HOUSE MAUI

AFFORDABLE & WORKFORCE HOUSING PLAN

SEPTEMBER 2025

MAUI ISLAND

CENTRAL | SOUTH | WEST

EMPOWERING COMMUNITY TOGETHER

Create a sustainable housing system that generates and keeps homes affordable for our kamaʻāina, enhances natural and cultural resources, and enriches our quality of life.

HOUSE MAUI IS ENABLING ACCESS TO HOUSING THROUGH OUR THREE PILLARS:

Align Resources

Together, we are:
Supporting coordination among actors within the housing ecosystem.

Working to align federal, state, and county resources to create infrastructure that supports housing affordability.

Collaborating with financial institutions to increase access to capital.

Directing philanthropic funds to organizations that support housing affordability.

Educate & Empower

Together, we are:
Influencing public opinion toward perspectives and preferences that support housing affordability.

Increasing the capacity of residents to realize their housing goals through knowledge and financial resources.

Increasing the capacity of housing counseling providers to enable residents to realize their housing goals.

Remake Systems

Together, we are:
Collaborating with government, builders, financiers, cultural and environmental groups, and other residents to design and implement policies that support housing affordability.

Partnering with nonprofits to engage their constituencies in advocacy for decisions that support housing affordability.

LEARN MORE AT HOUSEMAUI.COM

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 HOUSE MAUI INITIATIVE

ROLE OF THE HAWAIʻI COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

The Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF) cultivates generosity, advocates for equity, forges connections, and invests in the community to create a better Hawai'i. HCF recognizes that housing is a fundamental building block in every community, and also has a direct impact on the quality of people's lives.

Therefore, HCF is committing resources to the House Maui Initiative to support the planning and delivery of much needed affordable and workforce housing while building on the Maui County's community-based planning process. As with all community-based initiatives, House Maui relies on participation and support from leaders in county and state government and from across the community.

The people of Maui have voiced a growing need for housing options that empower residents to live with dignity in their communities of choice, while preserving the identity of existing communities in alignment with the General Plan and other community planning efforts. Through its CHANGE Framework, HCF aims to inspire and assist government decision-makers and community leaders spearheading viable new housing initiatives in Maui County. House Maui is grounded in Maui County's established planning framework, particularly in the guidance provided by the Maui Island Plan.

The challenge to maintain a sustained supply of housing requires both the public and private sectors to overcome barriers that hinder the delivery of housing for our communities.

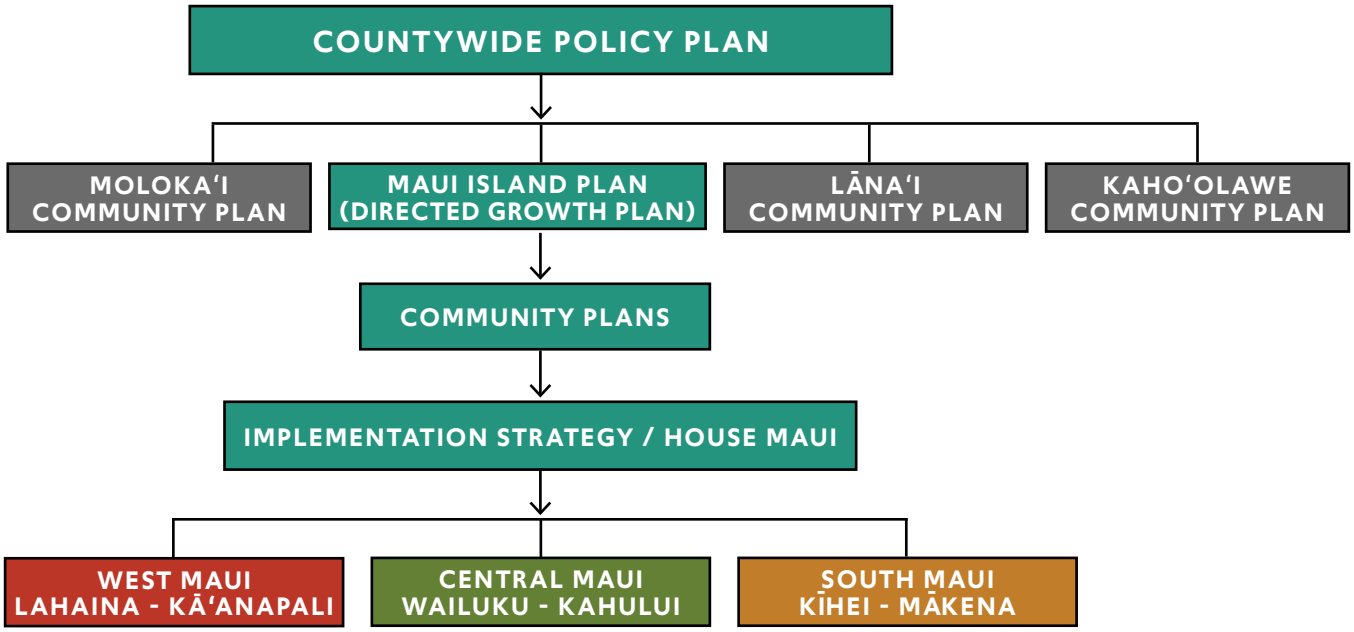
HOUSE MAUI & THE CHANGE FRAMEWORK

HCF's CHANGE Framework strives to create a shared movement to solve Hawai'i's greatest challenges.

Guided by a set of identified statewide data under six sectors, networks can align their efforts around shifting indicators for the better, so that together, their collective action creates a thriving Hawai'i. HCF has situated the House Maui Initiative within CHANGE's Community and Economy sector, and Housing Affordability and Cost of Living sub-sector. To learn more, please visit hawaiicommunityfoundation.org/change.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND COST OF LIVING	**The aim is to lead systems change to address the current statewide situation that 56% of renters and 40% of homeowners are burdened by housing costs – paying more than 30% of monthly income on housing alone.**

COUNTY OF MAUI PLANNING PROCESS

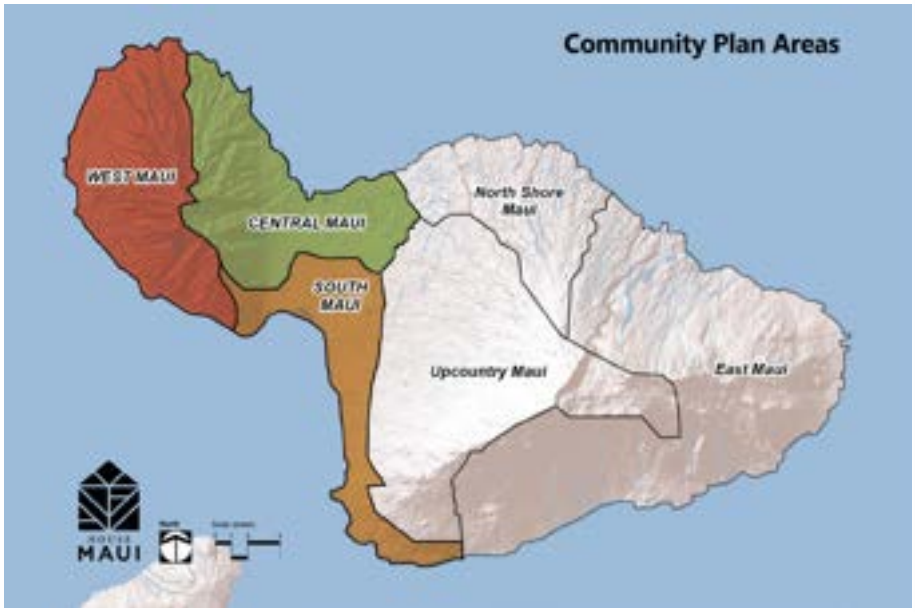


DIRECTED GROWTH PLANS

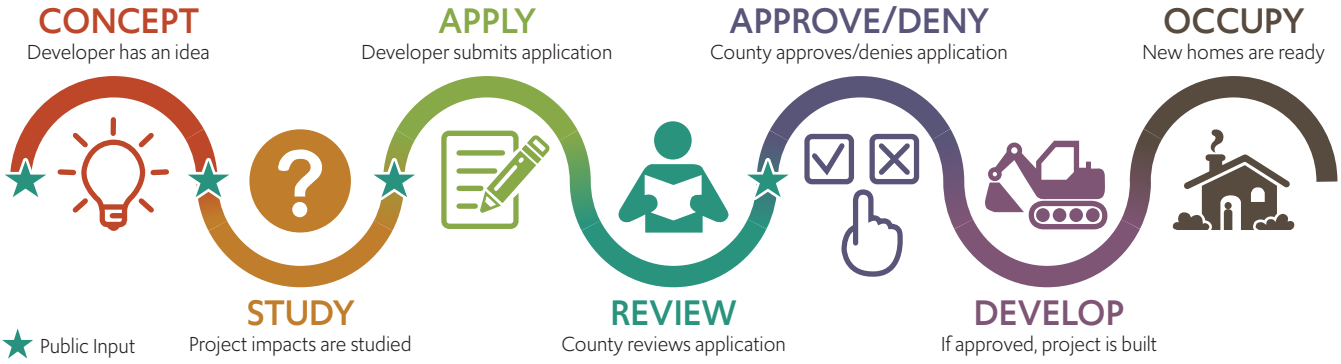
A key element of the Maui Island Plan (MIP) is its directed growth plan for urban, small town, and rural growth. The MIP's directed growth boundaries identify areas considered appropriate and desirable for future growth. The Maui County Council, in consultation with the MIP Advisory Committee and the community, established these boundaries to make growth more predictable and efficient, thereby reducing public costs and tax burdens. The boundaries also define small towns and rural areas, promote affordable and workforce housing, protect watersheds and coastal resources, identify transit corridors, allow for a diversified economy, and integrate land use and infrastructure planning.

At its adoption in 2012, the MIP anticipated the need for 10,845 more housing units by 2030, allocated to particular areas called planned growth areas. Within these areas are lands suitable to accommodate all the population and other pressures for growth that the MIP anticipated. The majority of the planned growth was directed to three regions: Central Maui (Wailuku-Kahului), South Maui (Kīhei-Mākena) and West Maui (Lahaina-Kā'anapali).

DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



Workforce and affordable housing can be created in Maui County in multiple ways. Some developers may choose to follow the 201H process, requesting exemptions from certain requirements to build a development with greater than 50% affordable housing. Other developers may take advantage of the Maui County Code (MCC) 2.97 process to create developments that are solely workforce housing with similar exemptions as a 201H and a quicker review process. Throughout Maui County, most larger developments are required to have at least 25% of their project be workforce housing as a result of the County's Residential Workforce Housing Policy (MCC 2.96), or pay a fee to help that housing get built elsewhere. Regardless of the process, workforce and affordable housing projects typically follow the steps outined in the graphic below.[1]



The development process can take anywhere from a few years to more than a decade, and at any point in this process a project could fail depending on many variables. A project's complexity, availability of funding, cost of land or materials, delays in the review process, public opinion, market forces, environmental constraints, and many other factors can influence a project's likelihood of being built.

[1]The steps listed here are simplified. For more information about specific workforce and affordable housing development processes, review Maui County Code Sections 2.96 and 2.97, and Section 201H-38 Hawai'i Revised Statutes.

MAUI COUNTY LEADERSHIP

RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.
County of Maui Mayor
(808) 270-7855
Mayors.Office@co.maui.hi.us

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING & HUMAN CONCERNS

Lori Tsuhako
Director

Saumalu Matāʻafa
Deputy Director

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Jordan Molina
Director

Wendy Taomoto
Deputy Director

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Kate Blystone
Director

Ana Lilis
Deputy Director

MAUI PLANNING COMMISSION

Kellie Pali
Chairperson - Wailuku

Kimberly Thayer
Vice Chairperson - Wailuku

Mel Hipolito, Jr.
Makawao

Dale Thompson
Lahaina

Ashley Lindsey
Wailuku

Blaine Apo
Kula

Mark Deakos
Lahaina

Andrea Kealoha
Pāʻia

Fawn Sherie Helekahi-Burns
Hāna

COUNTY OF MAUI COUNCIL MEMBERS

ALICE L. LEE
Council Chair
Wailuku-Waiheʻe-Waikapū
(808) 270-7760
Alice.Lee@mauicounty.us

GABE JOHNSON
Council Member
Lānaʻi
(808) 270-7768
Gabe.Johnson@mauicounty.us

TOM COOK
Council Member
South Maui
(808) 270-7108
Thomas.Cook@mauicounty.us

NOHE UʻU-HODGINS
Council Member
Makawao-Haʻikū-Pāʻia
(808) 270-5507
Nohe.Uu-Hodgins@mauicounty.us

KEANI RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ
Council Member
Molokaʻi
(808) 553-3888
Keani.Rawlins@mauicounty.us

YUKI LEI SUGIMURA
Council Member
Upcountry
(808) 270-7939
Yukilei.Sugimura@mauicounty.us

TASHA KAMA
Council Member
Kahului
(808) 270-5501
Tasha.Kama@mauicounty.us

TAMARA PALTIN
Council Member
West Maui
(808) 270-5504
Tamara.Paltin@mauicounty.us

SHANE SINENCI
Council Member
East Maui
(808) 270-7246
Shane.Sinenci@mauicounty.us

STATE OF HAWAIʻI LEADERSHIP

THE HONORABLE JOSH GREEN
Governor of the State of Hawaiʻi
(808) 586-0034
https://governor.hawaii.gov/contact-us

U.S. SEN. BRIAN SCHATZ
Hawaiʻi
(808) 523-2061
(202) 224-3934

U.S. SEN. MAZIE HIRONO
Hawaiʻi
(844) 478-3478
(202) 224-6361

U.S. REP. ED CASE
Hawaiʻi, District 1
(808) 650-6688
(202) 225-2726

U.S. REP. JILL TOKUDA
Hawaiʻi, District 2
(808) 746-6220
(202) 225-4906

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

Sen. Stanley Chang | Chair
(808) 586-8420 | senchang@capitol.hawaii.gov

Sen. Dru Mamo Kanuha | Vice Chair
(808) 586-9385 | senkanuha@capitol.hawaii.gov

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

Rep. Luke A. Evslin | Chair
(808) 586-6270 | repevslin@capitol.hawaii.gov

Rep. Micah Aiu | Vice Chair
(808) 586-9476 | repaiu@capitol.hawaii.gov

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Sen. Donovan M. Dela Cruz | Chair
(808) 586-6090 | sendelacrus@capitol.hawaii.gov

Sen. Sharon Y. Moriwaki | Vice Chair
(808) 586-6740 | senmoriwaki@capitol.hawaii.gov

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita | Chair
(808) 586-6330 | repyamashita@capitol.hawaii.gov

Rep. Lisa Kitagawa | Vice Chair
(808) 586-8540 | repkitagawa@capitol.hawaii.gov

DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS

Kali Watson | Chairperson
Hawaiian Homes Commission
(808) 620-9501

HAWAIʻI HOUSING FINANCE & DEVELOPMENT CORP.

