

3.0 PROJECT SETTING

3.1 HAWAIIAN HISTORY AND CONTEXT

Līhu'e, "goose flesh" or literally "cold chill," is located on the southeastern side of Kaua'i (see Figure 1-2). The project site is located in the ancient Puna District, which once stretched from the Hā'upu Range on the south to the Makaleha Mountains to the north past Kapa'a.

The project site spans three ahupua'a: Nāwiliwili, Kalapakī, and Hanamā'ulu (see dashed red lines on Figure 1-2).

- **Nāwiliwili** was famous for its wiliwili groves. The full name of this ahupua'a was Nāwiliwilipaka'āwililau'ililua, which means "wiliwili trees upon which raindrops fall, twisting the leaves so the rain touches both sides" (Wichman 58).
- **Kalapakī** is a relatively small ahupua'a fronted by a sandy beach. The area is rich with stories of the Menehune. Kalapakī literally means "double-yoked egg" (Wichman 59).
- **Hanamā'ulu**, or "tired bay," was given its name because it was located off the main road and travelers had to walk several miles to reach it. There once was a significant community here with a major heiau, Kalauokamanu, "tip of the endpiece of the canoe," at the foot of Kālepa Ridge. The heiau was feared since human sacrifices were made there. The stones of the heiau were eventually used to build the Hanamā'ulu Sugar Mill 1855 (Wichman 60-2).

The area also has ties to Chief Ahukini, ali'i nui of Puna who lived circa 1250 A.D. (Wichman 60-6). Also, in ancient Hawaiian mythology, this area was known as a major entry point for the island.

3.2 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF LĪHU'E TOWN

Līhu'e was established sometime in the second quarter of the 19th century. Governor Kaikio'ewa, who was the first governor of Kaua'i under Kamehameha, named his home, Līhu'e, in memory of his previous home on O'ahu. The name, Līhu'e, was unknown on Kaua'i before then; the ancient name for this area was Kala'iahea, or "calm reddish brown place" (Wichman 59).

By the early 1900s, Līhu‘e Plantation and Grove Farm Plantation had established Līhu‘e as a profitable sugarcane production area. The Līhu‘e Sugar Mill was one of the longest operating mills in the islands, in use from 1849 to 2000. Nāwiliwili Harbor became the main port for shipping on the island after completed as a deep water harbor in 1930.

Figure 3-1: Historic Photograph of the Līhu‘e Sugar Mill, circa 1889



Much of the following architectural and town history is based on interviews and discussions with Pat Griffin, a CAC member and former Chair of the Kaua‘i Historic Preservation Review Commission, who was kind enough to share her theories and research. According to Griffin, the sugar mill and the plantations are the principal reasons Līhu‘e and its community exists today. Plantation camps developed around the mill and the old Līhu‘e Store was the center of town located at the corner of what is now Halekō Road and Rice Street (see Figure 3-2).



Figure 3-2: Historic Photograph of the Līhu‘e Store, circa late 1800s

In the early 1900s, the town core and what has been aptly referred to as the “concrete village” by Griffin started to

emerge along Rice Street. Unlike typical Hawai‘i plantation towns that were mainly Western-style wooden structures with false fronts, Līhu‘e witnessed an infusion of neoclassical architecture starting with its seat of government. The two-story Historic County Building was built in 1912 and remains the longest-serving county building in the State of Hawai‘i (see Figure 3-3). The following year, the Bank of Hawaii built its Līhu‘e Branch store as a similarly styled one-story, flat-roofed concrete building in 1913 (see Figure 3-4). The Lihue Store tore down the old wooden plantation store and rebuilt it as a two-story neoclassical building in 1915 (see Figure 3-5). It was nicknamed “Kaua‘i’s Emporium” where just about anything could be found.



PHOTO: KAUA'I HISTORICAL SOCIETY ARCHIVES

**Figure 3-3: Historic
County Building,
circa 1914**



PHOTO: KAUA'I HISTORICAL SOCIETY ARCHIVES

**Figure 3-4: Bank of
Hawai'i, circa 1914**



PHOTO: KAUA'I HISTORICAL SOCIETY ARCHIVES

**Figure 3-5: Līhu'e
Store, circa 1920**



PHOTO: KAUA'I HISTORICAL SOCIETY ARCHIVES

**Figure 3-6: Albert
Spencer Wilcox
Memorial Building**

Over the next ten years, several other buildings with neoclassical elements were built in town including the Hawaiian Telephone Building (which still stands today in the Civic Center but is now clad with coral and metal siding), and the original Tip Top which held small businesses and a theater. The Albert Spencer Wilcox Memorial Building, built in 1924 was originally a public library and now houses the Kaua'i Museum. It is an interesting fusion of styles—a neoclassical entry attached to a Romanesque lava rock structure, barrel vaulted ceilings and a steep gabled roof with blue ceramic tiles adding an Asian flair (see Figure 3-6).

Figure 3-7: Lihū'e Post Office



During the Depression Era and 1930s, public improvement projects dominated the construction scene in Lihū'e. Roads were paved and several significant buildings were built. Hawaiian-style architecture pioneered by C.W. Dickey and Hart Wood was in vogue. These buildings were based on the California Mission and Mediterranean styles but were designed specifically for Hawai'i's humid, rainy weather. Large wall openings, porches and lanais, and the classic Dickey double-pitched hip roof characterize this architectural style.

Figure 3-8: County Annex Building, Adjacent to the Historic County Building



The Lihū'e Post Office (Figure 3-7), the County Annex (Figure 3-8), and the State Courthouse (Figure 3-9) are beautiful examples of this Hawaiian-style architecture that remain in Lihū'e Town. A historic map of the town core in 1932 is shown in Figure 3-10.

