

2.0 VISION, POLICY OBJECTIVES, & GUIDING PRINCIPLES



2.1 VISION FOR LĪHU'E

This Līhu'e Community Plan sets forth this vision for the Līhu'e District, adapted from the vision contained in the Kaua'i General Plan:

“The Līhu'e District shall be a place with walkable, compact communities, each distinct yet connected, and each with its own unique identity and sense of place. Green, open spaces between communities serve as visual and physical buffers and evoke Kaua'i's rural essence. Līhu'e Town serves as a destination and gathering place for the island, with a vibrant Town Core and a desirable mix of uses and attractions for residents and visitors.”

2.2 LĪHU'E'S ROLE ON KAUA'I

Kaua'i is celebrated for and deeply identifies with its rural character – green spaces, agriculture, natural beauty, and a lifestyle that supports home industries, coastal recreation, and some measure of living off the land. Līhu'e, as the urban center of the island, is expected to harmonize with the rural character of Kaua'i while providing all the requisite services of a hub: business, government, and transportation services, and a density of uses and housing that support the primary business engine of Kaua'i's economy.

At the same time, Līhu'e anchors Kaua'i's history and identity and provides a destination and gathering place. While other parts of the island such as Kapa'a and South Kaua'i have become resort destinations and self-sustaining communities in their own right, Līhu'e is unique in being the County seat and the first touch-point for visitors arriving on the island. It is steeped in plantation history and reminders of when Līhu'e was a bustling sugar town.

The County of Kaua'i General Plan (GP) provides guidance for land use regulations, location and characteristics of new developments and facilities, and planning for County and State facilities and services. The GP is a visioning document that guides policy for the future of Kaua'i. It contains the Kaua'i Vision 2020 that sets forth policy based on extensive community input and themes derived from that process. Each policy outlines an implementation strategy, with recommended land uses identified on the General Plan Land Use Map.

Appendix B includes the General Plan's Vision for Kaua'i 2020 and a discussion on the Līhu'e District's role in achieving that vision. The Līhu'e Community Plan is fully consistent with the vision outlined in the General Plan. It is intended to provide specific policy recommendations to direct physical development and public improvements for the Līhu'e District. Implementation of these recommendations are designed to fulfill the vision, policies, and principles contained in the General Plan. Table 2-1 identifies elements of the General Plan Vision that occur within the Līhu'e District.

Table 2-1 General Plan Elements in the Līhu'e District

Elements of Kaua'i Vision 2020	Examples of how these elements exist in Līhu'e District	
Natural Beauty	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Scenic mountain views of Kālepa Ridge, Hā'upu Mountains, Kilohana CraterThe mountain features frame the District, their silhouettes always in viewCoastline from Ahukini Landing to Niumalu	<ul style="list-style-type: none">White sand beachesNatural bays at Kalapakī, Hanamā'ulu, and Nāwiliwili HarborKīpū Kai
Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Wailua Municipal Golf CourseNiumalu ParkVidinha Stadium	<ul style="list-style-type: none">'Alekoko FishpondLydgate ParkCoastal Path (Ke Ala Hele Makalae)
Individual towns and villages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Līhu'eHanamā'ulu	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Puhi
Unique Communities and Neighborhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">KapaiaNūhouNāwiliwili-Niumalu-Kalapakī	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Pū'ali (Hulemanu Plateau)AirportKīpūKālepa
Shopping	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Downtown Līhu'eKukui Grove Shopping CenterPuhi big box retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none">KilohanaAnchor CoveSmall retail within various villages
Freight & Transportation Hubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Airport	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Harbor
Major Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Kaua'i Community CollegeIsland SchoolGrove Farm Homestead	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Wilcox HospitalKaua'i MuseumWar Memorial Convention Center
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none">State Office BuildingsCounty Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">JudiciaryPublic Safety Complex
Historic Places	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Kilohana Plantation & RailwayCounty Building and Historic District'Alekoko FishpondGrove Farm Homestead	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Kūhiō Highway Commercial StripKalapakī Beach PromenadeNāwiliwili Harbor Breakwater
Resorts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Marriott's Kaua'i LagoonsKaua'i Marriott Resort	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Aston Aloha Beach HotelKaua'i Beach Resort
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Important Agriculture Lands (IAL) designated by owner Grove FarmWith the end of sugar, crops include seed corn and diversified agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Commitment by State to agriculture as evidenced in long term leases on State lands between Kālepa and Kilohana Crater

