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LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

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*ASSOCIATE*

**HONOLULU OFFICE**  
1001 BISHOP STREET  
PACIFIC TOWER, SUITE 650  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-3484  
TEL: (808) 521-5631  
FAX: (808) 523-1402  
E-MAIL: sysadmin@pbrhawaii.com

**HILO OFFICE**  
101 AUPUNI STREET  
HILO LAGOON CENTER, SUITE 310  
HILO, HAWAII 96720-4262  
TEL: (808) 961-3333  
FAX: (808) 961-4989  
E-MAIL: pbrhilo@lava.net

**WAILUKU OFFICE**  
2123 KAOHU STREET  
WAILUKU, HAWAII 96793-2204  
TEL: (808) 242-2878  
FAX: (808) 242-2902  
EMAIL: pbrmaui@lava.net

## MEETING NOTES

DATE: April 15, 2005

MEETING DATE: February 18, 2005

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

SUBJECT **LĪHU'E TOWN CORE URBAN DESIGN PLAN**  
**Community Advisory Committee Meeting No. 4**

PRESENT: Sonia Topenio/Bank of Hawai'i  
Pat Griffin/KHPRC, Griffin Noyes Assoc.  
Russell Seacat/Architect  
Morton Yamasaki/Landscape Architect  
Clyde Kodani/Kodani & Associates  
Steve Kyono/State DOT Highways-Kaua'i  
Laurie Ho/Garden Island RC&D  
Palmer Hafdahl/Palm's Hawaii  
Keith Nitta/County Planning Department  
Doug Haigh/County DPW-Building Division  
Barbara Pendragon/County Planning Department  
Grant Murakami/PBR HAWAII  
Kimi Yuen/PBR HAWAII

DISTRIBUTION: above list via email  
Avery Youn/AY Architect  
Marc Ventura/Marc Ventura, AIA, LLC  
Cheryl Lovell-Obatake  
Mike Furukawa/Grove Farm  
Neil Clendeninn

The purpose of this meeting was: 1) to present the CAC with the findings from the public workshop, 2) to inform the CAC as to where the planning team is in the process of preparing the urban design plan and receive feedback from the CAC on the plan, and 3) to get closure on the Lihu'e Civic Center Site Improvements Draft Master Plan.

PBR summarized the findings from the responses they received for the surveys distributed at the community meeting held in January. At the time of the meeting, PBR had received about 20 survey results, which is far from a representative sample, but there were some clear trends in many of the responses.

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*[Please note: Since the February 18, 2005 meeting, the number of survey responses received to date (4/15/05) has since increased to 53 and a summary of the results are attached. The following discussion may vary from the latest results]*

PBR noted that the purpose of the survey was to “test the waters” with the public on concepts and ideas that were generated for the urban design plan from the previous meetings with the CAC. PBR also requested feedback from the CAC on both the process and concepts generated from past meetings to be sure that the project is heading in the right direction and that all of the elements of the urban design plan are covered.

The survey results discussed at the meeting are summarized below.

1. Question 1: For circulation around the Civic Center; respondents overwhelmingly preferred two-way traffic circulation over the one-way couplet option.
2. Question 2: For a one-way couplet option on Rice and Hardy Streets, residents preferred the option with two travel lanes, angled parking and a bike lane over the option of two travel lanes, angled parking and parallel parking.
3. Question 3: For the two-way Rice and Hardy Street roadway design option, respondents preferred a two-lane road option (with bike lanes and a median) over the four-way lane option (with no bike lanes and a median)
4. Question 4: For the design of 'Umi Street, respondents preferred the option with a center median/turn lane and no parking.
5. Question 5: For the question regarding the ranking of preferences on accommodating increased traffic traveling North-South across Nāwiliwili Gulch, the responses were split between the option of expanding Kaumuali'i Highway and the option of building another road across Nāwiliwili Gulch. It was noted that the State Department of Transportation (DOT) is planning to move forward on widening Kaumuali'i Highway below Rice Street to four lanes.
6. Question 6: Respondents overwhelmingly support the development of the Līhu'ē Bypass Road.
7. Question 7: Responses to the willingness to use a parking shuttle system and were mixed.

