

April 9, 2026

MEMO TO: Members of the Budget, Finance, and Economic
Development Committee

F R O M: Yuki Lei K. Sugimura, Chair *Yuki Lei K. Sugimura*
Budget, Finance, and Economic Development Committee

SUBJECT: **EAST MAUI RESIDENCY AREA MEETING REGARDING THE
FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET** (BFED-1)

On April 6, 2026, the Council's Budget, Finance, and Economic Development Committee held a public meeting at Helene Hall, Hāna, regarding the proposed FY 2027 Budget. Present for the meeting were: Committee Chair Yuki Lei K. Sugimura, Committee Vice-Chair Kauanoë Batangan, and members Tom Cook, Gabe Johnson, Tamara Paltin, Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez, Shane M. Sinenci, and Nohelani U'u-Hodgins. The meeting started at 6:02 p.m. and adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

The Committee received oral testimony from 30 individuals. Unless otherwise indicated, the following oral testimony was received in support of funding for the organization, program, or project noted:

1. Multiple individuals testified in support of allocating \$3 million from the Open Space, Natural Resources, Cultural Resources, and Scenic Views Preservation Fund to the Haneo'o Hamoa Fishing Village Hui and Ke Ao Hali'i to purchase 115 acres in the Haneo'o Ahupua'a to prevent luxury subdivision development.
2. Līpoa Kahaleuahi, Executive Director of Ma Ka Hana Ka 'Ike Building Program, and several others testified in support of the organization's student apprenticeships, kūpuna services, and community building projects.
3. Five representatives of the Kipahulu Community Association requested \$109,000 in County funding (toward a \$226,000 total budget) to acquire a 2.64-acre parcel and develop a culturally-appropriate community gathering space, traditional hale, and community garden.
4. Kane Kanaka'ole and several others testified in support of continued funding for Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc.'s services, highlighting critical transportation for youth excursions and kūpuna assistance.

5. Two representatives from Habitat for Humanity Maui, Inc. requested \$6.595 million to purchase 7.2 acres for 25 affordable single-family homes and \$250,000 for ongoing home repairs and maintenance. They strongly urged the County to address major processing delays in the Development Services Administration's permitting system.
6. Multiple individuals testified in support of Na Mamo O Mu'olea's conservation efforts and requested County assistance to address the deteriorating 'Ahahui Ka'ahumanu statue at Hāna Bay.
7. Sheila Roback, Director of Maui Adult Day Care Centers' Hale Hulu Mamo, and others supported continued services for po'e kūpuna, youth, and culture, noting the senior center's successful return to the Hana Senior Center.
8. Lehua Cosma, Executive Director of Hui Laulima o Hana, testified in support of dialysis services in Hāna. She strongly opposed the development of the Koki Mauka Subdivision by Ranch Partners LLC which prevents the preservation of open space and traditional fishing access.
9. Michael Opgenorth, Director of Kahanu Garden and Preserve of the National Tropical Botanical Gardens, highlighted urgent needs for collaborative invasive species mitigation along Ulaino Road, specifically targeting Little fire ants and the Banana bunchy top virus.
10. Mark Tanaka-Sanders and others expressed gratitude for emergency road and utility crews, while advocating for a community-led recreation needs assessment and a formal parking plan for Hāna.
11. Two individuals representing Hāna Mamas requested \$650,000 for behavioral health services, including a sober living house and an 'āina-based intensive outpatient program, and requested funding for an accurate, community-led census.
12. Heidi Lea, Hana Business Council, Inc., expressed gratitude for the \$1.015 million earmark to acquire 14.57 acres for the Hāna Hub resiliency project.

13. Matt Keiley, Maui County Farm Bureau, Inc. board member, supported Department of Agriculture funding for young farmers, the Ag in the Classroom program, and robust funding for the Maui Invasive Species Committee.
14. Mary Brook, Hāna Dragon Football Booster, requested follow-up on student-athlete travel funding, prompting Council clarification on the reimbursement process for the \$20,000 allocated in the FY 2026 Budget.
15. Individuals also testified in support of the Hāna Canoe Club, Hāna Arts, Festivals of Aloha, Kaunoa Senior Services, the Maui American Job Center, and the critical need for a Hāna-based community police officer and dedicated office space for the Maui County Emergency Management Agency.

Your Committee also received the attached written testimony.

For questions relating to the East Maui residency area meeting, please contact OCS staff (Keone Hurdle at ext. 7659 or Lori Ann Tengan at ext. 7147).