Figure 3-9: Lihū'e Courthouse



Along Kūhiō Highway, false-front concrete commercial buildings were constructed in the 1930s. The Garden Island Motors and Garden Island Publishing buildings near Hardy Street are examples. Figure 3-11 shows a historic photo of the buildings and Figure 3-12 shows a similar view of the structures today. Art deco also made its mark on Līhu'e in the 1930s with the Līhu'e Theater on Kūhiō Highway (1931) (Figure 3-13) and several buildings on Rice Street such as the Kress Store, now the Salvation Army Thrift Store.

Figure 3-11: Kūhiō Highway, circa 1930s

Further east on Rice Street, William Hyde Rice, Ltd. sold the old dairy land in the 1930s and 1940s and started developing a second



PHOTO: KAUA'I HISTORICAL SOCIETY ARCHIVES

commercial district around Kress and Kalena Streets. Barbeque Inn and other smaller shops thrived during the World War II years. A more informal type of business district developed in the Hale Nani area compared to the area along Halekō and Kūhiō.



Figure 3-12: Kūhiō Highway, Today

The postwar years, especially the 1960s and 1970s brought urban renewal on a large scale to Līhu'e. Architect John Graham, famous for designing Seattle's Space Needle and the nation's first shopping mall, also designed Līhu'e Shopping Center in 1966. Noted for using circular forms, he included one at the prominent corner of Kūhiō Highway and Rice Street of what is now the County's Mo'ikeha Building (see Figure 3-14). Other architectural examples from this era include the Sharon Sue Building (1963), First Hawaiian Bank (1966) (Figure 3-15), State Office Tower (1967) (Figure 3-16), and the Lihue Plaza Building (1970). These Modernist/International Style buildings typically have simple geometric forms, vertical windows in curtain (non-structural) walls, and flat roofs.

Figure 3-13: Līhu'e Theater on Kūhiō Highway





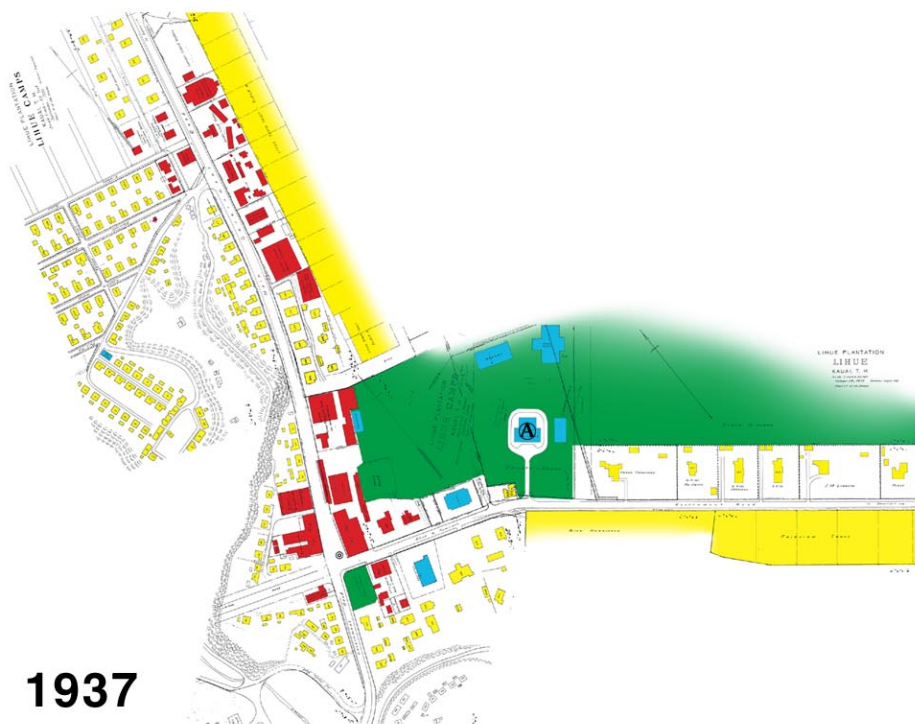
Figure 3-14: County Mo'ikeha Building, Formerly Part of the Lihue Shopping Center



