

**Questions and Answers
Kohala Community Meeting
August 23, 2005**

1. How can old timers economically keep their land and homes when high prices are driving them out? How can we keep younger generations from having to move?

Property tax laws have been revamped in this County so that existing homeowners do not get taxed out of their home. The problem is that sons and daughters who form new households find it difficult to purchase and even rent a home in today's market. This is a complex and widespread problem throughout the State, not just this County, and not just Kohala. The County is moving on several fronts of this affordable housing problem:

- County is developing approximately 1,000 affordable units in Waikoloa
- Inclusionary zoning requirements have been tightened to require developers to contribute more towards building affordable units;
- Expedited permit procedures are offered to affordable housing developers. Government alone does not have the resources and wisdom to tackle this problem. The private sector and the community need to assist in finding solutions. This affordable housing issue would be a timely topic for brainstorming workshops and community action programs.

2. How will issues be addressed and prioritized? What about affordable housing and healthcare?

We will look to the community to identify and prioritize planning and development issues.

3. Will this process have the ability to impact education and or Medical care in the community?

The CDP can address many community issues, including education and medical care. However, County government cannot provide educational and medical programs and facilities. A well-conceived CDP could possibly provide guidance to other implementing entities – including federal and state agencies and private sector companies.

4. Can the plan include upgrading our local schools and recreation sites like our local park, pool, football and baseball fields - parks like Keokea and Kapaa?

The CDP cannot directly affect state DOE schools or state parks. The CDP can and should include an assessment of County parks, and address needs for upgrading existing County parks and/or creating new County parks.

5. How do we provide public access to those places that are getting gated and fenced off for: fishing, hunting, walking, swimming and hiking? Who can we call for information on access to mountains and ocean?

Chapter 34 of the Hawaii County Code provides for public access from a public highway or street to public shoreline areas and the land below the shoreline and public mountain areas where there are existing facilities for hiking, hunting, fruit picking, ti-leaf sliding, other recreational purposes and where there are existing mountain trails. This section of the Code requires provisions for public access by dedication of land in fee or easement for subdivisions of land and multiple-family development at locations established by the Planning Director or the Planning Commission. Currently, no provisions exist under the Hawaii County Code prohibiting a private land owner from gating private property where no public access easement rights exist.

Depending upon the location, one of several agencies may have information on a particular trail or public access. These include:

- Historic Trails - State Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Wildlife - Na Ala Hele Program; Na Ala Hele Phone: (808) 587-0062 or <http://www.dofaw.net/>.
- Shoreline Public Access - County of Hawaii, Planning Department (808) 961-8288. Look for publication of new Shoreline Public Access Brochure on the County of Hawaii website by end of 2005.
- State parks and trails - State Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Parks; (808) 587-0300 or <http://www.state.hi.us/dlnr/dsp/>
- Volcano National Park Trails - United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service; (808) 985-6011 or http://www.hawaiiweb.com/hawaii/html/sites/volcano_national_park.html
- Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail - United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service; (808) 326-6012 or <http://www.nps.gov/alka/index.htm>

6. What development plans are “in the wings” that we need to know about?
The problem we have responding to requests such as this is the level of detail involved. It is easier (but not easy) to give out information on all permits issued. However, this does not seem to provide an accurate picture of potential future development. The reason is there are many small projects, (e.g., DWS reservoir site) that get picked up in our approval process that distorts the development potential. We have started a GIS layer where we have filtered out the major projects. We can share this as a starting point with the various communities. We need to figure out a way to keep it updated. The next step, then, is how to share this GIS information with the community.

Basically there are two choices:

- Static map, such as a jpeg file

- A stripped down free read-only GIS product.

We are currently experimenting with the latter alternative and should have a decision in a week on the feasibility of that alternative.

7. What kind of zoning changes have already been made but not yet activated?

The following is a list of zoning changes since the original County of Hawaii zoning ordinance in 1967 for which Planning Department records indicate the property has not been entirely subdivided. This list does not include potentially subdividable parcels under original zoning designations or insignificant potential consolidation & resubdivision actions on "re-zoned" properties.

