



# Waikapū Community Association

*To enhance the quality of life for the residents of Waikapū through the preservation and appreciation of its history, natural environment, and values of its rural tradition.*

## **Testimony to the State Land Use Commission meeting of November 3, 2011 on the Waiale Final Environmental Impact Statement.**

Presented by Jacob Verkerke as President of the Waikapū Community Association.

Good afternoon Chair Lezy and Members of the Commission,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on the Waiale Final Environmental Impact Statement.

My name is Jacob Verkerke. I am a resident of the town of Waikapū and speak in my capacity as President of the Waikapū Community Association. Waikapū will be the community most impacted by the proposed project.

1. As a Final Environmental Impact Statement, this document fails to meet the implied intent test inherent in its title; too many of the sections in this document do not rise above the level of speculation. They simply fail to make an actual statement, fail to provide the definitive basis for decision making on Land Use questions and environmental impacts. Without a real 'Statement' providing definitive and comprehensive factual information gained from a thorough and concerted investigative effort, and actual 'Statements' clearly stating how the planned development will address or mitigate important aspects of environmental impact, bodies such as this Commission are asked to act in 'blind' faith. Much of the language in this document is evasive, ambiguous, and suggestive of eventual clarification. This cannot be considered an acceptable approach, and thus this FEIS as presented should not be accepted.
2. What are some of the most important areas of environmental impact that do not rise above the level of speculation? What about the source of potable water for the proposed development? All the FEIS really has to say about that is 'the applicant is exploring several potential drinking water source opportunities'. How can that be considered sufficient basis for decision making on the environmental impact? Consequently, how can that allow this FEIS to be accepted?
3. What about the proposed plans for onsite wastewater treatment? The FEIS includes a discussion of the plan to install injection wells. While the document talks about restrictions on injection wells based on their location relative to the "UIC line", there is no discussion of the impact of the proposed Wellhead Protection Plan being drafted by the Department of Water Supply. That plan was discussed recently at a public information meeting at the

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Waikapū Community Center, so information on the potential impact of that Protection Plan is available. Again, should that not be part of the discussion on environmental impacts and mitigations? Again, does this omission not render the FEIS unfit for acceptance?

4. What about other environmental aspects? Aspects of the cultural and historical environment? You will hear or have already heard others with more specific expertise testify about concerns regarding burials in the extensive dune system, and about concerns for the preservation of those dune systems themselves. The Waikapū Community Association shares those concerns, as they involve important components of the Community's cultural, historical, and physical environment. The proposed Waiale development will be largely situated on lands that are part of the historical ahupua`a of Waikapū, and are as such part of the area that the WCA is actively focused on in its attempts to protect and strengthen the many facets of the endangered Hawaiian Small Town. The community of Waikapū offers a vital opportunity to revitalize and reemphasize all that is special and desirable in traditional small towns in Hawaii; too many of them have been lost. Many of them were lost through development proposals that did not properly plan for the protection of that unique physical, cultural, and historical environment.
  
5. This brings me to the key item in the testimony I offer on behalf of the Waikapū Community Association. For the Waikapū Community, preservation of its identity as a separate small town is central and essential. That separate identity is not a name associated with a non-descript area the old-timers remember. That separate identity requires visually recognizable boundaries. Those boundaries are well defined in the recommendations provided by the GPAC in their thorough work on the Maui Island Plan. The process of creating and adopting the MIP plan is not complete, and thus the parameters to be contained in the Maui Island Plan that should guide this Waiale development are not finalized. The Waikapū Community Association plans to vigorously present its case for inclusion of well defined open space boundaries creating visual separation between Waikapū and its northerly neighbors Wailuku and Kahului, such as proposed by the GPAC. The FEIS claims consistency with the draft Maui Island Plan, but presents a master plan that was never reviewed as part of the of the Maui Island Plan Urban Growth Boundary maps and is completely different from the maps found in the MIP. The LUC should also keep in mind that this entire Boundary Amendment application is premature, since the issue of Urban Growth Boundaries is not settled.

As proposed in the conceptual plans for the proposed Waiale development included in the FEIS, housing elements of the development would be situated in part of the location where an open space separation was proposed in the MIP. The MIP further refined this open space concept, based on resident input, to form a more continuous greenbelt which would also provide a buffer between Maui Lani and the new Waiale development.

The response on behalf of the applicant to the WCA's concern about protection of the separate, visual identity of Waikapū as a small town in Central Maui, claims that the difference in elevation and the presence of the Waikapū Gardens Subdivision and eventually

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of the proposed Waikapū Country Town development would cause the Waiale project to be invisible from Waikapū and Honoapiilani Highway. This assertion completely misses the point! Waikapū is much more than some older subdivisions on both sides of Waikapū stream, west of Honoapiilani Highway. Waikapū historically stretched much further east than that, and Waikapū Gardens is very much part of the Waikapū small town that is actively revitalizing itself.

As proposed here, someone driving through Maui Lani through Waiale onto Waiko Road and up to Honoapiilani Highway would never have any idea that he or she has left Kahului and entered the Waikapū community. That separate identity would not be recognizable without a clear and adequate open space buffer.

The FEIS as presented to this Commission fails to adequately address that very important impact on the physical and social environment of the area. It is an obvious attempt to preempt the work still being done to adopt the Maui Island Plan, which would provide clear direction for proposed developments such as Waiale. Acceptance of this FEIS would inappropriately and prematurely endorse the applicant's attempts at preempting the Maui Island Plan's impact on this development plan.

6. While the FEIS suggest that appropriate community consultation has taken place in the preparation of the FEIS and the conceptual design of Waiale, the reality is somewhat different. A community meeting was held in 2005, seeking input from Waikapū residents to be used in developing the conceptual design. In the six years that elapsed since then, many changes have taken place. The community of Waikapū has changed, both physically with the addition of Waikapū Gardens and as an Association, witness the active role now played by the WCA and the adoption of its Statement of Values. Maui as a community has changed, not in small part due to the new approach to updating the General Plan and the present efforts in completing the Maui Island Plan. And, importantly, the conceptual plan for Waiale has changed from what was discussed back in 2005. In the opinion of the Waikapū Community Association, this means that a fully informed and participatory community planning process has not taken place.

Attached to this testimony is a copy of the Waikapū Community Association Statement of Values, adopted in 2010. The Statement of Values describes what the Waikapū community has determined to be vital standards and guidelines for any and all endeavors affecting the community. The Statement of Values was provided to the applicant and its representatives as part of the comments to the Draft EIS.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments.