

# HOUSING AND LAND USE COMMITTEE

Council of the County of Maui

## MINUTES

March 18, 2026

Online Only via Teams

**CONVENE:** 9:14 a.m.

**PRESENT:** Councilmember Nohelani U‘u-Hodgins, Chair  
Councilmember Kauanoë Batangan, Vice-Chair (Out 11:54 a.m.)  
Councilmember Tom Cook, Member  
Councilmember Gabe Johnson, Member  
Councilmember Alice L. Lee, Member (Out 10:10 a.m.)  
Councilmember Tamara Paltin, Member  
Councilmember Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez, Member  
Councilmember Shane M. Sinenci, Member  
Councilmember Yuki Lei K. Sugimura, Member (In 10:21 a.m.)

**STAFF:** James Krueger, Senior Legislative Analyst  
Ellen McKinley, Legislative Analyst  
Carla Nakata, Legislative Attorney  
Jennifer Yamashita, Committee Secretary  
Lei Dinneen, Council Services Assistant Clerk  
Ryan Martins, Council Ambassador

Residency Area Office (RAO):

Keomailani Hirata, Council Aide, Moloka‘i Residency Area Office  
Roxanne Morita, Council Aide, Lāna‘i Residency Area Office  
Mavis Oliveira, Council Aide, East Maui Residency Area Office  
Jared Agtunong, Council Aide, South Maui Residency Area Office

**ADMIN.:** Nāhulu Nunokawa, Deputy Corporation Counsel, Department of the Corporation  
Counsel (All)  
Jacky Takakura, Director, Department of Planning (HLU-3(3))  
Collette Cardoza, Shoreline Supervisor, Department of Planning (HLU-3(3))  
Richard E. Mitchell, Director, Department of Housing (HLU-3(2))  
Saumalu Mataafa, Deputy Director, Department of Housing (HLU-3(2))  
Cassi Yamashita, County Housing Programs Division Administrator, Department  
of Housing (HLU-3(2))  
Alicia Mazingo, Housing and Community Development Division Administrator,  
Department of Housing (HLU-3(20))  
Gail Rambaoa, Federal Housing Programs Division Administrator, Department of  
Housing (HLU-3(2))  
Helen Zhao, Accountant, Department of Housing (HLU-3(2))

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**OTHERS:**    Testifiers  
Christopher Salem (HLU-3(3))  
Jasee Law (HLU-3(3); HLU-3(2))  
Jim Langford (HLU-3(3))  
Sam Small (HLU-3(3))  
Johann Lall (HLU-3(2))

Others (60)

**PRESS:**     *Akakū: Maui Community Television, Inc.*

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CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: . . .*(gavel)*. . . Good morning, everyone. Will the Housing, Land Use [sic] Committee meeting of March 18th, 2026, please come to order. It is 9:14 a.m. I am the Chair of this Committee, Nohelani U‘u-Hodgins. Before we get to the Members and the resources, I’d like to announce that the third item on this agenda, HLU-3(4)...I’m sorry, 3...yeah (4), relating to--I’m sorry, did I hear an echo? Okay, relating to a Community’s Facility [sic] District for Waikapū County Town is canceled. We will not discuss this item, nor will we be accepting testimony on this item either. Thank you. Now, proceeding with introductions. In accordance with the Sunshine Law, Members, if you are not with us in the Chambers, please identify by name who, if anyone, is in the room, vehicle, or workspace with you today. Minors do not need to be identified. Let’s begin with Committee Vice-Chair Kauanoē Batangan. Good morning.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Aloha kakahiaka kākou.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Councilmember Tom Cook. Good morning.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Aloha. Good morning, Chair. There’s currently no testifiers in the Kihei office, but we have Jared on standby.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Okay. Thank you. Councilmember Gabe Johnson, good morning.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Good morning, Chair, Councilmembers, community members. I’m alone on my side of the office and there’s no testifiers here at the Lāna‘i District Office. Mahalo.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you. Council Chair Alice Lee, good morning.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Good morning. Aloha kākou and hafa adai.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Hafa adai.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yeah.

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CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: That’s usually my favorite one, because then it usually gives me hope that we will only have half a day, but probably not today. Member Paltin, good morning. Hafa adai.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Aloha kakahiaka and hafa adai kākou. Streaming live and direct from the Council Chambers, and as soon as my camera is enabled, I will turn it on.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Awesome. Thank you. Councilmember Keani Rawlins-Fernandez, good morning and hafa adai.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Aloha kakahiaka kākou, mai Moloka‘i Nui a Hina. I’m at my private residence, alone in the kitchen, but at home with me I have my minor-aged daughter on spring break, as well as my adult husband, Makena Fernandez, and there are currently no testifiers at the Moloka‘i District Office. Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you. Member Shane Sinenci, hafa adai and good morning.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Good morning. Aloha kakahiaka and hafa adai. Fingers crossed. No testifiers in Hana, Chair.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you. And Member Sugimura will be with us shortly. From Administration, we have with us the Acting Planning Director, soon to be confirmed Director; the Director of Housing will be with us shortly, as will the Deputy Director of Housing, and their administrative heads...County Housing Programs Division Administrator, the County...the Housing and Community Develop [sic] Division Administrator, the Federal Housing Programs Division Administrator; and we have Deputy Corporation Counsel Nunokawa. We also have with us our community...our HLU Committee Staff. Good morning, everyone.

**. . . BEGIN PUBLIC TESTIMONY AT BEGINNING OF MEETING . . .**

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Let’s begin with testimony. Do we have testifiers who are wanting to sign up? I’ll read it as you walk down, Jasee. Testifiers wanting to provide testimony should be able to sign up in the lobby, join on the online meeting via the Teams link, or call in to the phone number noted on today’s agenda. Written testimony is encouraged and can be submitted via the eComment link at [mauicounty.us/agen...agendas](http://mauicounty.us/agen...agendas) as well. For individuals wishing to testify via Teams, please raise your hand by clicking on the raise-your-hand button. If calling in, please follow the prompts via...via star-5 to raise and lower your hand, star-6 to mute and unmute. Staff will add names to the testifier list in the order the testifiers sign up or raise their hand. For those on Teams, Staff will lower your hand once your name is added, Staff will then use the name you are logged in under or the last four digits of your phone number when it is your time to testify. At that time, Staff will also enable your microphone and video. Please be sure that your name appears in Microsoft Teams as the name you prefer to be referred as or anonymous if you wish to testify anonymously. If you are in person, please tell Staff if you would like to testify anonymously, otherwise, please state your name for the record at the beginning of the meeting. Oral testimony is lee...limited to three minutes per item. If

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you are still testifying beyond that time, I will kindly ask you to complete your testimony. Once you are done testifying, or you do not wish to testify, you can also view the meeting on *Akakū* Channel 53, Facebook Live, or mauicounty.us. At this time, we will begin testimony. I saw we have an in-person testifier, if you would like to testify.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, the first and only person signed up to testify is Christopher Salem on Teams.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Okay. Sounds good. Hello, Mr. Salem.

MR. SALEM: Good morning, Councilmembers.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Good morning.

MR. SALEM: I just want to confirm that, as far as the...the agenda goes, we are doing a review of the...of the Department of Planning at this hearing?

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Yep. Yep.

MR. SALEM: Okay. All right. I just want to make sure.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Yep.

MR. SALEM: Thank you.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: You’re welcome.

MR. SALEM: Okay. All right. So, this testimony goes to the core duty of the Planning Department, that being protecting coastal resources and ensuring public participation. The County has repeatedly represented the Planning Department has sole authority over SMA permits...to administer, enforce, compliance pursuant to the Federal Coastal Zone Management Act. The County receives funding to...to administer the SMA laws. It’s my position that funding should potentially be suspended by the Federal Government, NOAA, or the other agencies that I’m currently in contact with. What the record shows is a complete systematic failure and multiple costly lawsuits from citizens who are forced to be the developer compliance agents for the County...Olowalu, Montana (*phonetic*), Kahoma, et cetera. So, here is where it begins. Every estimate application requires some form of impact assessments and condition mitigations for storm water, drainage, infrastructure, and yes, fire protection. By rule of law, licensed professionals must prepare an order of magnitude cost valuations for those mitigations. In most cases, these critical valuations determine whether a project is classified as a major or minor permit, and that classification determines whether public hearing takes place on the proposed development. This is a statutory right, and where the system breaks down. The records show that engineering valuations are intentionally undervalued by developers. Projects that should be classified as SMA majors are pushed into minor status, and the public is entirely cut out. By rule, Planning has the authority to have Public Works review these calculations. The sobering fact is Public Works Director David Goode acknowledged not once has Public Works ever

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been asked to review the engineer's valuations. One of our former Plan...Planning Directors called it, well, those are stamps of integrity, they would never undervalue them. Well, you might want to look at the evidence in the Second Circuit Court to see that is not only a fact, it's an intentional act. It gets worse. Public Works administers civil engineering plans for those developments. By code, they are required to ensure that all departmental conditions, including SMA, are incorporated into the plans. After engineers prepare the drawings, those plans are supposed to be routed to the departments for verification. Only then are they permitted, built, and inspected. But when you review Public Works' routing sheets, there is a glaring omission...SMA is not even on the routing sheets. So, as a Staff Member of the Office of the Mayor . . . *(timer sounds)* . . . I requested this--I'll complete, thank you--I requested this checklist be corrected. I was completely blown off saying, brah, that's not the way we do things. That's also in the record in all of the communications --

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Mr. Salem.

MR. SALEM: -- from the Mayor down to Public Works. So, the bottom line--and I think you can see this here, and there...there's...it could go on and on, but that'll --

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Mr. Salem, could you please wrap up your testimony?

MR. SALEM: -- be...that'll take place in the authorities. I will.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Five seconds.

MR. SALEM: The result's predictable. I'll wrap up my...my testimony. How many subdivisions around Lahaina also didn't complete their fire mitigations? I know. We'll never know.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you. Members, any clarifying questions for our testifier? Seeing none. Staff? Thank you.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, no one else is signed up to testify, but we do see someone approaching the podium.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you.

MR. LAW: Thank you, Ellen. Thanks for being here for...working for the County today. Aloha kākou. Jasee Law from Kula Uka. Coming down here on the bus, I have a lot of thoughts in my head, then when I get in here, they just disappear. I don't know why that is. But I...I appreciate the previous testifier, Luna Ho'omalua U'u-Hodgins. As I've said before, this is the year of the Fire Horse, and there's going to be some social justice going on. It'll be a lot of other things. Unfortunately, you have to have some conflicts to get the justice because the people that don't...that...that have a different view of justice. So, I'm eager to hear from the...what is it called, the elected planning director? And I'm looking forward to hearing from the Housing Director. And hopefully we'll get together because I'm still...I...I'm kind at end...end of the line, wondering which line to get into because I need housing. And...and also, I almost forgot the Hawaiian word of

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the day is hau'oli la hānau, which means happy birthday. And happy birthday ahead of time, in case I don't get to testify tomorrow for Mr. Sugimura.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you. Any other testifiers?

MS. MCKINLEY: Yes, Chair. One more testifier. Jim Langford on Teams.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

MR. LANGFORD: Aloha, Council and Chair. Beautiful to see all of you healthy after the storm. I was listening to the earlier testifier, Mr. Salem, and reviewing...I did write something up for H3-HO (*phonetic*)...all those three letters, -3 and 4 [*sic*], but what I wanted to just suggest and...and support is, I recall there was an RFP being put together to consolidate some of the tracking functions in each of the departments, and I've been running a lot of software reviews and how to help with efficiency and maintain timelines, budgets, and stay ahead of some of the...the ethical complaints, and just keep things professional. So, I didn't know when that RFP was going to go out, but I do have software that some other cities are looking at and in counties, and employing in their...in their pipeline. So, it would be exciting to get to work with you folks here at home, and looking forward to finding out how to continue to add value to our community bringing safety and...and excellent solutions to the table. So, I guess I'm asking, do we know about the RFPs on the software? Is that part of this Housing? That's where I heard it. So, thank you.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you. Members --

MR. LANGFORD: Great to see you all.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: -- any clarifying questions? Seeing none. Thank you very much for your testimony. Staff, is there anybody else wishing to testify?

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, no one else has signed up to testify. So, we can proceed with a brief last call if you'd like.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Please.

MS. MCKINLEY: If anyone in the audience or on Teams would like to testify, please come up to the mic and begin your testimony, or use the raise your hand function on Teams. I'll provide a brief countdown...three, two, one. Seeing none. Chair, no one has indicated that they wish to testify at this time.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you.

**. . . CLOSE PUBLIC TESTIMONY AT BEGINNING OF MEETING . . .**

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**ITEM-3(3) OPERATIONAL AND BUDGETARY REVIEW OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING**

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Members, the first item on our agenda today is a review of the operations and budgetary status for the Department of Planning to help prepare us for the upcoming Budget Season, which I know we are all so excited about. So, we have with us Acting Planning Director Takakura. We are going to ask her to do her presentation and then take more testimony after her presentation. Okay. Thank you. Whenever you're ready. Thank you.