Denise Iseri-Matsubara | Executive Director
(808) 581-0620

HAWAIʻI PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY

Hakim Ouansafi | Executive Director
(808) 832-4692

HAWAIʻI COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Craig Nakamoto | Executive Director
(808) 594-0300

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Edwin H. Sniffen | Director
(808) 587-2156

MAUI SENATORS & REPRESENTATIVES

STATE SEN.
TROY N. HASHIMOTO
Senate District 5
Wailuku, Kahului, Waiheʻe, Mauka, Waiʻehu
senhashimoto@capitol.hawaii.gov

STATE SEN.
ANGUS L.K. McKELVEY
Senate District 6
West Maui, Māʻalaea, Waikapū, South Maui
senmckelvey@capitol.hawaii.gov

STATE SEN.
LYNN DECOITE
Senate District 7
Hāna, East and Upcountry Maui, Molokaʻi, Lānaʻi, Kahoʻolawe, Molokini
sendecoite@capitol.hawaii.gov

STATE REP.
JUSTIN H. WOODSON
House District 9
Kahului, Puʻunēnē, portion of Wailuku
repwoodson@capitol.hawaii.gov

STATE REP.
TYSON MIYAKE
House District 10
Portion of Waiehu, Paukūkalo, Wailuku, Wailuku Heights, Waikapū, Hyashi Village
repmiyake@capitol.hawaii.gov

STATE REP.
TEREZ AMATO
House District 11
Portion of Māʻalaea, Kīhei, Keawakapu, Wailea, Mākena, Kanahena, Keoneʻōʻio
repamato@capitol.hawaii.gov

STATE REP.
KYLE T. YAMASHITA
House District 12
Portion of Keāhua, Hāliʻimaile, Pukalani, Makawao, Pūlehu, Waiakoa, Kēōkea, ʻUlupalakua
repyamashita@capitol.hawaii.gov

STATE REP.
MAHINA M. POEPOE
House District 13
Molokaʻi, Lānaʻi, Kahoʻolawe, portion of Kahului, Haʻikū, Peʻahi, Huelo, Nāhiku, Hāna, Kīpahulu
reppoepoe@capitol.hawaii.gov

STATE REP.
ELLE COCHRAN
House District 14
Kahakuloa, Waiheʻe, portions of Māʻalaea, Olowalu, Lahaina, Lahainaluna, Kāʻanapali, Māhinahina Camp, Kahana, Honokahua
repcochran@capitol.hawaii.gov

2 ISLAND PROFILE & TRENDS

This section highlights trends in population, migration, number of households, and income, and discusses housing-related indicators such as rates of residential permitting, available housing inventory, competition for inventory from out-of-state buyers, homeownership rates on Maui, and housing stress.

POPULATION TRENDS – MAUI COUNTY

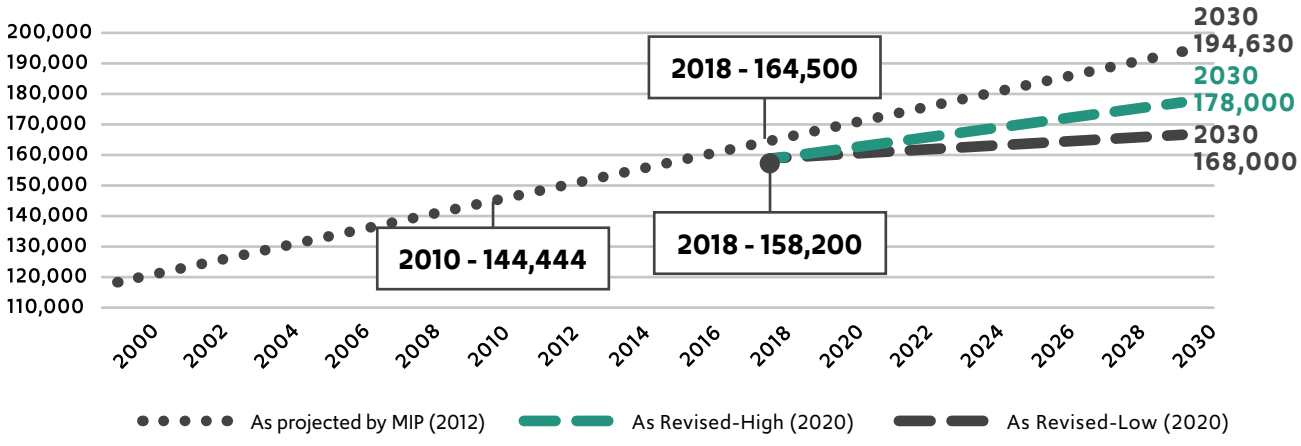
As of 2020 Maui County's resident population was 164,754, reflecting a slowing rate of increase that has hit 0.5% in recent years. In contrast, visitors to the county increased 1.6% per year between 2015 and 2019. This is significant to housing because some visitors' demand for accommodations competes with residents' need for homes. The increasing resident population, combined with an increasing visitor population, impacts housing availability.

POPULATION TRENDS - MAUI ISLAND

According to the 2020 Census, Maui Island's population has grown to 154,100, which reflects a population growth of 6.7% since the 2010 Census. Projecting similar growth rates over the next ten-year period, the 2030 population projection may be between 168,000 and 178,000 residents on Maui.

The 2012 MIP assumed continued high rates of growth, but this has not been the case in recent years. The annual rate of population increase has slowed to just an average of 0.27% from 2019 to 2020.

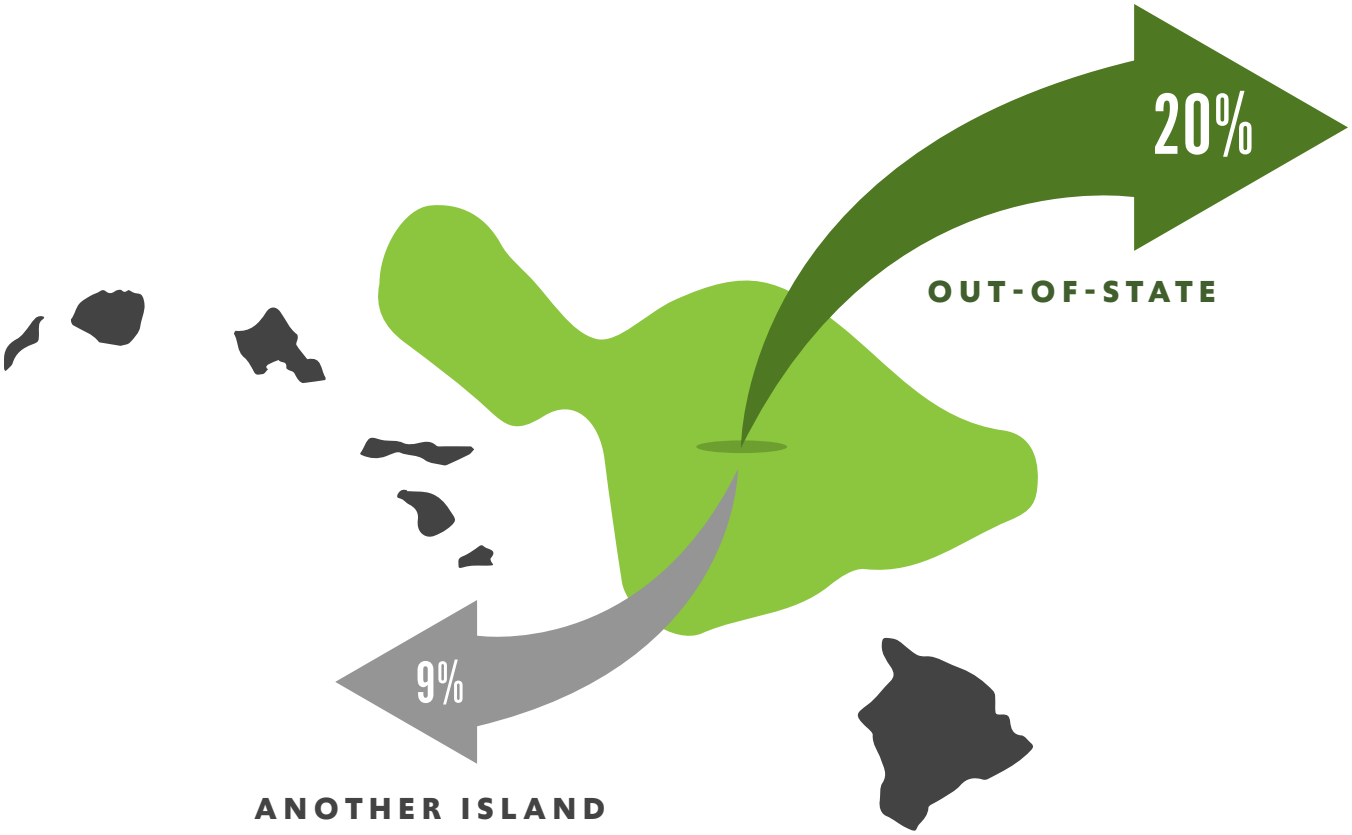
Maui Island: Historical and Future Population as Projected by MIP in 2012, and Updated Projections in 2020



Source: County of Maui, Maui Island Plan, 2012; PBR Hawai'i, 2020.

PLANS FOR MOVING

The slowing population growth is partly due to a lack of available and affordable housing, as more residents are attracted to good housing and job opportunities in other locations. In 2019, 20,000 county households were expected to move within the next five years. Among those with plans to move, 9% planned to move to another island, and 20% planned to move out of the state.



MULTIGENERATIONAL LIVING & OVER CROWDING

The U.S. Census Bureau defines multigenerational families as households with three or more generations living under one roof. According to the 2018 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates, Hawai'i leads the nation with multigenerational households accounting for 7.7% of all Hawai'i households.

More than a third of Maui Island residences are home to more than one family, while the nuclear family structure (a married couple with children and no other family members) represented only 13% of households. The lack of adequate housing supply for all economic sectors of the community and the decrease in housing affordability potentially account for multiple families in single-family residences.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

More than 25,000 island households, or 53% of the total, earn less than 140% of the area median income (AMI), making them qualified by income for various county workforce and affordable housing programs.

AMI is the median income across all households in an area and is determined each year by U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). In 2022, the AMI for Maui County was $101,100.[2]

For its workforce housing guidelines, the County classifies households by AMI:

- Less than 50% AMI - "Very Low Income"
- 51% to 80% AMI - "Low Income"
- 81% to 100% AMI - "Below Moderate Income"
- 101% to 120% AMI - "Moderate Income"
- 121% to 140% AMI - "Above Moderate Income"
- 141% to 160% AMI - "Gap Income"

[2]Maui County Housing and Human Concerns – Housing Division. 2022 Workforce Affordable Sales Price Guidelines.

HOUSING SUPPLY

Residential Permitting

Housing production is cyclical, but in Maui County, underlying economic cycles were likely further suppressed from 2008 to 2016 by a county-wide Residential Workforce Housing Policy (Section 2.96 Maui County Code) that had been implemented in 2006. Among other things, this policy required new market-rate developments to be at least 50% affordable for working families to own or rent. The policy was amended to 25% in late 2014, but it was not until 2017 that permitting picked up substantially. Recent production is still well below levels observed from 2000-2007.

Compounding these declines, many of the homes receiving building permits are intended for visitors, not for resident markets, as explained in later sections.

Private Residential Building Permits, Maui County

Maui County Databook, 2021. County of Maui Development Services Administration.