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8. Question 8: For parking alternatives, most respondents did not like street parking as an option.
9. Question 9: Parking structures were acceptable in many of the various locations shown in the survey.
10. Question 10 through 18: Results show that new German House structure on Halekō Road was not rated high, while the post office and County Building were rated high. There were mixed results on some of the other buildings.
11. A request to the architects and designers that deal with the codes and regulations: help identify the issues and problems that are preventing the intelligent reuse of existing or historic buildings. How can we encourage preservation? What requirements from the zoning code are too restrictive? How can we change the codes?
12. Question 18 and 19: Respondents overwhelmingly preferred parking lots that were tree-shaded. A CAC member noted that the planning team may need to reconsider the use of Monkeypod trees as they are the worse type of trees to use in parking lots, because they drop their pods which can ruin the finish on a car. They are probably better for large open grassed areas. Barbara Pendragon noted that Walmart uses Shower trees in their parking lots. It was also noted that the purpose for trees is to provide aesthetics and make an area feel more comfortable for walking. Also, the type of tree selected would depend on the function of the parking lot, if it is all day type of parking or parking for short time periods. Ultimately, it is hard to find the perfect tree; there are advantages and disadvantages of each type of tree. It was noted that Kaua'i County has the only zoning code that does not require tree planting for off-street parking areas.
13. Question 21. For the mill site, redevelopment as a retail/commercial development received the highest number of responses, followed by a museum or cultural attraction, followed by a park or botanical garden. It was noted that both Kekaha Mill and Līhu'e Mill have been purchased by the same owner, but right now the current owner's priority is the Kekaha site.
14. Question 20. For comments on the Civic Center Master Plan, responded were mixed on the closing of 'Eiwa Street because it is a shortcut to and from other places in Līhu'e. Kimi noted that in an earlier survey done for the Civic Center (prior to design development), when asked what people thought about closing 'Eiwa Street, they got about 40 to 50 responses and the responses were split down the middle on closing the road. It was either viewed as taking away a roadway shortcut or a great idea if it served to open up an area for green space.

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It was noted that the green belt should be the selling point for the closing of the street.

15. There was a question raised regarding the lease for the Big Save property. It was noted that the County Administration granted a 5-year extension to the lease. Any further extension of the lease may need to go to Council. It was noted that when the County bought this building, it was for the Civic Center and not for commercial use. It was noted that the service area for the Big Save is the biggest liability as it cuts-off the logical connection between the two buildings and it does not need to be that way.

A CAC member commented that a lot of people use Big Save as a primary shopping area. It was also noted that perhaps the store could do more to better match the needs of residents in the area.

16. It was noted that the planning team probably cannot finish the Master Plan unless we get Council approval. The one thing that might be holding the project up is the traffic study. What we propose on the surrounding streets for the Urban Design Plan may affect the projected effects of closing 'Eiwa Street and could change circulation patterns around Līhu'e. It would help if this group can come together and point us in the right direction.

Following the summary of the survey, the group had an open discussion on the project. The main discussion points, comments and questions that followed are summarized below.

1. It was noted that something like the "future fair" held for the preparation of the General Plan may be helpful in getting landowners and local residents to share their ideas of what they would like for Līhu'e Town.
2. There was discussion as to how the Garden Island Newspaper cited traffic as being the driver of the plan. The planning team noted that it is not their intention that traffic drive the plan, that other elements like land use will also affect the plan. However, traffic is a critical element that must be taken into consideration. It was noted that most of the group buys into the concept that they would like to see more walkable streetscapes in Līhu'e Town. The question is, at what costs, are they willing to go? Would it be ok to eliminate two travel lanes and put in bike lanes?
3. There was discussion regarding the roundabout proposed for the intersection of 'Umi and Hardy streets. Russell Seacat noted that roundabouts are not

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pedestrian friendly. He noted that people tend to speed off after coming out of the roundabout. They are not pedestrian and bicycle friendly. He would prefer a stop light at the intersection. Pat Griffin noted that a pedestrian lighting system that lights up when pedestrians cross the road may also be something to consider for pedestrian crossing in plan.