MS. TAKAKURA: Okay. Thank you. And good morning, Committee Chair U‘u-Hodgins, Chair Lee and Vice-Chair Batangan, and HLU Committee Members. I'm going to share with you an overview of the operations of the Department and of the divisions, and then go over some budget information for this fiscal year, and just a quick snapshot of a few performance measures. *(pause)* Which one do I press? Oh, that one. Okay. Thank you. First off, the Department adopted this mission in 2023 to help the people of Maui County manage growth and preserve land in an equitable and sustainable manner that balance is cultural, environmental, and economic needs. Quality service is provided by seeking efficiency and offering consistent and timely information with integrity and aloha. This is the framework for our operations and for our budget. With less than 100 employees, Planning is one of the smaller departments. We have 85.5 budgeted positions, and these are scattered throughout five different divisions that work on an array of land use projects and permits. We also staff seven boards and commissions, which range from meeting twice a month for Maui Planning Commission, to once a month from most of the others, to quarterly for Hāna Advisory Committee...and they sometimes have special meetings in addition. We also have advisory committees, like for the South Maui community plan update, and depending on the subject, meetings can run all day and then some. So, now, getting into a little bit of detail about the divisions, starting with Zoning Administration and Enforcement Division. Sometimes they're called zoning, sometimes they're called ZAED, I probably say both, but Zoning Division. And they have 30 positions, four of which are vacant, and their main responsibility is administering Title 19 of Maui County Code, and that's also referred to as the Comprehensive Zoning Code. They also administer Chapter 16.13 for signs, and they do all kinds of things, including building permits, subdivision reviews, certificates of occupancy, sign and banner permits, agricultural reviews, landscaping, parking, zoning confirmations, and answering the phone a lot, especially with these questions, like what can I do on my property? Or can I do this, but what about that? Or what kind of permits do I need and so forth. They also process updates to Title 19, which you see quite often, and I do have a number of those that we did in the last two quarters of the fiscal year. I'll show you at the end of the presentation. And then, enforcement is in this group, as you can see by the division name, and I'll share some of their performance measures later. And note that Enforcement's goal is...is compliance. SeeClickFix, also known as COMConnect, is the best way to reach them regarding potential violations. ZAED has been actively involved in post-fire rebuilds by playing a big role in coordinating permit reviews and making sure they are completed timely and in accordance with the many laws and proclamations. ZAED is also responsible for recent updates to Title 19 to allow for rebuilding...that would not have been able to occur without those updates, like the nonconformities and then the kitchenettes for the

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multigenerational...generational home...housing. The next biggest...next biggest division is the current Planning Division with 29 positions...mostly planners. There are seven vacant positions in this group. They handle the discretionary permits, many of which come to the County Council because they're approved via ordinance. They also manage the special management area and the shoreline, vacation rental permits, and many other permits like you can see here. Special use permits, conditional permits, changes of zoning, community plan amendments, district boundary amendments, EAs, EISs, and all kinds of other things. They also deal with contested cases, interventions, and other very complicated matters too. This team is also heavily involved in the rebuild, and they've been meeting with shoreline property owners and managing permit reviews as quickly as they can while still making sure that all requirements are met. And if you ever want to know what's going on with the Planning Department, check out the Maui, Moloka'i, Lāna'i Planning Commission agendas. They're usually full and take up a lot of time, but are very important for ensuring the public process. Okay, next group is the Long Range Division, and they have 13 and a half positions. And just FYI, the half is a half-time position, not half a person. It sounds very strange, even to me, but we do have a half-time position and...yep, that person is very happy in his half-time position. So, this group administers Maui County Code, Chapter 280B for the General Plan documents, and those are the Countywide Policy Plan, Maui Island Plan, and the community plans. This division works with the community to determine what do we want our home to look like in the future. Long Range Division also manages the many different land use maps that we refer to on a daily basis. 280B requires that all community plans, zoning ordinances, and subdivision ordinances shall conform to the General Plan. Also, Maui County Code 19-510 requires special use permits to be compliant with the General Plan documents. And then also, HRS requires the SMA permits to be consistent with the General Plan. So, these permits are routed to Long Range Division for consistency review. And sometimes you'll see them as attachments in the package sometimes that come up to County Council. Staff in this group also manage the cultural resources side of land use permits, reviewing applications for consistency with 19.52, and working with the State Historic Preservation Division to try to keep the special character of Maui County. And they're also actively involved in the rebuild with the historic district assessments and...sign permits haven't been coming in yet, but the assessments have been coming in for Lahaina Historic Districts I and II...and then they staff the Cultural Resources Commission. Okay. Last two small but mighty divisions. Plan Implementation Division, which the DRIP Committee will hear from this afternoon, checks on implementation of the General Plan...and spoiler alert, it's a lot. So, more on that at 1:30 p.m. today. I heard you folks say hafa adai, which I believe is a different language, but you don't get half a day today, you have us morning and afternoon, so...  
...*(laughing)*... 280B also requires preparation of County budgets and capital improvement programs to implement the General Plan to the extent practicable...practicable, and so plan implementation division reviews for that too. And then also, the Title 19 update, which will be reaching out to you this summer and fall. And then finally, Administration, have eight positions there, two vacancies. We basically make sure that...we basically run the department and make sure the divisions have what they need to get their work done. And this ranges from staffing, training, equipment, procedures, contracts, vehicles, all...any of those things that kind of fall through the cracks kind of get picked up by Administration and...because we got to

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make sure everything gets done. So, that's the operations of the department in a nutshell. Now, let's pivot to some budget numbers. So, this is just some spending information as of the end of last month. And you can see, we're really small. We have A, B, and C salaries and wages, operations, and equipment. No CIP, so I don't have any interesting pictures of tanks or waterlines or parks or fields or anything like that. And no fun activities at Kau...Kaunoa Senior Center, but these are our numbers. Salaries, we've kind of spent almost half, 49 percent, have 51 percent left. Operations, we spent 28 percent, and have 72 percent left. Equipment, we've spent 65 percent, and have 35 percent left. And out of the total, 43 percent spent, that's the \$4,006,473, and 57 percent remaining. On the bottom half of this slide, it's just some projects that we have contracts and consultants for or that are still ongoing in this fiscal year, and that's...some of them that you're aware of, like the South Maui Community Plan, Central Maui Community Plan, Maui Island SMA Boundary Review, and then, of course, the Title 19 update. Other expenditures...they're not really projects, but they are on the budget because they do cost money, is the rent and some renovations that we're doing to accommodate the staffing. And then future projects are things that haven't begun yet, but should be beginning within this fiscal year, sometime before the end of June 30th, and that's getting started an Upcountry Community Plan update, at least the...the foundational work of the research and doing...starting on the outreach. Also working on the Cultural Resources Management Plan update, and that would be in partnership with 'Ōiwi Resources. Socioeconomic forecast, rates and fees update, per Maui County Code 3.01, and then the Lahaina National Historic Landmark District update. That's mainly an Office of Recovery project, but we will be actively involved in that project with them when it gets started. So, finally, just some performance measures halfway through the year...and I...I didn't put all of them, but just some of the more prominent ones. Staff responses and assistance, 1,463...and, you know, I just wanted to comment on that one. So, for payroll purposes, one year is 2,080 hours. So, if we've got six months, that's like 1,040 hours. So, if you divide this 1,463 divided by, you know, half of a year, 1,040, that's like 1.4 inquiries every hour...so we're getting inquiries all the time. And so, that's in addition to all of our work, but, you know, they're super important because, you know, people want to know. And so, if we can help them, we...we certainly do. But it is quite a bit, and sometimes they are...they do take time because sometimes you have to research things for people, but that...that's really important to us to get those out and get the responses back to people. Land use verifications, 883; building permits reviewed, 893; and you've got some enf...we have some enforcement numbers in there. Inspections, 280; notices of warnings, 43; violations, 10; special management area exemptions and minor permits, 146; public meetings, 49 in the past six months; and then ordinances and rules amended, those other ones that come before you to update Title 19 and other so forth, those are 8 in the fiscal year. So, the work is relentless and it can be very complicated, but like our mission says, we have an important job to do, to manage growth and preserve land in an equitable and sustainable manner that balances cultural, environmental, and economic needs. It's not just for us, but it's for our future generations. So, that's everything I have to share. I can take some questions, and I do believe I have some of my co-workers online, and so I might have to phone a friend if I can't answer your question. But if we can't answer your question, if I could please ask that you send it in writing so...and then we can research and respond to you whatever we can't answer today. So, that's it. Thank you very much.

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CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you very much. Members, before we go into discussion, let’s please call for any testimony on this item. So, Staff, do we have any testifiers?

**. . . BEGIN PUBLIC TESTIMONY FOR ITEM HLU-3(3) . . .**

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, there is currently no one signed up to testify on this item. We can do a brief last call, if you’d like?

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Please do.

MS. MCKINLEY: If anyone would like to testify on this item, please come up to the podium or raise your hand on Teams. The countdown is three, two, one. Seeing none. Chair, no one has indicated they would want to testify on this item.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you, Members. Seeing no individuals wishing to testify...yeah? Okay, sounds good. I understand that somebody just raised their hand. So, Mr. Small, feel free to start your testimony. *(pause)* Is he unmuted on our end? Okay. You’re unmuted on our end.

MR. SMALL: And I think I’m unmuted now.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Yep, we can hear you. Go ahead.

MR. SMALL: On my end too. Great, thank you.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Of course.

MR. SMALL: As always, an honor to be, you know, participating in the democratic process. Thank you for your time and attention. At issue for me are the existing loopholes that we’ve been testifying about for years. You know, in subdivisions that have SMA permits, the...there is an...the County Code requires a plan...Public Works to recycle the subdivision plans back to Planning, and they systematically do not do so. Planning is supposed to have an opportunity to verify that the subdivision plats are conforming to the SMA permits, and they just don’t do it. And I don’t understand--well, I do understand why, I mean, it...it facilitates developers loading infrastructure requirements into their SMA permit, and then leaving them out of their subdivision. And currently, in Chris Salem’s case, Corporation Counsel--or KSG on their behalf--is maintaining that Public Works, when they sign off on a subdivision that that automatically satisfies the conditions of an SMA permit. But Mr. Cook went into last week the difference between Public Works’ ministerial duties that they must...if somebody meets the minimum requirements, they must approve, and Planning, having SMA jurisdiction, to add discretionary requirements for public safety and environmental protections. Your lawyers...the County lawyers are maintaining that Public Works can nullify the SMA additions that are made, and they are attempting to use the court to rewrite the Charter, to re-interpret the Charter, and that is just so wrong. I need you folks to understand what’s going on here and to do something about it. You have the power and authority to...to make sure that Planning does review. And if it’s a matter of

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money in the budget, then just charge the developer the fee. You know, it...it's...you're already getting--SMA is already getting what, \$400,000 a year from the State to administer CZMA? So, there's...there's funds to do this. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . You need to close this loophole. Mr. Sinenci, we...you know, your...your office worked intensively with Chris Salem to analyze how SMA is handled and how it's abused. You need to pursue that course.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Mr. Small, do you mind wrapping up your testimony, please?

MR. SMALL: It's already been laid out. I...I don't...you know, I'm begging you people. These are...these are loopholes. There's fire mitigations that contributed [sic] to the Lahaina disaster that got lost in these SMA permits.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Thank you very much, Mr. Small. Any clarifying questions?

MR. SMALL: And of course, there was a quick resolution --

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: You have a clarifying question?

MR. SMALL: -- that investigation never happened.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Sure. Sure.

MR. SMALL: You need to launch that investigation.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Mr. Small, thank you very much.

MR. SMALL: Thank you very much for your time.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Mr. Sinenci, has a clarifying question for you.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Mahalo, Sam, for your testimony this morning. So, just to clarify, your...your issue was the Planning Department receiving the SMAs back from Public Works?

MR. SMALL: Receiving the subdivision plats.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Back after their review, back to the Planning Department?

MR. SMALL: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay.

MR. SMALL: There...you know, there's...there's a...it's in the ledger. There's a space for it to indicate that it's been done, and they don't do it as a matter of practice. They don't do it.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay. Thank you for that clarification.

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CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Member Sinenci.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Yeah.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Mr. Small. Members, any other clarifying questions? Seeing none. Thank you very much for your testimony. Bye. Next testifier, please, if we have any?

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, no one else has indicated that they'd like to testify, so this is the last call for oral testimony, and please come up to the podium or raise your hand on Teams if you'd like to testify. The countdown is three, two, one. Seeing none, Chair.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you. Members, seeing there are no other individuals wishing to testify, without objection, I will now close public testimony...oral testimony for this item.

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you. Thank you. As a reminder, written testimony will continue to be accepted.

**. . . CLOSE PUBLIC TESTIMONY FOR ITEM HLU-3(3) . . .**

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Members, we're going to do a three-minute discussion period and any follow-up rounds if you need. We only have the next two items...or this one and the next one on the agenda. And I'll begin from this end. So, Member Batangan?

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Acting Director. Thank you for being here today. Can I ask for more detail on the unexpended operations funds that you mentioned? Have these funds been encumbered and just not paid out yet, or do you anticipate having significant Carryover/Savings?

MS. TAKAKURA: Thank you for the question, Vice-Chair Batangan. So, a lot of our operations funding is for professional services, and so I do anticipate that they will be spent down before the end of the fiscal year, but we try to pay them as they do the work and then they invoice us. So, it...it's going to be small, you know, amounts throughout the year. You know, usually we do have a little bit of Carryover/Savings at the end of the year, but we...we try to make sure that our planning and our expenditures are...are, you know, as close to each other as possible. Let's see if I can find that. And I have to apologize, you know, I was...I've only been doing this since February 1st, I wasn't actively involved in the budgeting. But like some of the funding is going to be for like say the Upcountry Community Plan update, but we haven't started it yet, but we do anticipate that toward the end of the fiscal year. Even the socioeconomic forecast, we're supposed to do that every two years and the last one was in May of 2024, so that's going to be coming up pretty soon. Others, you know, are going to be...we have some training planned for the commissioners, I don't think we've started on that one yet. And then others, just mediation fees, you know, because of interventions and so forth, those are

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going to be as they come up at the commissions. So, I...I do anticipate it being mostly spent down, but like I said, there might be a little bit of leftover. We have been filling vacancies, knock on wood, I hope I didn't just jinx that, but...so our A account might not be as...the leftover funding might not be as big in the past years, but...yeah.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Yeah, I understand the trouble with having...trying to hire a planner.

MS. TAKAKURA: Yeah, so like I said, we...we try to spend down as much as we can, you know, to budget and spend what we budgeted to stay on track, but...

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Okay. Is there...had the department budgeted for HCPO this year, or was that going to be fully funded through outside sources?