2.3 POLICY OBJECTIVES FOR THE DISTRICT

Residents and policymakers have expressed a common desire to retain and elevate Līhu'e's position as the heart of the island. They want to make it a point of pride, a destination, and to reinvigorate the Town Core as a bustling center that supports population and provides a draw for locals and visitors alike. In order to achieve balance between Līhu'e as the urban center of the island and Kaua'i's predominantly rural character, it will be necessary to focus on compact, condensed development forms within Līhu'e District's existing communities and retain buffers and green space on the outskirts of town centers and between communities. This will allow each community to retain its unique identity and character.

Plans and policy developed for the area in recent years have reinforced the "smart growth" planning principles that will make this a reality: compact development, a mix of uses, walkable neighborhoods, access to multiple modes of transportation, a diversity of housing types, and preservation of natural features and open spaces. At the same time, a sense of place and a sensitivity of context are called for, as Līhu'e and Kaua'i are home to unique natural environments, historic places and features, and natural beauty and view sheds worthy of preservation. The principles of smart growth were utilized as a framework for developing policy objectives for the Līhu'e Community Plan. Smart growth has ten (10) principles as identified in the callout box.

Having been validated by prior plans and community feedback, elements of smart growth principles were adapted into fourteen (14) policy objectives unique to the context of the Līhu'e District:

1. *Concentrate development within a 10-minute walking radius of the existing communities of Līhu'e, Puhi, and Hanamā'ulu.* This will discourage development and sprawl that depends on the automobile as the primary means of transportation, and facilitate the goals of walkability, sustainability, and revitalization.

2. *Renew and revitalize the Līhu'e Town Core as a walkable, well-landscaped, attractive hub with Rice Street as a central destination.* This can be accomplished through design guidelines, incentivizing infill development for increased density, and implementing revitalization initiatives to create reasons and places for the community to gather.
3. *Forge an identity for the communities in the Līhu'e District that retains unique character while reinvigorating the individual communities.* The LCP process sought community input to identify those features that define each community in terms of its people, natural resources, and built environment, and to recommend policies that uphold each place's unique qualities.
4. *Introduce and implement smart growth principles to foster walkable, compact, and connected communities within the Līhu'e District.* These principles were explored and then applied to the specific context of the Līhu'e District through a series of technical papers and Community Working Group sessions, the outcomes of which were presented to the community for input and concurrence.
5. *Define and uphold community character through the application of Special Planning Areas and design standards.* These tools can build upon the unique attributes of a community while making it a more attractive place for residents. The relationship of buildings to the street, the availability of parking, pedestrian facilities, and amenities, the creation of civic gathering places and open spaces, and the mix of uses in a given area are aspects of place-making that the LCP seeks to implement using Special Planning Areas and associated design standards.
6. *Provide housing opportunities that will be accessible to Kaua'i's growing population in all market sectors.* Revitalization of the Līhu'e Town Core will enhance employment opportunities. Encouraging higher density and mixed use res-

- idential creates an opportunity for increased business activity as well as workforce housing.
7. *Increase access to multiple modes of transportation, including bus transit, walking, and bicycling.* The Transportation Plan and associated maps included in this Līhu'e Community Plan present a comprehensive program to achieve this objective through both new multimodal facilities and recommended improvements to existing roads, sidewalks, and bike facilities.
8. *Set sustainable growth patterns that uphold the vision and take into account planned and permitted uses.* There is a substantial amount of planned and entitled growth in the Līhu'e District. The Līhu'e Community Plan update process sought to integrate these plans and understand how they will interface with and change the existing community in developing policies and recommendations for future growth.
9. *Maintain distinct community edges and green space buffers between communities.* Residents expressed a desire to keep the individual communities within the Līhu'e District distinct and compact, with defined edges that honor the natural constraints of topography and environment. The Līhu'e Community Plan proposes land use patterns, including an Urban Edge Boundary, with this objective in mind.
10. *Preserve agriculture, open space, and preservation uses throughout the majority of the District.* The vast majority of land within the Līhu'e

SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES

- A range of housing opportunities
- Walkable neighborhoods
- Distinctive, attractive communities
- Community collaboration
- Predictable, fair, and cost effective development decisions
- Mixed land uses
- Preservation of open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas
- A variety of transportation choices
- Development directed towards existing communities
- Compact building design

Source: Environmental Protection Agency "About Smart Growth"

District is classified as open space or agricultural use. Concentrating future development around existing urban centers as proposed in the LCP will help to preserve those lands presently under agricultural and open space use.

11. *Retain historic buildings, significant trees, valued view planes, and cultural resources, and utilize them as anchors in revitalization and reinvigoration efforts.* The LCP identifies valued historic, cultural, and heritage resources and recommends policies that support preservation and retention of these features as key place-making features that help to define the character and design direction for each community.
12. *Ensure that public infrastructure and amenities are incorporated into development plans.* The Līhu'e Community Plan describes existing public infrastructure and identifies areas that require improvements to support recommended development. Recommendations for public amenities and facilities are also included.

13. *Seek out partnership and funding opportunities for the undergrounding of utilities, in particular in the Līhu'e Town Core along Rice Street.*

14. *Apply ahupua'a and traditional Hawaiian land use concepts to current needs.* The ahupua'a concept defines a natural gradient of use types and intensities. The LCP looks to these traditional land divisions in understanding land use patterns and place-making elements in the Līhu'e District.

The following section explains how these fourteen policy objectives were adapted into guiding principles that could be applied to policy recommendations for each community.

2.4 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR COMMUNITIES

Guiding principles were articulated to inform policies and recommendations for the individual communities of Līhu‘e, Puhi, and Hanamā‘ulu, as well as the unique neighborhoods and villages of Līhu‘e District. The Līhu‘e Community Plan policies are aimed at elevating the following qualities in each community:

- Sustainable
- Compact
- Connected
- Mixed Use
- Place-Based
- Multimodal
- Vital & Attractive

Each of these guiding principles is explained in the following sections.

2.4.1 Sustainability

The State of Hawai‘i *Hawai‘i 2050 Sustainability Plan (2008)* defines sustainability as a Hawai‘i that achieves the following:

- Respects the culture, character, beauty and history of our state’s island communities
- Strikes a balance among economic, social and community, and environmental priorities
- Meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

Sustainability spans land use, transportation, economic development, housing, and more, providing a framework by which plans and policies can be evaluated. Each place has different parameters for what constitutes sustainability. In the Kaua‘i General Plan, the overarching theme of “compactness, completeness, and connectedness” was identified as a pathway to the goal of “keeping Kaua‘i rural”. The County of Kaua‘i’s Holo Holo 2020 initiative establishes broad

goals for Kaua‘i’s sustainable future to support economic growth, investment in planning, improved multi-modal transportation, and support of affordable housing development.

In 2008, A Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) Report was prepared for Līhu‘e with the participation of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and a group of community stakeholders from government, private, and non-profit sectors. The SDAT’s overarching recommendations included reinforcing of Līhu‘e as the center or “gathering place” of Kaua‘i, maintaining bonds between people and the land, exploring self-sufficiency versus dependence, and planning for the future.

The Līhu‘e Community Plan addresses sustainability through policies and principles that focus development around existing urban areas, land uses that support agricultural, open space, and preservation uses, and addressing revitalization needs that support Kaua‘i’s goals of becoming more self-sustaining.

2.4.2 Compact Development

Kaua‘i has a history of compact development, with settlements arranged around small villages, and later, plantation encampments. For the past several decades, new growth has generally been more suburban in nature, which requires an automobile to move between activities. This has led to urban sprawl and bedroom communities where very few services exist within walking distance.

Compact development in Līhu‘e serves the other guiding principles in that it:

- Focuses development around existing centers, thereby allowing for preservation of distinct community edges and open spaces outside urban centers;
- Creates vibrancy in urban centers by providing a critical population base that can support attractions, services, and businesses;
- Permits a range of housing types and price points, from single-family to multi-family;

TYPES OF CONNECTIVITY ADDRESSED IN THE LCP

Within a neighborhood:

The LCP seeks to improve bicycle and pedestrian access to schools, parks, commercial districts and other areas within neighborhoods in the Līhu‘e District.

Between neighborhoods:

Connectivity between the Līhu‘e Town Core and other neighborhoods is being provided in the form of walking paths, bicycle lanes, and improved pedestrian facilities.

Between Līhu‘e and other Districts:

LCP policies seek to enhance access between Līhu‘e District and other parts of the island by way of public transit, motor vehicles, and bicycles.

Between Modes of Transportation:

The LCP recognizes the importance of safe pedestrian and bicycle routes to other modes of transit, including bus stops and public parking facilities.

- Promotes alternate forms of transportation including walking, bicycling, and public transit.

The Līhu‘e Community Plan advocates for compact development by increasing permitted development intensities in select areas around existing centers, and by setting in place boundaries that protect community edges and open spaces from future development.

2.4.3 Connectivity

Connectedness within and between communities in the Līhu‘e District is essential to realizing the goals of compact development, walkability, vibrancy, and multimodal transportation. There are several levels of connectivity that are important within the Līhu‘e District, as shown in the callout box. The Līhu‘e Community Plan includes land use and transportation policies and proposals that support this objective. These include a transit hub in the Līhu‘e Town Core and a variety of transportation projects including a Līhu‘e-Hanamā‘ulu Mauka Road and priority transit corridor.

PRINCIPLES OF PLACE-MAKING

- 1. Access & Linkages:** A successful public space is easy to get to and get through; it is visible both from a distance and up close. The edges of the space are inviting and safe, and the space is convenient to public transit and parking. Compact design features such as short blocks and buildings set close to the street contribute to access.
- 2. Comfort & Image:** Perceptions about image, safety, cleanliness, and availability of places to sit are crucial to a public place’s success. Lighting, seating, trees for shading, transparent windows, attractive architecture, streetscape, and barriers from traffic help ensure safety and comfort and attract people to be in these public realm spaces.
- 3. Uses & Activities:** Active usage by a diverse mix of ages, genders, and group sizes throughout the day is an indicator of a successful place. Complementary land uses including residential, office, commercial, retail, and public uses help create an active environment all day.
- 4. Sociability:** A meeting or gathering place for the community where people from a broad cross section of the community bring their friends and relatives, interact in both scheduled and spontaneous ways, and express happiness, pride, and comfort in their surroundings. These many include plazas, small parks, cafés, and transit stations. Events such as parades, concerts, festivals, pop ups (temporary retail storefronts), and farmers markets help create the sense of place and community. Lighting, banners, and hanging baskets can emphasize the festive element of the place.

Source: Project for Public Spaces “What Makes a Successful Place?” 2014.

2.4.4 Mixed Use

Mixed use describes development that blends a combination of residential, commercial, civic, institutional, or other uses, integrates those functions physically and functionally, and provides pedestrian connections. A key principle of smart growth, mixed use supports vibrancy, character, and a diversity of housing. It also creates 24-hour centers of activity by accommodating both residential and commercial uses that are mutually supportive. 24-hour activity in an area increases

es its sense of safety, community, and vibrancy. In the Līhu'e District, the LCP seeks to implement mixed use as a key component of revitalization in the Līhu'e Town Core, as well as in select communities where a smaller village center can serve a neighboring population (e.g., Hanamā'ulu, Puhi).

2.4.5 Place Based Approach

In the tradition of context-sensitive solutions (CSS) planning, the LCP centers on the unique people, identity, and landscape of Līhu'e. The LCP process was intensively stakeholder driven, involved multiple means for community input, and allowed those who live and work in the community to identify common themes and priorities. In the Līhu'e District, the LCP looks at each commu-

nity and village as a separate place, with recommendations tailored to each. It also considers each place's role and identity in the context of the District as a whole.