4. 'Umi Street may need to play a role as a higher use roadway. It may be the connector roadway to Ahukini Road. There was discussion of other roadways, 'Elua and 'Akahi Streets connecting up to Ahukini Highway, but Steve Kyono noted that the State would probably not allow these roads to connect up to Ahukini. He noted that although the current thinking is planning is for more connectivity, the State would probably limit connections to Ahukini Road. The latest thinking in a lot of the planning community now is multiple ways to get around-connectivity. However, we would not want that type of connection there. .
5. Steve Kyono briefed the group on DOT's latest plans for the Lihu'e area. For the widening of Kaunuali'i Highway to Puhi, Steve noted that the four-lane roadway is under design right now. He also noted that for Kapule Highway and Rice Street, Rice Street is now being planned to terminate into Kapule Highway as a T-intersection with a straight-shot from Kapule Highway to the harbor.
6. Keith Nitta briefed the group on the background of the project. He noted that when funding was cut for the project, and in his discussions with Curtis Tom, the focal point of the project should be the town core. In scoping the project, Keith felt that the design guidelines would play a critical role in this project. He was also thinking that perhaps the current zoning code and planning standards would need to be adjusted (e.g. parking requirements and mixed use). He also mentioned that perhaps it would require a special planning area for Lihu'e, like they have done for parts of Kapa'a. Finally he noted that he would like to see the plan spin-off into real projects that would help to revitalize the area.
7. There was discussion on how the Lihu'e-Hanamā'ulu master plan fits in with this project. Keith noted that we still need to see how will affect the Civic Center. However, he noted that the Urban Design Plan will not do detail design for those lands because the landowner has already established design guidelines for the development of the property which were already adopted by ordinance. Keith noted that our focus will be more on the Lihu'e Town core area.
8. There was discussion regarding the need to keep Wilcox Elementary School in the plan. Mike Furukawa noted that when they were in discussions with DOE for Lihu'e-Hanamā'ulu in the mid 90's, they had identified a new school site on

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their plan. At that time, the thinking of DOE was that Wilcox Elementary School would close, with the new school being built. The land under the Wilcox Elementary School would then become a new community/civic area. However, in recent discussions with DOE, it now appears that they would like to keep Wilcox Elementary School. The DOE noted that Wilcox Elementary School is at capacity and is actually one of the biggest elementary schools that the DOE has, so to shut it down would be difficult. Even if they considered closing the school, the DOE may not give up the property. An agreement would need to be worked out within the State to transfer the property from DOE to DAGS. Right now, the concern regarding the new school on the Puhī side in Līhu'e Hanamā'ulu is that there are no residences around, and all the kids would have to be driven to the school. It is in an area of Kaumuali'i Highway which is already one of the worst in terms of traffic backups.

9. It was noted that we should incorporate Hawaiian culture into the plan. Things like details on the streets and for crosswalks.
10. It was noted that the next step would be to try to incorporate all of the elements that we have been discussing and develop a framework for the entire plan. This would include addressing streets, land use, landscaping, architecture, street furniture which will all come together in a draft plan.
11. A suggestion was made to develop a smaller survey to ask more specific questions about elements of the plan.
12. There was discussion regarding the State's involvement in this planning process. It was noted that the State's priority on Kaua'i is finding more office space for their different agencies as right now they're scattered throughout Līhu'e and they need more office space. It was noted that the planning team in talking with Dough Haigh thought about a deal where they share the cost of redevelopment of the Civic Center for the lease of some of the office space in the Pi'ikoi Building. It was noted that the best approach with the State is to bring in a proposal and ask for their input or comment on the plans.

Attachment