Housing Inventory & Competition from Out-of-State

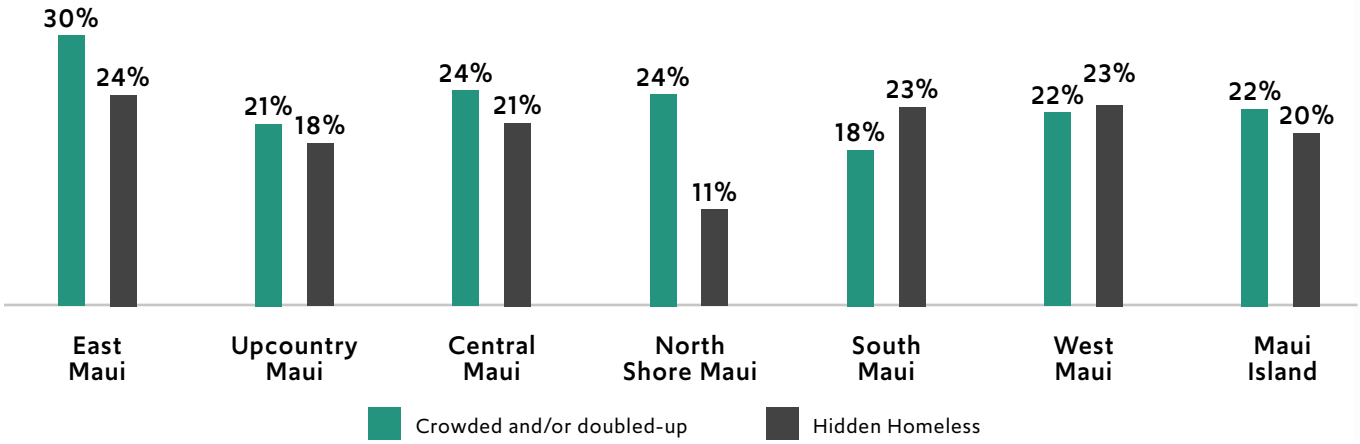
Maui Island had approximately 48,500 homes in 2019. This housing inventory includes only homes available to primary residents, but the housing permit data includes many homes that are not available for residents. Between 2008 and 2019, 48% of homes sold in Maui County were to out-of-state entities, according to the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT). About 77% of these were used as a vacation home.

In 2021, about 36% of Maui County homes were sold to out-of-state buyers. This decline from the 2008 to 2019 trend is likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Safe Travels program that limited arrivals from the U.S. continent and foreign countries.

Indicators of Housing Stress & the "Hidden Homeless"

Crowding, doubled-up households, and households that shelter the "hidden homeless" represent 20% to 30% of island households, and affect all areas of Maui. The hidden homeless are members of our community who have a short-term place to stay, but no permanent housing. These housing conditions all suggest pent-up demand, or demand for homes that would be evident should affordability and other housing barriers be removed. Additionally, the 2022 point-in-time count found 741 homeless people in Maui County, of which about 41% were sheltered.[3]

[3]Bridging the Gap. Hawaii Point-in-Time Count (2022)



PBR HAWAII, February 2020. (Data source: SMS Research & Marketing Services, Inc., "Hawai'i Housing Planning Study, 2019")

3 HOUSING DEMAND & AFFORDABILITY

The need for workforce and affordable housing is discussed at the island scale and then broken down by community plan area in the context of the Maui Island Plan. Housing needs for various income groups, housing affordability with respect to county policies, trends in home sale and rental prices, and affordability metrics such as index of affordability and down payment availability all contribute to housing demand and affordability.

ISLAND-WIDE HOUSING NEEDS: AT LEAST 10,404 NEW HOMES BY 2025

The assessed need for new homes considers DBEDT's 2019 projections of resident and off-island demand, but also recognizes the pent-up demand reflected in today's crowded, doubled-up, and homeless households. Altogether, Maui will need 10,404 new homes by 2025. The chart below evaluates potential scenarios if the projected need also accounts for low and high levels of pent up demand.

The 2012 MIP estimated that 10,845 new homes will be needed between 2010 and 2030 for Maui Island alone. The fact that the estimated demand is similar or higher in 2020 compared to 2012, despite slowing population growth, may reflect the lack of housing development on the island, and increases in both pent-up and out-of-state-related sources of demand.

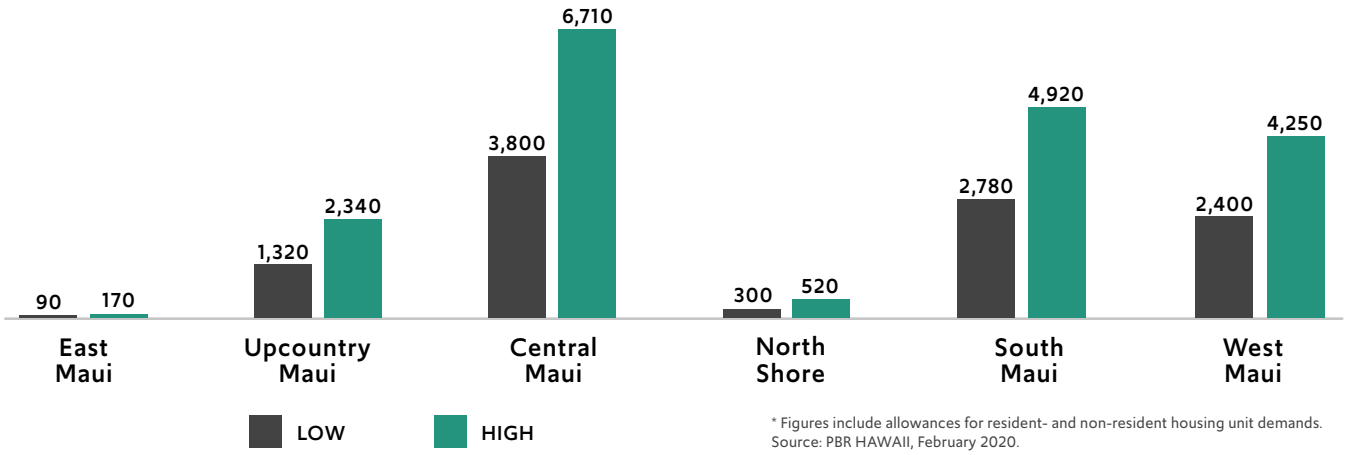
Most Maui residents still prefer a single-family home, but willingness to accept condominium, apartment or other unit types has risen, especially among renters. About 40% of those who plan to move within the island wished to purchase their next home, but many acknowledged that homeownership may not be a possibility for them.

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL HOUSING NEEDS ON MAUI ISLAND 2020 - 2030

	LOW	HIGH	BASIS
PENT-UP DEMAND, 2019	6,124	12,248	50% to 100% of crowded and/or doubled-up households
RESIDENT POPULATION GROWTH	2,360	5,170	95% of DBEDT 2019 County projections
OFF-ISLAND DEMAND	2,920	2,920	
TOTAL, Rounded	**11,400**	**20,300**	

Off-Island Demand | Resident Population Growth | Pent-Up Demand, 2019

Estimated Maui Island Housing Demand by Community Plan Area, 2020 - 2030*



* Figures include allowances for resident- and non-resident housing unit demands.
Source: PBR HAWAII, February 2020.

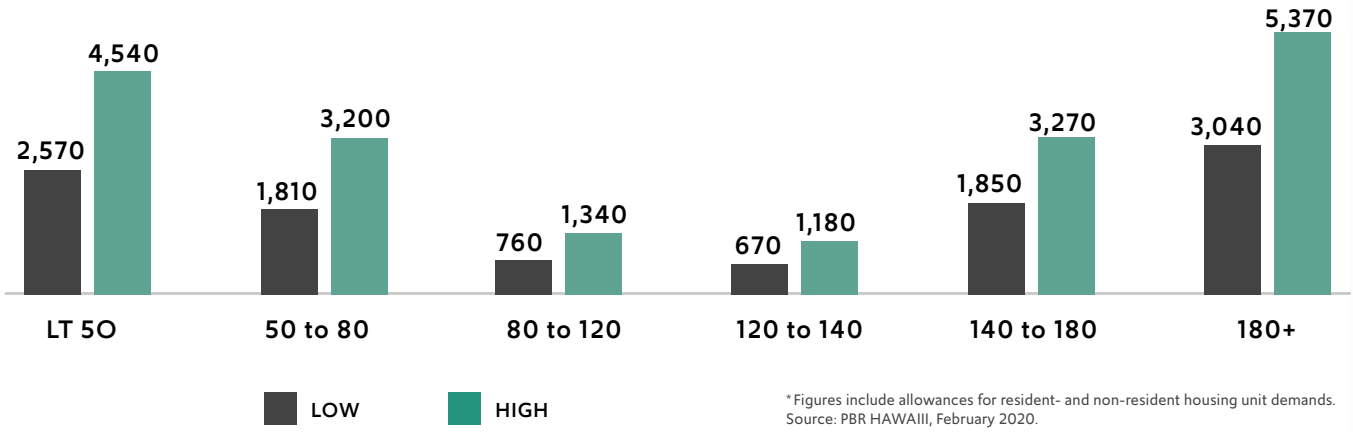
HOUSING DEMAND BY AREA

The 2012 MIP allocated future housing needs by community plan area. The MIP included socio-economic analysis that considered area differences in household sizes, jobs, out-of-state demand for homes, and historical development. Applying these principles to the anticipated level of housing demand suggests a rough allocation of future demand as shown in the chart above. As illustrated, the three regional areas with the greatest housing demand are Central Maui, South Maui and West Maui.

HOUSING DEMAND BY FAMILY INCOME

Based on the federal affordable housing criteria that considers the county's area median income (AMI), housing needs are acute for households with incomes less than 50% AMI and for those in the 50% to 80% AMI category, with approximately 4,400 to 7,700 units demanded by these groups respectively. The 80% to 140% AMI groups together represent another 1,400 to 2,500 units. The "gap group" and "market price" categories of 140% AMI to 180% represent another 1,850 to 3,270 units. At the highest end (180% or greater), this demand likely includes units sought for non-resident purposes, such as second homes.

Estimated Maui Island Housing Need by AMI, 2020 - 2030*



*Figures include allowances for resident- and non-resident housing unit demands.
Source: PBR HAWAII, February 2020.

HOUSING PRICES & AFFORDABILITY

Buying a Home

Housing prices dipped after 2006/2007, but have rebounded dramatically since 2011, with single-family prices at an all-time high. The median price of a single-family home sold in Maui County in 2019 was $741,178, compared to nearly $1.26 million in June 2022.

According to a survey conducted on behalf of the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation in 2019, 40% of county residents intending to move were not looking to buy because they did not anticipate staying in place long enough. This data would support the need to provide significantly more rental housing at all income levels. The top obstacles cited for not being able to afford housing had to do with financial qualifications: (1) too expensive (62%); (2) cannot afford the down payment (24%); (3) cannot afford the payments (15%); and (4) cannot qualify for a loan (14%). Only 12% of those who wished to purchase a single-family home appeared to be financially qualified. And, 23% of those seeking to purchase a home in a multifamily residential building appeared to be financially qualified.

Rental Housing

In order to rent a two-bedroom unit at the HUD-determined 2022 fair market rent of $1,957, a full-time worker would have to earn $38 per hour, or if working for minimum wage, the household would need the income of 3.7 full-time equivalent jobs. In comparison, the average renter on Maui is estimated to earn $15 per hour and could only afford a unit rented at $780 per month.

HOUSING CHALLENGES 2020 TO 2030

Addressing Maui's housing needs in the 2020s will present significant challenges to community leaders, policy makers, and the general public. It will take collective action by these groups to provide positive solutions. These challenges include:

PENT-UP DEMAND: Recognize the needs of island households that have been priced out of the housing market. Pent-up demand represents more than half of the projected need for new homes by 2030.

VARYING NEEDS: Provide a continuum of housing to meet varying income levels and needs, such as recognizing the needs of young adults who are ready to form new households and kūpuna who may need new housing types as they age.

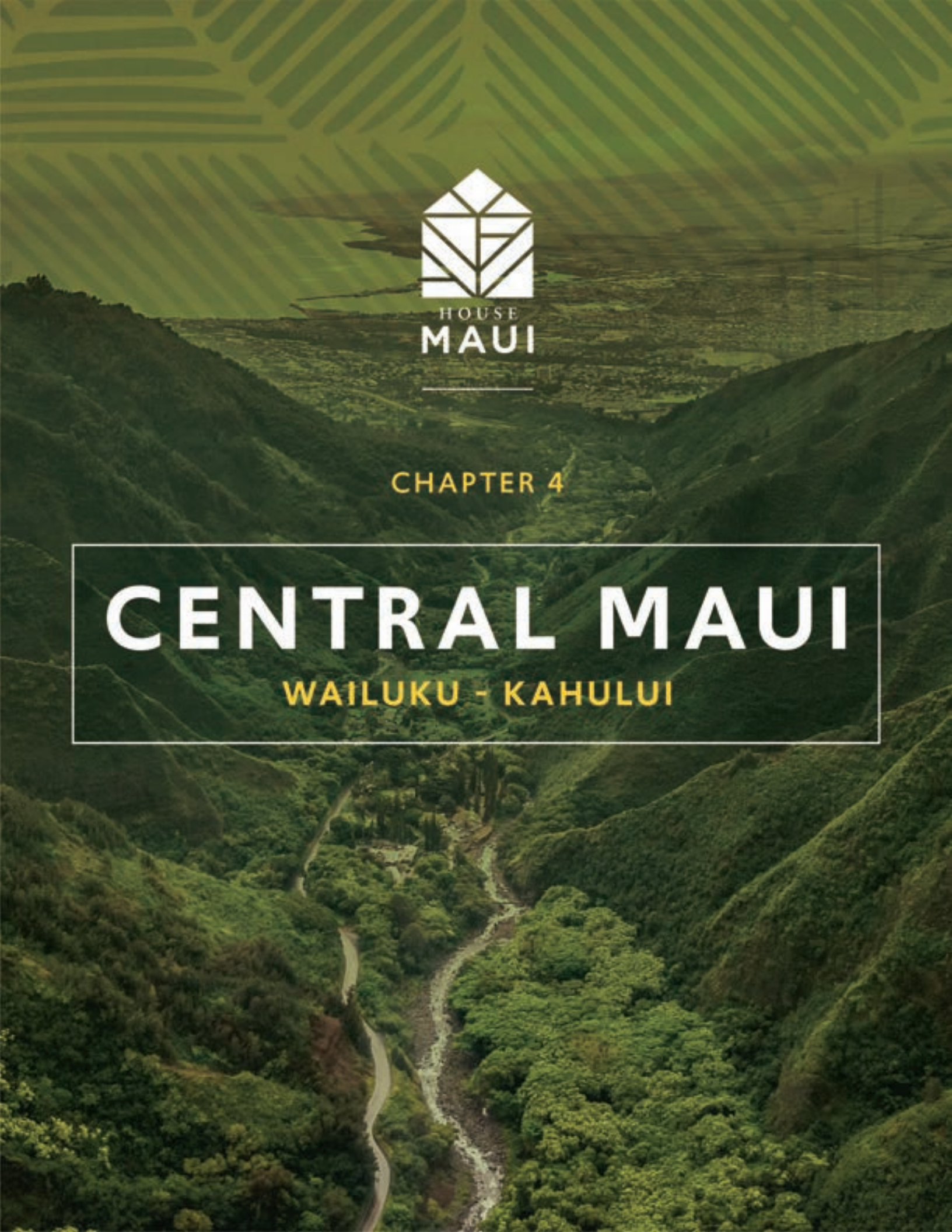
RESIDENT STATUS: Prioritize the need for full-time residents to secure quality housing over off-island demand for Maui properties. Maintain a balance that supports both housing that is accessible to island residents and long-term economic development.