- Kohala Ranch: Ord. 92-40 changed A-20a to RS-20, CV-10, RM-4 & Open zoning. Not all potential subdivision of affected lands has been completed. Various other ordinances changing A-20a to A-3a where parcel subdivision has not yet been done.
- TMK 5-9-06:05: Ord. 05-64 changed 7.47 acres from A-5a to FA-3a. Subdivision for 2 lots pending.
- TMK 5-4-01:10, 11, 13 & 19: Ord. 83-865 changed 400+ acres from A-20a to A-10a and A-3a. Subdivision No. 83-0173 for 50 lots of between 3.0 and 10.5 acres pending.
- TMK 5-5-02:010, 097, 098, 099, 100 & 104: Ord. 83-867 changed 23.528 acres from A-20a to A-3a. Additional potential for further subdivision.
- TMK 5-7-02:011: Ord. 86-082 changed 214 acres from Unplanned to A-1a. Subdivision No. 88-111 has Tentative Approval for 104 lots of approximately 1 acre in size.
- Surety Kohala (TMK 5-6-01:076): Ord. 85-48 changed 1,700 acres from A-20a to A-1a, A-2a, A-600a & Open. Approximately 180 acres remain subdividable into 1 and 2 acre lots.
- TMK 5-5-01:053: Ord. 94-100 changed 5.4 acres from A-5a to A-1a. Not yet subdivided.
- TMK 5-5-01:019: Ord. 96-04 changed 7.63 acres from A-20a to A-3a. Not yet subdivided.
- TMK 5-5-02:039: Ord. 88-65 changed 84,000 sf from A-20 to RS-15. Remainder lot includes original RS zoning with potential for another 4 or 5 lots.
- TMK 5-9-06:049: Ord. 88-151 changed 26.08 acres from A-20a to A-3a. Potential for 6-8 lots.
- TMK 5-5-02:085: Ord. 94-99 changed 7.0 acres from A-20a to A-3a. Tentative Approval for 2 lot subdivision is pending.
- Surety Kohala - Mahukona (TMK 5-7-03:001, 002, 003, 004, 007, 008 & 010): Ord 93-109 changed 200 acres from Unplanned to A-1a, V-2 & Open. Largest part of the Unplanned changed to A-5a with deletion of Unplanned zoning designation. Use Permit No. 111 approved for 18-hole golf course. SMA Use Permit No. approved for 200-240 room hotel, 125-150 1-acre lot subdivision, golf course & tennis facilities. No subdivision pending.

- Gentry Pacific (TMK 5-9-01:008): Ord. 97-102 changed 37.88 acres from A-5a to RS-15. Kahua Makai Subdivision at Waiakailio Bay.
- Hanaula Village Subdivision (TMK 5-4-06:021): Ord. 98-36 changed A-20a & RS-15 to RS-10. PUD No. 58 approved for 34-lot "traditional neighborhood development subdivision." Tentative approval for 34-lot subdivision pending.

8. What is the status of the Kohala Design Review Committee?

There has never been a Kohala Design Review Committee.

9. By the natural environment being the first priority, will you use natural being the first priority, will you use natural topography as boundaries as opposed to legal parcel lines? The one big problem is that automobiles are virtually the only method of transportation. How will you implement bicycle, walking trails for residents to safely get into towns from *mauka* of Akoni Pule Hwy?

Townscape's approach to community planning emphasizes:

- Understanding the natural environment
- Working with the community

In our natural environmental analysis, we try to understand ecosystems: the inter-relationships of climate, topography, geology, soils, streams, ground water, plants, animals, coastal zones, reefs, and nearshore waters.

- Legal parcel lines are a secondary concern.
- Re: multi-use trails – if this is a community need, a system of trails could be incorporated into the CDP.

