



LAND PLANNING
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

MEETING NOTES

DATE: January 3, 2005

MEETING DATE: December 8, 2004

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

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PRESENT:

Avery Youn/Architect
Cheryl Lovell Obatake/Community Specialist
Clyde Kodani/Kodani & Associates
Laurie Ho/Garden Island Resource Conservation & Development
Marc Ventura, Architect
Mike Furukawa/Grove Farm Company, Inc.
Neil Clendeninn/Doctor, Lihue Scholar
Palmer Hafdahl/Architect, Palm's Hawaii
Pat Griffin/Kaua'i Historic Preservation Review Commission
Russell Seacat, Architect
Sonia Topenio/Bank of Hawaii
Stanley Doi/State of Hawaii, DAGS Kaua'i Branch
Steve Kyono/State of Hawaii, Department of Transportation
Ian Costa/Director, Kaua'i County Planning Department
Keith Nitta/Project Manager, Kaua'i County Planning Dept.
Doug Haigh/Chief, Kaua'i County Dept. of Public Works
Building Division
Barbara Pendragon/Planner, Kaua'i County Planning Dept.
Frank Brandt/PBR HAWAII
Grant Murakami/PBR HAWAII
Kimi Yuen/PBR HAWAII
Phillip Rowell/Rowell and Associates

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Morton Yamasaki/Manager, Hale Pumehana
Gary Hennigh/Deputy Planning Director, County of Kaua'i

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

PURPOSE: To finalize and approve vision statement for the project, provide an overview of related Lihue projects and existing traffic conditions. Also, to gather input from the CAC on existing site opportunities, resources, constraints, and issues.

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1. Project Schedule

PBR spoke with Keith Nitta and Doug Haigh, the County project managers for the two Līhu'e projects, and discussed the possibility of combining the public meetings for the two projects. All agreed that this would be acceptable and subsequently a new date for the combined public meeting was scheduled for January 26, 2005 from 5:00 – 7:00 PM at the County's Mo'ikeha Meeting Room 2.

2. Vision Statement

The Vision statement was revised per Pat, Palmer and Laurie and handed out to the attendees. It was subsequently accepted by the CAC and is attached for reference.

3. Līhu'e-Hanamā'ulu Project

Mike Furukawa from Lihue Land Co. presented an overview of their Līhu'e-Hanamā'ulu project. The property is fully entitled and the first phase will be in the Hanamā'ulu area. It will include affordable units and the exact number is being negotiated with the County Housing agency. An Urban Design Plan was drafted and accepted by the Planning Commission in the mid-1990s as part of the entitlement process. It incorporated elements of neotraditional design before it became popular. An unusual condition placed on the project by the County was a minimum number of residential units, 1400 units. The idea was to allow higher density in Līhu'e to accommodate growth so that the outer regions of Kaua'i can remain more rural and less dense. Based on current zoning, the maximum number of units that can be developed is roughly 2,300 units. In reality, a mid range of 1650 – 1700 units will probably be developed. The residential zoning includes a variety of densities from R-6, R-8, to R-20. There are also industrial and commercial zones within the project site.

It is expected that the new water treatment plant will be operational in April 2005. The County has about a 1 MGD capacity available at the Līhu'e plant and has granted sewer access for the Hanamā'ulu portion of the project. Once the County's plant reaches capacity, future sewer treatment facilities will need to be developed. The existing plant could be expanded or a new plant developed in conjunction with other large landowners nearby such as the State Dept. of Hawaiian Homes. Some of the CAC members did not like the idea of drilling more injection wells in order to expand capacity at the current plant. Reuse is a possibility but more end users need to be identified. The Airport does not want it because it attracts birds which can be hazardous. D. Haigh suggested that expanding the existing plant may be the more viable option. Līhu'e Land Co. will continue to explore their options as development progresses.

