and a half years in the development of the West Kaua’i Community Plan,” said Council Vice Chair Mason K. Chock. “The plan provides direction and vision for the community of West Kaua’i and I am happy that the Department remains flexible and committed to working with the community in moving forward with their ongoing interests.”
For more information on the West Kaua‘i Community Plan, visit www.westkauaiplan.org.

A video of the virtual bill signing ceremony is available to view on www.facebook.com/CountyofKauai.

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