



# 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.*

MARCH 1, 2012

TESTIMONY BY THE WAILUKU COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION  
TO THE  
GENERAL PLAN COMMITTEE OF THE MAUI COUNTY COUNCIL  
ON THE  
DIRECTED GROWTH PLAN,  
CHAPTER 8 OF THE DRAFT MAUI ISLAND PLAN

Dear Chair Baisa and Committee Members,

The Waikapū Community Association (WCA) is pleased to have this opportunity to present its views on this very important component of the Maui Island Plan. The comments provided here will be based on the language and maps included in the December 2010 version of the draft of the Maui Island Plan.

While the Association recognizes much of its Statement of Values in the concepts and guidelines contained in this chapter, and is encouraged by the importance attached to the preservation of traditional small towns such as the community of Waikapū as is the purported focus of the proposed Maui Island Plan, the WCA comes to much different conclusions when it comes to the measures to be taken such as the drawing of Urban Growth Boundaries in Central Maui.

The proposed Maui Island Plan describes the community of Waikapū as *"a small rural town between Wailuku and Ma'alaea on Honoapi'ilani Highway. The town is primarily residential with a small commercial component. Historically, Waikapū has been surrounded by sugarcane fields, providing a clear distinction between the town and other nearby communities. [emphasis added]" (pg 8-15). Yes, indeed, Waikapū was and still is, a distinct town. And it wishes to remain a distinct town.*

The Waikapū Community Association's assessment of the historical and present day character of the town of Waikapū places it in the Country Town type shown in Table 8-2.

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Waikapū is an established community with a long and varied history of great economic and civic activity, witnessing a resurgence and expansion of traditional and contemporary agricultural activity. It offers job opportunities, recreational facilities and a very active community life in an area that still contains many historical, cultural and natural features that link it to its traditional and historical character of the thriving Hawaiian ahupuaa of Waikapū. As the proposed Maui Island Plan suggests, Waikapū is the very essence of the small town community worthy of protecting (Policies 8.1, 8.2)

Many of the Guiding Land Use Principles outlined in Chapter 8 (pg 8-9) appear to speak directly to the values adopted by the membership of the Waikapū Community Association (See attached Statement of Value). Principles 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 10 directly speak to the essence and quality of the town of Waikapū. They provide the context in which to position Waikapū as a showcase of how to apply these principles and guidelines to protect a special and unique community. And yet . . .

The proposed Maui Island Plan proceeds to use the guidelines and principles to develop a regional framework of 4 themes (pg 8-13). Theme Two, again, is very consistent with the philosophical foundation built by the guidelines and principles and with the Waikapū Community's Statement of Values; protecting prime agricultural lands is critically important for the long-term sustainability of Maui as a diversified and food-secure community. Waikapū is positioned in and surrounded by some of the best prime agricultural lands. The focus on 'prime' lands, as based on the ALISH classification used in the December 2010 version, is essential to that long-term sustainability; merely talking about 'productive' agricultural lands robs this theme of meaning as 'productive' is, to our knowledge, not a classification within the ALISH system. Particularly the prime agricultural land, found all around Waikapū, must continue to be the focus of this Theme Two.

The proposed Maui Island Plan goes on to articulate challenges and opportunities, and expresses the concerns felt by the Waikapū community in very clear terms. Under the heading of 'Loss of Community Identity and Boundaries' the Plan is talking directly about the threat to Waikapū town: *"As these lands become urbanized, the region's individual towns begin to blend together and loose [sic] their unique identities. To prevent the creation of one large, sprawling urban mass, clear separation must be*

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*maintained between the area's four sub-regions through the use of regional parks, greenways and protected areas."* (pg 8-15) And yet . . .

Chapter 8 of the proposed Plan goes on to describe a number of Planned Growth Areas: Wai`ale, Pu`unani, and Waikapū Tropical Plantation Town. Specifically in the description of Wai`ale, there is evidence of continued consideration of the principles and guidelines outlined earlier in the Chapter: *"While proximate to Kahului, Wailuku, and Waikapū, the Wai`ale town should be a distinct community, clearly separate from existing towns [emphasis added]."* (pg 8-18) Also: *"To prevent sprawl and further urbanization of prime agricultural resource land, a hard edge [emphasis added] must be maintained around Wai`ale Town."* (pg 8-18)

In the discussion on Planned Protection Areas, the proposed plan provides further evidence of supporting the principles and guidelines regarding maintaining the unique and distinct character of small towns such as Waikapū. In the discussion of the Central Maui Regional Park the plan states: *"The park is intended to maintain a significant amount of open space and provide a distinct separation [emphasis added] between the Waikapū and Kahului communities."* (pg 8-22) And yet . . .

The February 2012 revisions proposed by the Director introduce the current administration's intent to move the site of the Central Maui Regional Park to the south boundary of the Wai`ale development and offers up a Community Park in its stead. In doing so, the revision removes all discussion of this park's purpose of creating that important green belt boundary between the communities of Waikapū and Kahului. Rather, it suggests that the Regional Park can serve as a distinct separation between Waikapū and Maalaea and between Waikapū and Kahului at the same time! Quite a feat! At a minimum, the Community Park should be listed along with the other New Regional Facilities recommended on page 8-16, and have the minimum 100 acre stipulation assigned to it to ensure its effectiveness as that green belt separation between Wai`ale and Kahului.

Of the 3 Planned Growth Areas identified for the Wailuku-Kahului community plan region, the 2 largest are planned directly adjacent to the town of Waikapū: Wai`ale and Waikapū Tropical Plantation Town. At present, Waikapū includes an estimated 1,200 residences. As projected in the description of those 2 planned growth areas, these

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developments will add 3,987 units to the area (Tables 8-5, 8-6, 8-8). This constitutes a projected growth for the Waikapū small town of more than 330%, more than quadrupling in size! Have we still any reason to speak of Waikapū as a small rural town when it includes more than 5,000 residential units?

So, then what does the plan ultimately propose as formal and graphical representation of all these important considerations for the protection and support for Maui's unique small town communities, and specifically for that special community of Waikapū?

The December 2010 version of the proposed Plan offers up a Directed Growth Map (C3), that completely engulfs the Waikapū community in the Kahului urban area and presents it as a single Waikapū/Kahului/Maui Lani/Wailuku/Tropical Plantation/Puu'nani Urban Growth area. This all encompassing UGB provides no hard limits on growth in the area between Kahului and Waikapū. Gone are the very clear, meaningful, and effective boundaries included in the GPAC Directed Growth Map. Gone is any graphical evidence of the concern for a hard edge to maintain a clear separation and distinction between Waikapū and its neighbors Kahului and Wailuku. Gone will be the unique and separate identity of Waikapū as a small, rural town, as it was described earlier in this Chapter.

The February 2012 proposed revision to Map C3 introduces a number of new adjustments. First, the UGB around the proposed Puu Nani development is adjusted to create a more development friendly shape for this proposed project. It does this at the expense of the size of the buffer area between Wailuku and Waikapū. Second, the UGB along the proposed Waiale Road extension is moved eastward apparently to accommodate the administration's desire to relocate a number of County Departments' base yards into the Country Town of Waikapū. Really? Do those belong in a Country Town? Finally, the growth boundary around the older part of Waikapū, west of Honoapiilani Highway, including the Maui Tropical Plantation, is changed from Urban to Rural. There is no discussion in the chapter itself of any potential impact on the proposed Waikapū Tropical Plantation town. The Waikapū Community Association has heard diametrically opposed assessments of the impact of that change.

The Waikapū Community Association urges the General Plan Committee to take a hard look at what is proposed in this

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chapter of the proposed Maui Island Plan and to recognize that it is grossly inconsistent in its application of the lofty guidelines and principles espoused throughout the Plan.

**To provide some relief from this inconsistency, the Waikapū Community Association urges the following modifications to the plan:**

- 1. Utilize the Urban Growth Boundaries between Waikapū and Wailuku/Kahului as shown in the GPAC Directed Growth Map.** The boundary shown as the southern limit to the Kahului urban area coincides largely with the traditional boundary of the Waikapū ahapua`a, creating an appropriate present-day recognition of the historical land division of Waikapū.
- 2. Apply the Country Town Growth Boundary, as found in table 8-2 of the December 2010 draft of this Chapter to the portion of the GPAC Directed Growth Map that includes the town of Waikapū.** The WCA is prepared to accept the southward expansion of the Growth Boundary, south of Waikapū, as shown in the December 2010 Planning Department Directed Growth Map, where they coincide with the planned Waiale Road extension as part of this Country Town Growth Boundary. The areas indicated on the Planning Department Directed Growth Map as Waikapū 1 and Waikapū 2 Rural Growth Boundaries should be retained as proposed.
- 3. Create a hard and protected boundary to the east of the proposed Wai`ale planned growth area by explicitly excluding the entire band of sand dunes located in that area from any development considerations by clearly marking it on the map as a Protection Area.** This will serve to protect the few remaining intact sand dunes and the numerous burials known to be contained there as critical natural, cultural, and historical resources. It will also serve to fix an area of distinct visual separation between Wai`ale town and Waikapū town, aiding in the protection of Waikapū as a distinct community.
- 4. Reduce the projected and permitted quantity of residential units in the Wai`ale (new town) and Waikapū Tropical Plantation Town planned growth areas.** Wai`ale should be limited to 1,450 new residential units, Waikapū

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Tropical Plantation Town should be limited to 800 new residential units, as well as up to 80 rural lots. While this still represents a very dramatic increase in the size of the population of Waikapū, proper application of smart growth principles and guidelines, and productive and respectful cooperation between the Waikapū community and developers can ensure the preservation of the agricultural and rural character of the Waikapū community and of those new communities. The Association's Statement of Values should serve as an important guideline in that effort.

5. **Adjust the Urban Growth Boundary southward from Puunene Avenue between Kuihelani Highway and Mokulele Highway, to provide for the necessary expansion of the Kahului Urban core** to compensate for the loss of area between Kahului and Waikapū from the adjustment recommended in (1), and the loss of permitted residential units from the adjustment recommended in (4). This area is non-prime agricultural land, whereas the land around Waikapū is classified as prime agricultural land. This adjustment to the UGB will serve to support the principle of preservation of agricultural lands more than the proposed Planning Department 2010 Directed Growth Map would, solving one more internal inconsistency.
6. **Remove the Director's proposed revisions to the language in Chapter 8 where they serve to weaken the language of the Maui Island Plan.** A plan is 'a method for achieving an end' (Mirriam-Webster); without descriptions 'in detail' (pg 8-2), designations such as 'country towns, [etc]' (pg 8-2,7; table 8-2), the ability to 'direct' (pg 8-2), tools such as ALISH (pg 8-4), 'planning standards (requirements)' (pg 8-12), defined meanings ('prime' - pg 8-13), and defined targets ('100 acre minimum' - pg 8-16), the Maui Island Plan will cease to be that method for achieving an end. It will risk becoming a set of guidelines, which will end up being ignored for lack of, ultimately, conviction and determination.

The Waikapū Community Association, as representatives of the Waikapū Community is grateful for this opportunity to present this testimony to the General Plan Committee. It asks for support for and serious consideration of its concerns and efforts to protect this special community in

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Central Maui. The Association stands ready to participate in any way with the Committee and other interests in the expectation that the community of Waikapū will have the opportunity to thrive in the knowledge of its importance and value to the preservation of the Maui we love and need to protect.

Mahalo.

*Submitted on behalf of the membership and board of the Waikapū Community Association by Jacob Verkerke, President.*

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