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Avery Youn asked if the Urban Design Plan would include guidelines to control parking. Many cars crowd the streets in Hanamā'ulu. Also, the additional dwelling units in the Molokoa area are not done well. Flag lots are being CPR'd. Līhu'e Land Co. and PBR will look into controlling these aspects through contractual documents such as design guidelines, CC&Rs and perhaps in the updated version of the Urban Design Plan.

Clyde Kodani asked about the non-standard road designs approved in the Draft Urban Design Plan. They have noticed that the County tends to disapprove of non-standard street widths and street trees in the right-of-way. N. Clendeninn also questioned why the County only allows four different types of street sections when there should be a wider variety of street sections for different uses. For example, lower volume, shorter streets should have narrower cross-sections and where pedestrians frequent, sidewalks and street trees should be permitted. D. Haigh noted that the County has tended to discourage planting street trees because of the hazard they pose when falling in high winds and hurricanes. It is also a maintenance issue. The County does not have money to maintain them and therefore does not accept them as part of dedicated streets. It will require an Administrative call to change this policy. Līhu'e Land Co. will be meeting with the various County agencies to see if the proposed streetscapes which are much more pedestrian friendly would be allowed by Public Works. For private property owners, it is possible to have a homeowners association take care of maintenance. K. Nitta emphasized that engineering should not dictate urban design controls and that the CAC should feel to recommend what it wants for the current project.

C. Lovell Obatake also pointed out that Kalepa Ridge is significant to the Hawaiians. Care should be taken when orienting streets and homes based on Hawaiian geomancy in the Hanamā'ulu area.

4. Lihue Civic Center Update

PBR Hawaii presented the latest version of the draft master plan for the Līhu'e Civic Center. The Mayor has reviewed and approved the plan for public input. (The plan was circulated prior to the meeting via email and is attached for reference.) Highlights of the current draft master plan include an expanded County green along Rice Street which would open up the area for civic celebrations and events, modified parking facilities with potential locations for parking decks, and the closure of 'Eiwa Street to create a unified Civic Center with a pedestrian-friendly environment connecting the Historic County Building and the renovated County facilities at the Kapule, Mo'ikeha, and Pi'ikoi Buildings. The closure of 'Eiwa Street also eliminates the misaligned intersections along Rice and Hardy Streets which currently complicate vehicle

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movements and exacerbate dangerous driving conflicts and divides the Civic Center. The existing traffic at Hardy and Kūhiō already warrant signalization based on the analysis by our traffic engineers. To mitigate traffic conflicts at the 'Umi and Hardy Street intersection, a roundabout is proposed. PBR added that the draft plan as shown, including the parking decks, provides almost as many stalls as the current configuration. The State would lose about 4-5 stalls and the County would lose 9. The trade-off is a unified, landscaped, pedestrian-friendly civic center.

Comments and discussion from the group are summarized below:

- Keith Nitta asked if there would be a pedestrian connection between the Mo'ikeha Building and Wilcox School. Initially, PBR, the County and the Līhu'ē Hui were looking at this, but later decided that they did not want to cut off the school from the park. Instead another alignment on the south side of Līhu'ē Park is being considered. Also, if the improvements along Rice Street make it more pedestrian friendly, Rice would then become the primary pedestrian route, which is safer from a visibility standpoint since more people travel along Rice. Separated pedestrian routes can be dangerous since they are hidden from passersby.
- The County should envision the eventual acquisition of Wilcox School.
- Steve Kyono – an old study showed that 'Umi and Hardy needs a signal. There is also traffic shifting to 'Akahi Street.
- Doug Haigh – Kūhiō and Hardy also needs a signal. If the County is able to get matching funds from the Federal DOT, they may have enough to make all the Hardy improvements, including the roundabout.
- Avery Youn asked if the Big Save Service Access was adequate. PBR hasn't checked with them yet, but initial review by our traffic engineer says that it should be adequate.
- Parking Structures – the car still dominates this plan. The "piko" of the Civic Center is a parking structure. Many thought that one level of parking at grade with a park above would be too high and would block views. PBR responded that the parking decks can either be built below grade so that the park is at the surface, or bermed slightly above grade to help cut costs. Money would be the only limiting factor. Also, the parking structure can be phased in at a later time when the County determines if it needs more parking. The park could be built first to see how it affects parking demand. Then perhaps if parking is adequate, the County may decide that it does not need to build the structures. There is another option to use the War Memorial parking lot for County employees during the regular work week and to provide shuttle service to the Civic Center if they do not want to walk. The pedestrian routes would need to be improved at the same time.

