

To: State Land Use Commission, Chief Clerk, Riley Hakoda, [riley.k.hakoda@hawaii.gov](mailto:riley.k.hakoda@hawaii.gov)

Re: Hokua place, Kapa'a, LUC Docket No. A11-791/HG

Date: December 8, 2020



Aloha Mr. Hakoda:

May I respectfully request that the land under Hokua Place remain Agricultural.

The developers of Kapa'a Highlands – now Hokua Place - knew, and were very much aware, when they purchased this property that it was zoned Agricultural land. Their intent was always to rezone it, develop it, flip it, and walk away with their multi-millions, leaving our residents and tourists with all the mess they will leave behind, cast in stone, forever. They never had any intention of doing agriculture, but with their highly-paid consultants and lawyers, know how to navigate the system.

Affordable housing is only tiny percentage of this project but they are touting it as “affordable” - it makes it more warm and fuzzy – as does now giving it a Hawaiian name. I attended a Wailua-Kapa'a Neighborhood Association presentation by Greg Allen a few years ago when it was still Kapa'a Highlands. I asked him about the affordable housing, and he said it would be “up to 30%”. So I asked that, in theory, that could mean 0.5% or 1% - as that is **up to 30%....**, and he got very angry. He also kept insisting he was NOT a developer, which drew some ironic laughter and “of course you are's!” from those assembled. Their \$ amounts for the housing also do not take into account the monthly Maintenance Fees they will also have to pay, which will be a significant addition to the housing cost itself – not reflected in their documents and therefore misleading.

An estimate of vehicles from Hokua Place, they say 1,300 vehicles for 769 units. That's only two per unit. You know the actuality will more likely be: dad - truck, mom - SUV, son - truck, daughter – sedan, so 4 cars per “affordable “unit at the very least which is more like over 3,000 vehicles so their traffic estimates are WAY off target. I'm being conservative with 4 vehicles per family. Our rural (and yes, this area is RURAL, not URBAN,) country lanes are very narrow and winding (with huge potholes I might add). Olohena Road and the Bypass just cannot take this extra burden with this HUGE development. Oh yes, and they're going to “preserve the rural-like (“like”?) character of Kapa'a”. **No they're not!** They're going to ruin our rural, green, and lovely, AGRICULTURAL area with URBAN sprawl and an even worse traffic nightmare! The Traffic Studies they have used are from 2015, 2017, also way, way out of date. Visitor traffic is of course way higher each year due to marketing efforts. So out of date.

None of this makes sense in this area. It would have made more sense for the developer to have purchased land in Lihu'e which was already zoned Urban. With all Lihu'e's many extra new and wide roads and highways all over the place now it would have been more viable, as Lihu'e does not have the road/traffic issues as does Kapaa.

Whether we like it or not, tourism is our mainstay on Kaua‘i. Without it, our economy would completely collapse. It’s bad enough that I have to sit in traffic for hours, but I feel so sorry for our visitors, who have come here expecting paradise. Instead they wait in traffic for hours just like they did back in LA. Why would you come here and waste your vacation just sitting in traffic when you can do the same thing at home for free? How frustrating. We desperately need the dollars from tourism, and I have seen many letters to The Garden Island newspaper from visitors (some of whom have been coming for many years), shocked at how bad the traffic is in Kapa‘a, and thinking they may not return until we do something. Nothing is going to happen with DOT for years, and their choices of what to do to alleviate this are extremely limited and costly. The extra stress on everyone is changing the face of Kaua‘i too – at least in Kapa‘a. What used to be the land of aloha is now the land of anger and rage in some cases – unfortunate but true. Another blow to tourism.

Albeit a little relief due to COVID-19 temporarily lessening visitor numbers right now, the Kapa‘a Crawl is road rage daily. I work in Kapa‘a and live in Wailua so turn south on to Kūhiō Highway every afternoon. We just sit. The traffic coming north from Līhu‘e turning up to the Bypass, and the traffic coming out from the Bypass heading south causes major gridlock. Just too many people for too few lanes. There are so many near misses with people driving crazy and cutting in and missing you by inches, forcing you out into the other lane, it’s insane. I see crazy driving daily. It’s deadly.