MS. TAKAKURA: So, thank you for that question. So, the Hawai'i Congress of Planning Officials conference is every couple of years on the...on Maui. It...it rotates around the different islands, and that is separate. It...no...no funds come out of the department's budget, except if say, it's on another island and there's travel expenses for employees to attend. But that would be for any travel expenses . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . which we normally have funding for. So...and that might end up being a one-day thing in November on O'ahu, and I hope I can send, especially a lot of our newer employees, to attend that. So, that one, HCPO is not...does not come out of the County budget. Thanks.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Administration.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: I'm just going to do a double check that the Members online could hear the buzzer? Okay, great. Thank you. Member Sugimura is not with us yet, so we'll move over to Member Paltin. Do you have any questions?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: You know I do.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: I know you do. . . .*(laughing)*. . .

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Ms. Takakura. For my first question...and standard disclaimer applies. Do you guys collect the fees...or collect fees for certificate of occupancy or building permits?

MS. TAKAKURA: Thank you, Chair. So, regarding certificates of occupancy and building permits, we do not collect the fees, those are for Public Works.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay, thanks. Perfect. Next question. So, your top priorities last year--maybe not you, but whoever was in that seat--was like addressing morale, burnout, vacancies, wildfire recovery, Title 19 update. I looked at the title19rewrite.org website, and there's so much coming soon. What is the soon that is referred to when it says coming soon?

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MS. TAKAKURA: Thank you for the question. So, our Title 19 rewrite...you know, it's normal for these kind of huge projects to take multiple years, but coming soon we are planning to meet with you folks in the summer.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Summer and fall.

MS. TAKAKURA: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay.

MS. TAKAKURA: And then actually start with the presentations and the outreach in the fall. But, kind of to give you folks an update, because it has been a little while in the summer.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay.

MS. TAKAKURA: And just a comment...Kaua'i's one, they took six years and then it actually didn't work, and then they had to do incremental updates. So --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: How many years then are we?

MS. TAKAKURA: Let's see, I think it was 2019, and then we had COVID, and then we had wildfires and staffing and all kinds of issues. So, it's been a while. I...I admit, it has been a while.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. How about the Harvey...H.T. Harvey and Associates with the wetlands overlay, how is that coming along?

MS. TAKAKURA: So, the H.T. Harvey Wetlands Overlay, that project is complete. We haven't...they did the informational map, which is...there's a GIS link on our website and there's...H.T. Harvey is doing some work, I think, for--either in Mā'alaea area, but that's a different contract.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay.

MS. TAKAKURA: But...yeah, they're not doing any more work on the wetlands overlay matter.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, just check the website for the GIS link?

MS. TAKAKURA: Yes. Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. And then, I see that you have been working a lot with 4LEAF on the permitting in the burn zone.

MS. TAKAKURA: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Is there any like best practices that we can take from working with 4LEAF and apply it to all the other permits to help with the streamlining which was another priority?

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MS. TAKAKURA: You know, working with 4LEAF has been a good exercise for us because we've really had to spell out the processes and procedures, and so that's been helpful for us . . . *(inaudible)* . . .

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Have you documented them as administrative rules?

MS. TAKAKURA: Not as administrative rules, but that's a good idea. I'll write that down.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Because I...I love administrative rules.

MS. TAKAKURA: Yes. Yeah, thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Because, you know, I mean, why waste the disaster like that?

MS. TAKAKURA: Yes. . . . *(timer sounds)* . . .

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay, thank you. I heard the bell. This has been fun.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: We can come back to you if you have more questions, Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I can come up with some more.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: I know you can. . . . *(laughing)* . . . Member Johnson?

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you, Chair. And thank you, Acting Director, Director Takakura for joining us. Your institutional knowledge shows, so I'm going to ask you some questions. So, you...you were going through the slides on some divisions had vacancies and some did not, it seemed. Because you would...on your slides, you would say this ZAED has four vacancies, and then what...some of your other sides say no vacancies, but it didn't list the vacancies, so I...I assume those are full. So, basically my question is, is what are the vacancies in ZAED and what...is there a trouble spot, is there a sore spot? You know, let's start with that.

MS. TAKAKURA: Okay. Thank you for the question. So, regarding the vacancies in the Zoning Division, we have a Planner V that is vacant due to a recent promotion, and then we have two Zoning Inspector trainees and an Office Assistant that is vacant. So, the Planner V, they can see is recent because we promoted someone, and the Zoning Inspector trainees, I...I'm not...I can't answer why those are vacant because I have not been involved with that one.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: I would assume because of the pay.

MS. TAKAKURA: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: But if you don't know, then you don't know.

MS. TAKAKURA: Yeah, the pay is --

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COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: I assume the pay is low for a trainee.

MS. TAKAKURA: Yes. And so, it's also low for the Office Assistant, that's only SR-10. Sorry to interrupt you.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. Yeah, so, that's something we struggle with. So, some of the questions Councilmember Paltin asked were...were some that I was going to ask, about the over...wetland overlay map, you said it's finished. Can...can we send it on to the Conservation Committee, or do we have any plans? What are we going to do with that?

MS. TAKAKURA: Thank you for the question. So, it's available to the public. Regarding the Conservation Planning Committee, you know, Planning Department's not part of that committee, so I really can't say. I...I'm not sure, maybe...

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. TAKAKURA: Yeah, I don't know. Sorry.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: That's okay. It's a good segue for my next question, Acting Director. You know, to have an environmental planner, or someone who specializes in that...in that topic, well, let's say you, Acting Director? Would that be something you support?

MS. TAKAKURA: Yes. And...and our shoreline team works closely with the UHC grant, those are kind of the environmental planners, with...and they...they do have quite a bit on their plate...but yeah, they...they take care a lot of the environmental issues.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. In your Long Range Division, there's three GIS, right? So, let me clarify a little bit about that overland map. The...the map is not finished, but the inventory list is; is that correct for the wetlands?

MS. TAKAKURA: So, the wetlands overlay...I mean the wetlands map is complete, it's an informational map. That was the requirement in 19.47. . . .(timer sounds). . . And so, that...that process was completed to prepare that map. I'm not...I'm not sure what more you are saying.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. I...I was just thinking if you're not...you know, you only have three GIS--and I heard my time, Chair, so I'll be quick. The three GIS in your division Long Range, maybe they could help, but it says...you're telling me that the maps are already complete.

MS. TAKAKURA: Yes, they actually helped quite a bit in preparation of that map. And...

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay.

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MS. TAKAKURA: But yeah, they haven't done anything more since the consultant com...completed it.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thanks for clarifying. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Member Johnson. So, I was looking at the vacancies too, they do have four vacancies in ZAED, seven in current, one in Long Range, one in Planning Implementation, and I think the only department that is full is Administration...so they do have several vacancies. But good question, thank you. Member Rawlins-Fernandez, for your opportunity?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Of course.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo for putting all that vacancies together. Okay. Aloha, Acting Director Takakura. Mahalo for your presentation and for being with us this morning. I wanted to follow up on a couple of the responses that you gave my colleagues, and I understand that you just got to this position, so no pressure. So, you mentioned that the socioeconomic forecast is coming up this year. Is that something that's internally done or contracted out?

MS. TAKAKURA: Thank you, Chair. So, Councilmember Keani Rawlins-Fernandez, we...in the...when we did two years ago we contracted with UHERO to prepare that information for us. They're really the subject-matter experts, and we hope to use them again.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Mahalo for that. Okay. And then...so, you mentioned that after South Maui Community Plan, we're going to be working on the Upcountry Community Plan.

MS. TAKAKURA: That's correct.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Are we still trying to do multiple community plans at the same time? I...we tried doing that at one point back in...I think that was pre-COVID, when we put \$500,000 to contract the work so that we can do two community plans simultaneously. Is that something that the Department...did it work out, should we do it again, is that something that we should put into the budget so that we can do that again so that we can speed it along since the Charter requires us to have it updated every ten years, but mathematically it's just...hasn't been possible?

MS. TAKAKURA: Thank you, Chair. So, the answer is yes. Hopefully we can get South Maui completed when you folks are finished with the budget. And we've got Central in the works and we hope to have a draft plan for that one before the end of the calendar year. And once South is finished, we will be launching Upcountry. And the only way we'll ever catch up is by having two going on at once. And we do use consultants to help us with the foundational work, but once the draft plan is completed, we're going to be probably taking it on ourselves and running with it. Because our Staff know the community the best and will be doing the outreach in all those meetings. But...yeah.

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Two...two at a time. I don't think we can handle more than two, and knock on wood again, that nobody leaves...because we have such a great team at Long Range, I think we can handle two, yeah. Thanks.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Agreed. Mahalo. So, the funding for contracting it is in professional services already like it's been? Okay. Consistent...  
...*(timer sounds)*...

MS. TAKAKURA: Yes. Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Great. Okay. I hear the timer. Mahalo.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you for those questions, Member Rawlins-Fernandez. Member Cook?

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Director-to-be-soon. Could you kind of clarify the Planning Department's use of the General Plan and community plans and review...review and approval of permits and projects? Are the plans aspirational or firm guidelines for approval?

MS. TAKAKURA: Thank you, Chair. The answer is yes. So, Long Range Division is routed some of these permits. Like I mentioned, 280B, and then also in 19-510, there is requirements that certain permits have to be...have this gen...a General Plan review, and that would be like subdivisions, community plan amendments, Maui Island Plan amendment, change of zoning, special permits. And so, we do review the permit, the application and all the attachments, and then do a consistency review. There's others that it's not required...like say, a conditional permit. There's...there's nothing in the Code or anywhere that says that they have to be...have this consistency analysis, but we do them anyway so that the Planning Commission, and also the County Council, just has that information to make a better decision.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thanks.

MS. TAKAKURA: On SM-1 too, also. I'm sorry...SM-1.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay. I mean, in reviewing the 2012 County...County of Maui General Plan, which I was on. They used 2.9 persons per household for planning projections. And it was reduced to 2.66 by the year 2030 because the thought was that it would be trending down. During the time, I thought that was very strange, and I think we would all agree now that the average household is three times that at...at max. But in the 2012 planning documents, the protected...the projected residential growth for Kihei and Makena was 72 percent over a 20-year period. In 2010, it was 27,000 and change residents. 2020, 40 thou [sic]...projected 40,850. 2030, 46,896. We're at 2 thou [sic]...2026 with 29,249, and that's slightly over it was in 2010. My reason for stating all of this...I want to be supportive of the planning process, but I see the review of projects by the Planning Department, the Planning Commission, and then community plans that are forth...they're coming afterwards. I see a huge disconnect in what was projected and what's being done. ...*(timer sounds)*... Thirty seconds. I don't advocate

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that rate of growth, I'm just quoting it. It was also during that planning period and that particular plan that it was noted that in order to properly manage and protect our standard of living and lifestyle, we needed to budget and account for infrastructure. That never happened, didn't have enough time. So, I'll...I'll save my conversation for this. I don't really...anyway, I'm hoping that that sets the stage for some further questions, and I'm grateful for you being there. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you. Did you want to respond?

MS. TAKAKURA: Well, I...I can add that the Plan Implementation Division, one of their big things to do, is reviewing the capital improvement budget when that comes up. And so, you'll probably be seeing that when you folks take a look at the budget.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you. I think that the County and the Administration...the Council and Administration need to be held accountable and responsible for basically doing the infrastructure that we're planning around. Thank you.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Member Cook. Chair Lee?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Thank you. Good morning, Jacky. So, nothing personal, but the thing is, I agree with Member Cook. Yeah, I agree with Member Cook. We see...I've been here the longest as you know, and we...and I have seen every plan under the sun, moon, and stars. And you know what? We're running out of shelves. . . .*(laughing)*. . . Yeah, we're running out of shelves. So, when are we going to stop with the plans and actually do the work? I'm not saying you, but...but who's making all these plans? Whose bright idea is to have all these different plans...which is so wonderful, but never implemented. Is it the Council that is coming up with all these brilliant ideas, and then you guys are stuck trying to follow with these...what do you think? Go ahead, be honest.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: . . .*(laughing)*. . .

MS. TAKAKURA: Oh, thank you very much. Chair Lee, I can't say yes, it's Council, because then you're not going to...it might affect your vote on...some of them are just have been...you know, as like Councilmember Cook mentioned, you know, the General Plan is from 2012. They're just very old. And a lot of the work that we're doing is simply updating, like the community plans. We're trying not to create any new ones. In terms of implementation, we'll discuss that at 1:30 at DRIP Committee today because we do have that General Plan annual report that we put out. But...yeah, I agree with you. I mean like I mentioned, you know, there's a lot. There's 1,261 items...I mean it's overwhelming for us to manage. And they're not all Planning Department's...there are...there are some that are Planning's, but it's, you know, a lot of other departments too. So, I...I don't disagree with you on that.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. So, then I want you to say that the next time you hear the Council come up with a brilliant new plan, I...I'd like you to say no. Just say no, okay?

MS. TAKAKURA: Thank you. I'm going to write that down.

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COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yes. And I will support you. Thank you.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: In my household, no is a full sentence. Member Sinenci?

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you, Chair. And thank you, Ms. Takakura. Some of my questions were answered, but just some follow up. You mentioned that you had a plan timeline for the SMA Boundary Review?

MS. TAKAKURA: Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Councilmember Sinenci. So, the SMA Boundary Review Project, that one we just launched the contract with a consultant. So, it’s just very...and it’s bare-bones, and probably just gathering research. I haven’t heard anymore. The Deputy Director has been mainly involved in that one, and I saw the notice to proceed, but I’m not sure where...and that was just recently. So, you know, they have to do the...write the request for proposal and then do the bidding and all of that. So, the contract has been awarded, but I’m not sure where...where that’s at since then. But I can follow up on that.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay, great. Thank you for that. And then the other question I had was in, I believe, 2018, we did receive an audit about the permitting fees. I see we...you...you’ve got almost 900 permits reviewed, and we...we did, I guess, adjust some of the fees. Do you see any...does...and how has that been working out, and do you see a need for any changes in certain areas?