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- Why does 'Eiwa Street need to be closed? It is used during parades as the terminus. Some feel it would be difficult to justify closing the street with traffic so bad. The problem is many use it as a shortcut and make difficult left turns on and from Rice Street which backs up traffic. If there were no street, then traffic would use the signalized intersections at 'Umi and Kūhiō. The traffic engineers will study this further to determine what the real impact would be of closing the street.
- N. Clendeninn thought it was a great idea to eliminate 'Eiwa so that the County green could be extended to the Kaua'i Museum. It would also create opportunities for civic celebrations, farmers markets, as well as an outdoor space for the Museum to utilize.
- Dough Haigh – The Civic Center should not be the parking solution for Līhu'e Town. The Urban Design Plan should look at alternate areas outside of the two-block Civic Center to provide parking. Previous alternatives for the Civic Center plan looked at opportunities for offsite parking in which neighboring landowners could work together to provide parking for their customers and patrons. An example was the Lihu'e Plantation Building owner offering to donate some land for a parking structure if the other landowners and County wanted to chip in to pay for design and construction. Opportunities like this should continue to be explored for other parts of Līhu'e rather than using the Civic Center for parking. PBR added that the Līhu'e Town Urban Design Plan project will continue these efforts so that the Civic Center plan can focus on the improvement projects within the two block area.
- Stanley Doi – The State's main concerns have to do with parking administration, security (the lots seem too open and accessible), and the loss of the ADA stalls south of the State Office Building. PBR responded that the ADA stalls would be added back in. The net loss of 4 or 5 State parking stalls actually included the ADA stalls. The other concerns voiced by the State can be handled administratively and would need to be worked out with the County and State together. S. Doi also discussed the State's improvement plans for the area. They are considering razing the old Police Station and building a parking structure with office space above, much like the existing State Office Tower. There is also discussion about tearing down the existing Health Center buildings to put parking below and to develop a Health Center complex above. In this way, the State hopes to bring a lot of the agencies they have scattered throughout Līhu'e to the Civic Center.
- S. Kyono also added that there was a graveyard across Kūhiō from the Civic Center.
- Avery Youn will be submitting his comments in writing to PBR.

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5. Traffic Study

Phillip Rowell presented his findings on the existing traffic. He apologized but his analysis is not quite complete. He took traffic counts including turning movements at the requested intersections. However, he thought he could use the counts taken last year for the Līhu'e Civic Center project, but when they took their afternoon counts from 3 to 6 PM to discern when the peak hour was, it was different from the one used in the Civic Center project. The Civic Center counts ended at 4:45 but he found that the afternoon peak actually continued beyond 5 PM. As a result, he would like to go back and take counts for those intersections but will not be able to do so until the third week in January after the holidays and school resumes so that traffic returns to a more typical pattern. The morning peak hour traffic counts were adequate and he will use the Civic Center counts in his analysis. He is very interested in hearing from the CAC what their concerns were about traffic and welcomed their input.

It was noted that many drivers use Halekō Road as a shortcut to avoid Kaunuaui'i Highway. Also, it was noted that there are traffic backups during lunch and when schools end for the day. S. Topenio asked if there were any counts taken over an entire day. P. Rowell responded that the State typically does this every two years and just recently took a count in September. The State is still working on compiling those numbers and he will review them as soon as they are available.

P. Griffin voiced her concern over the long term plans to expand Halekō Road to four lanes. She suggested that another crossing be considered rather than loading traffic up in that area which is already bad and possibly would exacerbate conditions at the Rice/Halekō intersection. The 1976 Development Plan had recommended adding a new road across the gulch rather than widening Halekō and the CAC should consider revisiting this option.

