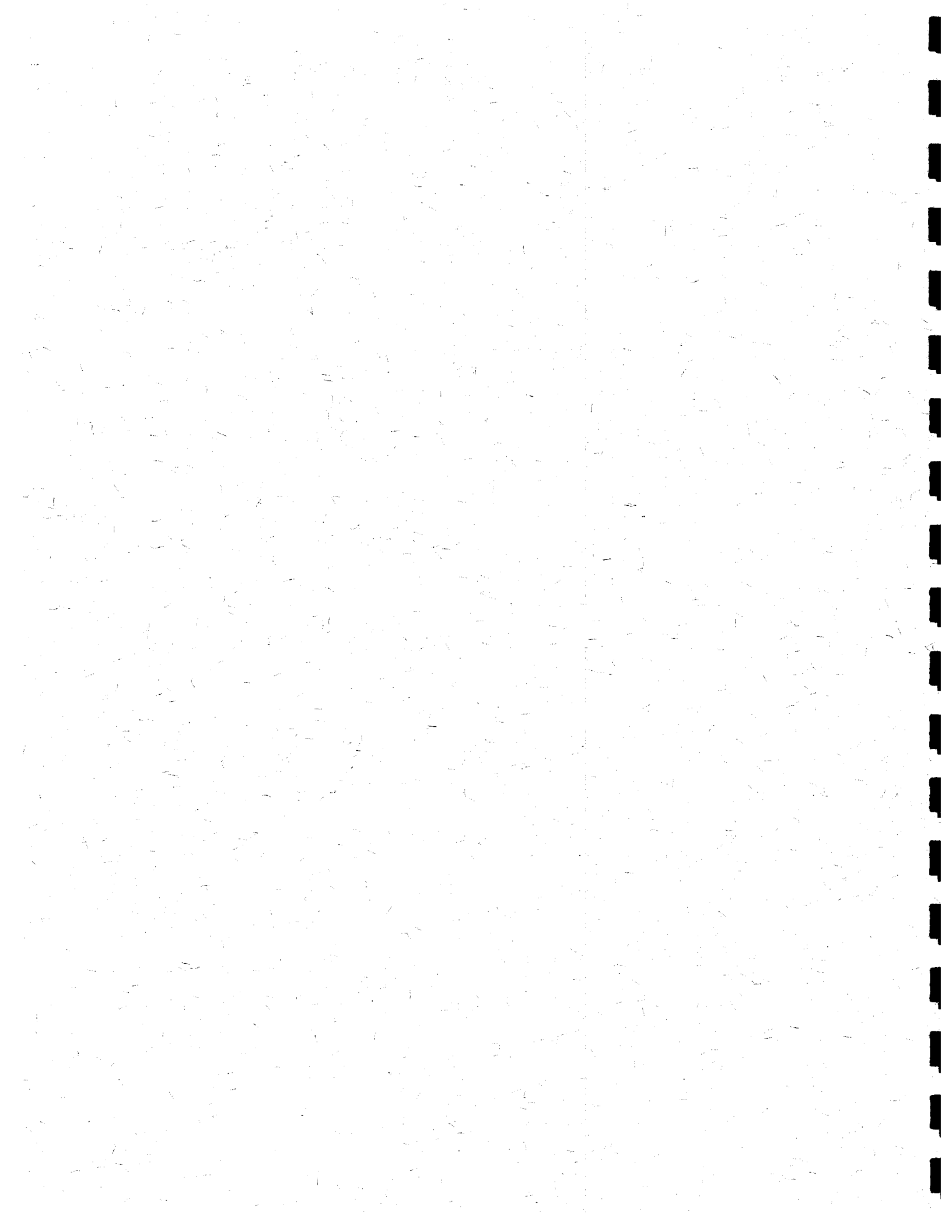


**PART 1**  
**INTRODUCTION**

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## PART 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 OVERVIEW: REGIONAL RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

For the purposes of this planning program, the Northwest Hawaii Region has been defined as the judicial districts of North Kohala and South Kohala, and the northern one-third of the North Kona District from Keahole Airport to the North Kona/South Kohala boundary. This study area consists of approximately 340,000 acres, or about 530 square miles -- roughly 13% of the Island of Hawaii's 4038 square miles, and nearly the size of the Island of Oahu.

