



## MEETING NOTES

**MEETING DATE:** August 15, 2024

**PRESENT:**

**Project Team:**

1. Lilliane Makaila, DHHL
2. Julie-Ann Cachola, DHHL
3. Ku‘upuamae‘ole Kiyuna, DHHL
4. Cherie-Noelle Ka‘anana, DHHL
5. Catie Cullison, PBR HAWAII
6. Nathalie Razo, PBR HAWAII
7. Makena Bassett, PBR HAWAII

**Beneficiaries/ Community Members:**

<b>TOTAL ATTENDEES:</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Total Beneficiaries:</b>	<b>24</b>
Applicants:	10
Lessees:	11
Both:	3
Others:	8
No response:	0

**SUBJECT:** Department of Hawaiian Home Lands Hawai‘i Island Plan Update Beneficiary Meeting, Round 1

**ATTACHMENTS:** A) PowerPoint Presentation, B) Land Use Designation Updated Maps, C) Fact Sheets, D) Comment Cards

**1. Meeting Overview and Highlights**

This meeting was the first of three rounds of meetings to discuss and receive feedback from DHHL beneficiaries on updated land designations for the Hawai‘i Island Plan Update. The purpose of this meeting was to educate the beneficiaries on the current Hawai‘i Island Plan and receive input on proposed Land Use Designations for the Hawai‘i Island Plan Update.

Tables were set up around the room with copies of initial drafts of the Proposed Land Use Designation Maps (Attachment B) and Fact Sheets (Attachment C) for each tract. As meeting attendees arrived they were asked to sign in and were given comment cards (Attachment D) for attendee review and use during the rest of the meeting. The comment cards listed each tract of DHHL land and included space for beneficiaries to leave their input about the proposed land use designations. During sign in, attendees were encouraged to

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*President / Chairman*

RUSSELL Y. J. CHUNG, FASLA  
*Executive Vice-President / Principal*

VINCENT SHIGEKUNI  
*Senior Vice-President / Principal*

GRANT T. MURAKAMI, AICP, LEED® AP BD+C  
*Senior Vice-President / Principal*

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CATIE CULLISON, AICP  
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ANN MIKIKO BOUSLOG, PhD  
*Director of Land Economics & Real Estate*

RAMSAY R. M. TAUM  
*Cultural Sustainability Planner*

ETSUYO KILA  
*Senior Associate*

GREG NAKAI  
*Senior Associate*

NICOLE SWANSON, ASLA  
*Associate*

BRADLEY FURUYA, AICP  
*Associate*

C.R. ‘IMIPONO WICHMAN  
*Associate*

THOMAS S. WITTEN, FASLA  
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visit the tables prior to the start of the formal presentation. Sticky notes were also provided for beneficiaries to leave comments on said documents.

Lilliane Makaila of DHHL led the presentation (Attachment A) and meeting. She began the presentation with a review of the meeting agenda, as well as the overview and approach for the Hawai'i Island Plan Update, giving background information on the original Hawai'i Island Plan and the purpose/process of the Plan Update, and introducing the timeline of the project. Lilliane followed this with an emphasis on the incorporation of beneficiary knowledge in the Plan Update, and gave a brief explanation of the updated Land Use Designations generated from the 2022 Department of Hawaiian Home Lands General Plan Update. The presentation included a brief description outlining each of the Land Use Designations and for what they are used.

Following this, she went over each DHHL tract in Kona and the 'Āina Mauna Legacy Lands, and compared the 2002 Hawai'i Island Plan Land Use Designation<sup>1</sup> to the proposed Land Use Designations identified. She went through each tract before opening the presentation to comments and input.

Following the conclusion of the presentation, beneficiaries were asked to participate and provide feedback. Beneficiaries could participate by raising their hands to provide oral comment and/or walk around the room to review the maps and leave comments on their comment cards, sticky notes, or discuss their input with the project team. Oral comments brought up during the Q&A period were recorded by PBR HAWAII and is summarized below. A more detailed account of beneficiary oral comments can be found in Section 5.