Figure 3-15: First Hawaiian Bank



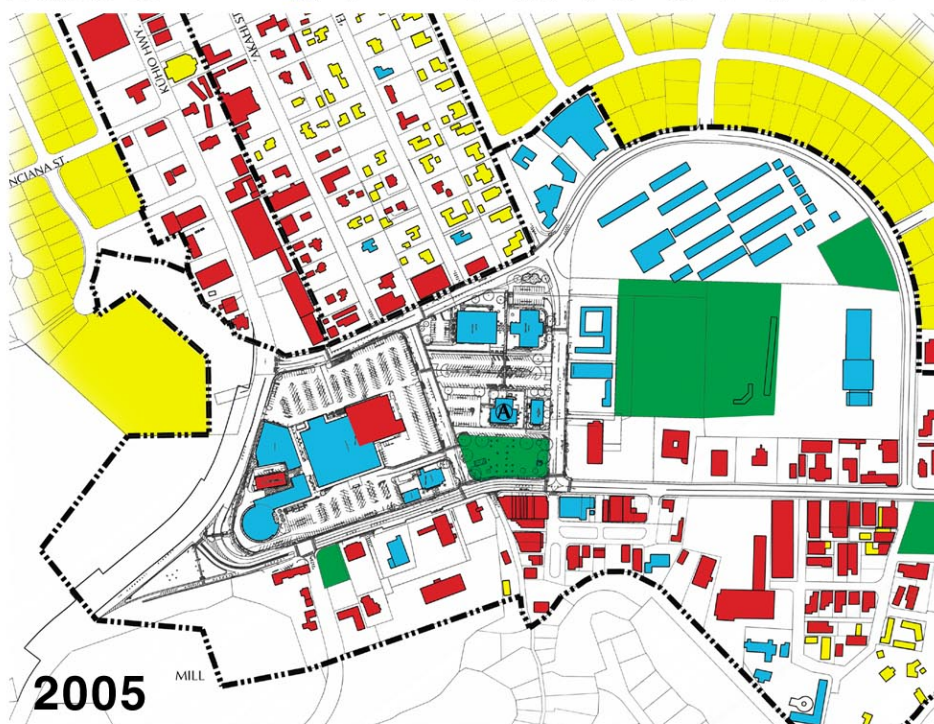
**Figure 3-16:
State Office
Building**



1937



1966

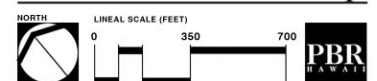


2005

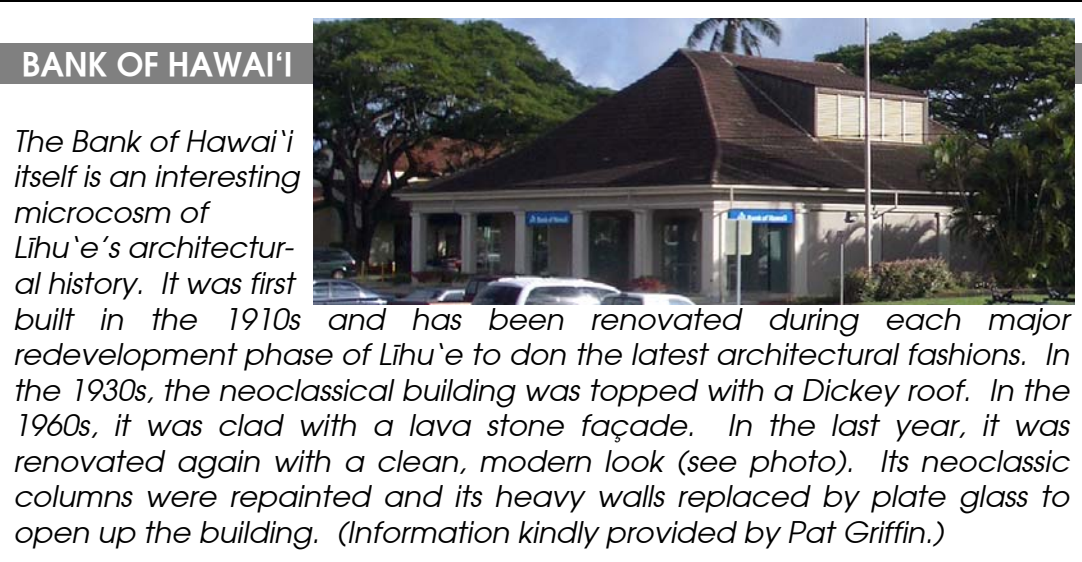
LEGEND

- RESIDENTIAL
- COMMERCIAL/RETAIL
- PUBLIC/GOVERNMENT
- PARK/OPEN SPACE/
AGRICULTURE
- A HISTORIC COUNTY
BUILDING

Figure 3-17
Lihue Town Core
Historic Land Use Maps



Part of Līhuʻe Town's charm is that buildings from each phase of development stand side-by-side today as a living record of architectural styles and fashions that have been popular in Hawai'i over the past century. Maps from 1932, 1966, and the present show how land uses in the town core of Līhuʻe have changed over the last century (Figure 3-17).



3.3 SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

SMS prepared a socio-economic study for the Līhuʻe Town Core Urban Design Plan and it is included in its entirety in Appendix C. Some of the highlights from that report are presented below.

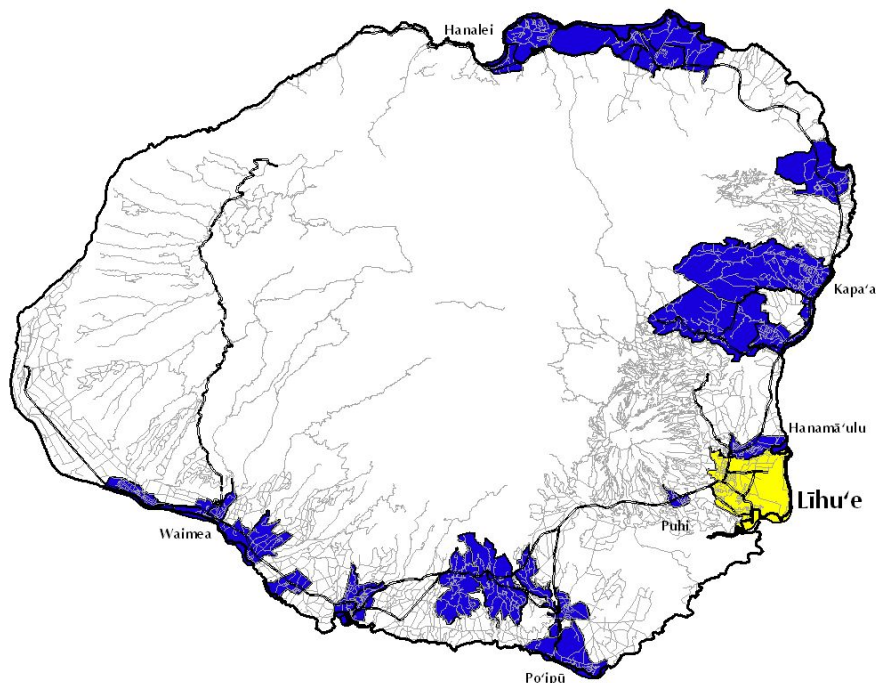


Figure 3-18: Līhuʻe Census Designated Place (CDP)

3.3.1 POPULATION

According to the 2000 Census, the Līhuʻe Census Designated Place (CDP) (see Figure 3-18) contains roughly ten percent of the resident population of Kaua'i (5,674 of 58,463 persons).

