

November 18, 2024

MEMO TO: David Raatz, Director of Council Services

F R O M: Carla Nakata, Legislative Attorney *CNN*
James Krueger, Senior Legislative Analyst *DMR*
Ellen McKinley, Legislative Analyst *EM*

SUBJECT: **HAWAI'I CONGRESS OF PLANNING OFFICIALS CONFERENCE,
SEPTEMBER 11-13, 2024** (PAF 23-021(37))

We attended the Hawai'i Congress of Planning Officials Conference on the Island of Hawai'i, September 11-13, 2024. The HCPO Conference was hosted by the County of Hawai'i Planning Department, in coordination with the American Planning Association's Hawai'i Chapter.

The HCPO Conference is held annually with the host rotating between the four counties and the State. The Conference offers planners across the State an opportunity to share their experiences and learn from each other.

This year's Conference began with mobile workshops on the first day. The second day featured the keynote speaker and breakout sessions. The last day of the conference had a final round of breakout sessions and a review of planning law. The presentation slideshows and other materials have been uploaded here: <https://tinyurl.com/HCPOconference>.

Mobile Workshop: Waikōloa Dry Forest Initiative

The Waikoloa Dry Forest Recovery project seeks to restore 275 acres of forest land south of Waikoloa Village. Community members established a nonprofit organization, the Waikoloa Dry Forest Initiative, to support the project. Two Waikōloa Dry Forest Initiative staff members led participants on an interpretive walk through the Waikōloa Forest Preserve. The workshop focused on the place's natural history, conservation challenges, and forest-restoration strategies. The group learned about the Initiative's outreach to area landowners, community and school involvement and volunteerism, and the capacity for a dedicated few to revive the wiliwili and its environment.

Mobile Workshop: Kīholo Bay Fish Pond and Hike

This workshop involved a visit to Kīholo Bay to learn about The Nature Conservancy's and Hui Aloha Kīholo's work to restore a loko i'a (fish pond). The workshop focused on the historical and cultural significance of the loko i'a and the environmental benefits that restoration efforts have had on the bay and surrounding area. Workshop participants assisted in the restoration efforts, helping reconstruct a rock wall or working in the native-plant nursery.

Mobile Workshop: NELHA

This workshop consisted of a visit to three businesses located at Natural Energy Lab Hawaii Authority, or NELHA, facilities: Terraformation's Ridge-to-Reef Restoration Center; Kona Sea Salt; and Symbrosia. NELHA fosters economic development and diversification in Hawai'i, and the businesses benefit from the deepest and largest ocean pipelines in the world.

Participants toured Terraformation's facilities and learned about seed banking, agroforestry operations, ecosystem restoration projects, and coral farming. At the Kona Sea Salt farm, we saw how salt and magnesium are harvested. Symbrosia taught us how seaweed can be included in cattle feed to reduce methane emissions.

Keynote: Salesforce's Peter Schwartz

Peter Schwartz, Senior Vice President for Strategic Planning and Chief Futures Officer for Salesforce, focused on plans to create the community our State's residents desire, including improving education, healthcare, and energy efficiency; providing affordable housing and childcare; and creating art institutions. To address problems, people must be engaged and overcome their fear of change.

Breakout Session: Park It Right, Hawai'i

This breakout session focused on a board game entitled "Reinventing Parking," in which groups of players competed for parking spaces. The game highlighted the needs that should be considered when developing parking, such as who needs parking all day, like workers, and who needs parking for only an

hour or two, like customers. Other considerations include enforcement measures for parking to prevent crowding and allow as many members of the public to benefit as possible, such as paid parking and police enforcement of time restrictions.

Breakout Session: Sustainable Food Systems

A panel of farmers and food producers explored how to reduce the percentage of Hawai'i's imported food. Presenters discussed the 24.5-acre Ho'olako Agricultural Innovation Park and Food System Campus. This facility is designed to provide technology and mechanization to lower farmers' production costs and will include a food bank and community center.

Other ideas the panelists are pursuing include:

- a food hub hui, which is a network of food hubs that share resources, including grant writing;
- farm tours;
- farm-to-table restaurants;
- mentoring programs;
- value-added products;
- apprenticeships and other programs to cultivate the next generation of farmers;
- partnering with schools to create markets for products, and
- farm dwellings, and farm labor dwellings.

State and county plantation-era legislation, such as onerous permitting requirements, needs to be overhauled.

Breakout Session: Confronting Hawai‘i’s Housing Challenges

Panelists shared approaches counties are using to address housing shortages, including Kaua‘i County initiatives on:

- guest houses,
- accessory rental units,
- special treatment areas along Rice Street in Lihue (County core), and
- special project areas that allow for greater density.

