

Summary of Ideas – Puna Community Input

This document provides a brief summary of the main themes that emerged from over 3994 ideas generated at 130 public meetings held between March to June 2006. All of the ideas were entered verbatim into the database, analyzed and sorted by appropriate themes. The full list of idea is available on the project website: www.hawaiiislandplan.com

Sustainable Island Development – *“Enable islanders to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life without compromising future generations.”*

Puna residents want to aim and act for a greater community self reliance and self-sufficiency by importing less goods and creating more local products. Participants would like to see development of local organic agriculture and incentive to promote “Green” businesses that balance the elements of ecology, economy and community. Participants expressed strong desire to limit their dependence on imported fossil fuel by encouraging support for alternative and renewable energy development such as: wind, solar, geothermal, biomass, bio-diesel, cellulose ethanol and hydrogen for their electricity and transportation needs. From educational perspective, residents would like to see more research and programs that advocate sustainable island practices.

Economics Prosperity

More Local Jobs and Options

Puna community members would like to see more encouragement and development of locally based small to medium sized businesses to create viable livelihood opportunities in Puna. Participants mentioned for more options in local shopping areas and restaurants to minimize the current driving time. Puna residents would also like to see more incentives and opportunities to promote plausible vocational training to expand the skills of our citizens, especially the youth.

Agriculture

Participants emphasized the value of preserving agricultural lands and diversifying agricultural activities to promote local self-sufficiency and agricultural sustainability. They are expressing strong desire to promote and encourage organic farming, diversified agriculture, and minimize the use of toxic fertilizers and chemicals.

Arts, Culture and Heritage in Puna

Puna residents would like to see a quality cultural and educational facility that celebrates communities’ sense of uniqueness. A place filled with cultural, historical and artistic activities for the youth, visitors, *malihinis* and *kamaaina*. Residents of Puna also expressed their desire in preserving rural small town ambiance and historical buildings by creating a special design district for town of Volcano. Furthermore, many participants mentioned the importance of keeping special access and fishing rights along the beautiful and rugged coastline.

Environment and Natural Resources

Malama `Aina - Care, Respect and Stewardship of Our Land and Ocean

Puna residents are very interested in preserving the natural beauty of their region. They regard *malama aina* as imperative values to the local culture and lifestyle. Majority would like to protect the shoreline and limit the negative impacts of development. Several participants mentioned that more conservation areas should be established to protect natural resources.

Invasive Species

Participants would like to see more prompt and effective expansion of invasive species programs and protocols to control the spread of coqui frog. Many express their strong desire to eradicate coqui frog, but without the introduction of another alien species.

Bulldozing, Grading and Grabbing of Native Forest

Residents are alarmed by the clear cutting of native forest in many parts of Puna. They would like to see rigorous enforcement or creation of better regulation & permitting process for grading and grubbing application. Many participant favors low impact clearing by encouraging better information dissemination regarding native flora and fauna to the property owner, bulldoze operators, and real estate agents.

Recreational Facility and Parks

Many residents in Puna feel having adequate recreational facility and parks for all age are a top priority. A place for children, youth, adults, elderly and pets to interact and stay active with playgrounds, sports field, pavilions for community events with picnic tables and BBQ's. Improving existing parks (Pohoiki/Kapoho) along the coast with restrooms and showers were also important to the participants while creating additional areas for camping and hiking. There were strong preferences expressed to building a large multi-purpose gymnasium in Pahoa town that will be accessible to everyone.

Land Use, Planning and Development

Community Center – Village Center

Puna resident would like to see more community centers that are walkable with park, schools and locally owned shops to provide the basic needs and services for the participant without having to drive long distance in an automobile. Participants expressed the need for more community based economic development by having small village center that stays true to the Puna's uniqueness and creating more gathering place for residents to interact, shop, work, learn and play.

Growth Management

Limiting uncontrolled growth and developments were the top priority for the participants. They would like to see more growth management tools to slow down or stop any more development until proper infrastructures are put in place to accommodate the population explosion.

Transportation – Road Improvement, Mass Transit, Biking, etc.

General Improvement of Roads, Traffic Lights & Alternate Route

Participants would like see more road improvements for safer driving environment and easing current traffic woes. Widening hwy 130 to four lanes or more merge lane from subdivision; and providing additional route to Hilo along lower Puna to manage the traffic flows were some of the top priority for the citizens of Puna. Many participants expressed the need for having more traffic lights at accident prone intersection along hwy 130.

Mass Transit – Public Transit

The participants support the further development of an affordable, frequent, efficient and reliable public transportation system with defined stops and times with shelter to protect people from the rain. They mentioned a variety of transportation modes, including light rail, car pool, and small shuttle buses powered by alternative fuel that would link the subdivision to park & ride facilities along the hwy 130 for better accessibility.

Alternative Transportation - Walking, Bike Paths, Hiking Trail, Horse Path, etc.

Resident expressed a strong preference for creating more opportunities for getting around without the dependence of a car. They would like to see more sidewalks, bike paths, and hiking trails. In general, resident would like to see multi-modal transportation corridors that can accommodate everyone – including, youth, seniors, pedestrians, horses, bikes, buses, rail and cars.

Public Facility and Services

Government, Police, and Fire Station

Improving local government decision making capabilities and ensuring more effective resource allocation were top priorities for the meeting participants. They would like to see more transparency in government activities and better communication among all levels of government and the communities they serve. From a planning perspective, residents would like to see more planning decisions made at the local level. Furthermore participants expressed a dire need for more community oriented police and fire stations and expanded services around Puna.

Medical Facility – 24 hours Emergency Care

Access to quality comprehensive local health care facility with 24-hour emergency room is the top priority for the resident of Puna. They would like to see support for development of local medical facility, much like the health unit in Waimea or Kau, to support the growing population of Puna. Many participants suggested the need for emergency medical evacuation service.

Education

Providing better educational opportunity for the future generation by improving existing schools and providing better support for local Charter schools were some of the top priorities for the participants.

Social Issues

Affordable Housing & Assisted Living Facilities

There are dire need for affordable land, rental and housing options for lower income family, elders and younger generations in Puna. Participants expressed concerns of losing young people because they won't be able to live in Puna, if current price escalation continues. Encouraging investments to create affordable Kupuna/elderly housing with several stages of assisted living facilities were some of the top concerns for the participants.

Drug Prevention & Better Rehabilitation Program

Further effort to combat drug abuse, especially "Ice", by prevention, education and having better rehabilitation center to help addicts get back into society was a top priority for participants.

Public Utilities

Energy

Improving and developing clean alternative and renewable energy industries were some of the top priorities for the meeting participants. They would like to see lower electricity cost by limiting their dependence on imported fossil fuel such as low grade diesel and coal. Puna resident would like to see incentive to encourage development of renewable energy industries to create more local jobs and embrace energy efficiency measures in all aspect of planning.

Waste Management and Recycling

Participants would like to see further improvement in waste stream management by following the 4 R's – reduce, reuse, recycle and restore. They would also like more expansion of transfer stations and having a more environmentally friendly sewer system.

Water

Some participants would like to see better water access through improvements of current water spigot locations and more water main line in subdivisions. On contrary, residents in Volcano area would not like to see any development of county water system to manage growth and maintain the rural ambiance.

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