Community Development Plan Process

10. What is the goal of this plan - to determine the acceptable uses of the different areas of land?

The basic goals in controlling land use are:

- identify and avoid hazardous areas (e.g., flood zones) identify and protect significant ecological and cultural resources (e.g., watershed areas, significant archaeological sites)
- direct and concentrate growth in compact urban areas (to economize infrastructure costs, reduce commuting, and maximize open space)
- balance public and private rights. Of course, public input will supplement and refine these goals. Regulation is the proper tool when the public interest directly relates to public health and safety. But there are many other public interests that go beyond public health and safety, such as preserving a rural lifestyle. We

should not rely only on regulation to tell people what they can and cannot do with their land. We do not want to stifle individual creativity and freedom. Incentive tools should be used where appropriate to encourage certain uses (e.g., tax incentives to preserve native forests).

11. How long is the planning process? 6 months? 2 years?

The typical process takes approximately 2 years. The groundwork laid by the Community Readiness Program could significantly shorten this process since much of the work and organization would have already been started.

12. How long are we planning out for?

The General Plan is a long-range policy document for the County of Hawaii. It is reviewed every 10 years. A Community Development Plan (CDP) is normally seen as a 5- year plan.

13. What happens while we are waiting for CDP?

An effective CDP that the community embraces and is a pragmatic blueprint for action requires much groundwork, such as

- raising the level of knowledge of planning concepts to enable more effective participation
- identifying key stakeholders, issues, and assets
- developing a broad awareness and appreciation of the CDP. By the time the CDP officially starts, hopefully the community has already gelled together as a result of this groundwork to become a community that is better informed, better organized, more self-reliant, and has established a relationship with government to know who, how, and when to intervene in decision-making.

15. Who will decide who will be on the steering committee?

The General Plan states that each CDP shall have a steering committee composed of members appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the County Council. It is anticipated that each community shall offer nominees to the mayor who have demonstrated a commitment and problem solving attitude with broad community respect and support as appointees to the steering committee.

14. Will others not on the steering committee be welcomed at the steering committee meetings?

According to the General Plan, a steering committee for Community Development Plans shall be composed of members appointed by the mayor and confirmed by the County council. Steering committee meetings will be open to the public.

15. Who is responsible to implement plan – not just for the county?

Past CDPs were focused on County actions. Today's CDPs will encompass a wider range of actions and clearly identify who has the lead responsibility to implement the action. With this broader scope, it is even more imperative that the community actively monitor and participate in the implementation of the plan.

1984 Kohala Community Development Plan

16. Why are we re-doing elements of the plan like the historical background when it has been done already with the 1984 plan? A lot is already in the North Kohala Community Development Plan of 1984. It only needs to be adjusted.

The 1984 North Kohala Community Development Plan (CDP) was written to provide implementation guidance over a ten-year period with updates to take place every two years. Now, 21 years later, the NKCDP has never been updated while the world, including North Kohala has changed considerably. This does not mean that the 1984 Plan does not contain some accurate assessments of North Kohala and its people or continue to provide relevant insight on the character and aspirations of the community. On the contrary, depending on the collaborative evaluation of its relevance and accuracy, including the historical background, by the North Kohala community, government and the CDP consultant, it is anticipated that the 1984 Plan will be a valuable asset in the creation of a new or updated North Kohala CDP.

While it can be acknowledged that the Community Readiness Program is the beginning of the CDP process, it is hoped that it will be of significant value to the community as well as government in fostering greater community responsibility in self-determination. This attitude is articulated in the Objectives of the program, which are:

- Educate the public on planning concepts and the CDP process
- Build capacity through training in facilitation and GIS
- Initiate data collection that would be useful for the CDP
- Engage in issues and problem identification, assets inventory, visioning;
- Optionally, to plan and implement a small project as a means to galvanize interest in participating and realizing tangible results;
- To restate and articulate pertinent goals and objectives of the General Plan as they apply to County operations and initiatives;
- To develop an action plan consistent with the restated goals and objectives in order for the County to lead by example and to allocate its limited time and money resources;
- To brainstorm methods to optimize resources by working more efficiently or to leverage with private or other resources; and
- To enable the community to fully support the community development planning process through a better understanding of the process and principles.

