

South Kohala Community Development Plan

WAIKOLOA VILLAGE PLAN

DRAFT CONCEPTUAL PLAN – January 21, 2008

By: BT/Townscape

PURPOSE: This (Draft) **Waikoloa Village Conceptual Plan** presents in graphic and narrative form general guidelines for the long-range – 20+ year look-ahead – future of Waikoloa Village, with emphasis on:

- **Providing needed community facilities for a growing town**
- **Providing transportation and circulation improvements**
- **Reducing the negative impacts of future “sprawl” development**

This Conceptual Land Use Plan is presented as an important **linking step** between the Focus Group discussions and the resulting “Planning Notes” (November 2007) and the more detailed **Action Plans** that we are developing for specific plan elements, including:

1. Location and funding for a Waimea Community Center and Community Park
2. Location and potential phasing for a future second Elementary School and High School

Suggested Overall Policies for Land Use in Waikoloa Village are:

- Policy 1. “PROVIDE INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES FOR A GROWING COMMUNITY” shall be the overarching planning policy for Waikoloa Village.
- Policy 2. The Waikoloa Village Community shall work closely with the County Government and area developers such that funding for important community facilities is provided.
- Policy 3. The County Government shall work closely with the Waikoloa Village community and with area developers to plan, fund, design, and construct a second access road to Queen Ka`ahumanu Highway.
- Policy 3. The County Government shall review the County General Plan “LUPAG” map for the Waikoloa area in light of current best practices for sustainable land use, and shall amend and decrease the acreage designated “Urban Expansion” accordingly.

Important elements of the Waikoloa Village Conceptual Plan are summarized below.

Note: See graphics “ WAIKOLOA PLANNING NOTES – NOVEMBER 2007” and “DRAFT WAIKOLOA VILLAGE CONCEPTUAL PLAN – JANUARY 21, 2008.

PROVIDE NEEDED INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES FOR A GROWING COMMUNITY

- 1. Community Center and Community Park** – There has been considerable discussion within the Waikoloa community regarding the need for a Community Center and a Community Park. Currently, the Waikoloa Elementary School serves as a community meeting place, and there are two small active recreation parks within the Village. However, this growing community needs a Community Center that is available for meetings and activities during the day and on weekends, together with an indoor gymnasium that can be used for both day time and evening organized sports such as basketball and volleyball. The community also needs a larger Community Park of 10 to 20 acres that would have ball fields, soccer fields, and other active recreation facilities that the existing smaller parks cannot accommodate. A committee of community volunteers has already done some planning for a Community Center. The CDP will provide some further details in terms of facilities planning and alternative sites for these important facilities. See the **Community Center and Community Park Action Plan** for details. (Note: We are still working on this Action Plan, and will include it in the “Preliminary Draft CDP” that will be submitted to the Steering Committee in March.)
- 2. Schools: Elementary, Middle, High** – The Waikoloa Elementary School, constructed in 1995 (?), is nearing capacity. At the same time, beginning with the 2007-2008 school year, this school began an expansion program by adding a 6th grade class for the first time. The plan is to add a 7th grade class next year, and an 8th grade class the year after, by which time the school will be a combined Elementary and Middle school. The longer-range plan is to convert the existing school to a Middle School, and to construct a new Elementary School on a 12-acre site within the County’s “Kamakoa” workforce housing project. This new Elementary School is on the DOE facilities plan for opening in 2014 – only 6 years from the present. Thereafter, as the population of Waikoloa Village continues to grow, there will be the need for at least one additional Elementary School, and eventually a High School. The CDP will address possible site locations for these longer-range school needs.
- 3. Commercial Center – shops, stores, small business opportunities** – A mainland company, “Metric Holdings,” with offices in Encino, CA, recently purchased the commercially zoned 50-acre parcel that is located within the “arc” of Pua Melia Road. This parcel is currently “anchored” by the Fire Station at the western end, and the Post Office at the eastern end. The developer’s preliminary plans for this commercial site

include a major grocery store, various shops and stores, a hotel, a business park, and some kind of community gathering place. An “assisted living” project for senior citizens may also be part of the development program. Metric Holdings has told the Waikoloa community that they plan to begin construction of the first phase of the project in 2008. The economic downturn that most areas of the U.S. is currently experiencing may delay the developer’s construction plans. However, as the population and purchasing power of the Waikoloa Village community continue to grow, it is only a matter of time before a large commercial center of this kind becomes a reality.