The General Plan calls for towns and villages that have a unique character, history, and sense of place. This is enhanced by creating gathering places where people can meet and interact by chance. This calls for the built environment and public spaces to exist at a human scale.

Elements for successful "place-making" are described in the text box. These are not meant as a cookie cutter, one-size-fits-all recipe. Rather, the basic elements need to be tailored to a specific neighborhood or location with plenty of community engagement.

2.4.6 Multimodal Transportation

Encouraging walking, bicycling, public transit, and other modes of transportation has benefits for public health, community vitality, and public infrastructure costs.

A key tenet of smart growth, multimodal transportation is crucial for supporting the types of compact, mixed use development that support a vital urban core. Features including smaller block sizes, narrower streets with bike lanes, slower traffic patterns, street landscaping, wide sidewalks, and development patterns oriented to street frontages all contribute to creating walkable, bikable communities.

The Kaua'i Multimodal Land Transportation Plan (MLTP) (2012) outlines steps the County of Kaua'i will take to achieve a balanced multimodal transportation system through the planning horizon year of 2035. Its goals are listed in the text box and inform the transportation maps and policies included in Chapter 6 of this LCP.

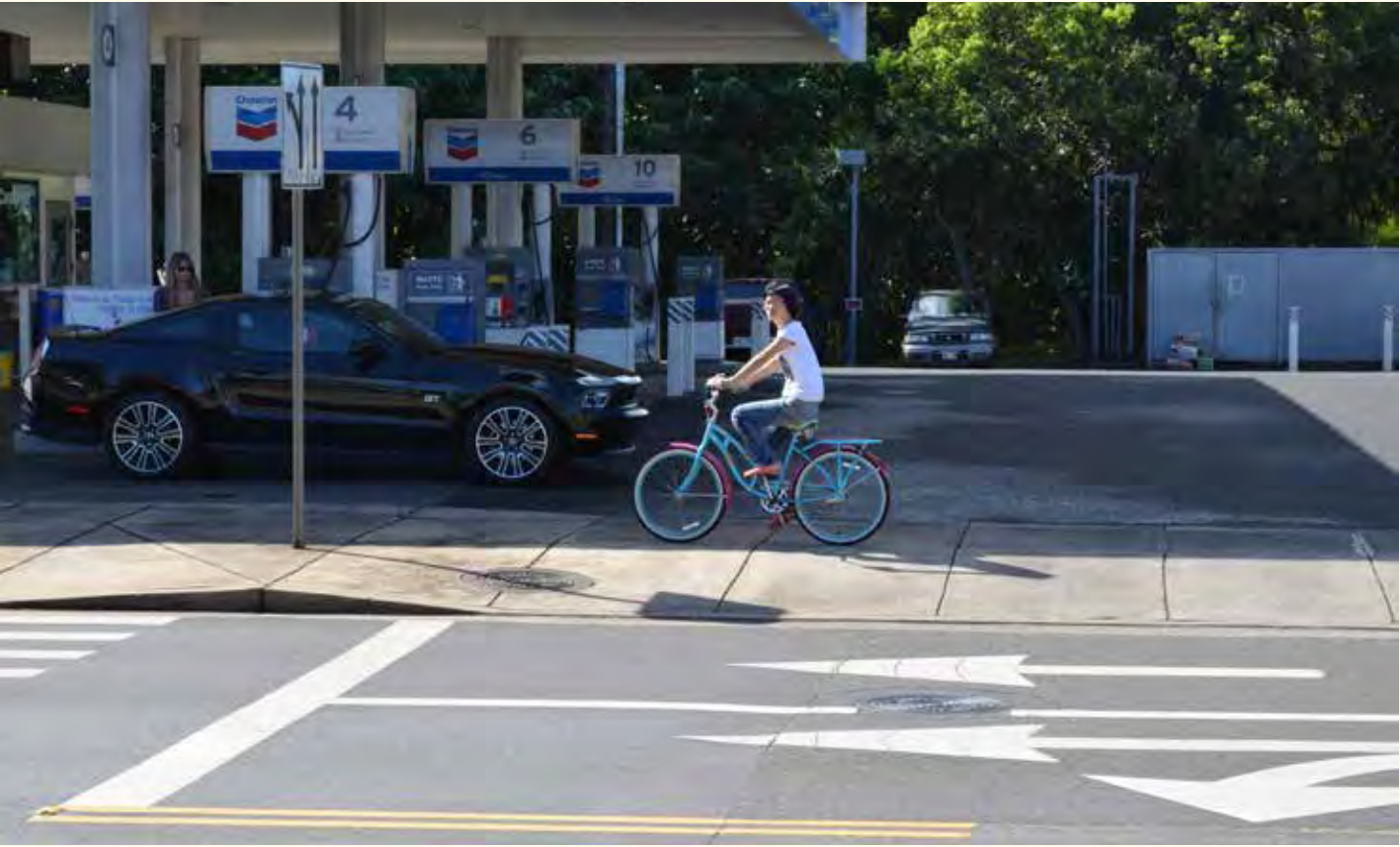
2.4.7 Vital, Attractive Communities

Development that complements the unique character and identity of each community will further the goals of revitalization and fostering Līhu'e as a destination. Toward that end, the Līhu'e Community Plan sets forth recommendations tailored to the major sub-areas of Līhu'e, Puhi, Hanamā'ulu, and Nāwiliwili.

Utilizing existing historic features and landmarks, as well as creating attractions and new places to gather will help foster a renewed sense of place in each of these communities. Parks and civic spaces, in particular, provide gathering spaces and contribute to the overall health of individuals in our communities. Form Based Codes and design guidelines can help to protect and perpetuate the sense of place that each community seeks to create. The Līhu'e Community Plan recommends preservation of place-making features and where appropriate, utilizes them to set the standard for neighborhood character and future development.

KAUA'I MULTIMODAL LAND TRANSPORTATION PLAN GOALS

- 1. A balanced, multimodal transportation system that provides choice, flexibility and resiliency in personal access and circulation for all.