MS. TAKAKURA: Thank you for the question. So, regarding fees, we’ve been following that study and have been incrementally increasing the fees. Just from my experience at Water and at here, because they have also rates and fees, doing these small fee increases are much more palatable to the community and manageable. So, I know...we’re not talking about next fiscal year, but we’re just proposing a small increase because we’re trying to do 70 percent of the cost this fiscal year. And so, we’re just asking for 80 percent of the cost next fiscal year. But, you know, that...that part of Maui County Code 3.01 is trying to get the Department off of being so reliant on the general fund. And so, I...I’m not sure what the...a new study’s going to show because that 2018 study is based on costs from 2017, you know...almost ten years ago, yeah?

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Yeah.

MS. TAKAKURA: So...and things have gotten a lot more expensive, so we’re going to see how that goes. But I want to add though, the smaller permits, like SMA exemptions, they’ve been \$206 for many, many years now. You know, just like the water fees, you know, the base rate is very low, it’s...it’s the...really the bigger ones, like the...you know, the SMA majors that are...you know, can be in the thousands, the big permits. So, your average person is not really going to be affected by any of the really big rate increases if...you know, if they happen because of the study results.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Okay, thanks. Mahalo for that. You guys are looking into that.

MS. TAKAKURA: Yes.

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COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you, Member Sinenci. I will do a second round by just a show of hands, so if you do have another for Department, please raise your hand. Member Paltin, I know you do. Does anybody else have any questions? Okay. I see you, Member Rawlins-Fernandez. Awesome. Thank you. So, Member Paltin, we’ll go with you, and then we’ll go to Member Rawlins-Fernandez online.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Ms. Takakura. Like Member Rawlins-Fernandez said, I’m aware that you’re new to the position, so don’t stress out. In last year’s answers, there was talk about the vacancies and offering retention and recruitment incentives, and then you also testified about doing a study. Did any of that get implemented?

MS. TAKAKURA: Thank you for the question. So, retar...regarding retention incentives, we’ve been talking closely with Personnel Services on how we can make that work, and looking at the other jurisdictions and how they have implemented. So, we’re actively working on trying to do that. Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay, still working on it. And then...

MS. TAKAKURA: Yes, for 13 and 4, and then trying to get something for 3 bargaining units.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Has...has the health benefits made any kind of dent or...

MS. TAKAKURA: I think they’ve been very helpful. I think all...out of the seven year-so [*sic*] employees, I think maybe three declined them. Everybody else is on. And so, I think that it’s been very successfully received. So, thank you for that.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, cool. And then, Index Code 909010B from the April 7th, 2025 letter talked about hiring a professional services...to hire a consultant to entitle County-owned land similar to how Kaua’i does with Lima Ola. Was...was a consultant ever hired?

MS. TAKAKURA: Not yet, Councilmember Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Before the end of the fiscal year, you think?

MS. TAKAKURA: I think that’s would...that’s highly likely before the end of the fiscal year, yes. That will be...we’ll work...work with the Managing Director, because that’s going to be a big team effort which we can talk with the next department about, so...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay, cool. And then also, the expansion positions for Grant Specialist II and Information Educational Specialist I, as of like April of last year, we were still creating the position descriptions. Have they been filled, or at what part of the process are they in?

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MS. TAKAKURA: The Information Education Specialist was filled, I think, at the end of January, so we have someone there just...from recently. And we haven't been able to fill the Grant Specialist, so we're trying to see if we can recruit that one at a negotiable salary, but we're still working with Personnel Services on that one.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: It's...it's able to be posted though?

MS. TAKAKURA: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay.

MS. TAKAKURA: The position's created, we recruited, but we have not been able to hire anybody.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Great, great. And then the user fee study that was put out by the Matrix Consulting Group, are we still on that schedule?

MS. TAKAKURA: So, regarding the matrix fee study, this current fiscal year is the last year of that, and so I was hoping we could have--well, I was in my Long Range Division Chair telling them, hey, you got to do a study. But unfortunately, it didn't happen this year, so we're putting it in the budget for...I think it's for next year. So, that's why...we're just trying to stick with that, but go ten percent higher. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . This year is 70, we're trying to ask for 80 percent for that study. Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. That was pretty good for just starting the job.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Very good. Thank you. Member Rawlins-Fernandez, followed by Member Johnson.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair. For the record and for the public's benefit, community plans are mandated by the Charter under Section 8-8.5 and State Statute, HRS Section 226-58. And for the record, on Moloka'i we actually do follow our plan and I'm so sorry if other districts don't follow their plans. Many of the policies and funding priorities I introduce come from our Moloka'i Community Plan. Because it's the Council's responsibility to make implementation possible...such as relocating the Pūko'o Fire Station, providing a new cemetery, and then we try to do a cultural overlay, which was actually something that our community plan asked for and unfortunately, that got...we weren't able to override the veto at the time. Plans are important to have before we take any action, and then we have to follow the plan. Establishing the plan isn't the problem. All the responsible parties must actually do their part to implement the recommendations from the plan...that's the problem. So, that's my comments about plans. I wanted to follow up on the...the rest of my questions that I had regarding the vacancies...and again, I know you just got there, so if you have any ideas on how you plan on filling those vacancies, I'd love to hear some of your thoughts.

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CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you, Member Rawlins-Fernandez. I believe Director has a response to your first statement as well, and then I think she’ll answer your vacancies question.

MS. TAKAKURA: Thank you, Councilmember Rawlins-Fernandez. So, I just want to say regarding the General Plan consistency reviews, you know, people complain about the new permitting system maps, but it’s been a great tool for pulling Long Range Division in is because now we get routed these things kind of methodically, you know, these big permits, and we know where to look and we can find the traffic impact report, and all of those things. So, I think we’re doing a much better job in the...than in the past about reviewing plans and to check for the consistency. And the other thing is, you know, the Plan Implementation Division is kind of a new division...well, I mean ten years old, but they fin...they have three people now, so they’re doing much better...are able to do...take on a lot more, and one of them is...is doing that im...implementation report. So, it’s getting better about following those plans. Regarding the vacancies, like I mentioned, we’re trying to do those retention incentives, seeing what we can for bargaining unit 4, and trying to get something going for bargaining unit 3. Some of the positions, like say the Long Range Division position, it’s kind of specialized so it’s a little bit harder to fill, especially as you get up into the higher levels, you...the...the skill set is...is pretty specific on what we need. So, it...it’s ongoing. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay. Mahalo for that. Okay. And then...so, in the last meeting we had . . .(timer sounds). . . for considering your confirmation...you want me to finish?

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Yeah, please do. Go ahead.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay, okay. And then this can be my last question. There...there’s concern from the CRC about not following the Recovery Coordination Directive number 6. And while there is support for expediting permit review, it shouldn’t be at the cost of the environment and our culture. So, I guess this will be a, you know, two-part question. How are you ensuring that the...expediting the review does not come at the cost of our environment and culture? And in the procedures that you’ve developed with 4LEAF in response to Member Paltin’s questions, have you incorporated Department of ‘Oiwī Resources to ensure that the Charter is being followed?

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Please.

MS. TAKAKURA: Okay. Thank you. Okay. So, regarding RCD-6 and the Cultural Resources Commission Review...so historic district permits always have to follow 19.52 of the Code, and so that’s not going to go away. They still have to be consistent with the requirements of the historic districts and al...also, they have to fol...submit to SHPD, which is the authority on archaeology. And then we’ve always been working closely with them on a staff level for the architectural reviews too, so none of that is going to change. The thing that is going to change is that it’s going to the CRC for their final approval. And as you probably are aware, we’ve had problems with quorum and...and different things, and so it’s just been very hard for applicants to...to get through the process.

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And the other thing is, you know, the...19.52 has this...kind of this caveat in there that if...once it's been...once the CRC has been notified, they have 90 days to approve, and if they don't, then it's deemed approved. So, it's ending up that because they're not making a decision on some of these, that they get approved by default. So, there's just been a lot of different issues with this, but Staff are going still make sure, you know, that it gets routed to SHPD, we follow whatever SHPD's recommendations are, we follow 19.52, we follow the commercial design guidelines. And then the environmental, if they're an SMA, you know, they may...you know, they have to do the...either it's a permit, or an exemption. There's still best management practices. If they're shoreline, then that's going to be even stricter about what they're allowed to do and where they can build. Flood development permit, that's not waived. So, there's still a lot of things that are going on. The only thing that is being removed is the CRC. And so, you know, Staff and the different permitting processes should be able to ensure that we're saving the...or protecting the environment and the culture. Regarding the 4LEAF procedures, those are more for ministerial, like SMA exemptions and the building permits. So, 'Ōiwi Resources has not really been involved in those, but like I said, for the historic district and the rebuilds, they're all being routed to SHPD. So, I...I think that's a pretty impor...way...important way that the culture is being protected by...by routing them to SHPD. So, I hope that helps answer the question.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Just to follow up, was that an executive decision that you think is sufficient, or did you consult with Department of 'Ōiwi Resources on whether they agree with you on that assessment?

MS. TAKAKURA: On which...which assessment is that? I'm sorry, on what?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: On...on your assessment that it should be enough.

MS. TAKAKURA: Oh, regarding ministerial permits?

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: . . .*(Inaudible)*. . . Yeah. Well, whatever you...you said that is going to SHPD and --

MS. TAKAKURA: Oh. So, everything...and like for the rebuilds, part of the routing process is once a HDX or one of the Historic District Assessment permits come in is, we let them know, here's the process for routing to SHPD. So, that's always been the case. Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Okay.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: We can maybe chat after.

MS. TAKAKURA: Yeah.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you.

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COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Mahalo, Chair.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Of course, thank you. Member Johnson, followed by Member Cook.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. You know, everybody knows where they were during this big Kona low storm. And on Sunday, I went down to South Maui and I saw the mud, I saw the...the damage. I called Councilmember Cook and I said, hey, you know, I’m in your district, I’m checking it out and it’s terrible, you know...like this...this...it’s such an issue for me. So, I’m going back to the wetland overlay, of course, Acting Director. So, basically, will your Department take any action to implement the changes in zoning or . . .(inaudible). . . any kind of wetlands protection having said...you know, I’ve been hearing...hearing your response about my questions for the wetlands overlay. Like for example, prioritizing parcels, the map that...that are saying these are important wetlands and rezoning a few, or recommending management or even acquisition of these. Are...does the Department of Planning take any actions?

MS. TAKAKURA: So, regarding rezoning...as a practice, the Department hasn’t really proactively and [sic] gone out and sought private property owners to say, hey, we want to rezone your parcel. Usually it’s the property owner coming to the Department. But I can talk to the Administration about how they want to proceed with this.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. I...I would love...like, you know, a lot of the discussions have been about plans, you know, and just for example, the Countywide Plan recommends that we bury our powerlines. Going down on South Maui this week I saw the damage and, you know, the...some of the plans are saying things we should be...should have done 10, 20, 30 years ago. And then, now, we’re getting these floods, these storms coming so much more often, I...I really think the Department should be proactive, and I really want you guys to go out there and...and, you know, work with us on what we can do. Because that next Kona storm is going to come, you know, and we’re going to have another mud pit on South Maui Road again. So, I think that taking these...using these plans and implementing them is a really key part. And I’ll just end it on that and if you want to...unless you want to add any more to that, Acting Director.

MS. TAKAKURA: I don’t have anything more to add. That one, like I mentioned, I’ll...I’ll talk to the Administration.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Wonderful. If...if...I’d love to hear the response to that, and maybe our...our Committee can ask that in writing, or a follow-up. I would love to learn more on...on what the Administration plans to do.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Sure, we can...we can ask that question in writing.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Committee Chair. Thank you.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Of course, Member Johnson. Member Cook, before I give you your three minutes, I’m going to recognize Member Sugimura. Good morning.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Good morning. Sorry, I’m late. Thank you.

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CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you for being with us.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Member Cook.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Briefly, I just want to acknowledge the challenges that the Planning Department has been served up. During the CHIPAC (*phonetic*), it was basically the General Plan. The group was constantly directed towards not being too...staying in our lane. It’s things like...I’m looking at the...some of the items that haven’t...“haven’t been addressed yet.” Diversifying transportation options, improving education, protecting the natural environment, strengthening social and healthcare services. Those are all things that we need to address, but within the planning process of a group of volunteers collaborating and trying to create a road map for the future. Having that, which is aspirational and needed, mixed in with must...fighting over must or shall or may makes it, unfortunately, a less implementable document. Do you have any comments?

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Go ahead.

MS. TAKAKURA: Thank you. Thank you, Councilmember Cook. So, that’s kind of a complicated issue when we have community plans, and then we also have zoning. You know, if we want to require certain things, ideally we would...we should put them in the zoning chapters in Title 19, or wherever they would be most appropriate in the Maui County Code. There are certain things that can be must in the community plans, but they’re really going to depend on what the subject matter is and how...how it re...if there’s no conflict with the zoning and other plans and...and things going on. So, that’s...it’s kind of a...a complicated subject, you know, and I...I think from...since 2012 we’ve made a lot of different improvements with like trying to protect the environment and strengthening some of our...our...the zoning code that...you know, the updates that we have done, and updating the shoreline rules and the SMA rules. So, you know, it takes time, but there have been things that have...with steps that have been take...have taken, you know, either by our department or the County as a whole to...to implement some of these actions in the General Plan document. Not everything, but a lot.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Thank you. I...I don’t mean to indicate that the Planning Department hasn’t. My point was, it’s hard to have it prescript...prescriptive and measurable so that people can agree and support. But thank you. Thank you, Chair.