DIRECTED GROWTH POLICY: Direct growth to urban areas to protect valuable agricultural lands, reduce commutes, make best use of public investments, and promote vibrant communities. With these values in mind, community planning has directed most growth to the Central Maui, South Maui and West Maui regions.

HOME OWNERSHIP: Increase homeownership opportunities, encouraging developments affordable for 80% to 140% AMI groups, financial counseling, and down payment assistance programs.

RENTAL HOUSING: Increase rental housing opportunities, including apartment and possibly single-family rental homes targeting all income groups, but especially those at 100% AMI or less.

REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE: Identify and implement needed public infrastructure to serve these goals and support public and private initiatives to develop housing.


HOUSE
MAUI
CHAPTER 4
CENTRAL MAUI
WAILUKU - KAHULUI

IWI

I ka ʻōlelo nō ke ola, i ka ʻōlelo nō ka make.
In language is life, in language is death.
TRADITIONAL HAWAIIAN PROVERB

Many words in the Hawaiian language represent foundational cultural concepts. Intergenerationally transmitted, the concepts embedded within ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi influence the minds, emotions, actions, and reactions of those who are proficient in the Hawaiian language. "Iwi" is one such concept.

Along with meaning "bone" and "skeletal remains," underlying concepts embedded within the term iwi include "kinship," as well as "stability, durability, dependability, and persistence." In Hawaiian Dictionary, iwi has seven distinct definitions, and these definitions are followed by 46 associated entries. Iwi is also a component in numerous compound words, proper names, place names, and other terms.

In Nānā I Ke Kumu (Look to the Source) Vol. 1, revered cultural authority Mary Kawena Pukui explained, "In pre-Christian creeds of Hawaii, man's immortality was manifest in his bones... The iwi survived decaying flesh. The bones remained, the cleanly, lasting portion of the man or woman who once lived. Even the bones of the living became symbols of the link between man's progenitors and his own eventual immortality. This symbolism is found in many of Hawaii's figures of speech."

Regarding iwi desecration, Pukui included, "The bones of the dead were guarded, respected, treasured, venerated, loved or even deified by relatives; coveted and despoiled by enemies." Some examples of iwi desecration include "merely leaving bones uncovered and exposed to the sunlight," intentionally modifying iwi into tools and implements, "obscene misuse of the skull," and "the ultimate desecration was the complete destruction of bones."

In modern times, over a century's worth of ongoing desecration of iwi due to construction and development continue to negatively impact the psychological, physical, and spiritual wellbeing of Native Hawaiians and local residents. Central Maui's dunes are the resting place for many generations of iwi kupuna. Protecting these burials and treating inadvertantly discovered iwi with respect and dignity is vital.

INDIGENOUS FOUNDATIONS

Native Hawaiians actively managed much of Maui's lowland regions, tending the land so it would nuture the species they needed to survive and thrive. In Central Maui's isthmus, traditional stories and chants describe the use of fire to manage and enhance the resources of this region. Guided by knowledge passed from one generation to the next, prescribed burn management was conducted in alignment with seasonal weather patterns and resource cycles. Accounts detail an environment effectively managed to yield a profusion of flora and fauna. Prior to the introduction of ruminant livestock and sugar plantations, Central Maui's isthmus was home to plants valued for a variety of uses—maʻo shrubs, trees up to six inches in diameter, fields of pili and kalamālō grasses—edible grasshoppers, and a diversity of bird species.

The ahupuaʻa of Wailuku stretches from ʻĪao Valley to Kahului Bay, from Paukūkalo to Kapukaulua, and across the isthmus, making up almost half of the historic boundaries of the larger moku (district) of the same name, along with the current Wailuku-Kahului area. Wailuku Ahupuaʻa was an important region in the early days of Hawaiʻi as a place where chiefs were buried and numerous historic battles took place. Many of Wailuku's natural and cultural features tell stories of agriculture and warfare that shaped and shifted the political landscape throughout the Hawaiian Islands. The word Wailuku can be translated as "waters that destroy," simultaneously associated with battles that occurred in the area and the highly variable nature of the Wailuku River, the volume and velocity of which can cause tremendous flooding and erosion.

The heart of Wailuku extended seaward from the mouth of ʻĪao Valley along both banks of the Wailuku River. The fertile soils supported agriculture while the waters of the Wailuku River provided a consistent water supply. Nearby, Kahului Bay was managed to provide a wealth of marine resources. Intelligent and sustainable management of Wailuku's resources reached a peak during the time of the high chief Piʻilani (around 1600 CE), who established Wailuku as a center of religious and political power on Maui. Piʻilani unified the districts of Maui through politics and warfare, with successive generations of chiefs endeavoring to secure and maintain political dominance over the whole of Maui.

POLITICAL HISTORIES

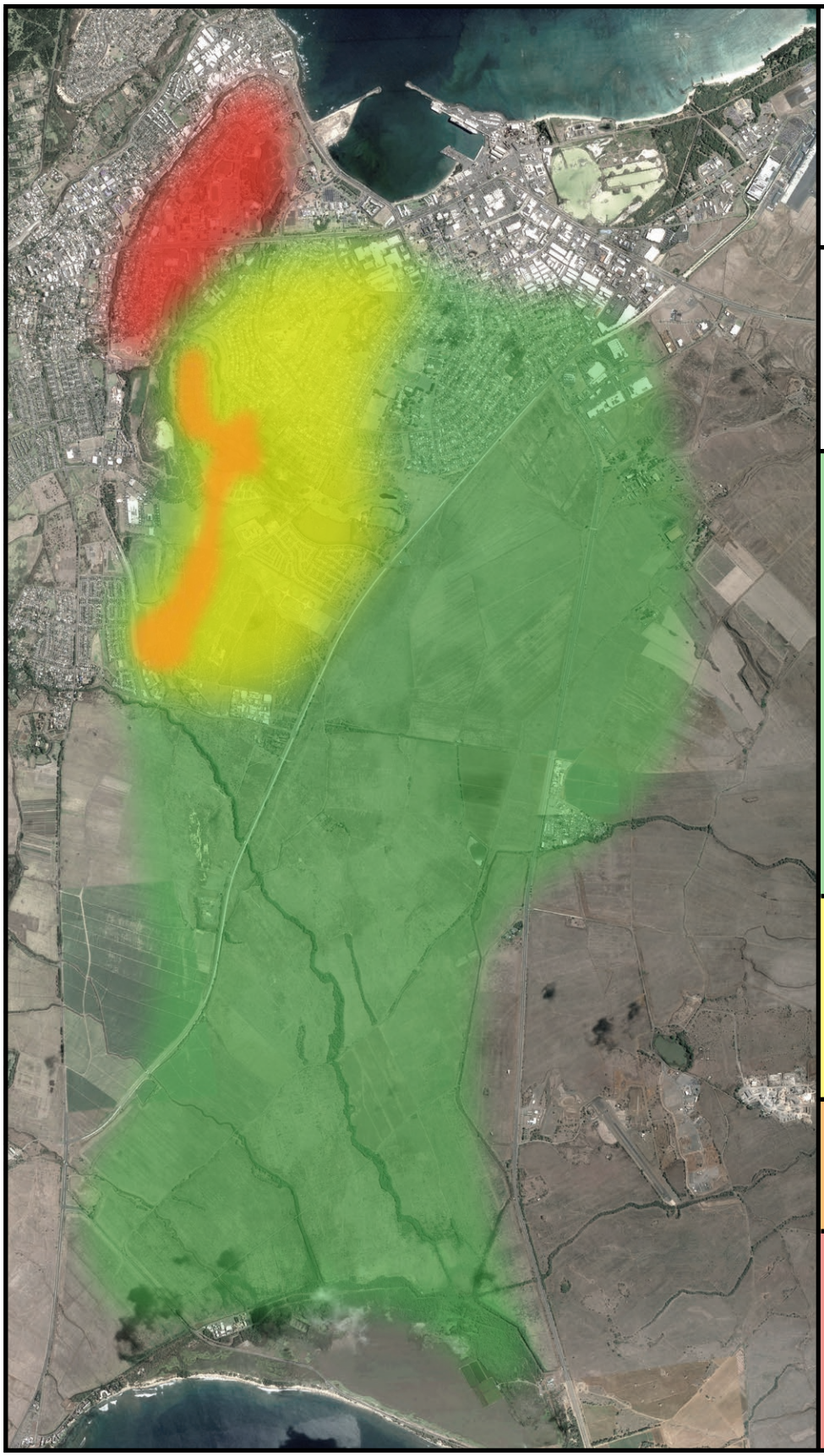
During the reign of high chief Kahekili in 1776, as the American Revolutionary War raged in some of Great Britain's American colonies, one of the most famous battles on Maui occurred when Hawai'i Island chief Kalani'ōpu'u and his 'Ālapa regiment marched upon Kalanihale, Kahekili's royal residence in Wailuku. Though it was considered one of the most elite regiments in the Hawaiian Islands, Kahekili defeated the 'Ālapa by strategically positioning his forces throughout the sand dunes of Kakanilua where they surprised and annihilated the approaching regiment, leaving only two of the eight hundred warriors alive.

In 1790, Kalani'ōpu'u's nephew, Kamehameha, returned to challenge the chiefs of Maui in the battle of Kepaniwai, which literally means "the damming of the waters" in reference to the bodies of the dead that crowded the Wailuku River as a result of the battle. By employing muskets and cannons acquired through recent contact with foreigners, Kamehameha prevailed on Maui, though Kahekili retained his hold on the other islands up until his death in 1794. Kamehameha would eventually unite the entire island chain under his rule, establishing the Kamehameha Dynasty and his place as Kamehameha I.

In 1848, Kauikeaouli—the son of Kamehameha I and titled King Kamehameha III—and his advisors established the Māhele, a new system of land entitlement which significantly altered resource management, land tenure, and the future of land ownership throughout the Hawaiian Islands. In the Māhele, much of the Wailuku Ahupua'a was designated as Crown Lands. However, smaller parcels in Wailuku were granted through land commission awards to a variety of recipients, including Kūihelani, a steward to Kamehameha I and the last konohiki of the ahupua'a of Wailuku.

Rich in resources, Wailuku's strategic, ceremonial, and agricultural importance made it an ideal place from which various ali'i chose to govern. Once the Hawaiian Kingdom was founded under Kamehameha I, governors were installed across the islands, but ahupua'a continued to be managed by konohiki (land stewards) who acted on behalf of the Kingdom.

After the 1893 overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom, Hawai'i eventually became a territory of the United States and later a state in 1959. Wailuku has served as the county seat since 1905. The State Office Building is located on some of the lands of Kūihelani. The County of Maui building is on an adjacent lot.



Kamaʻomaʻo
Kakanilua
ʻOawa o Kakanilua
Wao Akua One

The contemporary designation of "Central Maui" includes the towns of Wailuku and Kahului. Within this region are several areas of high cultural significance to Native Hawaiians:

Ao Kuewa o Kamaʻomaʻo
"Ao kuewa" are domains for wandering human spirits that have not been accepted into the realms of their ancestors. Ascribed as the territory of the specific akua named ʻŌlohe, the ao kuewa of Kamaʻomaʻo was actively managed for its abundant plant and animal resources. After the introduction of ruminant livestock, the diverse ecology of Kamaʻomaʻo was devastated and "sand may be said to make a beach clear across the isthmus."

Kakanilua
The sand dunes of Kakanilua were used as a strategic battlefield for centuries, the last battle taking place here in 1776 between Kahekili of Maui and Kalaniʻōpuʻu of Hawaiʻi Island.

ʻOawa o Kakanilua
The gulch of Kakanilua is where the last battles of Kakanilua and Kamokuʻilima were fought.

