



LAND PLANNING
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

MEETING NOTES

DATE: November 16, 2004

MEETING DATE: November 3, 2004

LOCATION: County of Kaua'i
Mo'ikeha Building, Room 2

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TOM SCHNELL, AICP
ASSOCIATE

RAYMOND T. HIGA, ASLA
ASSOCIATE

KEVIN NISHIKAWA, ASLA
ASSOCIATE

PRESENT:

Cheryl Lovell Obatake/Community Specialist
Laurie Ho/Garden Island Resource Conservation & Development
Marc Ventura, Architect
Mike Furukawa/Grove Farm Company, Inc.
Morton Yamasaki/Manager, Hale Pumehana
Neil Clendeninn/Doctor, Līhu'e Scholar
Palmer Hafdahl/Architect, Palm's Hawaii
Pat Griffin/Kaua'i Historic Preservation Review Commission
Russell Seacat, Architect
Sonia Topenio/Bank of Hawaii
Steve Kyono/State of Hawaii, Department of Transportation
Gary Hennigh/Deputy Planning Director, County of Kaua'i
Ian Costa/Director, Kaua'i County Planning Department
Keith Nitta/Project Manager, Kaua'i County Planning Dept.
Frank Brandt/PBR HAWAII
Grant Murakami/PBR HAWAII
Kimi Yuen/PBR HAWAII
John Kirkpatrick/SMS Research

DISTRIBUTION: via email to above list, and

Ian Costa/Director, Kaua'i County Planning
Department
Doug Haigh/Chief, Kaua'i County Dept. of
Public Works Building Division
Barbara Pendragon/Planner, Kaua'i County
Planning Dept.

SUBJECT: LĪHU'E TOWN CORE URBAN DESIGN PLAN
CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #2

PURPOSE: To present an overview of the existing conditions, background
information and research and to develop a vision statement for the project.

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PBR HAWAII presented a brief history of Līhu'e, a summary of existing land use regulations, major landowners within the project area, historic properties, a site analysis including urban form and character, and transportation and circulation. John Kirkpatrick from SMS Research presented some baseline information on economic trends in Līhu'e and Kaua'i. The second half of the meeting involved the development of a vision for Līhu'e. The following is a summary of the main discussion points of the meeting:

1. Historic Properties

PBR asked if there were any other historic buildings, features, or landmarks that should be identified in the plan other than those listed in the State and National Registers of Historic Places. It was noted that the Planning Department has an inventory of historic structures. It includes buildings but not other site features. It was also recommended that we consider historic railroad tracks/alignments. Non-building historic structures are not always included but might be interesting to include such as Hamura's which is a local favorite and a different kind of landmark. It was also noted that there is a network of underground tunnels in Līhu'e that were dug by Chinese immigrants. PBR noted that some of these are shown on the tax maps. Others mentioned Dukes, Ma's Place, and the three buildings along Rice Street that Pat has nicknamed "deco row."

2. Traffic Study

Phillip Rowell & Associates, the traffic consultant, will be going out next week to take traffic counts. The traffic counts taken last year immediately around the Civic Center will be incorporated into their analysis. As a result, they will be taking additional counts at the intersections along Ahukini, Kapule and Rice as recommended by the CAC. It was also suggested that consideration being given to traffic counts be taken throughout the day to see when the different spikes in traffic may occur. Others noted that traffic worsens around school hours, especially when school gets out. It is not only Wilcox but King Kaumuali'i School and Kaua'i High School that are factors.

3. Bikeways

Look at potential crossings across Nāwiliwili Gulch. Make the Rice and Kapule Intersection rider friendly. The old RR right-of-way along Nāwiliwili valley is shown as a bikepath on the State Bike Plan Hawai'i but there may be issues with the landowner. In addition, there were concerns expressed that Haleko Street may be overburdened to accommodate bikes. Look at another access across the valley where Ace Hardware is now.

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4. Drainage

Drainage may be an issue. It was discussed that keeping Nāwiliwili Stream and the open waters around our bays and coastline clean and healthy would be positive goals for both resident quality of life and the visitor industry. The idea of using Nāwiliwili as a feature in our plan was received well. It might even encourage others to *mālama* (care for) the stream. It was noted that all new developments are required to detain drainage waters on their properties so that no new increase in runoff occurs. Cheryl asked if a Drainage Master Plan was developed as part of the Development Plan update because all of the runoff ends up in the ocean and wondered if there was a possibility of finding new areas where runoff could be retained/detained to reduce outfall into the ocean. Keith added that it should be noted that not all of the runoff from Līhu'ē drains into Nāwiliwili. Cheryl shared the following website as a potential resource: ainakumuwai.com.

5. Traffic

It was suggested that it would be helpful to know who is driving into or through Līhu'ē and where are they going. Steve noted that the only way to do this is to perform a destination survey and stop traffic and ask drivers these questions. It can cause long delays and would be expensive to do. It was also noted that widening roads are a short-term solution that do not necessarily have to be done. There are other ways to reduce or mitigate traffic and we should consider them before adding more lanes.

6. Economic Data/Trends

John Kirkpatrick/SMS Research presented his initial findings for Līhu'ē and Kaua'i. Visitor spending is expected to grow more rapidly than resident spending. It was noted that "big box" developers favor Līhu'ē since residents are willing to drive there to shop. It was added that it also becomes a concern as to what happens when these big box stores close—how does it affect the community vacated and employment. The group was asked to consider what markets Līhu'ē can or wants to capture because it is centrally located and the kind of development (commercial/retail/industrial) that was desirable. For example, if businesses decide to cater to visitors because that is where the money is, what would this do to Līhu'ē? There is also great need for more industrial space.