MS. TAKAKURA: Yes. Thank you. We get stuck in the middle of it.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you, Member Cook. Member Sugimura, do you have any questions for Planning? I know you’ve missed their presentation, but I don’t want to skip over you if you have any questions.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Yeah, thank you. I’ll just listen. Thank you.

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CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Thank you. We're on our second round. Does any...I do have one question, but if anybody else has a question, I can hold mine until the end. Member Paltin, you have one more? Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I know we got sued or something about that package of the SMA and Shoreline Rules. Where are we at with that whole thing?

MS. TAKAKURA: So, my understanding regarding the SMA no needs is, we're not administering that right now. We're...we're just --

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Back to the original form?

MS. TAKAKURA: Let me look it up. Because I have it on our website.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh, it's on the website.

MS. TAKAKURA: I believe it's the no needs that we're...we're not implementing that part of the new SMA rules.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, like the Shoreline Rules...oh, can Collette help you?

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Is Collette Cardoza part of your planning?

MS. TAKAKURA: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: She is.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Okay, I see Ms. Cardoza with her hand up.

MS. TAKAKURA: She's our Shoreline Supervisor.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Perfect.

MS. TAKAKURA: She knows a lot.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Yay. Thank you so much.

MS. TAKAKURA: Thank you for...Collette.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Ms. Cardoza.

MS. CARDOZA: Yeah. Hi...hi, good...hi, good morning, Council.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Good morning.

MS. CARDOZA: Okay. So, the current status of the SMA rules that were implemented in 2024. A dru...a judge had struck the no needs portion of the rules. And so, we...our

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Corporation Counsel has...they're...they're being worked on, I guess, on...to trying to bring that back. So, as of right now, we have the amended rules that we have implemented, less that section for the no needs within the SMA rules. The amended shoreline rules, nothing was struck from the shoreline rules, and so those are as they are. And all that is available on our website...on the Planning Department's website.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. And I got no objection to her being a resource because she did so well.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: She did. Thank you. Do you have any other questions? No? You're good. Okay, thank you. Members, any other questions? Acting Director, I just wanted to give you the opportunity to respond to one of our testifiers when they were talking about subdivisions and the review for SMA. So, if you had anything to add, all my questions have been asked by my Councilmembers, so I'm super stoked on my end. But if you wanted to respond to the testifier, please do.

MS. TAKAKURA: Yes, thank you. Thank you for this opportunity, Chair. So, regarding subdivisions and SMA...subdivisions, they are reviewed via the SMA process unless they are smaller, and that's according to HRS 205A. Subdivisions of land into lots greater than 20 acres in size or subdivisions of a parcel of land into four or fewer parcels, those are considered exemptions, they're not part of the definition of development. So, those would not be SMA permits, but the other ones, like bigger, would be. And typically, those would be routed through MAPPS to the Department of Planning. But if there are any where they...someone thinks that they hadn't gotten an SMA, if they submit a SeeClickFix or COMConnect, we can research that and see if there was an SMA or not. Or they...actually, in the MAPPS system you can do a search by typing in the TMK, and then you can see all the permits that were issued to that TMK or, you know, the parent par...or whatever the parcel is. So, the information should all be available in MAPPS. But we can research if...if there's a specific parcel.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you.

MS. TAKAKURA: Thanks.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: That's all the questions I have.

MS. TAKAKURA: Thank you.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you. Members, any other questions? If not, I'm going to take a...let's say seven-minute recess, to 10:37, and switch out the Departments and discuss...and talk stories with Housing now. So, we will return at 10:37. See you in a few, Members. . . .*(gavel)*. . .

**RECESS:** 10:30 a.m.

**RECONVENE:** 10:43 a.m.

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CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: . . .*(gavel)*. . . Thank you, Members. Will the HLU Committee please reconvene. It is 10:43 a.m. And before we move on to our next item, if there are no objections, I would like to defer the previous item.

**COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS** (excused: AL, YLS).

**ACTION: DEFER pending further discussion.**

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you. Thank you very much.

**ITEM-3(2) OPERATIONAL AND BUDGETARY REVIEW OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING**

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Members, the next item on our agenda today is a review of the operations and budgetary status of the Department of Housing to prepare us for, again, the upcoming Fiscal Year of 2027 Budget Session. To provide us an...status update, we have the Housing Department and all of their lovely department division administrators. So, Director Mitchell, if you would like to begin by giving us an update, and then we will go with testimony. So, please proceed whenever you're ready.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Chair, and good morning, Members. I'd like to start by just making sure I introduced the Department's team. To my immediate right is our Deputy Director, Direct...Deputy Director Mataafa, everyone knows Saumalu. And to his right is our County Housing Programs Administrator, Cassi Yamashita. To her right is our County Housing...Housing Community Development Division Administrator, Alicia Mazingo...I always add an N there, so I caught it that time. And then to Alicia's right is our Federal Housing Programs Division Administrator, Gail Ram...how do you say your last name...[bay-o]?

MS. RAMBAOA: Rambaoa.

MR. MITCHELL: Rambaoa. But I also want to introduce our newly-appointed accountant, Helen Zhao, who is sitting in the back. Helen has over ten years of financial accounting experience in both the public and private sectors, so I'm glad to have Helen on board. This is her first week, so she's doing her onboarding. And then before I launch into my presentation, I just want to mention to Member Sugimura that we have responded to your BFED questions, those letters are en route to you. We were able to get them out before the storm, but obviously things got jumbled up, so to speak, during the storm, but at some point, they should be on your desk. It's a rather long memo. It's about 15 pages long, so forgive me for that, but you did ask a lot of questions, so we gave you all the information.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: . . .*(inaudible)*. . . extra points. Lāna'i.

MR. MITCHELL: I do get extra points? Okay, wonderful. That's...that's a good start. So, as is the case, everyone always asks the Department of Housing not what we've had to do administratively to stand up the department, but rather, how many units have we built?

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That's the first question, even though standing up a new department is an incredible amount of work. So, answer to that question, since the Department's inception, which was July 1, 2024, over 800 affordable rental units and workforce homes have been constructed and made available to County residents--Kaiāulu O Kūku'ia, Kaulana Mahina, Hokuao, and then Hale O Piikea I and II, and Hoku'ula and Kaiāulu O Kupuohi. We've...we've seen...pushed forward on a lot of projects, but what is not often discussed, and why I'm...I'm pleased that Chair U'u-Hodgins scheduled this meeting, was so we could discuss also a lot of the administrative work that we've had to do. So, I'll quickly go over, in summary fashion, what we've done, and then I will hand it off to our division administrators to talk about their division specifically. And then if there are questions about their divisions, it's likely that Saumalu and I will take those questions because my goal here is not to have them in the middle of the firing squad, but to get their feet wet with being here in Council and feeling the energy in the room and...and seeing how the questions flow. So, we started off with about 37 staff members, and we are up to 47, and we have a couple of positions that have been authorized that we have yet to fill. We've implemented, by my count, seven or eight office policies and directives...we had none when we started July 1, 2024, and as you could imagine, identifying what is needed with those kinds of policies and directives, and then drafting them and going through the consultation process, which you've had to do takes some time. We've set up the Housing Advisory Board, the first meeting was left...last month. We had a meeting scheduled regrettably for this past Friday, which was canceled. We have rescheduled it for next month, unfortunately again during budget season, but I don't believe we've picked the day that Housing Department is likely to be scheduled to be before you. As I've mentioned in prior meetings, we have a housing dashboard set up on our page now, and that dashboard will continue to be improved with time. And so, I understand there are lots of questions about what we haven't done on the dashboard, but I encourage the Members to see what we have done because it's an enormous amount of things that we have done. And kudos goes to our entire team, especially Alicia Mazingo and our Housing Community Development Division, for helping us getting that going. We've located over 100 residential workforce housing agreements that were not in a database, and we plan to make sure they are databased so that they're available in public to everyone. We've located an enormous amount of documents that relate to housing credits. They were not databased, and we intend to database those so that we can validate the credits that are in the marketplace and make sure it's transparent for the entire community. I can't tell you the amount of equipment tha...and furnishings that we've had to remove from the Department...I will just say it's a lot. In one of my presentations, I said to you, I stopped counting when I got to about 150 four-drawer steel case cabinets on the shop floor because I realized that there was years and years of cabinets and documents that had not been reviewed. So, by my count, we've now...we've gotten rid of over 50 of those cabinets as we've reviewed all the documents...and I made a little game out of it. I wanted to see who could get...find the oldest documents. And I believe Cassi, you may have found the oldest document dating back to maybe 1971? So, well beyond any reasonable retention period. And that just goes to show the amount of work we had to do to understand what was in the Department, and how we need to manage all the information that was there and begin the process of decluttering the office. We removed in excess of 150 miscellaneous banker's boxes that were stacked in the office. The prior Housing section had gone through two prior moves, and during that process things were simply boxed and

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stacked. And so, when the new department started, we had to figure out what all of these things were. We've instituted a document review, an RFLS review process to ensure that the quality of what we release is good...and of course, that comes with some challenges because everyone then has to work on the quality of their writing and what they produce to make sure there is no ambiguity or vagueness in their documents. We've gone through process of replacing all office signage that referred to Department of Housing and Human Concerns, Housing Section, and all the office letterhead and documents that had the prior Department's name on it. Implemented a range of drafting training programs, implemented a process that we're going to continue of having staff members visit projects so they directly appreciate the impact of what we're doing. Because it's easy to sit in the office and push paper and not really understand our purpose, but when you go to the projects, you appreciate the purpose because you see who we're housing and how we're housing our residents. And implemented officewide and division meetings on a regular basis so that we can identify issues and respond to them quickly. By my estimation we don't have any vacancies that are 90 days or older, and that speaks to the shift we made, which I'll talk about later, in converting our positions from civil service to exempt to allow us to move more expeditiously...expeditiously because the expectation is, we're going to be able to run a mile a minute, but we weren't staffed up to do that. So, as I indicated following...I think it was a DRIP meeting sometime last year where discussions about using the gubernatorial proclamation of affordable housing was raised. I participated in that discussion, and as a department, we decided to rely not on the proclamation, but rather HRS 76-77(14) to convert positions. And since we have done that, with the exception of two positions, we've filled all of our positions, and that is a C change. That conversion allowed us to reduce the time to onboard new employees. It allowed us, the Department, to qualify our candidates so we could see the resumes that came in and evaluate them for ourselves, and also allowed us to offer competitive salaries within our budget. As you may recall, we've completed two reorganizations, that in itself is very time consumptive. The process is very challenging. We did one initially in March of 2025, and that allowed us to hire our division administrators, administrative staff, and specialists that included each of the administrators to Deputy Director Mataafa's right--a Secretary III, a Housing Research Analyst, our accountant, two development coordinators, and three secretaries, one for each of the divisions. And so, I'm...I'm very proud with our progress in that regard because we've moved very quickly. Then the second reorganization related to the transfer of the CDBG office from the Mayor's office to the Department of Housing, and that was done in October 2025. That brought over a CDB [sic] pro...Program Manager, CDBG Specialist II, and a CDBG Technician. So, as indicated, we have largely filled all of our positions. We have a couple of positions that are vacant, and one...two that we're about to fill. We're about to refill our Housing Research Analyst, a new candidate will start April 1, and we're going to refill a Housing inspector position who also starts April 1. And the two vacant positions I alluded to were our County Housing Program Specialist, that's been vacant as of January 1, and our CDB [sic] Tech...Technician that is authorized, but is not filled due to lack of Federal administrative funding. I mentioned the number of policies and directives we've implemented to improve management of the office, and that has resulted in no fewer than 11 Union consultations and an inordinate number of iterative communications back and forth during that process to conclude the consultation. And some of those directives relate to our office space management and our efforts to promote equity by

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aligning our Federally-funded employee's salaries to match the then civil service employee counterparts. And we've proposed an administrative work time proposal which allows Staff to, for four hours a day, once a month, focus on just their work as opposed to taking incoming calls and reviewing incoming documents. And we haven't fully implemented that one yet, but we're working on it. With regard to office renovations, we are continuing to professionalize the office, as I like to say. That includes removing an inordinate amount of excess furniture. As a result of the several moves that preceded the formation of the Department of Housing, there were...there was a lot of furniture stacked in meeting rooms that was either broken or unused, and then miscellaneous furniture...furniture was broken on the...what I call the shop floor. We've gone through all of that, removed the furniture, and in some instances, equipment that was obsolete and broken. We are on the cusp of ordering new furniture and partitions for Staff, and I'm eager for that to happen because that will not only improve working conditions, but improve office morale. I alluded to the Housing Advisory Board has been set up. They too have their own webpage on the Department of Housing's page, and the first issue we will take up with them is...well, we had our inaugural meeting last month, and so in our second meeting, we will take up Chapter 2.96 with our Housing Advisory Board. And that's my initial overview. And before we transition to our division administrators, I'd like to pause and give Deputy Director Mataafa a chance to add any comments if he would like based upon what I've said so far.

MR. MATAAFA: Thank you, Director Mitchell. I have no further questions or comments to add to that. Thank you.

MR. MITCHELL: So, with that, I'd let...Gail, are you going to go first for Federal Housing Programs? Let Gail go first with her presentation. Thank you.