Planner Marie Williams said Kaua‘i County has created form-based codes to streamline processing and policies that allow lower-income housing to have greater density and height. Next, Kaua‘i County will tackle the lack of infrastructure.

Maui County Planning Director Kate Blystone talked about the need to build housing for the “missing middle,” targeting the need for more diverse housing choices at affordable prices.

Breakout Session: Innovative Approaches to Assess Alternative Commuters Transportation Needs

This discussion focused on “alternative commuters,” or people who travel during off-peak hours. Traditionally, resources for public transportation are focused on meeting needs during the busiest hours, but that approach may leave alternative commuters, especially workers with late shifts, with few options to get to and from their destinations.

Solutions to assist alternative commuters include promoting public shuttle services that function like Uber and Lyft, crafting incentives for carpooling, and expanding bike and e-bike use through rental services and infrastructure investment.

Breakout Session: Exploring Transfer of Development Rights for Managed Retreat in Hawai‘i

The panel discussed the feasibility of transferring development rights to address managed retreat in the State, including whether there is a market and the need to offer more than a 1:1 ratio to make this option attractive. Kaua‘i Planning Director Ka‘aina S. Hull discussed shoreline property challenges and mustering political will to transfer development rights from the coastline to agricultural property.

Breakout Session: Whole-Community Approaches to Disaster Recovery and Strategies to Build Long-Term Resilience

The August 2023 Maui fires exposed how policy and procedural systems are too slow to respond to disasters. The Maui Planning Commission is not equipped to handle the volume of reviews needed, and the burn zone is in the Special Management Area and National Historic Landmark District, requiring additional reviews. The systems need to become more efficient and nimble, especially to provide temporary housing and innovative water systems.

Sources of hope include:

- assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency;
- the United States Army Corps of Engineers, which could develop water sources and wastewater infrastructure through the Water Resources Development Act;
- restoration potential for Moku‘ula and Mokuhinia; and
- community engagement and vision.

Breakout Session: Hawai‘i AI: A Round Table Exercise

This exercise focused on how artificial intelligence can be used to augment planning work. Jurisdictions worldwide are already incorporating AI into their planning processes, from traffic planning in Los Angeles to flood-risk assessments in the Netherlands. Presenters noted AI’s ability to aggregate data

but also the need to ensure the data is accurate and derived from trustworthy sources.

As part of the exercise, participants crafted prompts for AI to use to generate a response. The exercise emphasized the importance of crafting detailed prompts to ensure AI-generated content is clear and accurate.

Breakout Session: Ka‘ūpūlehu o ka ‘āina kaha: Ahupua‘a Resoration from Theory to Action

Restoring and stewarding the Ka‘ūpūlehu ahupua‘a required collaboration by the community, landowners, developers, and agencies. The results include:

- the formation of the Ka‘ūpūlehu Development Monitoring Committee, the Ka‘ūpūlehu Marine Life Advisory Committee, the Ka‘ūpūlehu Foundation, and the Ka‘ūpūlehu Interpretive Center at Kalaemanō;
- long-term marine and groundwater quality monitoring;
- public access;
- community-led conservation with science partners led by The Nature Conservancy of Hawai‘i and Palmyra;
- an engaged landowner; and
- an engaged descendant and local community.

The Ka‘ūpūlehu Marine Life Advisory Committee was established to restore coral reefs and fish populations through a program dubbed “Try Wait,” letting the fish and reef “rest” for ten years to allow them to recover from over-fishing depletion. The group is developing a fisheries management plan that will allow the people to return to fishing in a balanced and sustainable way in 2026.

Breakout Session: Climate Change Is Now: Integrating Sea Level Rise and Coastal Threats into Planning for Beach Parks

Panelists described work being done to assess the vulnerability of Maui County beach parks based on sea-level rise. They also recommended adaptation strategies.

AICP Exam Preparation

This session gave participants an overview of the process to become certified by the American Institute of Certified Planners. The certification requires a mix of education, work experience, and testing.

Planning Law

Panelists presented on recent developments in the field of planning law. Retired law professor David Callies summarized *Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo*, in which the U.S. Supreme Court held that courts may not defer to an agency's interpretation of the law simply because a statute is ambiguous, overruling the *Chevron* doctrine. The session also provided an update on the Environmental Impact Statement law under Hawai'i Revised Statutes Chapter 343.

We appreciated the opportunity to attend this conference. If you have any questions, please contact Carla at ext. 5519, James at ext. 7761, or Ellen at ext. 7661.

paf:ebm:23-021(37)a

cc: Deputy Director of Council Services