Wao Akua One
The Makanipālua sand dune is described as a "wao akua one [region inhabited by akua amidst sand]." This wao akua one is a known burial ground in which many iwi remain until today.

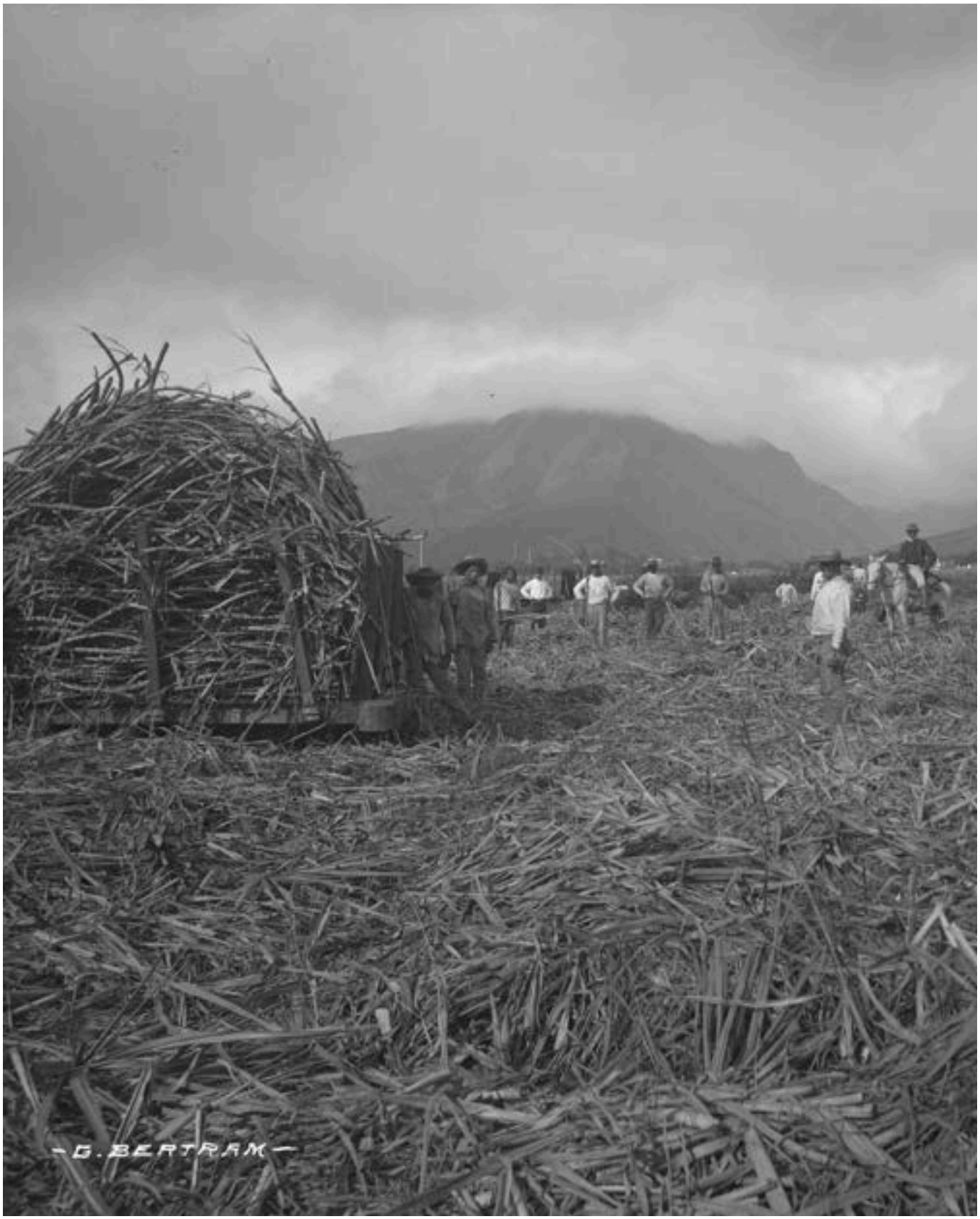
PLANTATIONS

Sugarcane is one of more than two dozen canoe crops brought to Hawai'i by Native Hawaiians and cultivated since ancient times. Although some commercial attempts at growing sugarcane began on Maui as early as the 1820s, it wasn't until the 1860s that commercial sugarcane cultivation began in earnest. By 1879, a total of 1,950 acres of lands were under sugarcane cultivation in the Wailuku area. In 1882, Claus Spreckels secured fee simple title to the ahupua'a of Wailuku amid broad protest and claims of improper dealings. With this acquisition, his sugar empire expanded across Central Maui and the isthmus to a total of 40,000 acres. By acquiring smaller plantations in the region, Spreckels would go on to create "the largest sugar estate in the world by 1892."

Before Spreckels, sugarcane cultivation in Wailuku depended mostly on native 'auwai (irrigation canal) systems for water. However, to support industrial scale sugar production, Spreckels constructed extensive infrastructure to channel water into his plantations from East Maui and the Nāwai'ehā areas of Central Maui. The negative impact of this infrastructure development on the ecosystems and populations of these respective regions was immediate and continues until today.

To supply the workforce for industrial sugarcane cultivation, plantation owners brought immigrant labor to Hawai'i from places like China, Japan, Portugal, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. The arrival of these peoples and the melding of the languages and cultures they brought with them all contribute to the Hawai'i we know today. Although the last commercial sugarcane harvest on Maui was in 2016, the legacy of sugar plantations continues. Among the challenging aspects of this legacy, the residents of the county continue to deal with the effects of industrial agriculture, including water issues, soil contamination, and airborne pollutants from former sugarcane lands and cultivation practices.

Digital Archives of Hawai'i, Irrigation ditch, Wailuku



Digital Archives of Hawai'i, Wailuku Sugar Plantation, Maui

Ku'ikahi Village

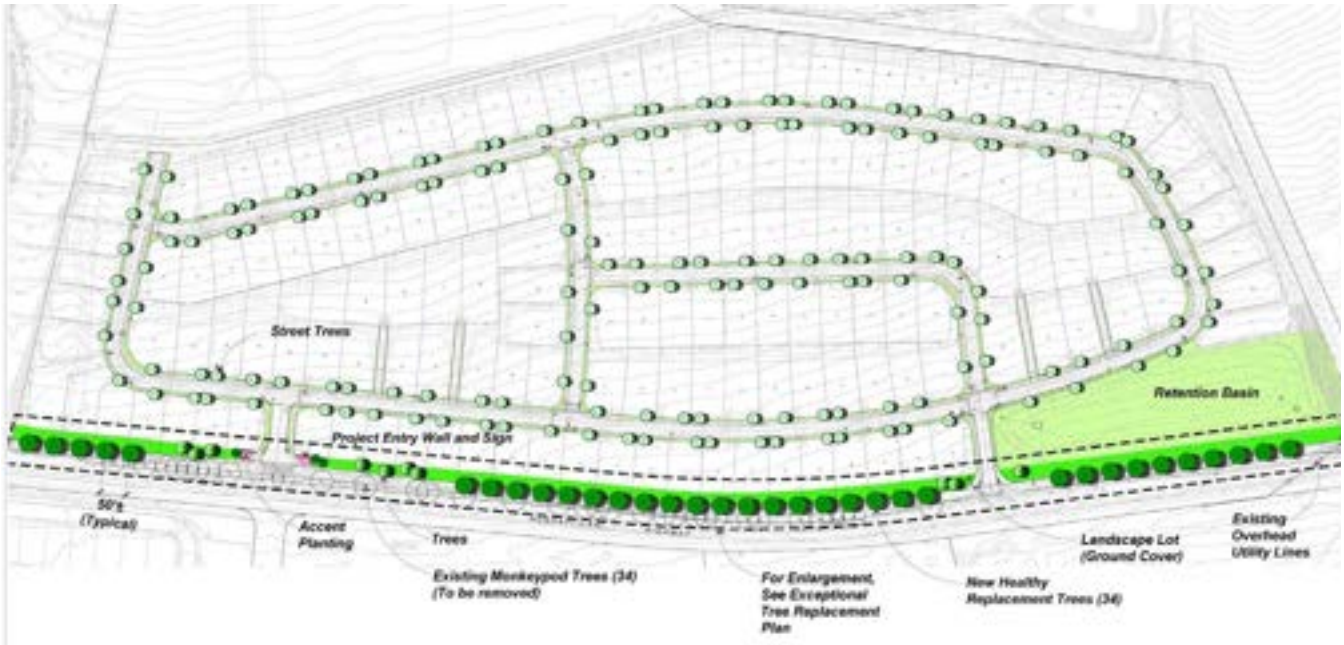
The Ku'ikahi Village is a 100% workforce housing project with 202 units featuring a variety of home types such as multi-family condos, duplexes, live-work units, studios, tiny homes, and single-family homes. Ku'ikahi needs an estimated $3.25 million in infrastructure improvements.

Alaula Builders

Top and bottom images: Alaula Builders

Pu'unani Homestead Subdivision

This subdivision is a project of the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands and will contain up to 161 new lots. Twenty-four of the new lots will remain vacant and unimproved, while the other 137 will be developed as single-family, three- and four-bedroom homes aimed at beneficiaries earning up to 80% of AMI.



Top and bottom images: Department of Hawaiian Homelands

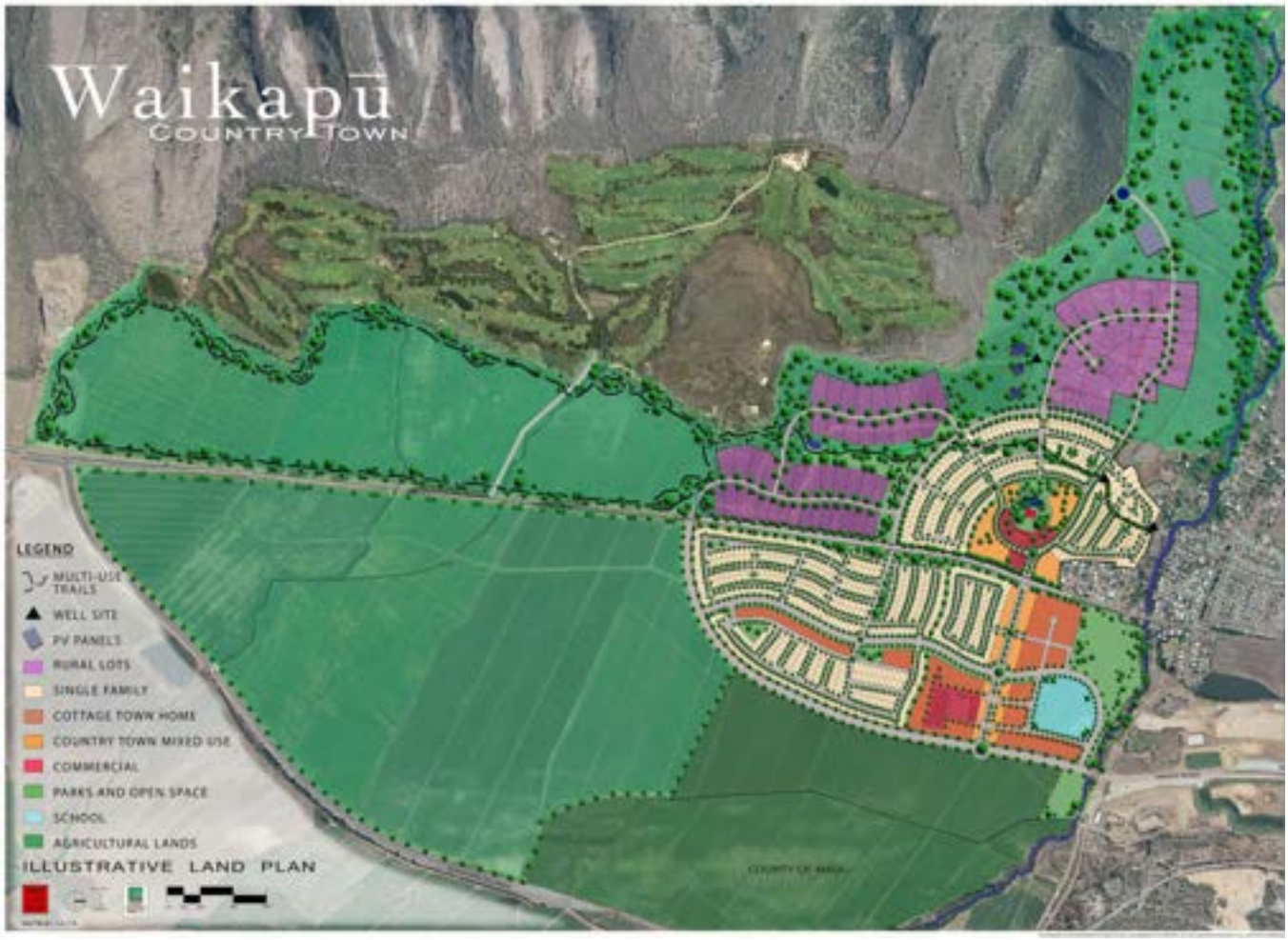
Hale Mahaʻolu Ke Kahua

Hale Mahaʻolu Ke Kahua is a 120-unit affordable housing community for individuals and families earning 60% or less of the area's median income. The complex is multi-family with one-, two-, and three-bedroom units and features playgrounds, a community center and space for Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc.'s (MEO) services.

Top and bottom images: Design Partners, Inc.