MS. RAMBAOA: Good morning, Madam Chair. Good morning, Vice-Chair. Good morning, Councilmembers. So, I'm going to go ahead and provide you a brief overview of the programs under the Federal Housing Program Division, and I will start with the CDB...CDBG program, which is the Community Development Block program. So, for program year 2025, the Department received a little bit over \$1.8 million--oh, thank you--\$1.8 million in Community Development Block Grant funding. These funds support a...a large range of projects, including facility acquisition, construction, and rehabilitation, but it also includes housing operations and supported services. Funded projects include Arc of Maui, Hale Makua, Wailuku Rehabilitation, Hana Health, Na Hale Kūpuna Operations, and Mental Health Kokua. For program year '26, the Department anticipates to receive a simil...similar allocation of 1.8 million. The request for proposals application period was open last year from November to December, and a total of three proposals were received, of which two of them met the initial threshold requirements and advanced to the evaluation stage. The draft...the draft for program year '26, the Annual Action Plan, is scheduled to be available for public comment from April 3rd to May 2nd of this year, with the final submission to HUD, which will be due on May 17th of 2026. Additionally, in February of this year, the...the Department received approval from HUD for a substantial amendment to reprogram prior year funding. This included reallocation of about to 63,000 from program year 2019 fuds...funds, as well as a little bit over 1.3 million from program 2024. These funds were redirected to support the development of additional units under the

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Na Hale Kūpuna Program. So, I'm going to go ahead and segue into the Home HTF Program. So, for Fiscal Year 2026, the Department received approximately 2.85 million in Home Investment Partnerships Program, or the Home Program, and approximately 1.45 million in the Housing Trust Fund Program, or the HTF. The Maui Homeowner Assistant Fund, or the MHAF, launched on May 6, 2024, and is scheduled to include [sic] this year on May 22nd. This one-time Federally-funded program is admitted...it is administered to...through the Department of Treasury, and it provides mortgage assistance and other qualified expenses to homeowners who were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. To date, this program has assisted over 15 million...this...to date, this program has assisted over 400 households and has distributed over \$15 million. The County has also contributed over \$640,000 in general funds to support the program. The State of Hawai'i affor...awarded funds to the County, which selected Catholic Charities Hawai'i as the sole recipient. The program is currently, however, entering its 60-day close-out period. The final day of services and document submission is scheduled for June 1st of this year. Final assistance payments are anticipated between July and September 2026, with a check deposit deadline of August 31st of this year. Under the Home American Rescue Plan, or the Home Arc Plan...Program, about \$1.4 million has been conditionally allocated to support Kahakō Transitional Housing Program. The Home Arc funds will support the rehabilitation of eight two-bedroom units for homeless families, serving up to 24 families per year. Additional affordable housing projects supported through the HOME and HTF monies include Hale Pilina, which will provide six HOME-assisted units, and is anticipated to open in 2027. At Hale O Pi'ikea, Phase II, this will deliver ten HTF-assisted units in 2026, while Phase III includes six HOME-assisted units, and four HTF-assisted units, and one HOME HARP unit. Applications for Phase III opened in December 2025, so...for the Housing Choice Voucher or Section 8 Program. For Fiscal Year '26, the Department was awarded approximately \$32.5 million from HUD to support the Housing Choice Voucher Program. A similar level of funding is anticipated for the upcoming fiscal year. The County of Maui administers approximately 1,500 vouchers. The program primarily serves kūpunas, individuals with disabilities, and families with children. The County is currently operating at a 97 percent voucher utilization rate, and it has expended approximately 98 percent of HUD-allocated funding. The current breakdown of voucher assistance includes 1,356 housing choice vouchers, 67 HUD-VASH vouchers supporting veterans, 44 emergency housing vouchers, 37 project-based vouchers, and eight stability vouchers. The Department is also expecting...exploring opportunities to expand project-based vouchers units, or PBVs, including a preten...potential partnership with Kaulana Mahina. The Section 8 waitlist last opened back in June of 2023 and it had about 2,000 applications. The Department is actively issuing vouchers from its waitlist, and we are currently processing positions between 12,000...1,203 and 1,252. Lastly, I will move into the congressional directive spending. So, earlier this month, the Department met with Congressional staff to discuss congressionally directive spending, or CDS projects, for the upcoming fiscal year...for Fiscal Year '27. Proposed projects included the Lāna'i Affordable Housing Infrastructure Project, the La'akea Village Supported Affordable Housing, Kahakō Building III Transitional Housing Rehabilitation Project, and the Maluaka Affordable Rental Housing Project. Congressional staff advised that requests be scaled to approximately \$2 million total and that priority projects be identified. For Fiscal Year '26, the County was awarded

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1.5 million in CDS funding, and this included \$250,000 for the Maluaka Project and 1.5...\$1.25 million for the Lāna‘i Affordable Housing Project. *(pause)*

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Gail. And I think next up is Alicia.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: I would love a copy of whatever she just read. I'm trying to type as she's going and...can...can we ask that from the Department?

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Sure.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Thanks.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Chair. I did anticipate that request and mentioned to Ellen that I'd like the opportunity to just clean up a few things before we submit the written version.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MR. MITCHELL: Yes. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Thank you for allowing me. Thanks.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thanks.

MS. MAZINGO: Thanks. Good morning, Chair, Vice-Chair and Members of the Council. I am Alicia Mazingo at the Housing and Community Development Division. As a quick overview, we are fully staffed, as Director Mitchell said, as of February, 2026. We have five affordable housing projects in various stages of development, and two kind of program-related developments that we will talk about. First, is Hale O Laie, aka Haggai Institute, over in Kihei. We have released the request for proposals, and that was in February of 2026. We have successfully had the mandatory onsite preproposal conference, which was held just last week, on March 12th, as we prepared for the storm. It was a fun walk-through. The deadline for the notice of intent to offer and submission of all questions will be March 27th, 2026, and the proposal deadline is May 4th, 2026. That is with a goal of selecting an offer, a successful offer on June 5th of 2026, pending any interviews that we might be holding. Moving right along, we have Komohale...Komohana Hale Apartments in Lahaina. This is a rebuild. We have selected a contractor to procure a site assessmin...assessment and preliminary design that will help inform a future design build RFP. This is going to support 40 affordable multi-family rental units. We are also seeking FEMA public assistance funds in the project, and have submitted a CBDG-DR application and have been conditionally awarded \$16 million for that project. The next project is Kaiāulu O Nāpili, and we have initiated a right-of-entry with Corporation Counsel for the developer to complete a site survey on the parcel. That should occur this month, and then that will also follow other surveys, maybe archaeology, soil assessments, et cetera. The property was originally purchased with Open Space Fund and a request to reimburse the Open Space Fund with Affordable Housing funds is being processed in the budget office. We are working with the developer also to develop a draft terms for the ground lease that we expect to

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proceed with here in the next couple of months. Moving along, Kaiāulu O Lāna‘i, or the Lāna‘i Affordable Housing Project as it’s been referred to in the past, has been issued a ground lease to the developer. They have also received a General Fund grant that is associated with improvements both onsite and offsite, basically infrastructure improvements for the parcel. And then just a quick note that those two projects, including the next, are also receiving Affordable Housing funds through the Department. Kilohana...excuse me...Kilohana Makai is the next on the list, and they have received a General Fund grant as well for onsite and offsite infrastructure. This was executed in January. The grant will support the extension of Wela Street and Kilohana Drive, including utilities, landscaping, sidewalk, fencing, walls, and streetlights. Sort of the program-based projects that we have going on are the Experimental and Demonstration Housing Projects Fund, and we are working on a solicitation application for funding. We’re focusing this year’s efforts on County-owned parcels and developing those County-owned parcels. We’re looking at three that developers can potentially develop, and they will be compared against each other. And lastly, as Director Mitchell said, we have launched the affordable housing dashboard, have gotten lots of questions so far, and we are compiling those questions and working with the GIS Department to get training this month to be able to make those updates quickly and effectively within the Department.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Alicia. And I think Cassi is now ready to go. Thank you, Cassi.

MS. YAMASHITA: Aloha. Good morning. Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Councilmembers. Cassi Yamashita, County Housing Programs Division Administrator. I’m...I’m going to present my scope more with statistics. I think we would be here until tomorrow if we had to go through every single project. But overall, the Affordable Housing Projects for Fiscal Year 2026, there were 16 total projects that were funded for 68 million...\$68.6 million in Affordable Housing Funds. These total...these projects will assist 959 units, and I use the word assist because that’s the word that is used in the reporting requirement in the County Code. But it could mean maintenance, repairs, construction development--all of those things. We have one project that is already completed, which is the Kilohana Makai, which is the water systems development, three agreements that are already executed, and one agreement in draft with Corp. Counsel. Five agreements are under grant review for approval prior to execution, and six are being currently routed for execution. I’ll just list the projects that these are...that we’re talking about here. These include the Maui...oh, not that one. Oh, he removed it. I have it here. *(pause)* Thank you. These include Arc of Maui, the Plumbing and Window Repairs, Kaiahale ‘o Kahiluhilu I, Phases I and Phases II, Kaiāulu O Lāna‘i, Kaiāulu O Nāpili, Kehalani Apartments, Ka Hale A Ke Ola Emergency Shelter Rehab, Lahaina Community Land Trust, Lipoa Apartments, Na Hale O Maui Paris, Pi‘ikea I, II, and III, and the Kilohana Makai. And this also includes one buy-back property from a residential workforce housing unit. Okay. Also, within this division there are seven programs that are administered, the first being the First Time Homebuyers Program. Within Fiscal Year 2026, there were three households that were served, expending 60,000 in funds. There is 1 million in Revolving Funds allocated towards this program. The Department is currently considering having two lotteries for the First Time Homebuyers Program...one lottery will allow for the current eligibility criteria, and the other will be specific to first time homebuyers purchasing residential workforce housing property. We’re just looking

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at this program more holistically to see how we can better implement and push out the funds for this purpose. Next on our list is a residential...I mean rental assistance program that is administered through four agencies--Women Helping Women, MEO, Family Life Center, and Ka Hale A Ke Ola. So far, in Fiscal Year 2026, as of December 30th, 2026, it is reported 231 households have been served, and over the years 470. And there's a little over 2 million expended so far, and there's 3 million in allocated funds for this program. Hale Mahaolu does the home ownership and counseling program. They have served so far 53 households, and their goal was 50, and they've expended 47 percent of their funds with 89,000...a little over 89,000 spent down. Next, is Women's Reintegration Program. They've served 25 individuals. Their goal was 35. As of December 30th, 87,000 has been expended...87,000, or 50 percent of their funds. Next on the list is the 'Ohana Assistance Program. We expect to serve 20 households with this program. Twenty agreements have gone out to grantees under the program for review and approval. Of those 20, 11 have been returned are...and are en route for execution. All 20 agreements are expected to be executed by May, 2026. There is \$2 million in allocated funds towards this project. Up next is the Moloka'i Voluntary Deed Restriction Pilot Program, 500,000 is allocated towards this program. Currently the guidelines are being modified, clarifying request from Corp. Counsel following their initial review. The modified guidelines are anticipated to allow for a streamlined process that ensures the goal of the program remains intact, and addresses the concerns from Corp. Counsel. Once guidelines are approved, then application review will also be reviewed by Corp. Counsel to ensure alignment with the guidelines. A press release is expected to occur by the last week of March of this year to promote the program and detail the application and review process, which is expected to occur in April of this year. The program is expected to serve at least five households, and all five agreements are expected to be executed by June of this year. And then lastly, the 'Ohana Zones Program, which actually is a partnership with the State and is expected to commence on June 30th, 2026. And the Department is in communication with the State representative to pursue...in pursuit of a no-cost extension to spend down unused funds. This extension will allow for an additional two years to carry out the program activities and spend down the funds. And that's it for me. Thank you.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Cassi, and...and thank you, Chair. That's the end of our presentation.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you. And then you folks are going to clean that up and then send it over to us?

MR. MITCHELL: Yes, Chair.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Thanks. Before we begin with discussion, let's take testimony. So, Staff, do we have any testifiers signed up?

**. . . BEGIN PUBLIC TESTIMONY FOR ITEM HLU-3(2) . . .**

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MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, no one has signed up to testify. If anyone would like to testify, please come up to the podium or raise your hand on Teams.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: We have somebody.

MS. MCKINLEY: I do see...I do see someone.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Yep.

MR. LAW: Thank you, Ms. McKinley.

MS. MCKINLEY: Oh, pardon...pardon me.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Yeah. Go ahead.

MR. LAW: Jasee Law again. In the beginning I thought I was going to speak for like just for the whole meeting, but I...something came up in my mind for the Housing Department, so I would like my previous remarks to go under the Planning Department item. And so, as the case is under...it's a...I think it's still...I'm not sure wha...the case is pending, it's a lawyer...got to tell you, and you guys don't...you're not going to answer me anyways, but I heard that Sonia Davis had a...had a place in Kihei there, I'm not sure what the name of that place was, right there by the shopping center. I'm pretty sure you guys are familiar with that name, Sonia Davis, she was one of the litigants and that was back when it was the Housing and Human Services Department. But then she is...I don't want to disclose her location, but she's living in a car again because she didn't have money to pay the rent, and I'm kind of wondering what's going on with that. So, yeah, something...some...somebody fell through the cracks again there. Thank you guys for your time, and I save the rest of my time for the people of the moku 'āina.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you.

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, we do have one online, Johann Lall.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Oh, my mic would have been helpful. Thank you. Mr. Lall.

MR. LALL: Aloha. Johann Lall, I'm testifying on my own behalf. I wasn't going to testify, but I was blown away by how much this Department is doing. So, I think in general, when folks in government do what we...we want them to do, we should...we...we should give them praise and credit. So, yeah, I'm...I'm blown away by the amount of housing that they have actually gotten done and have coming down the pipeline. So, it shows like what you can do when you actually devote resources and staffing and make something a priority. So, this is a really good model for...for doing really what the community says over and over again is, like the most important issue is...is housing. Because without housing you don't have people, you don't have, you know, all the important stuff that makes the community a community. And I just also want to say the only other person I've heard besides Director Mitchell say a mile a minute is my mom, and we are from Trinidad and the Caribbean, so it makes me realize that must be like a British and Caribbean saying. I've never heard an American person say that. . . .(laughing). . .

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CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: What did he say?

