



# Hāmākua Community Development Plan



CDP Update

June 2011

## The CDP and Town Revitalization Planning

Significant community input during the CDP visioning process demonstrated that revitalizing Hilo-Hāmākua's small towns and villages while maintaining their unique historic character is a high community priority. Yet, due to the large geographic size of the planning area, the CDP will not be able to develop town revitalization plans for its 13+ towns and villages. So how do we intend on addressing this community priority? The CDP is developing a town revitalization planning "toolkit" that will provide a planning process template and contain a variety of planning tools to serve as a resource for local communities to create customized town revitalization plans in collaboration with the Planning Department.

In order to develop this toolkit in a live setting, a Town Revitalization Planning Exercise was held in Honomū on June 4<sup>th</sup> 2011. Honomū was chosen as a living classroom because it contains several key elements of former plantation towns found throughout the region. Particularly, it has a main street core of businesses, a few public facilities, a tourist attraction that draws in visitors, and its town core maintains its historic Plantation character.

### What is a Town Revitalization Planning "Exercise"?

This Town Revitalization Planning Exercise involved inviting a cross-section of stakeholders to the "table" to discuss the current challenges facing Honomū, to identify and test alternative planning scenarios, and to develop recommendations for how best to apply the process and toolkit. By engaging residents, businesses, County planners, and agency representatives in a collaborative setting, we are able to maximize planning and local expertise. Other stakeholders were also on hand to observe the process to evaluate it and its usefulness for planning other towns in the region. The exercise was hosted by the Hāmākua CDP Team and facilitated by Howard Blackson, a town planner that has facilitated similar planning processes in rural Ka'ū and throughout the mainland U.S.



Downtown Honomū & boardwalk, standing in front of Sarong Heaven

### Exercise Components

The exercise began with participants taking a walking tour of Honomū covering downtown Honomū and up 'Akaka Falls Road as far as Kalani Loop to demonstrate the edge of town. During the walking tour, local participants identified unique community features including cultural and historical references, and answered questions about life and business practices in Honomū. Howard pointed out town components and characteristics as well as possible planning strategies for small towns to protect their character and maintain quality of life for residents and visitors. A video of this walking tour can be seen on [www.hamakuacdp.info](http://www.hamakuacdp.info) under the News & Events tab.

Next, participants broke out into three brainstorming groups tasked with mapping the desired future growth for Honomū town. Using tracing paper over existing zoning maps, the groups envisioned the town center, identified and set the "urban" growth boundary, laid out desired street types, connectivity, and pedestrian networks, and identified the types desired areas for open space, affordable housing, senior housing, expanded civic spaces, and discussed additional economic development opportunities.



Howard stands in front of the Banyan tree @ the Honomū Gym. Gyms & parks are not only important for recreation, but as community gathering places and as shelters in case of an emergency.

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## Exercise Components (cont.)

Howard collected the desired future maps and integrated them into an impromptu regulating plan which describes where different neighborhood components such as buildings, streets and open space would be placed.

Participants “tested the plan” to see how well it would meet daily needs and activities, resiliency, economic stimulus, affordability, and aging in place issues. This testing was done using a technology called keypad polling. Keypad polling allows the group to vote through hand-held devices and immediately see on a screen how the room voted. This technology is a quick way to assess group preferences while allowing enough anonymity for participants to feel comfortable in expressing divergent viewpoints.



Honomū residents and local experts discuss what they love about Honomū and how they see its future



Residents, county planners, and consultants brainstorm and map Honomū's assets, facilities, and civic spaces

## What we learned in Honomū?

- Participants represented a good cross-section of the public, including residents, landowners and small business owners
- Participants were generally able to come to consensus on the needs of the town and various strategies to meet those needs
- Participants provided constructive feedback on process components, timing, who else should be in the room, and some of the revitalization tools in the toolkit
- Participants expressed enthusiasm and a willingness to partner with the Planning Department for future town revitalization planning sessions

The CDP Team will use the lessons learned from this exercise to fine-tune our Town Revitalization process and toolkit, and will further engage the community on small town revitalization strategies and other overlapping planning challenges at our Regional Workshop, to be held in the Fall of 2011.

**Stay tuned for more information on that in upcoming CDP bulletins!**

Beautiful 'Akaka Falls is almost 4 miles mauka of Honomū Town. The State Park consists of over 65 acres & is a very popular visitor destination. Currently, only a small portion of the 250,000 annual visitors stop in Honomū to visit the shops and buy products from local businesses. One of the challenges is how to get the visitors to slow down, stroll through downtown, & experience Honomū's unique history and hospitality.



## Our Next Steering Committee Meeting will be:

**When: August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011, 5:00-7:00pm**

**Where: Laupāhoehoe Library Humanities Room**

**Agenda:**

- An updated timeline for the CDP, which will include a discussion on where we are & what is coming up next – including mapping out key decision points coming up
- We will also begin planning for a Regional Planning Workshop in the Fall

The CDP team has been working behind the scenes this summer to prepare for some important planning choices coming up soon. Stay involved by attending the Steering Committee meetings, giving your public testimony when appropriate, and keeping up with us on [www.hamakuacdp.info](http://www.hamakuacdp.info) or on Facebook!



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Sign up for Email announcements, go to the “How to Stay Informed” folder on the website

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