4. **Potable Water** – Potable water for Waikoloa Resort and Waikoloa Village is provided by the West Hawai`i Water Company, a privately owned company that is a subsidiary of the Waikoloa Development Company, which until recently owned approximately 20,000 acres of undeveloped land in and around the Waikoloa Village area. This land was sold to other parties in 2007. The Water Company owns and operates groundwater wells, reservoirs, water transmission mains, and water distribution lines, and currently provides about 3 million (?) gallons per day (mgd) to its users. The existing wells draw water from the “Waimea Aquifer,” which has a “sustainable yield” of an estimated 13 mgd. Currently, this aquifer also serves the potable water needs of Waimea. As the population of both Waimea and Waikoloa continue to grow, the availability of potable water may become a limiting factor.
5. **Wastewater Treatment and Disposal** – Wastewater treatment from commercial, institutional, and multi-family land uses at Waikoloa Village is provided by two existing wastewater treatment plants (WWTP): the Auwaiakeakua WWTP (“A-Plant”) and the Kamakoa WWTP (“K-Plant”). Both WWTPs, together with collection lines and effluent disposal fields, are owned and operated by the West Hawai`i Sewer Company, a subsidiary of the Waikoloa Development Company. West Hawaii Sewer Company is currently expanding the A-Plant and is also designing a new K-Plant in order to service the County’s Kamakoa Workforce Housing project, as well as other planned projects in the northern sector of Waikoloa Village.

PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION IMPROVEMENTS

6. **Second Access Road to Queen Ka’ahumanu Highway** – Access to Waikoloa Village is provided by Waikoloa Road, a 2-lane arterial road that connects Waikoloa to the Queen Ka’ahumanu Highway to the west (makai) and the Mamalahoa Highway to the east (mauka). A second connecting road to Queen Ka’ahumanu Highway is needed, both to accommodate increasing traffic volumes and, perhaps more importantly, to provide a second **emergency egress route** for Waikoloa residents. The most significant type of natural disaster that threatens the Waikoloa community is the threat of wildfires. The area’s dry climate, combined with the highly flammable introduced vegetation consisting primarily of fountain grass and kiawe trees and the frequency of high winds

make the Waikoloa area especially prone to large-scale wildfires. A major fire in August 2006 (?) burned some 20,000 acres to the east and south of Waikoloa Village, and caused the evacuation of the entire Waikoloa community. That fire burned to the very edge of the Waikoloa Road/Paniolo Avenue intersection, the main intersection in Waikoloa Village. In the case of the 2006 fire, the entire Village was successfully evacuated without injuries or other adverse results. However, the fire threat is an ever-present danger for the Waikoloa community, and a second access/egress road may well prove to be the difference between successful evacuation of the Village and injuries or even loss of life. The County has recently retained a special consultant to develop a financing plan for this second access road, and a special committee of Waikoloa community members is currently evaluating the preliminary financing plans.