If you have any questions relating to the FY 2027 Budget, please contact the Committee staff (Kirsten Szabo at ext. 7662, James Krueger at ext. 7761, Jarret Pascual at ext. 7141, Clarissa MacDonald at ext. 7135, or Pauline Martins at ext. 8039). Thank you for your cooperation.

bfed:2027bgt:Residency area meetings:260406EastMaui:kjh

Attachments

Kīpahulu Community Association Resource Center presentation

Theo:

Background

The Kīpahulu Community Association (KCA) was established in 1993 to support the needs and advance the collective well-being of the Kīpahulu community. In partnership with another local nonprofit organization, a community center was developed in the decade following KCA's founding through a combination of grant funding and extensive volunteer labor.

In recent years, however, changes in access and use have resulted in this facility no longer being available for KCA's gatherings and programming. As a result, KCA has relocated its meetings, community events, and celebrations to Kīpahulu Point County Park. While this has allowed continuity, it has also underscored the urgent need for a dedicated, permanent space—a true “home”—to support the full range of community-building activities envisioned for this rural and geographically isolated area.

Need for a Community Resource Center

Over the past year, a grassroots group of more than 40 Kīpahulu residents and their keiki—including both long-standing Native Hawaiian families and other local residents—has gathered weekly on Saturday mornings. These gatherings, currently held in the parking lot of Palapala Ho'omau Church, focus on strengthening community relationships, deepening cultural and spiritual connection, and advancing local food security initiatives. Despite the limitations of meeting in an improvised outdoor space, this group has already contributed significantly to the community through:

Roadside cleanup efforts

Harvesting bamboo for a traditional fishing boat launching structure

Volunteer work in lo'i restoration and maintenance

Cultural enrichment programs, including Hawaiian craft workshops

The acquisition and stewardship of dedicated KCA land would provide a stable and culturally appropriate gathering place. It would also support the development of a community garden and food forest, creating a reliable source of fresh food for local distribution.

Planned features include essential community resources such as an automated external defibrillator (AED), a helicopter emergency landing site, produce distribution systems, and a plant nursery for propagation and sharing.

Land Acquisition Opportunity

KCA established a Land Search Committee to identify a suitable site for a permanent community resource center, and an ideal 2.64-acre parcel adjacent to the Palapala Ho'omau Church gathering area has been discovered.

This parcel is being offered to KCA at a reduced price of \$50,000, representing a rare and time-sensitive opportunity. Securing this land would provide a long-term foundation for community resilience, cultural revitalization, and food sovereignty in Kīpahulu.

To ensure the long-term protection of this resource, KCA will establish a legally recorded land covenant at the time of purchase. This covenant will guarantee that the land remains under KCA ownership and is used in perpetuity for community benefit, cultural practice, and resource development. It will safeguard the property from privatization, misuse, or transfer outside of its intended purpose.

Governance & Stewardship

KCA is committed to stewarding this land through both strong community governance and alignment with 'ike Hawai'i. The organization operates through a Board of Directors and a membership-based structure, with regular public meetings that

ensure transparency and accountability. Stewardship of the Resource Center will be guided by kūpuna and community leaders.

This work is grounded in core Hawaiian values:

Mālama 'Āina – caring for and restoring the land

Kuleana – shared responsibility across the community

Laulima – collective effort and cooperation

Aloha 'Āina – deep respect and love for the land

Together, these values create a framework where land stewardship is reciprocal, intergenerational, and community-led.

Project Overview

KCA's vision includes:

Purchase and protection of the 2.64-acre parcel

Installation of a safety fence along the coastal cliff

Removal of invasive vegetation and ecological restoration

Construction of a 20' x 30' traditional hale

Development of a kalo patch and vegetable garden

Installation of a rainwater catchment system

This process will itself strengthen community bonds through shared labor and stewardship.

Budget Summary

Total Funding Requested: \$109,000

Total In-Kind Labor Contribution: \$117,500

Detailed Budget

Phase 1: Land Acquisition

Purchase & closing costs: \$55,000

Legal services (in-kind): \$2,500

Phase 2: Safety & Clearing

Fence installation: \$7,500

Labor (in-kind): \$14,000

Phase 3: Pavilion Construction

Materials: \$30,000

Labor (in-kind): \$42,000

Phase 4: Land Restoration

Equipment: \$5,000

Labor (in-kind): \$42,000

Phase 5: Garden Development

Equipment/materials: \$2,000

Labor (in-kind): \$10,000

Phase 6: Water System

Tank & plumbing: \$10,000

Labor (in-kind): \$7,000

Closing Statement

This project represents a critical investment in the future of Kīpahulu. By securing and stewarding this land, KCA will establish a permanent, community-held space for cultural practice, food security, and connection.

The inclusion of a land covenant ensures that this resource remains protected in perpetuity. Combined with strong governance and deep community commitment, this effort will create a lasting legacy for future generations.