The meeting closed by suggestion of DHHL and when beneficiaries had no further comments or input to share with the project team.

The following key topics were identified in oral comments:

- Land Use and Designations; Concerns about land designations and their impacts, such as why certain areas lack residential designations, the suitability of lands for renewable energy, and the process of acquiring and using land
- Communication and Transparency; Requests for more detailed information and updates, including photos of sites, explanations of planning overlaps, and clearer communication from DHHL
- Housing and Development; Discussions about housing models, including rent-to-own schemes, affordability of housing, pre-fab homes, and the struggles with financial pre-qualifications
- Community Engagement and Representation; Calls for increased involvement of the Hawaiian community in decision-making and development processes, and the hiring of more local staff

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<sup>1</sup> Note: The 2002 Hawai'i Island Plan is the main source for identified land use designations; however, some tracts are more recent acquisitions or were subject to planning efforts more recently than 2002, in those instances the most recent reference was utilized.

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- Administrative Processes and Issues; Questions about specific procedures, such as land swaps, leasing commercial land, and handling of vacant lots, alongside frustrations with perceived inaction or mismanagement

### **2. Comment Card Comments**

- a. We received 2 comment cards from beneficiaries with comments regarding the proposed Land Use Designations, project ideas, tracts, and questions about projects. These comments will be available for review along with the comments from the online comment form.

### **3. Fact Sheet Comments**

- a. We received no comments on the Fact Sheets.

### **4. Large Map Sticky Note Comments**

- a. We received comments on all 6 Large Maps with comments and questions about environmental conditions of tracts, Land Use Designation suggestions, status of projects, and expressing priority for projects. These comments will be available for review along with the comments from the online comment form.

### **5. Beneficiary Question and Answer Input**

#### **a. Q&A/Group Comment Period:**

1. Noticed that Honokōhau had different land designations than currently shown, questioning why it lacks a residential designation. DHHL explained that a nearby water treatment plant and surrounding industrial zoning prevent residential development due to the need for buffers and space. Water issues further complicate making the area livable, leading DHHL to opt for the quickest and most effective designation.
2. Asked if they could see the site in real life. DHHL is working on providing updated photos and pictures of the sites.
3. Inquired if the timing of updates to the Hawaii Regional Plan and Island Plans overlap. DHHL clarified that the plans are staggered: the Island Plan was updated in 2022, with the last update for Oahu in 2014, and the Big Island Plan in 2009 with additional lands from reconciliation.
4. Asked about the difference between the Hawaii Regional Plan and the Island Plan. DHHL explained that the Regional Plan focuses on the needs of people, while the Island Plan focuses on land use and what can be done with it.
5. Asked how DHHL acquired scattered lots in Hilo. DHHL responded that these lots come from independent acquisitions, recommendations for acquisition, purchases, trades, or transfers, such as DLNR lands in Ka'u.

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6. Inquired if people could suggest land use designations for potential acquisitions. DHHL stated that suggestions can only be considered for lands already acquired by DHHL.
7. Suggested adding more place names to maps to help beneficiaries orient themselves.
8. Asked how land swaps work. DHHL explained that it depends on the parties involved and that acquiring lands is generally easier than giving them away. For example, DHHL had expressed interest in acquiring lands from large landowners in Honoka'a.
9. Noted that Kalaoa had lands designated for renewable energy and asked about solar in this tract, recommending it be designated as kuleana. DHHL acknowledged the area's rough terrain and water issues but considered renewable energy a legitimate option.
10. Observed 15 vacant lots in Lā'iepua and asked if they are for sale. They suggested giving these lots to interested individuals or placing pre-fab homes on them.
11. Asked about Village 4 in Lā'iepua and its system. DHHL explained that it is a rent-to-own residential community similar to Ho'olimalima in Kapolei, with a 15-year rental term but no option to use fees to help the renter buy the house in the long run. The commenter felt this model does not benefit Hawaiians and should be reconsidered. DHHL highly encouraged the commenter to bring their mana'o to the commission. The commenter also emphasized how many people see DHHL as one entity, but are unaware of the fact that staff (eg. the Planners) do not have the power to make decisions but rather bring the beneficiary ideas/needs to the council.
12. Brought up the complications with qualifying for an award, as well as the difficulties of paying for the lease. They brought up issues with the high percentage of blood quantity needed for and discussed many Hawaiians struggle with financial pre-qualifications for housing. They also asked what happens to the people renting the rent-to-own houses after 15 years. DHHL did not have the answer, but committed to returning to round 2 of these meetings with an answer/statement.
13. Emphasized how many people drop out of the waitlist because of the demands of the financial pre-qualification, which is viewed as a struggle. They also expressed a desire for a stable, achievable option for housing Hawaiians without so many "hoops to jump through," and expressed a sadness for the Hawaiian people.
14. Urged DHHL to consider pre-fab housing that is affordable, attempting to assist in finding a cost effective and quick housing solution for Hawaiians that are struggling financially. They stated that they have family who have turned