- 7. Paniolo Avenue Extension** – Paniolo Avenue, a major 4-lane local collector road with a right-of-way of 80 feet, is the main collector roadway within Waikoloa Village. The County General Plan shows the eventual extension of Paniolo Avenue northward to Kawaihae Road, which would in effect make Paniolo Avenue a sub-regional arterial road. In the near term, the owner/developer of the “Waikoloa Heights” project is required by their development agreement to extend Paniolo Avenue from its present terminus at Ho’oko Street up to and across Kamakoa Gulch, and eventually to the northern boundary of the Waikoloa Heights property. This extension would also provide for access to the County’s Kamakoa workforce development project. As of January 2008, the construction plans for the first phase of this extension, about one mile of road up to but not yet across Kamakoa Gulch, were being reviewed by the County Planning Department. According to representatives of the developer, construction was scheduled to begin in the second quarter of 2008.
- 8. Emergency Access Road from Hulu Street** – In 2007, the County completed the rough grading of an unpaved “emergency access road” that extended from the terminus of Hulu Street about 2.5 miles westward and downslope to the Queen Ka’ahumanu Highway. The road traverses land that is proposed for development by the Bridge Company. This road is intended to serve as an emergency egress route when there are natural disasters like wildfires that require evacuation of some or all of the Waikoloa community. The Bridge Company has apparently said that they will eventually pave this road, including the section of road that is on land owned by the Waikoloa Village Association, from the existing terminus of Hulu Street to the eastern boundary of the Bridge property. To date, however, the Bridge Company has not received County and State land use approvals for its most recent development plans. (See Concept Plan element #13 for more details on the Bridge Aina Lea project.)
- 9. Walkways and Bikeways** – Most of the streets and roads in Waikoloa Village, including Paniolo Avenue, were constructed without sidewalks and bike lanes or bike paths. With the growing population and the growing awareness of the environmental and health benefits of walking and bicycling, there is a need to “retrofit” existing roads with

sidewalks and bike lanes. Paniolo Avenue in particular, with its generous 80 foot right-of-way, could be redesigned with a standard cross-section that would have:

- o 4 11-foot travel lanes
- o 8-foot wide parking on both sides (including 2-foot paved gutter)
- o 5-foot wide bike lanes on both sides
- o 5-foot sidewalks on both sides

(Add typical cross-section sketch)

REDUCING THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF “SPRAWL” DEVELOPMENT

10. County’s “Kamakoā” workforce housing project – This project will be a “first of its kind” in Hawai‘i County, and in many ways, a first in the State of Hawai‘i. The project will use the “land trust model” to ensure that home prices are affordable “in perpetuity.” The land trust model includes lease instead of fee simple purchase of house lots and limits on the appreciation of property values. The project will also use innovative “Community Facilities District” financing to pay for most of the project’s infrastructure. With a planned 800 for-sale and 400 rental units on 267 acres of land, for a gross density of about 4.5 units per acre, the project is significantly more dense and efficient than the typical 10,000 square foot lot development pattern in Waikoloa Village, which works out to about 3 units per acre. The project also has a high level of amenities for home owners and renters, including a Community Center and 12-acre Community Park, a Daycare Center, a 12-acre site for a future Elementary School, and some 20-acres of trails and greenways. Overall, the project will provide affordable homes and rentals for Waikoloa area workers, and thus reduce the commuting time and expense for many people who have jobs at the resort or in Waikoloa Village.

12. “Industrial” land near Waikoloa Village Center – The County General Plan “LUPAG” map for the Waikoloa area shows an “Industrial” parcel of about 200-acres adjacent to and to the southwest of the “Medium Density Urban” area that includes the site of the future shopping center. This industrial land may provide some opportunities for local jobs sometime in the future. Waikoloa Village will probably always be primarily a “bedroom community,” with most people commuting to jobs in the Kohala resorts and beyond. However, the development of some local jobs would have a positive impact on vehicular traffic during peak periods, and would also provide some economic balance for the Waikoloa community. Future uses of this industrial land could also include alternate energy generation facilities like photovoltaic “solar farms” or smaller scale “wind farms.”

13. The County should not approve any rezoning that would negatively impact visually and environmentally important open space in the Waikoloa area.

The County Planning Department and County Council need to be aware of the dangers of over-development and suburban “sprawl” in the Waikoloa area.

Waikoloa Village encompasses about 3,000 acres of land, most of which is zoned “RS-10” – single family lots, minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet. The Village is surrounded by an irregularly shaped “buffer” totaling about 10,000 acres, which is owned by the Waikoloa Village Association. To the west (*ma kai*) of Waikoloa Village are several large land parcels owned by Tri-Kohala Corporation and Bridge Company that are being planned for development. The Bridge lands have already been rezoned to “RA-1a” (Rural Agricultural 1 acre lots) and RM-4, RM-7, and RM-14.5 – Residential Multi-Family of various densities. The Tri-Kohala parcels are still zoned A-5a (Agriculture 5-acre minimum lot size. Bridge Company has recently announced that it plans to increase the unit count for the “Aina Lea” project here from 1,900 homes to over 4,000 homes. This change in plans will require zoning changes for at least some if not all of this site. There are also extensive privately owned A-5a zoned lands to the north, south, and east of the Waikoloa Village area. Many of the large land parcels in this area are being planned for future “development” by speculators. Rezoning of any of these parcels should not be approved unless and until the land owner can demonstrate in detail at least the following:

- Availability of adequate potable water source(s)
- mitigation of adverse traffic impacts
- mitigation of adverse visual impacts
- positive benefits to the community, including construction of affordable housing

14. Revise the County Subdivision Regulations and Planning Department policies and enforcement procedures such that “Gentleman Estates” masquerading as agricultural subdivisions can no longer be approved.

State Land Use statutes restrict residential structures in the State “Agriculture” District to “farm dwellings.” In practice however, the Hawai’i County Planning Department has approved many “agricultural subdivisions” – including the now notorious “Hokulia” second home project – that are actually country estates for the wealthy. There is certainly a demand for and a place for projects of this kind. However, “country estate” projects should be required to apply for and receive State Land Use “Rural” classification, and County “Rural Residential” Zoning designation. As a corollary, any and all agricultural subdivisions should be required to submit an agricultural business plan together with their preliminary subdivision documents, and the Planning Department should design and implement a monitoring program that will ensure implementation of these agricultural business plans. Note: these suggested amendments to County subdivision regulations have County-wide implications. The details of these amendments should therefore be developed in coordination with the other active CDP’s – e.g., the North and South Kona CDP and the Puna CDP.

15. Amend the County of Hawaii General Plan “LUPAG” map by reducing the acreage of “Urban Expansion” lands located between Waikoloa Village and Queen Ka`ahumanu Highway.

The current County General Plan LUPAG map for the Waikoloa area includes over 7,000 acres of “Urban Expansion” land in the Waikoloa area. This designation is defined in the General Plan (page 14-7) as: *“Allows for a mix of high density, medium density, low density, industrial, industrial-commercial and/or open designations in areas where new settlements may be desirable, but where the specific settlement pattern and mix of uses have not yet been determined.”* The consensus of the Waikoloa community is that there is no need in this area for such a large amount of acreage to be designated “Urban Expansion.” Undeveloped, RS-10 zoned lands within Waikoloa Village will, at “build out” provide an additional +/- 5,000 homes – thus more than doubling the population of Waikoloa Village. This development process may take 20-30 years to complete. Development of the 7,000+ acres of “Urban Expansion” lands would add:

- 7,000 homes and 20,000 people, if developed at an average density of 1 unit per acre of land;
- 14,000 homes and 40,000 people, if developed at an average density of 2 units per acre of land.

For at least the next twenty years, there is no community or market need for these kinds of numbers of new homes, and no rationale for this large “Urban Expansion” area. Suburban sprawl development of this kind is neither sustainable nor desirable for this region of Hawai‘i County.

Next Steps in the CDP planning process:

1. Review the Conceptual Plan with the South Kohala Steering Committee (January 23 and February 27, 2008 meetings) and with the Waikoloa Village Focus Group (January 26, 2008);
2. (January-February 2008) Develop **Action Plan** details for at least the following elements of the Plan:
 - o Program and alternative sites for Community Center and Community Park
 - o Alternative sites for second Elementary School and High School
 - o Changes to the County General Plan “LUPAG” map
3. (mid-Feb 2008) Community-wide meetings: progress report on the CDP.
3. (Feb-March 2008) Compile the background material, planning notes, conceptual plans, and Action Plans for Waimea, Waikoloa, Kawaihae, and Puako into a **Preliminary Draft South Kohala CDP** document, and submit this preliminary draft to the South Kohala CDP Steering Committee and the Focus Groups for review.
4. (March-April 2008) Review the Preliminary Draft CDP with the Steering Committee and with the Focus Groups and revise/refine as needed.
5. (May 2008) Publish the **Public Review Draft South Kohala CDP** document and present highlights of the Draft CDP at community meetings.