Waikapū Country Town

Waikapū Country Town will provide 500 workforce homes within the 1,433-unit development for local homebuyers. When completed, the surrounding community will have a new school, commercial businesses, and parks and open space. Homes will consist of single-family, cottage town homes and rural units. Waikapū Country Town will require significant infrastructure improvements including water, wastewater, and road improvements.



Waikapu Properties, LLC

Kahului Civic Center and Mixed-Use Complex

The planned Kahului Civic Center and Mixed-Use Complex is a transit-oriented development estimated to provide a mix of approximately 300 market-rate and affordable rental units. This state-sponsored project will also include government offices, a library, retail, and parking close to Queen Kaʻahumanu Shopping Center and the Kahului transit hub.

State of Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation

Hale Pilina

Hale Pilina is a 178-unit rental project in Central Maui proposed by Catholic Charities Hawai'i. The project will consist of two three-story buildings and two four-story buildings with 89 one-bedroom units and 89 two-bedroom units all affordable for local residents at or below 60% AMI. Located in the heart of Kahului between Queen Ka'ahumanu Center and Maui Mall, this project will be close to transit, shopping and services.

PROPOSED SITE PLAN

Top and bottom images: Catholic Charities Hawai'i

Waiehu Mauka

Waiehu Mauka is a single-family residential project being constructed for Native Hawaiian beneficiaries. The completed project will have 311 single-family homes, 55 vacant lots and 38 rural/agricultural lots.

FIGURE 1-2
Waiehu Mauka Conceptual Plan

Department of Hawaiian Homelands

HOUSE
MAUI

CHAPTER 5

SOUTH MAUI

KĪHEI - MĀKENA

PILINA

Ko ko a uka, ko ko a kai.
Those from the upland, those of the shore.

A TRADITIONAL HAWAIIAN PROVERB WHICH DEPICTS THE SHARING OF RESOURCES BETWEEN THOSE WHO DWELT IN THE UPLANDS OF A MOKU, AND THOSE WHO DWELT ALONG ITS SHORE.

Today's South Maui is a shoreline community but traditionally Native Hawaiians living makai (seaward) depended on resources that existed mauka (inland) and vice versa. These two areas experienced pilina (interconnectedness, relationship, union) that allowed both people and place to thrive. The Kumulipo, a 2,102 line geneology tracing the lineage of Native Hawaiians back to the beginning of time, describes a similar pilina between the species of plants and animals that live mauka and those that live makai. Lines 83-84 of the Kumulipo is an example of this relationship:

Hānau ka limu kala noho i kai	Born is the sargassum living in the sea
Kia'i 'ia e ka 'ākala noho i uka	Guarded by the raspberry living on the land

In the 1400s, the ali'i 'aimoku of Maui, Kāka'alaneo, initiated the organization of the island into 12 moku. The boundaries for each ran mauka to makai, largely aligned to the natural movement and flow of water: streams, underground watercourses, and even precipitation patterns.

The region now known as South Maui consists primarily of lands from the two moku of Kula and Honua'ula. Extending down from the crater of Haleakalā, a good portion of Kula, and all of Honua'ula, sprawl westerly toward the the leeward coast. Thick mesic forests along the mauka slopes of these moku once attracted heavy mists and rain. The Native Hawaiians that once inhabited the lower reaches of these mesic zones not only cultivated a number of crops including sweet potato and dryland taro, but they also managed the abundant bird and timber resources of these forests. Makai populations along the dry leeward coasts of these moku managed rich ocean resources through stewardship and aquaculture, and also cultivated sweet potato and other crops where possible.

Trade in these resources between the Native Hawaiian populations of South Maui's mauka- and makai-dwellers is well documented in traditional narratives and post-contact writings. Mauka inhabitants in Pūlehunui (Kula), for example, depended on their fishery located just south of Keālia Pond. As part of a yearly cycle, some upland dwellers of Honua'ula would plant their sweet potato crops at the beginning of the rainy season, move down to makai villages during this time to harvest the bounty of the sea, and later return to their mauka settlements when their crops had matured.

In modern times, direct trade between the mauka and makai communities of Kula and Honua'ula is no longer a significant part of the region's economy. And, the destruction of the upland mesic forests has resulted in a drastic reduction of annual mauka precipition, not only adversely affecting upland regions, but also the lowland regions that once benefitted from the mauka-to-makai flow of water resources.

INDIGENOUS FOUNDATIONS

The South Maui region spans portions of four moku (districts): Honuaʻula, Kula, Wailuku, and Lahaina. Within these moku, there are 25 ahupuaʻa that extend from Kanaio in ʻĀhihi-Kīnaʻu to Ukumehame in Māʻalaea.

The seaside region of modern day Kīhei once featured stretches of wetlands just inland of the shoreline that extended all the way to Keālia. Prior to decimation by introduced livestock and foreign agricultural practices, native upland forests generated precipitation cycles which produced the intermittent streams and springs that fed the wetlands along the shoreline. In turn, these wetlands fed springs along the coast which resulted in an abundance of limu (seaweeds, algae), reef systems, and marine species.

In the areas of Kalepolepo and Lāʻie, Native Hawaiians constructed loko kuapā (walled fishponds) which were primarily fed by springs sourced from wetland waters, and which supplied the local population for centuries. Kōʻieʻie Pond in Kalepolepo was large enough to provide fish for the local community and for nearby moku. In modern times, increased development has led to the drainage of many wetland areas creating a decline in the health and abundance of once thriving coastal ecosystems.

Rainfall produced by healthy upland native forests also provided water for the inhabitants of the modern day Mākena region. Seasonal precipitation which fell directly upon the area or was channeled down to the lowlands via underground lava tubes nourished extensive ʻuala (sweet potato) cultivation as well as rich coastal ecosystems.

Fed by upland precipitation, freshwater pools, springs, and anchialine ponds supported settlements of considerable size amidst the seemingly barren lava fields along the coast. Lava tubes which extended out beneath the ocean floor feed freshwater upwellings that were the foundations for the rich ʻōpelu, akule, and nehu fisheries managed by the populations of the region.

Mauka-makai cooperation amongst Native Hawaiians was required in this region. Upland crops like maiʻa (banana), ʻuala, and kalo (taro) were cultivated and traded for fish with people residing near the coast. With the subsistence economy and cooperation, South Maui was able to achieve self-sufficiency, despite its arid climate.

FOREIGN INFLUENCES

After 1786, Mā'alaea Bay became an important seaport for foreign travelers, whalers and immigrants arriving in Maui. As the demographics began to change, the island experienced the introduction of new ideologies, belief systems and cultural values. In 1848, King Kamehameha III established the Māhele. The Māhele is considered the most significant event to change land use and allocations in Hawai'i and led to the privatization of land.

Through the Māhele, King Kamehameha III retained about a million acres for himself. These lands, known as "Crown Lands," included Ukumehame, Waiōhuli, and Kēōkea. The remaining land fell into foreign ownership, with just 1% of land awarded to Native tenants by the Board of Commissions to Quiet Land Titles (commonly referred to as the Land Commission). Native Hawaiians needed to claim the lands which they tended to and lived on, and then present various forms of testimony to the Land Commission. Though many claims were made, only a small fraction of those claims were awarded. Due to the Māhele, lands also began to fall into foreign ownership and, combined with western economic ideology, initiated the transition from a subsistence economy to a market-based economy.

Digital Archives of Hawai'i, Maui, c. 1880

Hawai'i State Archives, Maui, Haleakalā Ranch

RANCHING & PLANTATIONS

In 1793, cattle were introduced to Hawai'i. King Kamehameha I put a restriction on the killing of cattle which led to a cattle population explosion. By 1830, it was clear to King Kamehameha III that there was a need to control the cattle on the islands. Paniolo (cowboys), were brought in from abroad to teach Native Hawaiians how to manage cattle. The cattle industry became a major influence in the areas with ranching operations beginning in regions like 'Ulupalakua and Mākena. Ranching caused extensive harm to the environment resulting in deforestation due to both land clearing and cattle grazing. Though the majority of ranching activities were upland, ramifications were felt in the coastal area because the change of the forest line and make-up decreased precipitation in the region.

In the mid-1800s, widescale sugarcane cultivation was established while Irish potatoes began to replace sweet potatoes along the slopes of this region. The cattle, sugar, and potato industries boomed as exports headed to supply the Gold Rush of the American West.

The negative effects of ranching and plantations were not only environmental but also cultural. Land clearing practices and hoofed animals destroyed many culturally significant resources, such as ilina (burial sites), agricultural fields, water sources, and heiau (places of worship).

MILITARY IMPACT

During World War II, Kīhei became a training hub for the U.S. military. Training exercises stretched along the shoreline from Māʻalaea Bay to Mākena Landing because the coastline and terrain were similar to the battlefields in Japanese-controlled territory. Various geographic features and cultural resources were destroyed along the South Maui coastline during bombing practice events. Prior to World War II, the population of the entire island was near 47,000 people. By 1944, South Maui alone saw an influx of 53,000 military personnel stationed there for training. The military presence would set the stage for the next phase to impact South Maui.

Naval History and Heritage Command. Operation Sailor Hat on Kaho'olawe, which is part of the moku of Honua'ula.

TOURISM

After the conclusion of World War II, the population in the region decreased dramatically as the military personnel returned home. In an effort to retain some of its population, South Maui turned to tourism as its next economic venture. By the 1970s, there were almost one million tourists per year coming to Maui. By the 1980s, arrivals doubled to 2 million per year. The numbers climbed to nearly 3 million in 2019. The South Maui area now called Wailea was developed as a tourist destination in the 1970s. Tourist resorts and accommodations, along with new residential communities, have continued to be developed in this area and now stretch north into the town of Kīhei, and into Mākena on the south. By the beginning of the 21st century, tourism had officially replaced agriculture as Maui's leading industry.

Digital Archives of Hawai'i, Wailea, Maui.

Līloa Hale

Līloa Hale is an affordable rental housing project that will result in 117 units for seniors (62 and older) earning 30% to 60% of AMI. Units will be 1 and 2-bedroom and managed by Hale Mahaʻolu near the existing Hope Chapel on Līloa Drive.

Maui County Planning Commission submittal for SMA Permit, 2020

Hale o Piʻikea

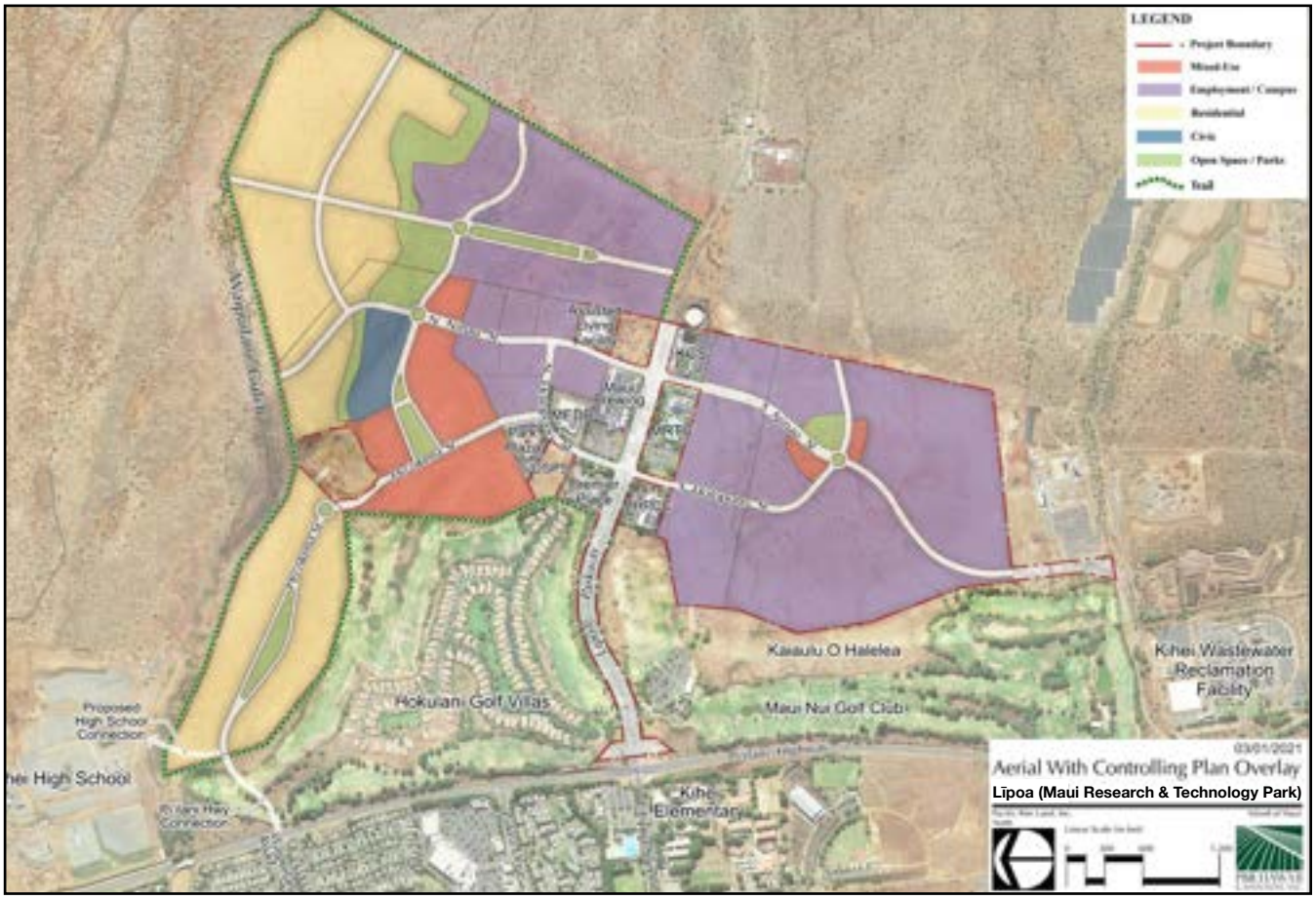
Hale o Piʻikea has three phases, the first of which is 90 units of 2 and 3-bedroom affordable rentals for residents earning 60% AMI and below. This first phase also features five units for mobility impared residents and two for visually impared. As envisioned, the whole project will result in 223 affordable units in a mixed-used development.