The median age of Līhuʻe residents in 2000 was 44 while Kaua'i's as a whole

was 38. Within the immediate Līhu'e Town Core described as Census Tract 405 Block Group 2, or the area bounded by Rice Street, Kūhiō Highway, Ahukini Road and Kapule Highway, it was even higher at 47 years of age. Nearly a quarter of the Līhu'e CDP's population was over 65 (22.4 percent) and nearly another quarter is 17 years of age or younger (22.8 percent). Another 600 persons (10.5 percent) were between 55 and 64 years of age in 2000. Recent 2004 State DBEDT projections forecast the population of Kaua'i to get increasingly older with those over 65 years of age described as the fastest growing segment of the population (SMS 2005).

Little League Practice at Līhu'e Park

Of the 2,178 households within the Līhu'e CDP, 30.4 percent (663 households) had children under the age of 18 years and nearly 40 percent (863 households) had individuals 65 years or older. 16.1 percent of households consisted of individuals living alone who were over the age of 65 (350 households). Within Census Tract 405 Block Group 2, the percentage of individuals over the age of 65 living alone is even higher at 17.4 percent (69 households). In comparison, only 7.7 percent of Kaua'i County households consisted of individuals over the age of 65 living alone and 27.7 percent of households had individuals over the age of 65. This indicates that there are proportionally more Līhu'e households with elderly persons than Kaua'i as a whole. There are also quite a few Līhu'e households with children, however, proportionally less than the Kaua'i County average for households.



Compared with 62 percent of all Hawaiians, over 72 percent of Līhu'e CDP residents were born in Hawai'i. Within Census Tract 405 Block Group 2, the proportion is even higher at 81.6 percent.

3.3.2 INCOMES

According to the 2000 US Census, Līhu'e CDP residents had a higher average per capita income (\$22,619) than Kaua'i as a whole (\$20,301) as well as compared with nearby Puhi and Hanamā'ulu CDPs. Within Census Tract 405 Block Group 2, it was even higher (\$29,853). However, this is more likely due to the age structure and smaller portion of households with children in Līhu'e.

Over the long term, Kaua'i per capita personal income has trailed the State's to the point where it was about five-sixth the State's average in 2002 (SMS 2005). Also, wages have decreased as a portion of Kauaians' income while rents and transfer payments are increasing. According to the 2000 Census, more than 40 percent of homes in the Līhu'e CDP received Social Security income. However, very few families were living below the poverty line.

3.3.3 WORKFORCE AND EMPLOYMENT

Data from the US Census Bureau suggests that roughly half of Kaua'i's workforce has an address with a Līhu'e zip code (96766). However, the zip code includes Puhi and Hanamā'ulu and did not include government workers. Based on SMS's analysis, they believed the workforce counted in the Census figures probably included workers who work from but rarely in Līhu'e. Since Līhu'e has historically been the center of Kaua'i, many of the larger firms with 100+ employees were listed with a Līhu'e address.

Based on calls made by SMS, roughly 800 government employees work in the study area.

The Līhu'e CDP was home to approximately eleven percent of Kaua'i's 4,611 government employees in 2000. Government workers represented 18.3 percent of all civilian employed residents in the Līhu'e CDP and they comprised an even higher proportion within Census Tract 405 Block Group 2 at 24.2 percent. This indicates that a relatively high number of government workers lived near the Civic Center in 2000.

The majority of residents in the Līhu'e CDP and Census Tract 405 Block Group 2 were also in management, professional and related occupations (34.9 percent and 39.0 percent, respectively).

Although Hurricane 'Iniki brought soaring unemployment to Kaua'i throughout the 1990s, the unemployment rate has steadily declined and passed the State's current low rate of 2.4 percent. Kaua'i's unemployment rate in April 2007 was 2.2 percent (DBEDT 2007).

3.3.3.1 Journey to Work

According to the 2000 US Census, of the 2,632 workers living in the Līhu'e CDP over the age of 16, 93.2 percent drove a car, van, or truck to work. This was similar to Kaua'i rates as a whole (90.7 percent).

Two percent of Līhu'e CDP workers (52 workers) walked to work and less than one percent (22 workers) used public transportation. 16.3 percent of Līhu'e CDP workers carpooled and the average journey to work

(excluding those who work at home) took only 14 minutes. This was short even by Kaua'i standards as the island averaged 21.5 minutes to work. This suggests that many Līhu'e CDP residents work relatively close to home. The majority of Līhu'e CDP workers who did not work at home (roughly 46 percent) left between 7:00 and 8:00 AM.

3.3.4 HOUSING

In 2000, roughly 40 percent of Līhu'e's households rented in comparison with 38.6 percent of Kaua'i County households (US Census 2000). Also, nearly 38 percent of the housing units within the Līhu'e CDP were attached units (multifamily).

Since 2000, SMS analyses show that rental trends on Kaua'i varied significantly based on location and the number of bedrooms and type of unit. In Līhu'e, the average monthly rent for a one-bedroom apartment remained modest from under \$600 in March 2000 to about \$675 in December 2002. For a two-bedroom single family house, however, rents in Līhu'e went from \$775 to \$2,200 over the same time period. The reverse trend occurred over the same time period in resort areas such as Po'ipū and the North Shore, where average rents for one-bedroom apartments increased significantly (rents up above \$900 per month by December 2002) and decreased by nearly half for two-bedroom single family units (\$900 and \$1,300 per month respectively in December 2002). These trends may indicate a general need for housing within Līhu'e, particularly larger multi-bedroom single-family units.

3.3.5 LAND USE AND CONSTRUCTION IN THE URBAN CORE

The Urban Core includes a mix of residential, commercial and industrial parcels. According to SMS, there were an estimated 489 single family lots, 129 condo/apartment lots and 289 commercial/industrial lots within the Līhu'e Core area in 2005. Much of the Līhu'e area is built upon but roughly 20 percent of the lots were vacant, most within residential and commercial areas (SMS 2005). The Līhu'e District includes only about a sixth of the visitor plant inventory of Kaua'i. The majority of it located at the Kaua'i Marriott Resort and Beach Club and the Kaua'i Beach Resort and Hotel (former Radisson Kaua'i Beach Resort).