The landscape of the Northwest Hawaii region is a bold landscape of dramatic scale and fascinating variety. Here can be found rocky, picturesque seacoasts accented by secluded small bays and beautiful white sand beaches; distinctive destination resorts with world class resort hotels, golf courses and gardens; sweeping grasslands that extend for many miles and that afford panoramic views of the region's great mountains: the Kohala Mountains, Mauna Kea, Mauna Loa, Hualalai, and, on a clear day, views of Haleakala on Maui; rural farmlands and villages that still have the flavor of "old Hawaii"; mauka pasturelands that support herds of cattle and horses; and densely forested mountain reserve lands where rare and endangered flora and fauna can still be found.

The people of the region represent a diversity of economic and ethnic backgrounds. The residents of the established communities of Waimea and Waikoloa Village in South Kohala and Hawi-Kapaau-Niulii in North Kohala include many Native Hawaiians and people of Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Pacific Islands, and European/American ethnic backgrounds. Occupations include various jobs in the visitor and hospitality industry, small business people, government workers, farmers, ranchers, teachers, construction workers, professionals, and, increasingly, a significant number of retirees.

This region is seen by many as one of the major future growth areas of the State of Hawaii. Growth and development has already begun to have a dramatic impact on this largely rural area, especially during the 1980s. In 1970 the populations of North and South Kohala were 3,326 and 2,310 people respectively (see Table 3). In that same year, the region had a total of 235 visitor units -- the Mauna Kea Beach Hotel, completed in 1967. By 1980, the population figures were 3,249 for North Kohala -- virtually no change -- and 4,607 people in South Kohala, the latter representing about a 100% increase over 1970. Visitor accommodations had not yet increased, but several resort projects were in various stages of development. By 1990, the population of the two districts had increased significantly: North Kohala to 4,291 (1,000+ more people in ten years) and South Kohala to 9,140 (4,500+ more

people in ten years). A total of over 2,000 new visitor units had been added to the inventory, primarily at the three new deluxe hotels -- the Royal Waikoloan, the Mauna Lani Bay Hotel, and the Waikoloa Hyatt -- and associated resort condominium units. The Ritz Carlton Hotel at Mauna Lani Resort, with 450 deluxe rooms, opened for business in October of 1990.

The level of growth and development that the region experienced during the 1980s would be considered very modest for a large urbanizing region on the mainland. However, for a largely undeveloped and rural area like North and South Kohala on the Big Island, the addition in one decade of 5,500 permanent residents, some 2,000 new residential units, and over 2,000 visitor units that in turn generated approximately 4,000 new jobs, the impact of this growth and development has been quite substantial.

In terms of positive impacts, the growth of the visitor industry in West Hawaii, and related employment in construction and various service businesses, has provided residents with an unprecedented range of job opportunities and wider options for economic advancement. Such opportunities were especially important to North Kohala residents, where unemployment during the 1970s soared to the 15 to 20 percent range after the 1975 closing of the Kohala Sugar Company. On the negative side of the ledger, however, there has been a growing concern on the part of residents and County officials concerning the typical range of issues that must be faced in any rapidly developing region: traffic and transportation services, water supply, wastewater disposal, electrical energy, solid waste disposal, schools, parks, police and fire services, hospitals, social services, environmental impacts, affordable housing, and the potential loss of the rural lifestyle that had been enjoyed by the people of the region.

What will the future bring? World political and economic events during 1991 brought a temporary slowdown in investments and resort development throughout Hawaii, and this slowdown has continued through 1992. In the Spring of 1992, however, it was announced that construction work was being resumed on the 458-room Prince Hotel at the South Kohala Resort. Work is also expected to resume in the near future on the 340-room hotel at Kaupulehu Resort. The established resorts at Mauna Lani and Waikoloa are moving ahead with the design and construction of a number of upscale condominium projects. Zoning has recently been approved for several large mauka development projects, including Kohala Ranch Phase IV (1,490 units) and Parker 2020 (1,000 units). (See section on "Proposed Projects," p. 114 for details.)

What kinds of impacts, both positive and negative, will these and other major projects have on the natural resources and on the people of the Region? What are the visions of the



future subscribed to by the residents of the area, by landowners and developers, and by public officials? What kind of a future would be desirable for this Region -- and how can this desirable future be realized? These are some of the fundamental issues that this Plan will attempt to address.

## 1.2 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE NORTHWEST HAWAII PLAN

The overall objective of the "Northwest Hawaii Plan" is TO DEVELOP A MID-RANGE (YEAR 2005) PLAN FOR NORTHWEST HAWAII THAT ACHIEVES A BALANCE BETWEEN OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL RESOURCES, AND WELL-PLANNED GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.