ʻIkenakea Development

Līpoa (Maui Research & Technology Park)

Līpoa is a mixed-use community that includes residential, commercial and office uses. The project is intended to create opportunities for a broad range of desirable knowledge-based and emerging industries. The residential areas are outlined in yellow with some residential uses also permitted in areas outlined in salmon. Līpoa has been approved for up to 1,250 units, 200-300 of which will be affordable housing units.

Though this plan has the most potential for affordable housing units, it needs an estimated $14 million in infrastructure improvements (such as road improvements) to be able to make these housing opportunities possible.



Pacific Rim Land, Inc.

Kaʻonoʻulu (Piʻilani Promenade)

When completed, Kaʻonoʻulu is intended to be an 88-acre master planned mixed-use community anchored by 500 workforce residential units that are in compliance with the existing approvals provided for by the State Land Use Commission and the County.

Koa Partners

Kama'ole Pointe Condominiums

Just mauka of the area between Kama'ole Beach Parks I & II, Kama'ole Pointe Condominiums will be 129 units of 100% workforce housing. Units in this complex will be 1, 2, and 3 bedroom.

Urban Design Review Board Application for SMA Permit, 2016

Kilohana Makai

This 28-unit single-family workforce housing project is an infill project located in South Kīhei near Keawakapu Beach. All homes are four bedrooms and range in size from 1,425 square feet to 1,817 square feet.

Aina Lani Pacific, LLC

Honua'ula (Wailea 670)

When completed, Honua'ula will include 288 workforce housing units, 515 single-family homes, and 346 multifamily homes. It also includes 24 acres of mixed-use development and 103 acres of recreational and open space areas.

Honua'ula Partners

PROJECT TO WATCH

Pūlehunui South | Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL)

Pūlehunui South is a 646-acre project that will include a blend of agricultural homesteads, places to process agricultural products, facilities to learn about Hawaiian cultivation and cultural practices, and a farmers market featuring the products that will be grown on the land.

The project plans for a future where the Kīhei Bypass is constructed and takes into account a potential mauka connector road between South Maui and upcountry. It also identifies three potential intersections along Maui Veterans Highway to serve the project and multiple potential locations for a regional wastewater treatment plant.

Pūlehunui South is one of a few projects planned for the area by DHHL, and the Hawai'i departments of Land and Natural Resources, Accounting and General Services, and Public Safety. Together, these four agencies are proposing to prepare a regional infrastructure master plan for water, wastewater, drainage and roadways. A Final Environmental Impact Statement for the master plan was accepted in 2020.

While Pūlehunui South does not appear in the list of projects House Maui is actively supporting at this time, we recognize its value and importance to Maui's Native Hawaiians and the perpetuation of Hawaiian culture in South Maui. The project is in the conceptual planning phase and it is not yet clear how many homes it will provide. As project plans progress, we see great potential for Pūlehunui South to fill a need for Hawaiian homesteads and will likely include it in future updates to this plan.

Department of Hawaiian Homelands

PROJECT TO WATCH

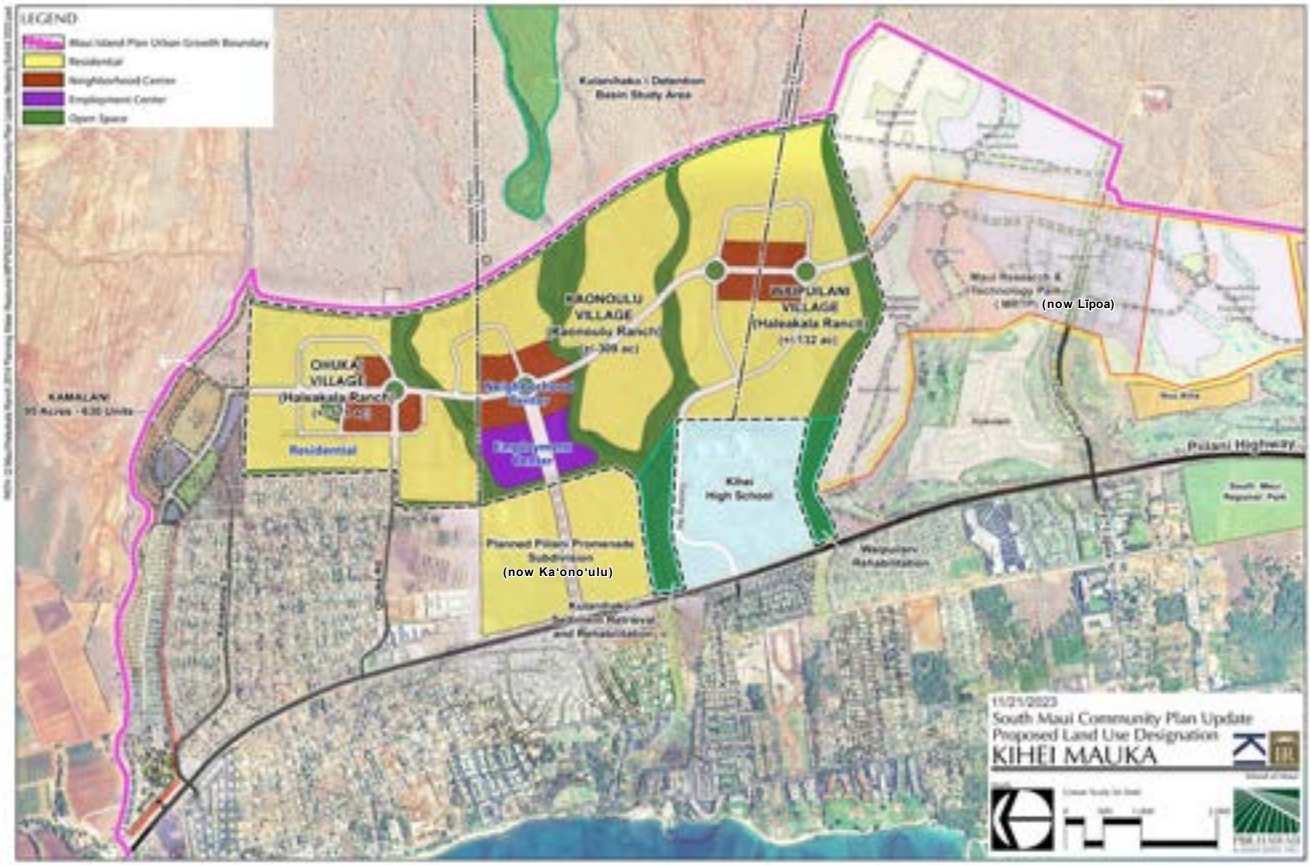
Kīhei Mauka

Kīhei Mauka is in North Kīhei, mauka of Piʻilani Highway between Līpoa (identified as Maui Research & Technology Park in the graphic to the right) and the previously developed residential and light industrial area mauka along ʻOhukai Street. This 583-acre project is owned by Haleakalā Ranch Company and Kaʻonoʻulu Ranch LLLP. The ranches have collaborated to envision a project that incorporates smart-growth principles featuring single- and multi-family residential, mixed-use centers, commercial, and light industrial.

This project targets the needs of local residents, with significant area planned to house South Maui's workers. Kīhei Mauka also presents an opportunity to plan for regional transportation infrastructure. The ranches are coordinating with Līpoa and Waiakoa to plan multi-modal routes through the completed project and to adjacent projects, which will ultimately reduce traffic in the region.

The backbone of this infrastructure is the extension of N. Nīnau Street in Līpoa. In the long term, this project would also facilitate regional planning for a mauka collector road that begins at the Veterans Highway in DHHL's Pūlehunui project and would extend Nīnau Street within the Urban Growth Boundary, reconnecting with Piʻilani Highway at the Kanani Street intersection.

This project is very early in the planning process, but community plan designations that match the proposed project were added to the Community Plan Advisory Committee's draft of the South Maui Community Plan. This plan has not yet received County Council approval, but Kīhei Mauka's inclusion is evidence of the community's general support for growth in this area. HMI will continue to monitor this project and may include it among priority projects in future versions of this plan as project details become more certain.



Ka'ono'ulu Ranch and Haleakalā Ranch

HOUSE
MAUI

CHAPTER 6

WEST MAUI

LAHAINA - KĀʻANAPALI

WAI

I ka ʻōlelo nō ke ola, i ka ʻōlelo nō ka make.
In language is life, in language is death.
TRADITIONAL HAWAIIAN PROVERB

Many words in the Hawaiian language represent foundational cultural concepts. Intergenerationally transmitted, the concepts embedded within ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi influence the minds, emotions, actions, and reactions of those who are proficient in the Hawaiian language. "Wai" is one such concept.

Commonly understood to mean "freshwater," wai simultaneously evokes the concepts of "retention, storage, containment," as well as "source of life." In Hawaiian Dictionary, the concept of wai has six distinct definitions and these definitions are followed by 227 entries directly associated with this term. "Wai" is also a component in numerous compound words, proper names, place names, and terms.

Presided over by a variety of akua (deities) and ʻaumākua (ancestral guardians), wai is featured in innumerable traditional narratives, and it continues to be used in ceremony. Management of wai has been codified in the laws of pre-contact governments, the Hawaiian Kingdom, the Territory of Hawaiʻi, and the State of Hawaiʻi.

In historic times, generations of Native Hawaiians and residents have been directly impacted by wai issues such as water diversion for foreign industries and interests, forced displacement, loss of livelihood, and environmental pollution and degradation. In modern times, western military practices, sewage injection wells, development, and lengthy water rights disputes and litigations continue to exasperate the psychological, physical, and spiritual wellbeing of Native Hawaiians and local residents. The presence or absence of wai is a limiting factor for housing development, especially in West and South Maui.

INDIGENOUS FOUNDATIONS

For generations, the moku of Lahaina in West Maui served as a preferred location for Maui's aliʻi (chiefs). This was due in part to the abundance of food from both the land and sea, and because of the beautiful landscape and favorable climate. Lands along the coast of West Maui provided prime locations for growing kalo (taro), ʻuala (sweet potato), ʻulu (breadfruit), and niu (coconut). Lahaina's main loʻi kalo (irrigated terrace of kalo) lands are found on the slopes of Puʻukukui and are fed by the three large streams of Kahana, Kahoma, and Kauaʻula. ʻAuwai (irrigation canals) were built to divert water from these streams to support crop cultivation. Any excess water was later returned to the streams or other bodies of water.

Upland native forests of the kalana (sub-district) of Lahaina were effectively managed for centuries to produce the quantities of water needed to sustain widescale taro cultivation in the naturally dry lowland regions. A unique system of water management transported water laterally across the region, not only supplying myriad loʻi kalo, but also simultaneously charging the aquifer resulting in numerous freshwater springs along the coast. As a result, Maui's highest concentration of inland fishponds (no fewer than 11) were once found in the vicinity of modern-day Lahaina Town – the canal-crossed lands once dubbed "the Venice of the Pacific" by British captain George Vancouver.

Across these lowlands, Native Hawaiians also cultivated an expansive grove of breadfruit trees which not only provided abundant resources for residents, but also reduced excessive evaporation of freshwater under the intense Lahaina sun while improving localized precipitation and climate.

Adjacent to the moku of Lahaina, the deep-valleyed geography of the moku of Kāʻanapali was formed over eons through the erosive force of waters that course down to the shore from Puʻukukui at the summit of the ʻEʻeka Range – one of the wettest regions on the planet. Along the valleys, Native Hawaiians cultivated extensive systems of loʻi kalo, and the waters therein were managed as fisheries rich in freshwater species such as ʻoʻopu (native goby), varieties of ʻōpae (native freshwater shrimp), and hīhīwai (native shellfish).

The ahupuaʻa south of present-day Lahaina Town were also home to agricultural settlements, supported by evidence of heiau (place of worship) complexes and petroglyphs in the region. Along elevated areas in this district, ʻuala was planted where natural rainfall was sufficient, and the sea around river mouths and along the coasts teemed with resources. The valley of Olowalu was used for loʻi kalo, and the ahupuaʻa of Ukumehame was terraced to support farming. Developed and managed by Native Hawaiians, the significant agricultural resources of this region allowed the growth of a large population in West Maui.

This population was also supported by the fertile fishing grounds along West Maui's coastline. The bays and sea beds in Kahana were recognized for their abundance of marine life, allowing Hawaiians to consistently harvest fish such as kūmū, pāʻūʻū, nenue, and weke.

West Maui's proximity to Molokaʻi and Lānaʻi, and its advantageous position for easy communication with other highly populated areas, further cemented its favorability for the ruling aliʻi. Kākaʻalaneo, who established Maui's moku/ahupuaʻa system, ruled from Kekaʻa, while Piʻilani, the mōʻī who unified East and West Maui, ruled from Lahaina. Numerous features in West Maui's landscape are named after Piʻilani, including the present-day highway that connects West Maui to the rest of the island: Honoapiʻilani (the bays of Piʻilani) Highway. Even after Kamehameha I united the islands into the Kingdom of Hawaiʻi, Lahaina served as the main seat of government for Kamehameha II and Kamehameha III, the second and third rulers of the Hawaiian Kingdom.