It was also recommended that the traffic study review the pedestrian crossings on Rice Street at the Kauai Museum and Chevron and the one in front of the Post Office which was removed. It seems to make more sense to put the Post Office crossing back and take out the one in front of Chevron based on pedestrian destinations.

6. CAC Mapping and Input

The group then broke to gather around maps of Līhu'e Town to add their thoughts and opinions on the various resources, constraints, issues and opportunities they saw in Līhu'e. These ideas will be considered and used in the development of alternatives.

Attachments: Vision Statement

Līhu'e Civic Center Draft Master Plan, dated November 22, 2004

Vision 2025 for the Līhu'e Town Core...

(as edited and tentatively approved at the third CAC Meeting, December 8, 2004)

Līhu'e--the vital, pulsing heart of Kaua'i--celebrates its unique past and embraces its future, combining the best of both in its development over the next twenty years. Our town is the welcoming destination at the Gateway to Kaua'i. It is the center of local government and the embodiment of civic pride. Līhu'e embraces business and community development while honoring and protecting its historic commercial and residential neighborhoods. It recognizes its part in the larger environment as demonstrated by the responsible stewardship of its watershed and other natural resources. It encourages a pedestrian-friendly environment within a multi-modal transportation system. Līhu'e is pleasant and vibrant, inspiring and beautiful. The town epitomizes the spirit of aloha, welcoming all Kauaians--the young and the old, families and singles, students and the workforce, visitors and residents alike.

Organizing Principles and Planning Themes:

- Civic Pride
- Aesthetic Improvements and Beautification
- Historic Preservation
- Business and Community Revitalization
- Transportation Networks
- Environment and Natural Resources
- Government Participation
- Community Facilities
- Utilities and Infrastructure

Goals and Objectives

Civic Pride

Goals:

- Celebrate Līhu'e as a destination
- Revitalize Līhu'e as a unique, vibrant town that inspires and leads by example
- Develop Līhu'e into a model community for Kaua'i, Hawai'i, and the world
- Implement and fund regular maintenance and upkeep of public spaces, parks, and streets

Aesthetic Improvements and Beautification

Goals:

- Beautify Līhu'e streets, walkways and parks
 - Objective: Design and install landscaping to create a streetscape that unifies the "patchwork quilt" of architectural building styles and mix of uses

- Develop a “greenbelt” in the center of Līhu‘e Town
- Build upon the Līhu‘e Gateway Project (there are ties to Hawaiian history that this area was an ancient gateway)
- Implement a Public Arts Program
 - Objective: Ensure public art is accessible to all at all hours of the day and not locked behind gates when buildings / facilities close for business.
 - Objective: Install public art extensively throughout Līhu‘e.
- Create a unique identity for Līhu‘e
 - Objective: Develop thematic beautification projects for each Līhu‘e neighborhood identified in the plan including unique designs for crosswalks, landscaping, public features and amenities.

Historic Preservation

Goals:

- Inventory Līhu‘e’s historic resources
- Maintain and enhance historic resources
 - Objective: Preserve the Sugar Mill. It is the “lynchpin” connecting the old with the new. At the very minimum, preserve the vertical form of Līhu‘e Sugar Mill stack to maintain connection to Līhu‘e’s history. Will require cooperation of landowner, results from hazardous materials investigations.
 - Objective: Enhance the old railroad alignment. Explore connections between Līhu‘e and the Harbor through this corridor (bikepath, pedestrian path, train). Will require coordination and cooperation of the landowner.
 - Objective: Explore uses of upper Nāwiliwili Gulch, near Kūhiō Highway overpass (one suggestion: botanical park)
- Educate residents and visitors about Līhu‘e’s rich history
- Celebrate Līhu‘e’s history and make it a focal point of revitalization efforts. Integrate the old and the new.
- Encourage historic preservation through government regulation and assistance
- Encourage enthusiastic community, business, and property owner participation in enhancing historic resources

Cautions:

- Maintain integrity of historic preservation. Avoid commercialized or sensationalized versions of history.