Much of the Urban Core housing was built in the 1980s while commercial construction has been spread out over time (see Figure 3-19). Sales data suggest that the real estate market has increasingly been active in Līhu'e as it has been Statewide, peaking in 1996 and in 2003. Recently, the majority of sales have typically been residential but in 1999 there were proportionately more commercial/industrial sales in Līhu'e.

The average residential lot size in the study area was 13,092 square feet with an average building area of 1,542 square feet. The average commercial and industrial lot size was 30,449 square feet with an average building size of 8,948 square feet (SMS 2005).

SMS also notes that the Līhu'e District (identified as TMK Zone 3) contains about half the land zoned for commercial and industrial uses on Kaua'i, with two-thirds of it undeveloped. The Urban Core Study Area has about a quarter of all commercial and industrial parcels on Kaua'i, with about a fifth of the vacant parcels designated for commercial/industrial.

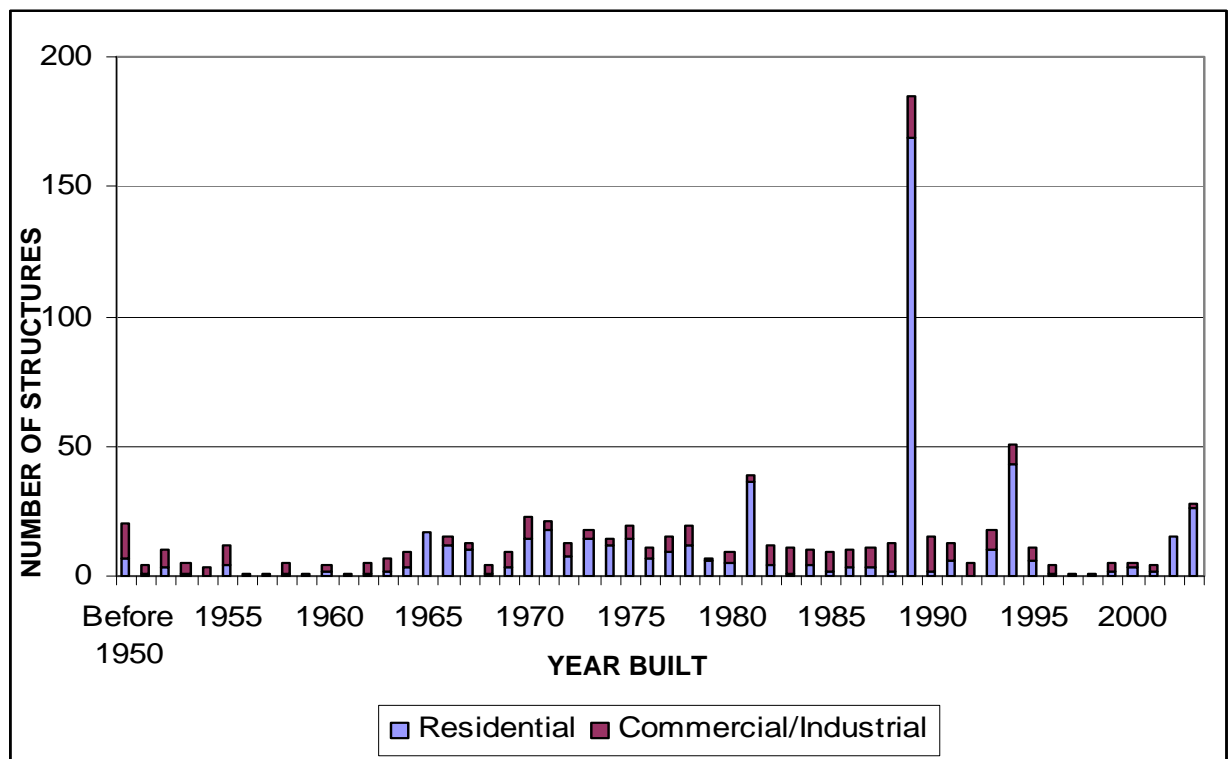


Figure 3-19: Age of Structures within the Līhu'e Core Study Area (SMS 2005)

3.3.6 KEY PROJECTIONS AND PLANNING CHOICES FOR LĪHU'E

SMS concluded their study with the following projections and key planning choices for Līhu'e:

- Līhu'e is a small area with a complex mix of persons living in and passing through town. Any components of the design plan involving commercial activity should take into account the market(s) that will support that activity and any renovation needed to accommodate it. The markets are segmented. If the potential customer base for commercial areas is to be large, they will need to

appeal to Līhu'e residents, the Līhu'e workforce, and visitors both staying on Kaua'i and cruise ships.

- Līhu'e currently appears to capture a very small share of visitor spending. However, cruise traffic will likely increase and could bring visitors (day or overnight visitors) to the Līhu'e area. If cruise ships stay longer at Nāwiliwili Harbor than they do now, then cruise visitors could become increasingly important as a consumer group for Līhu'e.
- Development of a Historic Līhu'e area. This area would integrate historic architecture and open spaces with upscale dining and retail choices. To be successful, the new focus should be linked to events (in Līhu'e Park, perhaps), walking tours, and points of interest.
- Based on projections provided in SMS's report, such a historic area could include from 40,000 to 70,000 square feet of retail and eating and drinking space by 2010. There is currently close to 9,000 square feet of commercial and industrial space within the Līhu'e Core study area (SMS 2005).