17. Are there copies of the old CDP available for review? We might like to actually implement some of the ideas on that plan. What happens with development while we are waiting for the CDP?

The Planning Department has a limited number of print copies (approximately 6) available for sale at \$27.00 each. Copies have been recently provided to the Bond Memorial Library (889-6655). Copies are also available for review at the Planning Department and Department of Research and Development in Hilo and the Planning Department, West Hawaii Office in Kailua-Kona. The plan can also be seen on the website www.kohalaplan.org.

Ideas in the 1984 North Kohala CDP the community finds to be appropriate and desirable for implementation may be incorporated in the new CDP along with implementation strategies. Implementation strategies for existing ideas in the 1984 CDP may also be developed and acted upon by the community and the appropriate action partners.

Until a new CDP is created and adopted for North Kohala, development is primarily regulated by the current zoning, the General Plan and the 1984 North Kohala CDP.

18. Why is it that people who never paid their dues by earning "standing" (in the community of Kohala) want to take over the "development" process to fit their wants and needs? Example: building gated communities, selling of land that was stolen by Castle and Cooke to Kohala Society / Chalon that re-sells to developers and excludes local people from being able to purchase land at an affordable price for themselves and their children. What is really happening is much resentment, hatred towards Chalon / Kohala Surety, new people driving up land and tax prices, rich vs. poor / struggling, etc.

Standing: being of a local family that was Hawaiian or worked plantation and did things for the community for no money gain, like Rev. Goto of Honoka'a who was murdered by the plantation bosses because he fought for better wages, housing, for the local plantation workers. There is much anger and hatred towards those who think they know it all and what's best after being here for 5-10-15 years. When will people learn to respect those who were here 100-200-300+ years ago and those who worked the plantation?

Issues relating to "newcomers vs. locals" and "haves vs. have-nots" are difficult issues that many Hawaii (and mainland) communities are struggling with. Can the CDP process help people to build bridges and develop a better understanding of one another? We hope so, and will do our best to shape a planning process that encourages honest and open communication.

What steps will be taken to get the long time residents of Kohala involved in this process?

It is important to get as many residents as possible to be involved in the process, especially families who have chosen to make Kohala their home for generations. To act on this goal, the process will build on the idea of “starting where people are at” by complementing the use of large community meetings with a range of approaches that reach out to residents. This may include strategies such as holding smaller meetings with residents in different venues – for example, at church gatherings, at school gatherings, at community events – and/or involving “interviewers” from the community who go out to small groups of residents to gather ideas and concerns about the future of Kohala.

19. What can we do to include younger people and families (age bracket 18-30) in this process of participating and developing the future of our Kohala community?

The future of Kohala lies in the hands of the community’s youth. Thus, it is essential that they be exposed to and involved in the community’s efforts to organize and mobilize residents, plan for its future, and take action. Examples of specific ways in which this can happen include

- Creating opportunities for young people to share their own ideas about Kohala’s future and including their hopes and dreams in the planning process
- Having the youth help in mapping the community’s assets; and/or
- Involving youth in interviewing their family and friends to identify key issues and concerns that should be part of broader community conversations. In this way, Kohala’s youth would not only participate in Kohala’s planning process but will also build their capacity to help direct future community building efforts.

20. For me Kohala reverberates with the sounds of old. In the 1992 plan, I see not one word about the ancient history of these *ahupua’a*. May we plan ahead, knowing that we walk over the footsteps of the ancient Hawaiians? With our *Kupuna* to guide us *Mahalo nui loa*.