- 2. A freight transport system that supports the island's economic sectors, including food and agriculture, health and wellness, sports and recreation, arts and culture, science and technology, and sustainable technologies and practices.
- 3. A transportation system that supports economic vitality and provides affordable access to jobs and economic opportunity.
- 4. A transportation system that supports and enhances public health.
- 5. A transportation system planned and designed to protect and enhance the island's natural landscapes and environmental quality.
- 6. A transportation system that makes efficient use of energy and is less dependent on imported petroleum.
- 7. A transportation system that will be maintained in a state of good repair.
- 8. A transportation system that protects and enhances the cultural values of Kaua'i, the rural character of the island and a high quality of life.



2.5 UPDATES TO THE GENERAL PLAN VISION IN THE LĪHU'E COMMUNITY PLAN

The Līhu'e Community Plan process largely confirmed that the General Plan vision and elements remain relevant to current community needs and desires. Certain innovations and proposed projects have changed some of the specific elements, however the larger themes continue to hold. The elements of the Līhu'e Community Plan that differ from those presented in the General Plan can be summarized as follows:

- Innovations in energy production have shifted the focus to alternate sources including solar, hydropower, and biomass-to-energy.
- The adoption of the Multimodal Land Transportation Plan has provided greater detail on the direction of transportation in the District. The Plan now incorporates a priority transit corridor and programs such as Safe Routes to School (SRTS) and Complete Streets.
- Introduction of the proposed Līhu'e-Hanamā'ulu Mauka Road from Hanamā'ulu to Puhi, providing an alternate regional route and shifting Kūhiō Highway from a State Highway to a County road with greater emphasis on multimodal transportation.
- A focus on prioritizing projects for the district to direct County spending.
- An emphasis on mixed use development and design standards that are consistent with smart growth principles outlined in the LCP.
- A shift towards including design in the regulatory code as a method of implementation, possibly through future adoption of a Form Based Code (see Appendix C).
- A more pronounced emphasis on compact development and a mix of commercial and residential uses to promote walkability and



- reduce reliance on automobile transport to meet basic needs.
- Recommendation to establish an Urban Edge Boundary to limit the extent of urban sprawl and delineate edges.