FOREIGN INFLUENCES

The arrival of Captain Jean-François de Galaup de Lapérouse on Maui in 1786 initiated the first recorded western contact with the island. In the years that followed, a rush of newcomers traveled to Maui pursuing sandalwood trade, missionary work, the whaling industry, and a burgeoning agricultural economy. With the influx of foreigners and industries came the introduction of new crops and livestock (such as pigs, goats, cattle and sheep) changing the physical landscape of the islands. Mosquitoes were also likely first introduced to the islands in Lahaina.

Foreigners also brought new ideologies regarding land, religion, and value-systems that began to shift the culture and societal norms of the islands. The first missionaries arrived on Maui from New England in the 1820s, and missionary leadership established Lahaina as a primary station in Hawaiʻi due to its proximity to Hawaiian royalty. Meanwhile, foreigners also brought diseases unfamiliar to the native population. Due to the lack of natural immunity, these diseases turned into epidemics and severely ravaged Native Hawaiians, reducing the population by up to 90%.

With the increasing influence of foreign cultures on Maui, and decimation due to foreign epidemics, traditional Hawaiian practices began to decline, and new types of development began to alter the ways Native Hawaiians had lived for centuries. This outside pressure contributed to the Māhele in 1848, creating private land ownership which King Kamehameha III believed was a way to protect the land from a wholesale land grab by a hostile foreign government. Despite the intention, many factors led to the disenfranchisement of Native Hawaiians during the process and lands still ended up in foreign hands.

Hawai'i State Archives, Kamehameha II - Liholiho

Hawai'i State Archives, Kamehameha III - Kauikeaouli

Hawai'i State Archives, Lahaina agriculture

PLANTATIONS

From the mid-1800s and throughout the 1900s, agricultural development in West Maui accelerated. Pioneer Mill Company and Baldwin Packers became notable producers of sugar and pineapple exports respectively. Increased development had significant effects on West Maui's landscape. Streams were diverted to irrigate fields, and many cultural sites were demolished, buried, and built over as new industries emerged and grew. Many buildings in Lahaina, such as Baldwin House and Hale Paʻi, reflect these early plantation and missionary influences.

Pioneer Mill closed in 1999, ending sugar production in West Maui. Maui Land and Pineapple Company, the product of a merger between Baldwin Packers and Maui Pineapple Company, ended its pineapple operations in 2009.

TOURISM

In the mid-1900s, Maui's government leaders and landowners began turning their attention from agriculture to tourism. This shift was exemplified by development of the first-master planned resort in the State of Hawaiʻi – Kāʻanapali Beach Resort – in 1962. Tourist accommodations now stretch north from the Kāʻanapali area into the area now called Kapalua. During the last fifty years, West Maui's character has once again changed, with increased numbers of visitors in exclusive resort areas along the coast, but also in neighborhoods through short-term rentals. Today, the visitor industry is the primary economic driver in West Maui.

Between industrialized cultivation of sugarcane and pineapple, along with development in service of tourism, West Maui has suffered a steep decline in environmental and cultural health due to widescale abuse and mismanagement issues. Sewage injection wells, along with nutrient rich runoff, have led to the pollution and degradation of reefs along the region's shorelines. The complete diversion of streams from their natural courses, once an extreme tactic of war, has had devastating impacts on the ecosystem. All of these issues severely impact Native Hawaiians' customary rights and lifestyles and make uncertain the future health and vitality of the region.

WILDFIRES

On August 8, 2023, a wildfire accelerated by winds from Hurricane Dora passing to the south of the Hawaiian Islands destroyed much of Lahaina Town. 101 people died and more than 2,500 housing units were destroyed. Thousands of people are currently without stable housing. The community is grieving the loss of loved ones, homes, and this historic town. As we grapple with the effects of this tragedy, it is clear that we will need to come together to reenvision the future of Lahaina.

Hawai'i State Archives, Front Street

Hawai'i State Archives, Hale Paī

Pulelehua Phase I

The initial phase of Pulelehua will feature 100 affordable units for sale. Planned to be a complete community, with everything a resident would need within walking distance, Pulelehua's remaining four phases of development will include more affordable and market-rate housing, commercial development, parks and trails, and space for a future school.

Top and bottom images: Maui Oceanview LP

Lahaina Teacher Housing

The Lahaina Teacher Housing project is located on lands that were identified to relocate homes that were in the path of the Lahaina Bypass. The remaining vacant lots of this subdivision will be used for either single-family or multifamily rental units for Hawai'i Department of Education teachers.

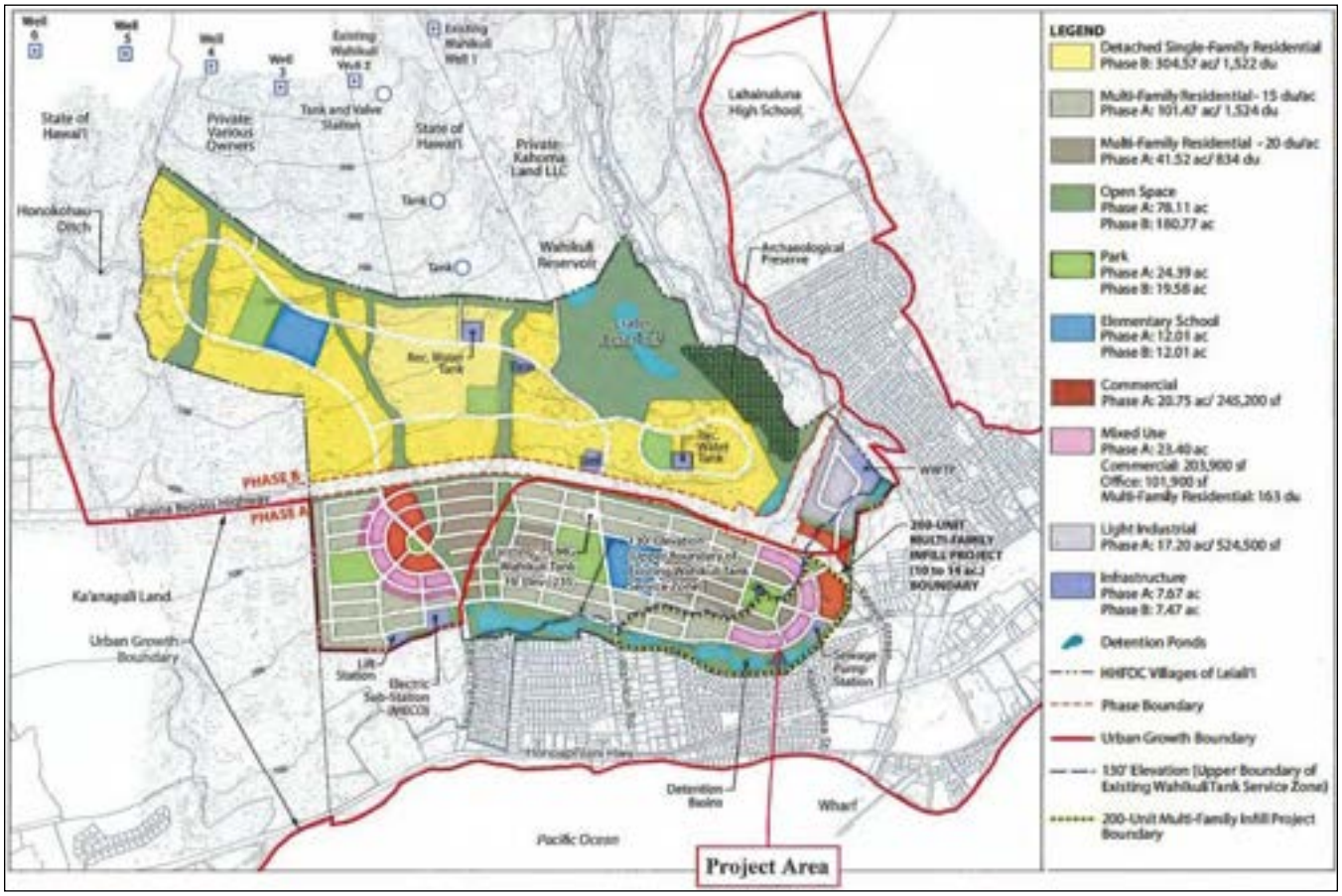
Google Earth

Villages of Leialiʻi 1B Homestead Property (DHHL)

The Villages of Leialiʻi 1B is the next phase of this project. Village 1A was completed and occupied in 2007. Village 1B will include 250 single-family homes and a community playground. This project is in the early permitting stages.

Villages of Leialiʻi Phases A & B (HHFDC)

Hawaiʻi Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC) is leading the master planning and development efforts of the 1,100 acre property that stretches mauka from Lahaina Gateway Center to Lahaina Civic Center. When completely developed, this property is planned to include affordable and market-rate housing (4,100+ units planned), commercial, light industrial, and public uses. The first phase of this project is Kaiāulu o Kūkuʻia, commonly known as the "Keawe Street Apartments," which broke ground in 2022.



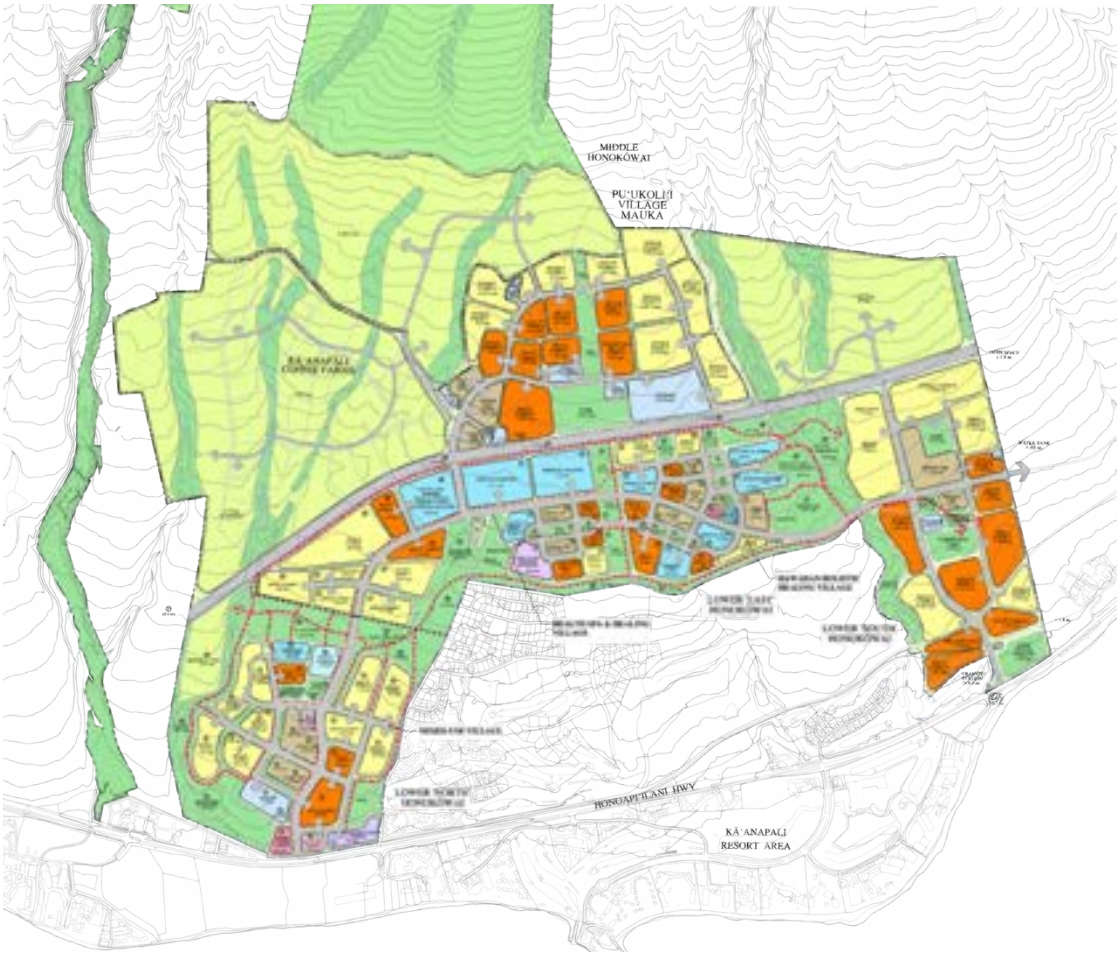
State of Hawai'i Housing Finance Development Corporation

PROJECT TO WATCH

Kā‘anapali 2020

Kā‘anapali 2020 was a community master planning effort that began in 1999 for more than 4,000 acres mauka of the Kā‘anapali resort area. When complete, this project is intended to include parks and trails, mixed use and commerical areas, government uses, a hospital, and single-family and multifamily housing.

Kā‘anapali Land Management (KLM) is still actively pursuing this project, but it is not yet refined enough to include in this plan. If KLM begins to seek approvals for development, Kā‘anapali 2020 will be included in future versions of this regional plan.



Kā‘anapali 2020

HOUSE
MAUI

444 HĀNA HWY SUITE 201
KAHULUI, HI 96732

(808) 242-6184

HOUSEMAUI.COM

WWW.HAWAIICOMMUNITYFOUNDATION.ORG