Business and Community Revitalization

Goals:

- Development and success of a variety of business and commercial activity. It should include a balanced mix of retail, food services, finance and

- professional services, entertainment, non-profits, government and public services.
- Allow Līhu‘e to be developed as the main urban center for Kaua‘i
 - Objective: Allow higher density residential and urban developments to be built in Līhu‘e to “keep country, country,” rural communities, rural.
 - Create a Cultural District in the heart of Līhu‘e
 - Objective: Close ‘Eiwa Street and incorporate the Kaua‘i Museum, Historic County Building, Post Office, and other historic buildings within a cultural district
 - Objective: Support the development of new cultural attractions within the district
 - Objective: Develop a walking tour to celebrate and educate the public about Līhu‘e’s cultural and historic amenities
 - Support community events such as farmers markets, street fairs, holiday and community celebrations within the Civic Center
 - Develop a mix of housing types within Līhu‘e
 - Objective: Develop higher density residential developments *(specify a height limit...?)*
 - Objective: Allow mixed-use developments with residential units located above ground-level commercial uses.
 - Create a community that brings together a wide mix of users—multiple generations, locals and visitors, residents, students, and employees

Transportation Networks

Goals:

- Develop transportation networks that support multi-modal choices
- Create a safe, pedestrian-friendly environment that encourages walking
- Convenient bicycle network and facilities
- Uncongested yet appropriate traffic flow. Circulation based on context-sensitive design.
- Appropriate development of parking facilities that encourages the use of multimodal transportation options
- Develop alternatives for through-traffic *(Līhu‘e Hui: please clarify...? Is this in reference to the Līhu‘e bypass or does it mean improved connectivity throughout Līhu‘e? Like the pedestrian bridges across Nāwiliwili? Or all of the above...?)*
- Include enhanced links and connections to periphery areas such as Nāwiliwili Harbor, Kukui Grove Shopping Center, Līhu‘e Airport

Environment and Natural Resources

Goals:

- Protect and enhance natural resources

- Objective: Mālama Nāwiliwili Stream by reducing and/or mitigating pollution that enters the stream

Government Participation

Goals:

- Establish a range of government-sponsored activities, e.g. “center stage” events on County lawn, farmers markets
- Create tax credits and other formalized incentives for commercial development and historic preservation
- Partner with other governmental agencies, businesses, utilities, landowners, and developers to stimulate revitalization efforts

Community Facilities

Goals:

- Enhance and improve existing public facilities
 - Objective: Improve and enhance the County Lawn to facilitate community activities held there.
 - Objective: Close ‘Eiwa Street to expand the County Lawn
 - Objective: Improve Lihū‘e Park, increase accessibility and visibility
- Increase the amount of landscaped public spaces within the civic center
- Develop a regional park/multi-purpose center/festival grounds
 - Objective: Develop multi-use parks for different sports and children’s activities
- Develop a civic center forum
 - Objective: Create a “Pump Room” – public area within the Civic Center equipped with closed circuit television to view public meetings, interactive computers for public information, permitting, other public services/data **(Līhu‘e Hui: please clarify this one!)**
 - Objective: Create a technologically advanced “e-hub” where electronic voting and active community discourse can be held
- Develop a dedicated Kaua‘i Information Center (KIC)
 - Objective: Partner with Kaua‘i Historical Society or other like organization to advance and enrich the synergy between the two organizations and their missions/services.
 - Objective: Locate the KIC within the Civic Center, possibly a public plaza or historic building such as the County Annex.

Utilities and Infrastructure

Goals:

- Locate overhead utilities underground
 - Objective: Prioritize overhead lines within the Civic Center
 - Objective: Work with KIUC to find funding

- Objective: Schedule undergrounding of utilities with other roadwork or improvements to minimize disruption during construction
- Provide sufficient capacity to support projected growth
- Partner government with landowners and developers in developing needed infrastructure
- Prioritize public funding of improvement projects to support revitalization of Lihu'e

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