News Release
For Immediate Release: October 12, 2021

West Kauaʻi Community Plan receives 2021 Outstanding Planning Award

LĪHUʻE – The County of Kauaʻi’s West Kauaʻi Community Plan was recently awarded the 2021 Outstanding Planning Award by the Hawaiʻi Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA-HI).

The announcement came during the Hawaiʻi Congress of Planning Officials 2021 Conference held on Oct. 7, after a jury of professional planners selected the West Kauaʻi Community Plan based on five criteria: innovation, transferability, quality, implementation, and comprehensiveness.

“I’m very grateful to our Planning Department team and our West Kauaʻi community for their years of hard work and dedication toward developing a plan that is truly a product of partnership between government, our westside residents, and the many sectors of our community,” said Mayor Derek S. K. Kawakami. “The West Kauaʻi Community Plan integrates all visions into a comprehensive and robust plan that will affect positive change, while preserving our historic and cultural heritage, for many years to come. This award belongs to West Kauaʻi, and we extend our sincere appreciation to all involved.”

“We are incredibly honored to have been chosen for this prestigious award,” said Planning Director Kaʻāina Hull. “As planners, our community’s best interest is always at the center of what we do, and the West Kauaʻi Community Plan is a testament to that. We thank the westside community for opening their hearts to us, and the American Planning Association Hawaiʻi Chapter for recognizing the efforts of all who participated in this process.”
The West Kaua‘i Community Plan was adopted in December 2020, and updates the outdated development plans for the regions of Hanapēpē-‘Ele’ele and Waimea-Kekaha. It is a long-range land use policy plan with a 20-year time horizon covering communities of Kekaha, Waimea, Kaumakani, Pākalā Village, Hanapēpē, and ‘Ele’ele.

The County of Kaua‘i Planning Department launched the planning process in 2018 on the heels of the General Plan. The community outreach program was developed based on input from West Kaua‘i organizations and guided by a focus group of community leaders and stakeholders. More than 70 meetings and events were held to obtain input on the plan, including open houses, small group meetings, focus group meetings, focused workshops, educational presentations, walk audits, school presentations, and open design studios.

Department staff employed innovative outreach strategies such as a mobile outreach cart, pop-up events, youth essay and art contests, social media outreach, an interactive “Story Map” using Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and a website portal containing detailed information on all meetings, studies, and reports.

The plan sets policy to maintain the area’s rural, small-town character by increasing infill housing opportunities with building scaled for West Kaua‘i towns, and protecting historic shopfront buildings. The plan also addresses sea level rise using the best available science and identifies vulnerable neighborhoods in the land use map.

Through design workshops, “safe routes” where developed in all towns, along with conceptual roadway sections, to encourage residents to walk, bike, or ride transit throughout the district. In addition to land use and context-sensitive transportation, the plan covers cultural and heritage resources, natural and built environments, climate change, natural and coastal hazards, social and economic change, infrastructure, parks and recreation, and native plants.
The final West Kaua‘i Community Plan is available to view online at: https://westkauaiplan.org/.

The APA-HI award announcement can be viewed at: https://hawaii.planning.org/community-outreach/2021-awards/.

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