3.3.7 SERVING THE LOCAL POPULATION AND WORKERS

SMS recommends upscale establishments to target the professionals, part-time residents, and visitors. However, it is important to recognize the everyday, local residents and workers who need affordable places to eat and shop on a regular basis. They comprise a significant portion of the population that could potentially frequent Līhu'e establishments and it will be important to make these places welcoming and accessible to them in a pedestrian-friendly environment.

Responses received from a survey distributed in 2003 to the Līhu'e Business Association and County employees as part of the Līhu'e Civic Center project support this statement. Write-in responses to an open-ended question asking what changes would they like to see within the Civic Center area revealed that there is a need for more eateries, lunch wagons, kiosks, coffee shops and snack bars and a variety of stores and gift shops that are in walking distance of the Civic Center. Many wanted to see more tables and benches and places to eat outside and beautifully landscaped open areas with continuous pedestrian pathways. A summary of these responses is provided in Appendix B.

Other socio-economic considerations for Līhu'e Town include the higher than average Hawaii-born resident population, strong demand for multi-bedroom housing units, and the aging population of Līhu'e.

3.4 SITE ANALYSIS

A site analysis was prepared for the Līhu'e Town Core and is shown in Figure 3-20. It includes slope and flood analyses, identification of historic places and important resources within the Town Core such as buildings, properties, and trees. It also describes notable views, areas susceptible to developmental change, and the location of overhead utilities. Section 3.7 provides a more detailed description of the urban character of the different project neighborhoods and Section 3.6 discusses land ownership.

3.4.1 HISTORIC PLACES AND IMPORTANT RESOURCES

As one of the historic town centers of Kaua'i, Līhu'e is rich with historic places and other important community resources. Several sources of information were used to identify these resources within the Town Core. They are the State and National Registers of Historic Places, the County's Historic Resource List, community and CAC input, and the Kaua'i Historical Society.

3.4.1.1 State and National Registers of Historic Places

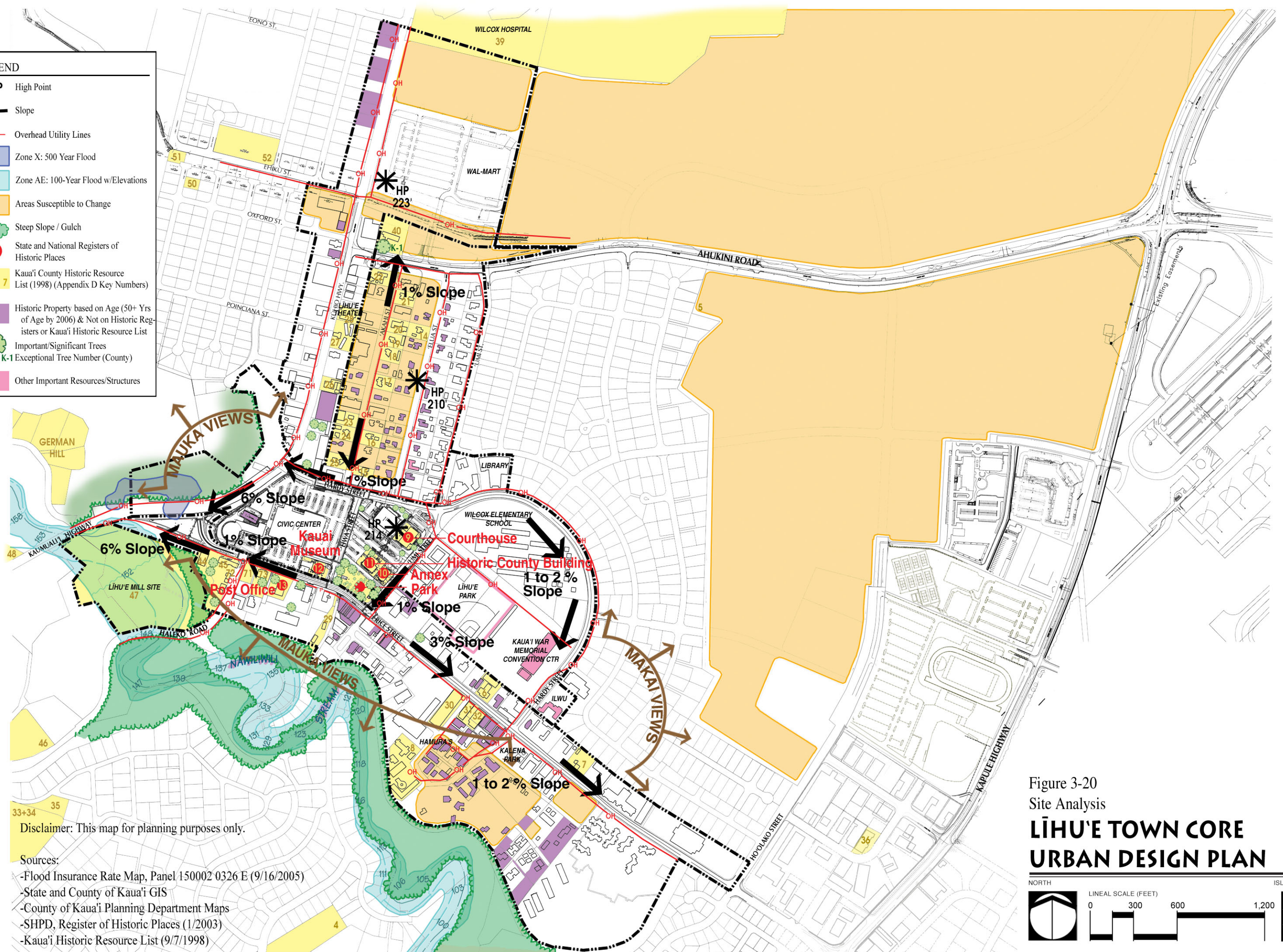
The State and National Registers of Historic Places are planning tools developed to help identify historic resources of state and national importance.