The Northwest Hawaii Plan recognizes the vital importance of economic development, jobs, infrastructure development, housing construction, and the many other forms of economic activity that are essential to the health and prosperity of the community. However, it is also the position of this Plan that open space and natural resources are critical to the Northwest Hawaii Region -- both in terms of a foundation for the local economy as well as in terms of the environmental qualities that make this region a special place.

Important related objectives of the Plan are:

- To develop a broadly based plan through consultation with County departments and officials, State and Federal agencies, landowners and developers, concerned citizens, and the general public.
- To provide a narrative and graphic "Open Space and Land Use Plan" and "Infrastructure Plan" that County decision-makers can use to implement the General Plan's goals, policies, and standards for the Region. These planning tools will be used as guidelines by County decision-makers in evaluating the appropriateness of proposed zoning changes and the manner in which development of land should occur in the study area.
- To document the Plan's open space and natural resources database in computer (digital) form such that it can be entered into the County's "Geographic Information System (GIS).
- To develop clear recommendations for action and implementation.

Pursuant to these objectives, the planning project was structured around five major work elements. These elements, and their approximate calendar duration, were as follows:

1. Research and Analysis of the region's land uses, infrastructure systems, development trends, open spaces, visual and natural resources, and documentation of these data in digital form. (4 months)
2. Regional Growth analysis, and the articulation and evaluation of a number of regional growth scenarios. (2 months)
3. Open Space concepts development, based on the research and analysis work (2 months)
4. Development of an overall Open Space and Land Use Plan for the region. (2 months)
5. Development of recommendations for Infrastructure Systems for the region. (2 months).

### 1.3 PLANNING CONTEXT

The County General Plan is the overall policy and planning document for the future growth and development of the County of Hawaii. The Northwest Hawaii Plan is one of a number of regional plans, community development plans, and subregional plans that function as more detailed planning guides within the overall framework of the General Plan. In terms of timeframe, the General Plan provides a 20-year perspective, while the more detailed plans typically address planning and development needs for about a 10-year period. Thus, the Northwest Hawaii Plan's target planning year is the year 2005 -- about 12 years from the expected time of the Plan's enactment by County Council.

Within the Northwest Hawaii Region, only the district of North Kohala has a County-approved community development plan (CDP). The North Kohala CDP was completed in 1984, and was adopted by the County Council via Resolution in September, 1984. It is recommended that the Council's Resolution adopting the Northwest Hawaii Plan state that, in the event of a conflict between the North Kohala CDP and the Northwest Hawaii Plan, the Northwest Hawaii Plan will govern.

Other plans and planning programs have been taken into consideration during the development of the Northwest Hawaii Plan, including the County's Keahole to Kailua ("K

to K") Development Plan, the County's "Water Use and Development Plan," the Office of State Planning's "West Hawaii Regional Plan", the Office of State Planning's "Five Year State Land Use Boundary Review" process, and various project specific plans that have been or are being developed by State and County agencies and by the private sector. Related plans are discussed in more detail in Part 2 of this report.

#### 1.4 THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Northwest Hawaii Plan was developed through a fairly complex program of both technical and non-technical activities, including:

- Inventory and analysis of available reports and documents on the study area, including information on land use, population, economics, government services, policies and plans, existing and planned infrastructure, natural resources;
- Meetings and working sessions with landowners, community groups, County and State officials, and concerned citizens to discuss priority issues;
- Field reconnaissance work to assess land uses, landscape conditions, scenic resources, and visual quality;
- Development of computerized maps for important land uses, natural resources, and open space resources data;
- Development of draft plans and text and review of this draft material with County Planners, Engineers, and others;
- A series of three public informational meetings during the development of the draft plan;
- Publication of the public draft plan and draft report in November, 1992.

After publication of the draft plan, the Planning Commission will hold one or more public hearings. Further revisions to the Plan will then be made, as appropriate. The Prefinal Plan will then be presented to County Council for review, input, and eventual enactment - probably by means of a Council resolution.

## 1.5 ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

The "Purpose and Recommendations" section at the beginning of the report provides the reader with a summary of the Northwest Hawaii Plan in the form of:

- \* The most important graphic plans -- dealing with open space, land use, and infrastructure;
- \* Information on how to use the Northwest Hawaii Plan;
- \* A summary of the Plan's major recommendations for action.

Part 1 of the report provides an introduction to the Plan and the planning process.

Part 2 contains the results of inventory and analysis work that was undertaken by the planning team.

Part 3 provides a detailed description of the basis for and contents of the major planning products and recommendations that were developed through the planning process.



PART 2  
INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

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