

From: [Anne Walton](#)
To: [DBEDT LUC](#)
Subject: Testimony on the 2nd DEIS for Hokua Place
Date: Thursday, December 20, 2018 2:23:02 PM

TO: State Land Use Commission
FROM: Anne Walton, Kapa'a, Kaua'i
DATE: December 20, 2018
RE: Hokua Place Development

Aloha Land Use Commissioners,

I am writing you in regards to the proposed land use designation change of the 97 acres directly adjacent to the Kapa'a Middle School on Kauai, which in its current iteration is referred to as "Hokua Place". I say in its current iteration because this particular project dates back to 2004 when it was called Kapa'a Highlands, and had different investors that subsequently went bankrupt, one of which was under federal investigation in Hawaii. Between 2005 and 2013, two separate petitions were filed to reclassify these state agricultural lands for urban use. In 2013, the property went for foreclosure auction and was purchased by a Palos Hill, Illinois based management firm, and now overseen by HG Management of Utah. This is only important because the one common thread throughout these changes has been Greg Allen, the man I heard stand before the Kauai Planning Commission every two weeks for seven months in 2017. With each version of his project the size, scale and scope of the project changed, and at the same time new promises were made in regards to what the development would provide to the community, most of which remain unsubstantiated.

In addition to the observed performance in front of our own Planning Commission and County Council, I made a thorough review of the 2nd Draft Environmental Impact Statement. My conclusions for why I am opposed to the up-zoning of Hokua Place from agricultural lands to an urban center designation are based on the following:

INCREASE IN TRAFFIC IMPACTING THE EAST SIDE OF KAUAI

The 2nd DEIS indicates that Hokua Place is expected to generate 487 vehicle trips per hour (vph) and 560 vph during the AM and PM peak hours of traffic, respectively, then buried in the document they qualify that by saying that: "The AM and PM peak hour trip generation characteristics for Hokua Place were increased by about 90±vph over the DEIS traffic study, primarily due to the use of the average peak hour trip rates for multi-family dwelling units." So what numbers are we looking at here? By their estimates, Hokua Place will actually add another estimated 1,900 vph (AM plus PM) to Kuhio Hwy and the By-Pass Road, further miring us in perpetual gridlock. If that isn't enough, imagine Kuhio Highway when 2000 cars are added to the Kapa'a logjam by two already approved resorts ready to go up in the Wailua-Kapa'a corridor. The only solutions proposed by developers are to: **a)** transfer ownership of the By-Pass Road to the State, of which their property simply crosses, but they don't own the whole road – in any case it is already fully operational and not noticeably reducing the Kuhio Hwy traffic congestion; **b)** cutting a road between Olohena Road and the By-Pass Road which is a smoke and mirrors approach to reducing traffic, in no way will it reduce congestion as that is not where the problem lies (except during school drop-off and pick-up hours); **c)** and then the rest of their 48 significant improvements in the DEIS are punted to the State or County

(see HDOT's study *Kapa'a Transportation Solutions*, August 2015).

IMPACTS ON AN AGING AND INADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Aging infrastructure once again became apparent when a sewer cap blew up in November 2018 on Kuhio Highway and a sewage spill contaminated the Wailua River beach area, and nearshore reefs. A few days later there was an island-wide energy blackout. Increased water outages require old water lines and pumps to be frequently upgraded. We know about bumpy potholed county roads, as well as defects in the highway. Adding more cars increases damage to an already poorly maintained network of roads. Data given for Kapa'a Schools capacity is outdated (2010/11), so stating that they are not at capacity is irrelevant until the data reflects the current situation. The fact that County has "several solid waste programs with several other proposals that will likely be implemented by the time this Project is under construction" creates both a dependency on the County to solve the problem of solid waste for Hokua Place, and provides no assurance that sufficient capacity will be in place to handle the additional burden of solid waste generated by an additional 769 residential units (not to mention from the other 4 developments on the east side alone).