As part of national policy derived from the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and according to the Code of Federal Regulations (36CFR60), the National Register is an authoritative guide maintained by the National Park Service to be used by Federal, State, and local governments, private groups and citizens to identify the Nation's cultural resources and to indicate what properties should be considered for protection from destruction or impairment. The listing of private property on the National Register does not prohibit under Federal law or regulation any actions which may otherwise be taken by the property owner with respect to the property.

However, listing in the National Register makes property owners eligible to be considered for Federal grants-in-aid for historic preservation. There are also potential tax benefits for listed properties. These provisions encourage the preservation of depreciable historic structures by allowing favorable tax treatments for rehabilitation, and discourage destruction of historic buildings by eliminating certain Federal tax provisions both for the demolition of historic structures and for new construction on the site of demolished historic buildings. The County of Kaua'i also exempts qualified residential properties listed on the Hawai'i Register from property taxes per Kaua'i County Code §5A-11.22.

LEGEND

- HP** High Point
- Slope
- Overhead Utility Lines
- Zone X: 500 Year Flood
- Zone AE: 100-Year Flood w/Elevations
- Areas Susceptible to Change
- Steep Slope / Gulch
- State and National Registers of Historic Places
- Kaua'i County Historic Resource List (1998) (Appendix D Key Numbers)
- Historic Property based on Age (50+ Yrs of Age by 2006) & Not on Historic Registers or Kaua'i Historic Resource List
- Important/Significant Trees
- K-1 Exceptional Tree Number (County)
- Other Important Resources/Structures



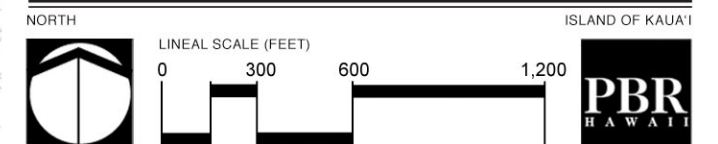
Disclaimer: This map for planning purposes only.

Sources:

- Flood Insurance Rate Map, Panel 150002 0326 E (9/16/2005)
- State and County of Kaua'i GIS
- County of Kaua'i Planning Department Maps
- SHPD, Register of Historic Places (1/2003)
- Kaua'i Historic Resource List (9/7/1998)

Figure 3-20
Site Analysis

LĪHU'E TOWN CORE URBAN DESIGN PLAN



Similarly, the State Register of Historic Places is a list of historic properties of value to Hawaii's heritage. The list formally recognizes districts, sites, structures, buildings and objects and their significance in Hawai'i's history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture. The State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD) is the official keeper of the State register. They are also tasked to develop and implement interpretive programs for historic properties listed on or eligible for the Hawaii register of historic places as well as review any modification planned for a historic property on the register (Sections 6E-8, 9, and 10 HRS).

Several buildings and the Līhu'e Civic Center Historic District are listed on one or both Registers of Historic Places. Table 3-1 provides a listing of the registered places within the project neighborhoods. They are also highlighted in red in Figure 3-20.

Table 3-1: Resources Listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places within the Project Neighborhoods

SITE NUMBER	SITE NAME	TMK	DATE LISTED	
			HAWAI'I REGISTER	NATIONAL REGISTER
30-11-9342	Līhu'e Post Office	3-6-05:10		11/28/89
30-11-9344	Kauai Museum (Albert Spencer Wilcox Building)	3-6-05:05	2/17/79	5/31/79
30-11-9351	Līhu'e Civic Center Historic District <i>(includes the Historic County Building, County Annex, State Courthouse, and County Lawn)</i>	3-6-05:01,02,03	9/21/81	12/17/81

3.4.1.2 Kaua'i Historic Resource List

In addition to the State and National Registers, the County of Kaua'i Planning Department maintains a Kaua'i Historic Resource List (KHRL) which identifies a wide variety of historic resources including buildings, structures (includes bridges, a grandstand and a wall), objects, and historic districts. It also includes historic resources that have been demolished or have lost integrity in terms of their historic value. This may be due in part to renovations, damage, or deterioration of the resource. The KHRL was last updated in September 1998. A full listing of the resources or properties identified on the 1998 KHRL within the Līhu'e area is provided in Appendix D and identified in yellow in Figure 3-20.



Lion Horse Trough on Halekō Road

Within the Līhu'e Town Core project neighborhoods, several historic resources have been identified. They include a variety of commercial buildings, residences, churches, theaters, as well as a couple of objects—the Paul Isenberg Memorial and the Lion Horse Trough (see above)—both on Halekō Road.

3.4.1.3 Historic Properties by State Definition

According to Hawai'i Revised Statutes (Section 6E) and Hawai'i Administrative Rules (Sections 13-275, 280 and 284), the definition of a "historic property" means any building, structure, object, district, area, or site, including heiau and underwater site, which is over fifty years old. A determination of significance is required by the State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD) for any "historic property." Due to this automatic trigger based on the age of a property, all TMKs with structures reaching fifty years of age in 2006 within the Town Core project neighborhoods that are not listed on the State or National Registers of Historic Places or the KHRL have been identified in the site analysis. They are shown in purple in Figure 3-20. The ages of the buildings were estimated from Kaua'i County property tax information. Not all structures or properties over fifty years old will be found significant by SHPD during their review. However, because they trigger the SHPD and County of Kaua'i Historic Preservation Review Commission (KHPRC) historic preservation review processes and based on the potential for them to be found as historically significant, they are identified in the site analysis.