MR. LALL: A mile a minute. Like my entire life I’ve been hearing that, so . . .*(laughing)*. . . anyway. They’re doing a great job, I think. So, the only question I would suggest asking is how they do such an amazing job. Mahalo.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you, Mr. Lall. I am a firm believer too in giving people their flowers when they deserve it, so thank you very much. We do have a clarifying comment, I guess we’re going to call it, by Director Mitchell.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Chair. I’ll direct this comment to you. It’s...because of my accent, it’s not often known that my father is Jamaican and my mother is Guyanese. So, I have a lot of West Indian blood in me. And my mother is partial Sikh Indian, so it’s an incredible mix, but the mile a minute comes from my father, Mr. Lall. Thank you very much. And I...I should say, this work is not possible without a great team, and the team is under pressure a lot, but I am thankful for their hard work.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you, Director. Any other clarifying questions for our testifier? Seeing none. Thank you very much, Mr. Lall. Any other testifiers wishing to testify?

MS. MCKINLEY: Chair, no one else is signed up to testify, so we can do a last call.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Please.

MS. MCKINLEY: This is the last call for testimony, please come up to the podium or raise your hand on Teams if you would like to testify. The countdown is three... two...one. Seeing none, Chair, no one has indicated they wish to testify.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you. Members, seeing there are no individuals...no more individuals wishing to testify, without objection, I will now close oral testimony.

COUNCILMEMBERS: No objections.

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you very much. As a reminder, written testimony will continue to be accepted.

**. . . CLOSE PUBLIC TESTIMONY FOR ITEM HLU-3(2) . . .**

CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: At this time, we’re going to begin again with Committee Vice-Chair Batangan, and he can begin our three-minute discussion.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Department. So, the previous presenter, I think Director Takakura, mentioned collaboration with your Department. Can I ask for more detail on how you work with the other departments to ensure conformity with, say, the Maui Island Plan, the community plans, alignment with infrastructure such as water, wastewater, roads, et cetera, and social services?

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MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Member Batangan. In practice, what happens is the Department reaches out to us, so we reach out to them when we have concerns or opportunities for collaboration. There isn't anything formally set up, such as a regular rotating meeting, if that's what you're asking. But as issues come up, we're in the same building, and we talk a lot with each other. Thank you.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Can I ask how the Department...oh, please.

MR. MATAAFA: I'll just supplement what Director Michell says is, when issues do come up, we do have really concentrated meetings with those directors in those departments. So, for example, when we're talking about R-1 water in West Maui, we do a hui with both Department of Water Supply, Department of Environmental Management, and try to figure out ways where we can all support each other. And then with Department of Planning, we've had a couple of meetings late last year, we were trying to explore the entitlement process and how we could both work together on County-owned parcels to move those efforts along.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you.

MR. MATAAFA: Yeah, it's...it's...when the meetings do come up or issues do come up, it really is just a really focused meeting with us and the other directors who are involved in the issue.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Then how does your Department collaborate with developers, nonprofits, and State agencies? And are there collaboration gaps that the Council can help address?

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you for the question, Member Batangan. That issue is really important to me, and something I'll answer by working backwards in time. Something I've implemented most recently, particularly with our division administrators, is to schedule meetings with our development partners, and to ask them very directly what are we doing well and what are we doing poorly. And I...I call them tough love meetings, but you have to have those meetings so you can understand how you can internally...improve internally. Philosophically, I approach it that way because I like to view our development partners as clients, clients who, in a private sector, could go elsewhere for services, but unfortunately, public sector, they're locked into working with us, but I still want to view them that way and I want to figure how to serve them better. So, when issues come up, we try to triage them quickly. The purpose of that is also to develop a direct relationship. Relationships being what they are, people will call who they know first. And since our team is relatively new, and a lot of our development partners don't . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . know our team, calling them and saying, are there any issues, just want to make sure you know how to reach me, here is my cell, has, in fact, yielded lots of instances where developers are calling us...as recently as this weekend I got calls while I was in the office taking care of things to address issues on the Lānaʻi Affordable Housing Project. So, to me, that's a direct answer in two ways...one, scheduling meetings, and two, making sure they know I'm available whenever to address issues when they bring it to me. Thank you.

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VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you, Chair. Since contact is important, can I ask a question and just ask that they marinate on it until we come around again? So, you mentioned that you reach out to developers for tough love meetings. Are there any themes on what you do well and what you don't do well? You don't have to answer now, but I just want you to...since context is important, I...I wanted to ask it before we go all the way around and then you don't know what I'm talking about.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you. Member Sugimura?

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Thank you. I agree. Wow, I've never heard a presentation like this, so appreciate it a lot. Thank you very much for the questions that you did for Budget because that's happening...and for sure, we're going to have your Department come before the whole Committee. I wanted to ask about 201H exemption from water fees. And I think we were going to create an ordinance...you...the Department was going to create an ordinance because I think what happens is, the develop...developer comes before us, and then there's a...

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: 2.97.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Oh, 2.97, sorry, wrong one. Just say yes or no, or should we expect it?

MR. MATAAFA: Yes, you should expect it, but I wanted to talk about something that we did to preempt that. So, in FY 2027, for our Affordable Housing Fund applications, we amended the application to have specific questions about whether the projects that were seeking funding were also going to seek fee reimbursements through the...for the water system development fees. So, when the FY 2027 projects come out in...next month, you'll see in the budget provisos language where they've clearly requested a water system development fee waiver, and having that request added to their Affordable Housing Fund ask.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Okay. Oh, I see, so you don't have to create the change of ordinance. Oh, great...good. You...you solved that problem. And the projects that were mentioned for the 201...oh, wrong one...for...was it housing assistant vouchers? I think we're probably 100 percent used by the...by the community. And is there ever a chance for us to get more? I don't know who to ask. Oh, you? Okay.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Chair, for the question, and...and thank you, Member Sugimura, for giving me an opportunity to jump in. The opportunity to get more is based upon FUD's...HUD's determination; is that correct, Gail? And so, we're at...I think you said 97 to 98 percent utilization rate, so we really have very little room left. So, Gail, if you have any supplemental information about how one can get additional vouchers, that might be helpful.

MS. RAMBAOA: Thank you, Vice-Chair, for your question. In the past, we've worked directly with HUD to try to obtain additional vouchers from...from Kaua'i PHA and other...other PHAs, but unfortunately, we've been unsuccessful. From what I understand, there's

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only two times during the year in which we're able to obtain additional vouchers. We can try to obtain additional vouchers because like we stated, we're almost at full utilization, we're at 98 percent right now. So, if that's something that the Department feels would be beneficial for the...for the County of Maui, that's something that we can pursue.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Oh, it's hard to get, huh? . . .*(timer sounds)* . . .

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Yes, go ahead. You can answer.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Chair, and if I could also supplement that response. During the presentation, we also talked about looking at other opportunities to project-based vouchers. It's not something the Department has done fairly aggressively and we'd like to look at those opportunities...that helps with the funding stack, the development, but also creates a bit of a timing challenge because if you take vouchers out of circulation with the view that they will be used in a project, you want to ensure the project's completed in time for the project to be vased...based, otherwise you've got to pull it back from the project and actually get it out in the marketplace. But basing vouchers with projects is something we need to also look at, so we're looking at those opportunities. Thanks.

MR. MATAAFA: Yeah, and just one more thing. So, currently, FY 2026, you will see like a slight uptick in the number of normal housing vouchers that we have, and that's because the emergency housing vouchers converted over to housing assistant payment vouchers. So, last year we had 15...about 1,530 vouchers, and now we have 1,560 vouchers in the Department's inventory. And that's just because we converted the emergency housing vouchers that were previously administered in the COVID area into regular housing vouchers.

COUNCILMEMBER SUGIMURA: Thank you.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Member Sugimura. Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Director Mitchell. So, my question is going to be centered around fee waivers. My understanding is in...under 2.96, if it's 100 percent affordable, or 2.97, the fees are waived, but in other 2.96 projects that aren't 100 percent affordable, they need to pay the fees. Would you be supportive of exempting things like the driveway permit fee, wastewater assessment fees for a facility expansion for either regional wastewater treatment system in Kihei, Wailuku, West Maui, impact fees for traffic and roadway improvements, grubbing and grading permit fees, plumbing fees, electrical permit fees, building permit fees, park dedication fees, subdivision filing fees, and construction plan review fees, 100 percent for those residential workforce housing units that are 100 percent and below AMI, and 50 percent for those from 101 to the above moderate income household, which is, I think 140...120? This is something that I learned that they do on Kaua'i, and I'm wondering if you would be supportive of us doing it here?

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MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Chair, for the question. Thank you, Member Paltin. And let me first say that in response to Member Sugimura's question about revisions to 2.96, in the response which is en route to BFED, I included a section relating to working with Member Paltin and...and Member Kama on revisions 2.96, with regard to Member Paltin's current question, this is the topic that I was discussing, and yes, I am in agreement with the fee waivers for projects that are not 100 percent affordable, but on those portions that are affordable. And I know that was PAF 26-009, I believe, and it's on the Council agenda for consideration this Friday. So, I am supportive of that because that helps us to reduce the cost and move along with expediting projects. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Currently there is no way to give the authority to you unless there is criteria that you could follow to authorize the waiver? Do you have criteria in mind that I could propose as an amendment to give you that authority to waive the fees?

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Member Paltin, for the question. Your question came up a couple days ago . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . through OCS Staff, and my response to OCS Staff on this issue was that my position is if there is a budget ordinance appropriating funds for a project that's in part or whole affordable housing, that budget ordinance sets the tone for everything the Department does. And then, subsequent to that, if there is a grant or loan agreement that we have fully executed to implement the budget agreement, that grant or loan agreement further sets the tone. And then finally, if there's a residential workforce housing agreement fully executed, that sets the tone. So, if any of those three were in place, I think there should be discretion that is controlled by those criteria if you were to give it to the Director. Ideally, the Director would not need to get to the third one, which is the residential workforce housing agreement, because once the budget ordinance is in place, we have to follow it anyway. So, that will control the exercise of discretion in my opinion. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: For context, can I give him a question to marinate? How urgent is this that it could potentially pass before budget?

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Member Paltin. I don't need to marinate on that one. The community, as well as the Members, expect immediate responses from the Department. And so, as in collaboration with the Council, I'd love to see us get things done quickly--with appropriate exercise of discretion, of course--but this one seems to be very straightforward. For projects that are partially affordable, I think we should be waiving the fees. If there's a need to put rails on the Director's exercise of discretion in approving the waiver of fees, I've articulated how one could do that in my opinion. Thank you.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Director Mitchell. Thank you, Chair. The number on that is Bill 48 if anyone's curious.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: . . .*(laughing)*. . . Thank you. Member Johnson.

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COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Director and all of the Departments who showed up today. Obviously, you know, we're really impressed with a lot of the work you've been doing. But this job, there is so much more work to be done as well. I'll just first off start off saying, you know that the project vouchers, if you recall, the...Coach Atherton came before this body a...a while back and said he would support the project-based vouchers for his development down there, and you guys all know where that is. So, I'll continue on with questions. Admin rules for Bill 111, online portal, nice work. What's the status on the admin rules for implementation of Bill 111?

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Member Johnson. I...I know this is a hot issue for you, Member Johnson, and the Department is focused on working on this. And as I indicated at our...I think it was our last BFED meeting. We are juggling many things in trying to prioritize the urgent things. And this is on our list of things to work on, and we will move forward with figuring out how to implement some rules. Thank you much.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Do you have a timeline or calendar or anything?

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Member Johnson. No, we don't have a timeline. As you could imagine, I have a multi-page list of a lot of things, and we're trying to prioritize them. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. Fair enough. You know, the intent for Bill 111 was creating a waiting list where future homeowners can apply, they can state where they want to live, the AMI status, the...how many bedrooms they want, et cetera, you know, and this also helps organizations that are helping them. So, we...you know, we want to get that up and running so that every...you know, that it will flow. Just for Lāna'i specifically about the AMIs, ILWU just negotiated a 30 percent raise for the Four Seasons workers on Lāna'i. Now, that means a lot for our little community and it's going to affect our AMI, so I'm curious of how you guys respond to HUD's AMIs. Do you guys just . . . *(inaudible)*. . . my understanding is we can move them, but you can't go low, or you can't go high, but maybe you guys can explain how the AMI works, especially when we get a 30 percent raise for Lāna'i.

MR. MATAAFA: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Councilmember Johnson, for that question. So, if you look at the Code as it relates to workforce housing projects that include affordable rentals and workforce housing units, the County's HUD median family income is set by HUD, and the Department is able to adjust the income for Moloka'i, Lāna'i, and Hāna in response to that.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Right. You can adjust it by higher or lower? Because that was a debate we had. Can you guys clarify that? . . . *(timer sounds)*. . .

MR. MATAAFA: It's lower.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. That raise...and I heard my time, so I'll finish on this. That raise would...affects 700 of our workers on Lāna'i. So, very happy they got a

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30 percent raise, and I'm sure it's going to change our AMI. Just letting you guys know. Thank you, Chair.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Member Johnson. If I could just supplement the income, largely for Member Sugimura's benefit, this question came up in the BFED communication, and it's addressed in detail in the letter that's en route to BFED. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Oh, wonderful. . . *(inaudible)*. . . we're all having that nice overflow. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Of course, Member Johnson. Thank you. Member Rawlins-Fernandez. You should know she was giving you guys a round of applause when you were reading the Moloka'i Deed Restriction Program, so she's very excited.

COUNCILMEMBER RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ: Indeed I was, and congratulations to the Lāna'i residents for that salary adjustment. Yeah, incredible. Yeah. So, mahalo to the Housing Department Team for such a comprehensive report presentation. You kind of answered all my questions and left me nothing to follow up on. So, thank you. And particularly mahalo, Ms. Yamashita, for spearheading the Moloka'i Voluntary Deed Restriction Program, working closely with our office. I am so excited to finally get that launched at the end of this month. So, yes, I was...lots of applause for that. And, you know, you all have always been very responsive to my text messages, and emails, and meeting requests, including to discuss new policy ideas. So, I won't ask you to comment on any new policy ideas today, and I can follow up with you on some of those ideas at a later time. So, no questions. Mahalo.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Member Rawlins-Fernandez. Member Cook?

