

Re: In SUPPORT of the Puna Community Development Plan;  
with comments on Planning Director's Background Report and Recommendation

Greetings Planning Commissioners,

I am a member of the 2007-2008 Puna CDP Steering Committee. I voted in favor of the May 2008 draft, with the understanding that it is a living document, maturing over time with more research and data.

I ask the Planning Commission for an affirmative vote to accept the Puna CDP March 2008 draft, with the following qualifications:

1. The Planning Directors argument that it's okay to approve subdivisions and more cesspools at Maku'u based on obsolete State Dept. of Health regulations, does not adequately justify the risk of contaminating the water.
  - We don't know if the water supply will be contaminated by thousands more cesspools, or if it won't.
  - We should preserve it until we have more data.
  - There should be a full-scale environmental assessment
  - It could develop into a new economic base
  - A water well head and delivery services (trucks or pipes) could create a lot of jobs
  - Hauling water long distances during droughts could be a thing of the past.
  - We need more efficient ways to get water to increasing numbers of residences during times of drought.
  
2. In the Planning Director's second recommendation regarding the Plan's more restrictive grubbing and grading permit process, he presents two weak arguments that do nothing more than give in to the inadequacies of the process.
  - He says that a County commission to review grading and grubbing permits for historical or cultural sensitivity will slow the approval process down and

result in more un-permitted land clearing activity. Today, State Historic Preservation is required to review, but it's done without a thorough investigation, based on the limited data on hand in the State database.

- If the County developed a licensing board, inspector-contractors could be on-call for every aspect of the building process, this burden that overwhelms the Planning and Building departments every time there's a real estate boom. The licensing board would create new trades, and more people could be gainfully employed without increasing the number of staff inspectors, and then laying them off when the boom is over. Contract inspector work is possible if we approach the problems with new age ideas.

The Puna CDP has a firm stance in support of a more restrictive grubbing and grading permit approval process. I stand behind it for many reasons.

- Storm water runoff, erosion and residential flooding, caused by excessive bulldozing is more prevalent today, and it will get worse as more forest falls.
- Bulldozing without pre-defined boundaries often results in poorly planned home sites and driveways.
- Bulldozing without an inspection process causes most dozer work to be done without a permit.
- Careless dozer operators push vegetation onto adjoining properties, when their clients request them to "clear the entire lot".
- In some cases, the lack of inspection has caused the wrong lot to be dozed.
- In 2007 the County Council spent \$250K on "pilot" pig control program, because a flurry of phone calls were received complaining about pigs in people's yards. Pigs are losing habitat as quickly as native birds are, each time the dozer drops more trees.
- It isn't necessary to clear more than a quarter acre of land in the forest to live comfortably and to have a yard, a garden and a greenhouse.
- Only some cultural and historical sites and features are currently protected by land use laws of the State.
- Natural, biological and geological sites and features are essential habitat for rare and endangered species found nowhere else on Earth. These species need the forests on private lands to survive. There is very little forest left in Puna that has not been inundated by lava, or subdivided.

3. I strongly urge the following "down zoning compromise" revision in place of the Planning Director's recommendation to replace section 3.2.3.b. Note: This alternative would eventually render any lot larger than 10 acres today, down to an allowable 5 acre parcel *unless a one-time only subdivision clause is written in* to this ordinance, and I suggest the clause be included.

Where the number of acres read "50", it should be "30" (two places). Where acres reads "5", it changes to "6" (two places). It must include lots currently zoned for something smaller, to read:

- Lots of 100 acres or more to A-20A
- Lots of 30 acres or more but less than 100 acres to A-15a
- Lots of 6 acres or more but less than 30 acres to a designation that would allow no more than a two-lot subdivision
- Lots of less than 6 acres to A-5a

4. Make correction # 4 as pointed out by the Planning Director in the Background and Recommendation document.

Please forward your affirmative vote for the 2008 Puna Community Development plan to the County Council, as soon as possible.

Thank you kindly,

Kim Tavares

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