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to this option. DHHL replied that they would discuss this option with the commissioners. In response, the beneficiary urged DHHL to look at what the Hawaiians are doing on their lands to get by and to take inspiration from that.

15. Stated that it is not fair to the beneficiaries to remain unheard, or to have their questions/concerns left unaddressed, but also acknowledged that their questions were not necessarily related to the topic of the meeting. They suggested that next meeting DHHL brings a member of the Land Management team, or someone who might know the answers to their questions.
16. Stated that there should be more engagement from the Hawaiian community- both in consultation and the development process, and asked why more Hawaiians are not hired for DHHL development jobs.
17. Asked why DHHL is endorsing the Lā'iepuā rent-to-own project. DHHL responded that they do not currently have the answer, but urges them to advocate for this issue to the commission.
18. Asked why none of the commissioners were present in the meeting. DHHL had no definite answer, but mentioned how they all have separate jobs and their position is voluntary.
19. Asked if Ho'olimalima was built in an existing community, and expressed disappointment with DHHL. They also mentioned issues in residential communities such as illegal vacation rentals, vacant lots, abandoned houses, etc. that have not been dealt with by DHHL. DHHL responded by offering to schedule a meeting with the enforcement unit to try to address these issues. The beneficiary expressed frustration with DHHL, as he observed the Department prioritizing smaller issues rather than addressing the larger infractions. They also shared his personal experience where their residential association has been advocating for a park in their community, but has faced consistent denial from DHHL- even after suggesting that they will do their own landscaping/ construction. They stated that they feel there is a general state of inaction with no explanation.
20. There is shared feeling of frustration concerning DHHL hiring outside construction companies/developers. Why not hire Hawaiians?
21. A beneficiary suggested beneficiary/community education on DCCR. They believe that people do not understand the roots or laws of DHHL processes. They want people to know and understand DCCR, they feel that education would allow DHHL and beneficiaries to be on the same page and achieve unity. In response, DHHL asked all comments and frustration to be directed towards the Department and motioned for the meeting to end soon.
22. Beneficiary asked about who can lease commercial land and how. The commenter inquired about a 5 acre commercial lot in Honokōhau for a fish and agricultural market, but never heard back from LMD. DHHL stated that

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they put out a solicitation for a commercial business and instructed interested parties/ beneficiaries to talk to the Land Management Division.

*This is our understanding of the topics discussed and the conclusions reached. Please give PBR HAWAII written notification of any errors or omissions within seven calendar days. Otherwise, this report will be deemed an accurate record and directive.*

DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS  
HAWAI'I ISLAND PLAN UPDATE  
BENEFICIARY MEETING, ROUND 1 – KONA  
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ATTACHMENTS TO SUMMARY

**ATTACHMENT A:  
Powerpoint Presentation**

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**ATTACHMENT B:**  
**Land Use Designation Updated Maps**

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**ATTACHMENT C:**  
**Fact Sheet**

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**ATTACHMENT D:  
Comment Cards**