MISLEADING SALES PITCH ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING

30% of the Hokua Place subdivision condos will be in the affordable category as required by Kaua'i County Ordinance No. 860. However, the projected sales prices in 2nd DEIS quotes prices of multiplex and single family houses comes with the warnings: "Prices are subject to market conditions." This means that housing prices can increase at the will of the developer, and if precedent is any indicator, then this will happen. And, in addition to that qualifier, none of the current projected pricing speaks to meeting our affordable housing needs. Single-family units are priced from \$650,000 to \$950,000. In fact, even the lots (without houses) are projected to be selling in the \$216,000-\$316,000 range (note: all these numbers are in 2015 dollars, as stated in the DEIS). Add on the actual building of a house, then these lots clearly exceed the "affordable housing" threshold. It is clear that the audience for Hokua Place is not comprised of current residents, the ones most in need of housing, but rather it is catering to the current trend whereby 41% of residential real estate sales are to mainlanders and foreigners.

PROMISES MADE IN THE DEIS TO THE COMMUNITY

1) Hokua Place promised to provide a public pool for the community, but conveniently forgot to indicate that they will provide the land but the County has to build and maintain the pool – which the County has yet to agree to; 2) they proposed to develop a "sustainable community" that "preserves the rural like character of Kapa'a while meeting a growing housing need" – none of these three items have been substantiated by examples in the 2nd Draft Environmental Impact Statement; 3) they justify the urban center up-zoning request to the Land Use Commission by saying they are building within a 10-minute walk of the Kapa'a core center (compact and walkable is a criteria) when in fact the walk access is dangerous in that there are no sidewalks between Hokua Place and town along some of the busiest streets on the island; 4) they declare they are "preventing sprawl into Open and Agricultural lands" when in fact they are creating sprawl; 5) they are proposing an area off of Olohena Road for future police and fire sub-stations yet at no time has this need been identified by the County, especially since a new police station was built around the corner near Baptiste Sports Complex not more than 5-years ago (and it is not clear whether Hokua Place wants to lease this land to the County or gift it).

THE MYTH OF HOKUA PLACE AS A MODEL OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The following statement in the 2ndDEIS exemplifies how shallow their understanding is of “sustainability: “The management policies will encourage residences to participate in the moral ethics of respecting the surrounding environment, reduce waste and excessive consumption, and fulfill the responsibility as trustees of the environment for the present and future generations. Residences will be invited to participate in policy and decision making.” (2ndDEIS). These are simply platitudes without any substance. This does not set a very high standard for “sustainability”.

INACCURATE INFORMATION AND DATA IN THE 2ndDEIS

Some of the data in the 2ndDEIS is old and out dated such that it makes some of the points and projections grossly inaccurate. An example of this is on page 111 of the DEIS which states that we have “roughly 52,00 residents”, however, more recent projections are between 71,000 and 77,000. The DEIS then builds its projected residential sales, residential needs and job growth on these miscalculated numbers in order to justify our future housing needs. The math on this just does not work. Another misrepresentation of information is on page 120 in reference to traffic and vehicle numbers (also mentioned above in the comments on traffic). And another example of misinformation is on page 130 which states “ DOT is presently planning to complete the widening of Kuhio Highway by the year 2019. The widening of Kuhio Highway from the Kapa’a By-Pass Road to Kuamoo Road is included in this traffic impact analysis. Anyone who lives here knows that in 2018 DOT repaved this section and has no intention of going back in 2019 to widen a section of the highway they just paved. These are just an example of some individual misrepresentations of information found throughout the DEIS.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE LAND USE COMMISSION

I am recommending that the Land Use Commission support Alternative 1 – the No Action Alternative from the 2ndDraft Environmental Impact Statement. Under this alternative, no action will be taken and the Project area would be left in its current state. Hokua Place would not be built. The land would remain in the State Lands Use Agricultural District. The “no action” alternative would be consistent with the sentiments of the community.

Respectfully,
Anne Walton

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