The Kapa‘a Bypass already gets backed up, particularly heading south a.m. and p.m., by people trying to beat the madness of the overloaded traffic on Kūhiō Highway to get to Līhu‘e, and please don’t even try to go north on the Bypass on a Wednesday afternoon, when they hold the Farmer’s Market by the Armory in Kapa‘a. You’ll get stuck in traffic halfway up the Bypass and will sit there for 45 minutes, attempting to reach the roundabout less than a mile away. The same when you’re trying to head from Kapa‘a town up Olohena Road on this same Wednesday. With all the traffic coming from the north on the bypass, from the south on the bypass, there is total gridlock and road rage with too many people for too few, small roads. And they’re going to add another lane down from the the Hokua development down to the Bypass road with extra thousands of vehicles? Madness. Complete madness.

Our already fragile infrastructure just cannot take this. We have to make sure our infrastructures are in place, roads, water, sewage (we had serious and major sewage collapse issues recently from old and apparently improper sewage infrastructure in Wailua which snarled the highway for days and the effluent polluted Wailua Bay), etc. before we do any more development. For too many years, it has been the other way around, and has to stop, for all the logical reasons. Now add in the Coco Palms redevelopment to the wastewater issue. Hokua Place will be using this Wailua Bay sewage system, which has already backed up WITHOUT all the extra sewage waste from these homes.

Fresh water access to this area is also limited. The current source relies on Grove Farm’s Waiahi surface water treatment plant. There are already existing concerns with this facility’s ability to provide water, including the absence of a NPDS wastewater permit with the State since May 2016 and ongoing litigation relating to the unpermitted taking of water from streams in conservation areas. Not to mention the water plant is already at or near capacity.

Our Agricultural land is **FINITE**, and shrinking drastically as we speak. Once it’s gone to development it won’t come back, it’s gone forever. All these lands used to be viable for sugar cane

and pineapple, and could be viable again for multi-faceted agriculture. Which is what the intent of the current long-time zoning is. **Agriculture.** The owners could always lease out small, or quarter, half or one-acre lots to local people to farm so we can actually produce some more of our own food here, help have fresh Kaua'i produce and stop importing so much stuff. Hokua Place could become Hokua Agricultural Farms (and Market?) instead! Wouldn't that be awesome? Food security is SO important, particularly when you're just a dot in the ocean, the remotest islands on the planet and this would be a wonderful opportunity for some small grass-roots organic agriculture which did not need to depend upon a barge to get here and feed our people.

Malama Kaua'i, a community-based nonprofit organization that focuses on advocating, educating, and driving action towards a sustainable Kaua'i is already active and successful in the north shore/Kilauea area with many local farmers. Maybe Hokua could copy their concept? We have already seen, due to COVID-19, that many supermarket shelves are empty of our produce staples. We need to grow our own food! Keep this Ag!

Will there ever be a time when Urban land gets converted to Agricultural? I don't think so, I wish! This is a one-way highway (so to speak). I'm not against building a *truly* affordable housing development. It just needs to be in the right place, with appropriately zoned land and sufficient infrastructure in place **first**. Kapa'a just cannot handle this. Lihu'e would be a more logical option with so many businesses and shops being walkable.

There is already the looming Coco Palms traffic and infrastructure issues (looks like they are starting on the rebuild with construction material and heavy equipment in its driveway), plus the development of the lot between the Sheraton Kapaa and the Kaua'i Coast at the Beachboy, permitted a long time ago, despite their negative consequences on traffic, especially during hurricanes/tsunamis. The evacuation route is our same, one and only, two single lanes Kūhiō Highway which just cannot take these extra vehicles. But it has so been deemed. We'll just sit there in traffic and we're all gonna die. We have one road, two single lanes. And it aint gonna change. It just cannot take any more. Neither can we, please.

I speak for many of my friends and `ohana here. I implore the members of the Land Use Commission to keep this land in Agricultural zoning. Let's feed our people! Personally, I'd love some arugula!

My apologies for my lengthy testimony, but it is so important to me that we try our very best to retain our shrinking Agricultural lands before it is too late – we are **The Garden Island** – and we need food for our people.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration Mr. Hakoda.

Mahalo nui loa,



Carol A. Beardmore