An important aspect of sound community planning is to move into the future with an awareness and appreciation of from whence we came. Thus, understanding what has sustained Kohala for generations is critical to planning its future. An example of how this will be addressed is the first workshop that will be held in Kohala on “North Kohala’s Cultural and Historical Resources.”

21. How can we maintain our "small town cultural background" and still have many big developments?

A community-based planning process provides the opportunity for residents to develop a shared vision for their community – a vision for now and for future generations. Community residents should utilize the process to articulate that vision, develop clear guiding principles and a values base for community development, and organize themselves to build “voice” for their vision. Having built this type of community capacity, residents can then more effectively utilize processes such as the County’s General and Community Development Planning processes to shape their community according to the common vision and core values they have developed for themselves and for generations to come.

22. Non Gated – Unlocked Development that is based on trust vs. security. How do we get back to this as more and more is locked up gated and insecure?

[Brown, Larry] I see this as primarily a social issue that might be outside the realm of a CDP. Bob Jacobson recently attempted legislation that would prohibit any more gated subdivisions in Hawaii County, which I believe never got out of committee. As long as the county allows new subdivisions with private road ownership, it may be politically impossible to legislate against gated subdivisions.

While I understand why many upscale neighborhoods are gated, I really believe that allowing whole communities to physically isolate themselves from the rest of the population adds to the chasm between the haves and the have-nots. *(It is a symptom of a greater ill in our society that needs to be addressed.)* Nevertheless, telling a majority of the county's residents that they cannot drive down the street in front of your house without an invitation because they can't afford to buy a house on your street is class discrimination and further focuses the criminal activities the rich are trying to protect themselves from onto those less able to protect themselves.

23. How can we live in Kohala and loving living here prevent Kohala from being an expensive place to live in?

[Brown, Larry] What kind of carrots and sticks can be adopted into our property tax code to ensure that truly affordable housing is available for our working population and to ensure that retirees on fixed incomes aren't forced to sell their paid for homes because they can't keep up with their real property taxes?

24. Special are the people who were born and raised in Kohala. Now, with sky-rocketing real estate prices, can most of them keep their land and house and continue to live in Kohala for the next seven generations?

[Brown, Larry] See above.

25. How can we support responsible growth in terms preserving what's unique about Kohala while providing affordable housing and economic opportunity for those of us who call Kohala home?

[Brown, Larry] Isn't this an integral part of a meaningful CDP? The CDP should include an action plan for affordable housing and for preservation of what it is about Kohala that is most valued by its citizens. Exercise democracy and take advantage of every opportunity you can to be involved in shaping the future of your community seems to be something that every citizen can do to help identify and support what is responsible growth for their community.

26. How much land does the county own in N. Kohala?

The County has 59.5 acres of land in North Kohala. The land includes parks, solid waste transfer stations, police and fire stations and baseyards.

27. How does the property tax phenomenon work? For instance as people buy in at the local market prices, does it raise the property taxes for old time residences? And why, if it does?

Property tax is an *ad valorem* tax. It is based on the appraised value of the property. Property values are determined based on the mass appraisal method. Areas of similar properties are valued similarly. As properties within an area are purchased at higher prices it gradually brings up the values of all of the properties in that area. Recent changes in our real property taxes were designed to mitigate the effect of inflating values by allowing an additional exemption for properties in the homeowner class and by capping the valuation increase for those same properties at 3% per year until the home is sold or otherwise transferred.

28. Why are wealthy ag lot owners getting tax exemptions?

Exemptions for home ownership or agricultural use are based on meeting the requirements for those exemptions. The financial status of the property owner is not a factor for property tax or exemptions. The use of the property determines allowable exemptions.

29. How can you keep the land prices and property taxes affordable for our kids in the future?

The ordinances introduced by Mayor Kim and passed by the County Council in late 2004 will help to keep property taxes affordable for homeowners by providing an additional homeowner exemption and by capping valuation increases at 3% per year for qualifying homes until they are sold or otherwise transferred. Changes to the agricultural tax program were made to support commercial agriculture.