It was suggested that for retail to be successful it has to be unique. The sugar mill could be an opportunity to create something special in Līhu'ē. Something historical would be unique. It was also noted that it would be important to develop Līhu'ē for residents as well as visitors.

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7. Vision

PBR opened the floor up to the CAC to give their thoughts on the vision for Līhuʻe. The following is a list of their comments:

- The Līhuʻe Hui (Pat, Palmer, Neil, and Laurie) submitted their vision of “the vital, pulsing heart of Kauaʻi” for consideration (copy attached).
- Consider how to make the “patchwork” of Līhuʻe’s architecture into a unified whole. Use unique crosswalks and artwork as a possibility.
- Those outside of Līhuʻe look at Līhuʻe as leaders. Līhuʻe could show by example: Landscaped streets. (Morton)
- Landscaping can improve the area. Traffic would be less of a problem if it had more of an identity. Līhuʻe should capture the interest of residents and visitors alike. (Morton)
- History is key
 - Educate residents and visitors
 - Appreciation for what’s there but how to make it work for revitalization
 - Enhance what is there with landscaping to tie together the “Patchwork Quilt”
 - Danger of “Disneyland” version of history
- Līhuʻe should be: (Keith)
 - 1) Built as the heart of Kauaʻi otherwise other communities will be burdened with development that is more appropriate for the urban center. Allow rural areas to maintain rural character by putting the urban developments in Līhuʻe.
 - 2) Integrate the old and new.
 - 3) Circulation within and around Līhuʻe would be pleasant and efficient.
 - 4) Pedestrian- and multi modal transportation-friendly
 - 5) Service area for the whole island. Kauaʻi can do well with one central workplace.
 - 6) Balance of locals and tourists
- Līhuʻe as a center for kids sports facilities. Include a regional park. It could also be used for festivals and fairgrounds. (Sonia)
- Make Līhuʻe a destination not just a place to pass through.
- Integration of Old and New
 - Government should be able to support the retaining of old historic buildings.
 - Don’t let the “big box” ruin it
- Community Gathering Place/Community Forum Area outside the County Building. It could also be an electronic hub where people come to vote.
- Dedicated Visitors/Information Center

Be careful that this is clearly not a “front” for time shares so that people will want to enter. One way to avoid this is to partner with other organizations

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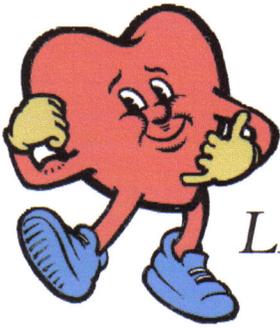
like the Kaua'i Historical Society (KHS). There was a plan for KHS to lease out part of the Annex Building but this would be an ideal location for a visitors center. Consider finding partnerships between government and private, and non-profits. In Europe, they are often located in a public plaza or near a community focal point.

- Utilize the lawn in front of the County Building for activities.
- Include or establish a Public Art Project. Laurie passed out copies of a packet put together for a Public Art Project compiled for Ian Costa.
- Closing off 'Eiwa Street if could be the Cultural Center of Lihu'e. Expand the green spaces, create a cultural district with the existing Museum and new museums. (Morton)
- The Sugar Mill – could be the lynchpin between the old and the new. Nāwiliwili Stream under the bridge could be a quiet passive park or even a botanical park. The train trestle by the mill should be retained. The conveyor belt is the longest one in the state. However there are already plans to demolish it. Office of Economic Development has money to look into the environmental remediation of the mill site.
- Develop a theme for each of the neighborhoods to identify the uniqueness of each area. The themes should be relevant/specific to Lihu'e and Kaua'i (e.g. a flower for each area). The theme should be consistent throughout each neighborhood, create a sense of pride and identity (Neil).

8. Follow-Up Items

- Visioning ideas will be refined by PBR and distributed to the CAC for review and input.
- Keith will help PBR obtain a copy of the Historic Building Inventory.
- The next CAC meeting is scheduled for December 8, 2004.

Attachments



VISION:

LĪHU‘E, the vital, pulsing heart of Kaua‘i

AS EVIDENCED BY:

Civic pride

celebration of Līhu‘e as destination
maintenance of the town’s historic resources by government regulation and enthusiastic
community/business/property owner participation
ongoing upkeep and cleanliness programs

Attractive environment

well maintained, landscaped streets, parks, walkways
thematic crosswalks and street features (creating a unique *look* to the town)
underground/unobtrusive utilities
public art

Balanced use

a variety of retail operations
food & entertainment: range of restaurants, nightclubs, bars
cultural: museum, theater, walking tours
events: farmers’ markets, street fairs, celebrations at various holidays
services: banking, insurance, law
not-for-profit: churches, social services
government: county, state, federal
residential

Mix of users

multigenerational
Kauaians, tourists and other visitors
residents, students and employees

Government participation

range of county-sponsored activities, e.g., “center stage” events on county lawn, farmers’ markets
tax credits and other formal incentives for commercial building preservation
established, well-used “Pump Room”—public area in civic center with closed circuit tv to view
public meetings; interactive computers for county information, permitting and other data...

Ease of town transit

safe and encouraging to walk
appropriate parking
multi-modal transportation choices
calm, flowing traffic
alternatives for thru-traffic

Peripheral area support

enhanced links to Nāwiliwili: pedestrian paths, invigorated harbor
complementary themes among neighboring precincts