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Yes, thank you, Chair. For the Director, following up on Member Paltin's question regarding deferred fees for all the various things. That spec...what...what's your perspective and suggestion on funding the...funding all the things that we need that we are taking...taking that burden and cost away from the developer, but it's...covers like Public Works, Water, Wastewater, a bunch of things?

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Chair, for...and thank you, Member Cook, for the question. I promise you I won't forget your name again, as I kept calling you Member Johnson at the last meeting...and I forgot, was it...did you remind me? Someone had leaned into me and said you're getting the name wrong. I think it was Lesley, Director Milner. Your question was if we have fee waivers as broad as is being suggested by Bill 48, which is on the Council's agenda for this Friday, how those fee waivers then...or the...the amount that's being waived covered for the departments? And my recommendation would be to have the ability through the Affordable Housing Fund to transfer an analogous amount of money to the departments, particularly to those departments who rely on those fees to fund their program. So, that's how I would look at it. So, it isn't...it isn't just a...a waiver with no replacement, it's just it's not paid by the developer.

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COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Okay. So, thank you. That was my kind of a follow up or sister question. Would you...would you be able to use the Affordable Housing Funds to do that? Would you be able to...would you be able to fund that subsidy?

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you for the question, Chair, and Member Cook. The scope of the fees that we're proposing to waive as we speak now, I can't tell you with certainty whether the Code allows for us to pay for those fees through the Affordable Housing Fund. So, the question is better suited for Council to answer at a later date because . . .*(inaudible)*. . . hasn't had a chance to...to thoroughly look at it. But that's the idea.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: Well, I kind of interpreted that that was the case, that we would have to have legislation to adjust the parameters of where that funding would...coming from, but I hear...am I hearing you correctly, that you would think that it would be an appropriate expenditure of Affordable Housing Funds to pay for those fees.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: In broad strokes in general . . .*(inaudible)*. . .

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you for the question, and yes, the answer is yes.

COUNCILMEMBER COOK: That was simple. Thank you. Thank you, Chair. Thank you. And I want to thank all of you for your presentation. It is exciting to see the momentum of the Department. Thank you. . . .*(timer sounds)*. . .

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Thank you, Member Cook. Good timing. Yay. Unless that's a phone ring. No? Okay, good. Well, Chair Lee is not here, so Member Sinenci?

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you, Chair. And yeah, I did want to preface my questions first with congratulations for getting the Department stood up. I know it's been challenging filling all the positions, but it looks like you've assembled a...a good team for...for the Department. So mahalo, Director. And also, thank you for coming out to East Maui to kind of survey some of our challenges as far as moving forward with affordable housing projects. And I know you...you recognize some of the challenges, specifically just the cost to build out in rural East Maui where everything could be at least three times more. So, you mentioned possibly looking at acquisition, and if you could speak to some of your ideas about keeping costs down or how should we, as a rural community, move forward to keep our costs down if we're going to build affordable projects out there.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you for the question, Chair, and Member Sinenci. Well, first, let me say thank you for inviting me out to East Maui, and for spending the entire day with me, and showing me quite a bit that I wouldn't have otherwise seen. I appreciated the opportunity and time spent with you. Because it's so hard to develop in East Maui, it became abundantly clear to me that when there are opportunities to acquire a larger...multifamily developments, and you and I looked at one, and that seemed to me to be a rare opportunity. One has to be thoughtful about deciding whether to take action. In that particular instance, as you and I discussed, it's not just the acquisition,

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it's the renovation, because there is a significant amount of deferred maintenance with the building. It's the long-term management and...including the lease-up, and then additional ongoing costs. And one would need to have, in East Maui preferably, a third-party vendor who would be the grantee to whom the Housing Department would work with to manage such a facility. Then we also looked at a...another piece of land that I think is being developed by Habitat for Humanity. The property owner doesn't come to my mind right now, but it was about 25 lots, each of which were about 10,000 square feet, that had the capacity to yield 50 housing units. And so, I'm supportive of...given that infrastructure is on the site already with the exception of electricity, and the...the lots have been leveled and there is the road going into the development, it seems to me we just need to find a way to get it out of stall mode and get that project moving. And so, I'm supportive of both the acquisition and the more aggressive development of the project that's already underway. Because what's abundantly apparent to me is that . . .*(timer sounds)*. . . when one looks at any development that has occurred in East Maui, the last one was in the '70s, and the need is high. So, I've said to Deputy Director Mataafa and others, we, as a team, have to think about every single district and what those districts need...needs, including East Maui. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Thank you, Director. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Of course. Thank you. And I know Member Batangan needs to leave, so he asked the question for you folks to marinate it on...marinate on, so hopefully you guys are thoroughly soaked, and now you can answer his question.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Member Batangan, for the question to marinate on. It was so delicious I forgot about it.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: . . .*(laughing)*. . .

MR. MITCHELL: Can you refresh my recollection, please?

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: In your --

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Your tough love.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: -- tough love conversations with the developers, what are the themes for things the Department does well, and what are the themes for the Depart...things that the Department needs to improve on?

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. Thank you for the question. Let me first start by saying there's one theme that became very apparent to me...that conducting these meetings was a little bit of a surprise to the developers. And so, as often's the case when you're the messenger, you...you get tough love from them on a range of issues that go well beyond your scope of work. One developer, in fact, said, well, you're the only to do this, so we're going to talk about all the challenges. The thing that became very apparent to me was that even within our department, if we have a processing challenge--whether it's a loan document, a grant agreement, or residential workforce housing agreement, whatever it is we're

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trying to process--they don't understand the Department of Housing is limited in taking action until we get approval on those documents. All they understand is the document is stuck in the Department of Housing. So, we have to, as a Department, work harder at getting our documents through our internal and intradepartment approval process so that we help expedite at least our part, and also mitigate what I consider to be the incorrect perception that we are somehow not acting on their documents. But the tough love message I got that was interesting was that they...their experience is magnified by the multiple departments they have to interact with that have their own documents, that go through their own processes that slow down the entire process. And so, some have suggested some way to streamline the fact that it's...it's one project that's touched several different departments, each of them have their different documents, all of them take a different timeline. Another comment that was very clear was that--you know, and I think we're going to as we move forward with Fiscal Year 2027, depending on what we get in our budget--they would like to see some of our applications digitized so it's not so paper-intensive. And so, we have, in our upcoming budget, made a proposal to move forward with digitizing document process. And then finally, there was some confusion about how they solve things within the Department. And one of the things I'm trying to do with our Housing Community Development Division is make sure our project development coordinators are able to float across divisions and triage project issues. There hasn't been that role before, and I think the developer community needs to understand that several different people in the Department touch a project, but not all of them understand everything. And what we need is our project developer coordinators to understand where a project is, and what it needs, and help move it along within the Department. So, those are some of the things. . . .(timer sounds). . . But I will end with, you know, I don't mind the tough love discussions because ultimately, if I can figure out what the problem is and I can have the developer tell us, we have a reasonable opportunity to fix it. Thank you.

VICE-CHAIR BATANGAN: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Director.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Of course. Thank you. Members, I will go by a show of hands on second round if you have any questions. So, Member Johnson, I saw you raise your hand, please go.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Thank you, Chair. You know, Director, I appreciate your responses. We're all on limited time, so I'll try to make my question short. So, I know we talked about meeting with Sanoe from Women Helping Women and helping them with transitional helping...transitional housing. Can you give us an update? Is that something you guys put in the budget, or are you considering?

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you for the question, Chair, and Member Johnson. I...I believe you're asking whether we were asking for additional funding in the program; is that right?

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Well, let's start...have you folks met with Sanoe?

MR. MITCHELL: No, we have not yet.

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COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. So, what's your take on adding more funding to help the transitional housement...housing on Women Helping Women, would you guys support an increase budget for that?

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you for the question, Chair. And thank you for the question, Member Johnson. So, while we did not put that in our Fiscal Year '27 budget proposal, I don't see why the Department would not be supportive of additional funding for the program.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay, fair enough. First Time Homebuyers Program...did I hear you correctly, there's only three that...that were awarded?

MR. MATAAFA: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Councilmember Johnson. Yes, that's correct.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. Well, I would totally support increasing that and making it bigger. I...I really think...I think it's fascinating to tie it in with deed restrictions and just really kind of make islands of affordability. I...I heard you guys talk about...little bit about expanding program, would...would you be...would you support making it a bigger fund? We'll start with that.

MR. MATAAFA: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Councilmember Johnson. I think you're referencing...and I think you cut off the First Time Homebuyers Program. We are comprehensively looking at the program as a whole, and trying to fix the things that are not working and adjusting the things that will help us get the funding out in a more timely manner. So, that includes also adjusting upwards the amount of \$30,000. And as I said, we're still in that process of reviewing internally what needs to be done, and then once we've finalized our draft, it'll likely go to Corp. Counsel to get their advice on it as well.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Great. Okay. I'm going to switch to a different one. So, in looking at holistically to update it, what about the CBDGR [sic] program? Would you kind of take them out of...from them, which is touted as a success and already has guidelines? What about the Moloka'i Voluntary Deed Restrictions Program, could that also help be a guide for the first time homebuyers? I...I know you guys are looking at it overall, which I totally support, but those are some suggestions. And what say you guys?

MR. MATAAFA: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Councilmember Johnson. Yes, we are taking a look at all the programs within the Department . . .(timer sounds). . . which includes 'Ohana Assistance Program, which it includes First Time Homeowner Buyers Program, and other programs that we manage in the Department, and looking at the things that work in those programs and trying to implement them in the First Time Homebuyers Program. So, that's all included in our revision process that we're working through right now.

COUNCILMEMBER JOHNSON: Okay. I heard my time and...that's really good to hear. Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

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CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Thank you, Member Johnson. Member Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Chair. I forget which division was talking about the Residential Workforce Housing Buy-Back, but I believe that you said that you were working on getting those databased. Is there a component of that where you are able to track if folks are selling it during the re...deed restriction period for market value? And what is the consequence for that? And do you need people from the community to alert it to you, or can you figure it out on your own?

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Member Paltin, for the question. So, that would be in the County Housing Programs Division, and I alluded to us locating and collecting all the residential workforce housing agreements and databasing those. And you raise a good issue and concern that I have to, quite frankly, acknowledge I hadn't contemplated how we can solve that issue, but we need to figure out a solution to the problem of deed-restricted property owners selling their homes at market rate and the Department not knowing about it. I don't know how many instances of that have occurred or how recently they are.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Might need to collaborate with Finance maybe?

MR. MITCHELL: So, it would be helpful to figure out how we get that information. I just don't know how to do that just yet, but I appreciate you bringing it to --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, as of now, we should...like community, if we see it, alert you?

MR. MITCHELL: Please. I mean, as you know, when the community advises me of things, I respond to it pretty quickly. So, if we could at least start there, that'll help. But...and we need to have a better solution than community feeling burdened to have to bring it to our attention. But we'll think about it. Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Which leads me right into my next question. Where are you on the progress of administrative rules for the department as a whole? Like as you're in the process of standing up the department and creating these policies and whatnot, we know we're a political animal. What if somebody else wins and they change everything out, and then there is no documented administrative rules as to the policy of how things are currently being done?

MR. MATAAFA: Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Councilmember Paltin, for the question. So, in each of our divisions, that is a stated goal is to update administrative rules. For the County Housing Programs Division, we do have old administrative rules from 2009 on the administration of the Chap...of the Residential Workforce Housing Policy, but those need to be updated. So, when they get settled and get through the FY 2026, that's a goal for each of the divisions is to have administrative rules adopted so that we can have a clear document that tells and directs the...the administrators how to administer certain policies or programs that come through the Department.

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COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And you're referring to the HRS process of leaning consultation and all of that as well, yeah? . . .(timer sounds). . .

MR. MATAAFA: That's correct. Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And are the old rules posted on the website?

MR. MITCHELL: If I could jump in here, Chair, and Member Paltin. So, in either early...mid-2024 or late 2024, we collected all of the rules and guidelines. One of the things we needed to find out was where they were and what their current state was. And we provided all of those to the Administration. It is my objective to not only update them all--because many of them were very old--but to post them not only on a County page, along with all our division's rules and guidelines, but on the Department of Housing's page so it's very clear what they are. That is an enormous body of work, because a lot of these rules, as Deputy Director Mataafa indicated --

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Like Dead Sea scrolls.

MR. MITCHELL: -- are old. So, it is something we have to do, and it's something I'm focused on, and I just ask for everyone's patience as we...we try to address the many, many issues we're dealing with. Thank you.

MR. MATAAFA: To answer the other question you...you asked, the rules are posted on the Maui County gov dot web...the maucounty.gov website. So, you can find them there as well.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Members, it is 12:01. Does anybody else have any other questions before we end this meeting? Member Paltin, you look like you have more questions?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, just wondering, are you coming on Friday and submitting testimony in support of Bill 48?

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Member Paltin. I will be in Chambers on Friday.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Awesome. Thank you.

CHAIR U'U-HODGINS: Okay. Members, if there are no objections, I will defer this item.

**COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED NO OBJECTIONS** (excused: KKB, AL).

**ACTION: DEFER pending further discussion.**

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CHAIR U‘U-HODGINS: Awesome. Thank you so much. This concludes the Housing Land Use and [sic] Committee meeting. Thank you very much, Members. Thank you very much. Very nice to meet you all. I appreciate your presentation. It is now 12:01, and this meeting is adjourned. . . . (*gavel*) . . .

**ADJOURN:** 12:01 p.m.

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Transcribed by: Terianne L. Arreola

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CERTIFICATION

I, Terianne L. Arreola, hereby certify that pages 1 through 51 of the foregoing represents, to the best of my ability, a true and correct transcript of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not in any way concerned with the cause.

DATED the 13th day of April 2026, in Makawao, Hawai'i.



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Terianne L. Arreola