Exceptional Tree K-1 (False Kamani) in front of the Historic Kuhn's House

3.4.1.4 Significant Trees and Other Resources

Other elements shown on the master plan that have been identified as important resources include a variety of trees, parks and open spaces, as well as buildings or structures not yet old



enough to be considered for the historic registers. These resources are highlighted in pink in the site analysis in Figure 3-20 and the trees are shown in green. There is an Exceptional Tree as listed by the County's Exceptional Tree Ordinance (KCC 22-5.4) within the Town Core. It is the False Kamani (*Terminalia Catappa*), Exceptional Tree No. K-1, located just east of Kūhiō Highway on Ahukini Road. The banyan tree at the Watamull Building on Rice Street is also significant as it is the tree that initiated the Exceptional Tree designation on Kaua'i. The initiative was led by the Mokihana Club and the County Council passed the Exceptional Tree ordinance in 1974 (Ordinance No. 240). The Hawai'i State Legislature followed in 1975 with Act 105 (HRS 58). Currently, the banyan is not listed as an Exceptional Tree in the County Code. It is shown as a significant tree in the site analysis (Figure 3-20).

3.4.1.5 Nāwiliwili Stream and Gulch

There was also a strong sentiment to provide connections to Nāwiliwili Stream and to improve water quality. Nāwiliwili Stream stretches from the old mill site and Town Core to Nāwiliwili Harbor. It provides a unique opportunity to provide a greenbelt connecting the Town Core with the harbor. Recommendations from previous studies include pedestrian and bicycle paths such as the Līhu'e Community Pathway from the State's *Bike Plan Hawai'i* (Kimura 2003) and possibly rebuilding the old railway that once extended from the mill to the harbor. Other recommendations include stormwater runoff control and remediation to improve water quality downstream and at the harbor.

3.4.2 TOPOGRAPHY

The Līhu'e Town Core sits on a plateau overlooking Nāwiliwili Stream. See Figure 3-20. The majority of the site is relatively flat (1 to 3 percent grades) with steeper slopes along Kūhiō Highway and Rice Street where the two roads intersect. There is a relatively steep bluff along the southern edge of the Town Core where the land slopes towards Nāwiliwili Stream. The old Līhu'e Mill Site sits in a low point at about 148-150 feet above mean sea level (amsl). The Civic Center is at 200-214 feet amsl above the stream and the high point of Līhu'e Town is near Wal-Mart at roughly 223 feet amsl.

3.4.3 FLOOD INFORMATION

Nāwiliwili Stream is a major stream channel and therefore the main floodway near the Līhu'e Town Core. The Town Core sits on a plateau above the stream and has been determined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to be outside of the floodplain. The mill

site, however, is located in the streambed and portions of the site are within the floodway. Detailed flood elevations have been calculated for Nāwiliwili Stream and are shown in Figure 3-20.

***View to the South of
Hā'upu Range in the
Distance***



3.4.4 IMPORTANT VIEWS

Because Līhu'e is up on a plateau and most buildings in Līhu'e are low rises, with the State Office Building the tallest structure in the Town Core at four stories, spectacular views can still be seen from many parts of Līhu'e Town and are valued by the community. To the south and west, there are mauka views of the Hā'upu Range and Mount Wai'ale'ale, respectively. Looking north up 'Umi Street, there is a view of Kālepa Ridge in Hanamā'ulu. To the east along Kapule Highway and further down Rice Street and Ahukini Road, there are distant views of the ocean.

3.4.5 OVERHEAD UTILITIES

There are both electrical and telecommunication lines that run overhead along many of the streets in Līhu'e Town. These are shown in red in Figure 3-20.

3.4.6 AREAS SUSCEPTIBLE TO CHANGE

In the site analysis, areas that were susceptible to developmental change are shown in orange in Figure 3-20. There are three main areas that are highlighted: Līhu'e Land Company's Līhu'e Gateway project, the 'Akahi/'Elua Streets neighborhood, and the lower Rice Street neighborhood around Kress and Kalena Streets.

The Līhu'e Gateway project has been over ten years in the making. The County supported the land use change from agriculture to urban uses in the mid-1990s in order to accommodate Kaua'i's projected growth. It is in a logical location near the island's major airport and harbor and Civic Center. It encompasses over 500 acres of land near the Līhu'e Airport with approved zoning for single and multi-family residential, commercial, and industrial uses.

The 'Akahi/'Elua Streets neighborhood is a residential neighborhood that is transforming into a commercial district given its proximity to the Civic

Center. Existing zoning varies from commercial to multi-family residential, to single family residential (see Figure 3-23). Many of the residential structures are historic—from the 1930s and 1940s—and are valued by many community members for their architectural significance. Several businesses have preserved the buildings and maintained the residential character of the historic neighborhood. However, other businesses have torn down the old homes and erected modern commercial structures without much consideration for the neighborhood’s historic character. As a neighborhood in transition and with some families still living in some of the homes, the design guidelines developed for this area will try to maintain and encourage what is left of the historic residential neighborhood while allowing commercial uses to operate in the area.

The Lower Rice Street area near Kress and Kalena Streets contain several older buildings and vacant lots. It is also home to historic “Deco Row”¹ and Līhu’e icons such as Hamura’s Saimin and Barbeque Inn. It is in a transition area between the older commercial areas and larger multifamily complexes. The area is underutilized and is ideal for redevelopment.

3.5 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The legal instruments that regulate development on Kaua’i are:

- Kaua’i General Plan (last updated in 2000)
- Kaua’i County Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance (CZO)
- Līhu’e Development Plan (last updated for the County in 1976)
- State Land Use Districts and Other State Agencies’ Long-Range Planning Documents
- Other County Ordinances such as the Subdivision Ordinance

A general explanation of how this Līhu’e Town Core Urban Design Plan fits within the existing County regulatory framework is provided in Section 1.2. The following sections provide additional information on existing land use regulations specific to the Līhu’e Town Core and related reference maps. It also describes proposed application of the recommendations made in this report and how they are envisioned to work with the existing regulatory instruments.

3.5.1 THE KAUA’I GENERAL PLAN

The Kaua’i General Plan is a policy document that is intended to improve the physical environment of the County of Kaua’i and to provide for the

¹ Phrase coined by Pat Griffin.