

EDB Committee

From: Jonathan Starr <kalepa@maui.net>
Sent: Wednesday, August 21, 2019 1:25 PM
To: EDB Committee
Cc: Keani N. Rawlins; Kelly King; Tasha A. Kama; Shane M. Sinenci; Tamara A. Paltin; Alice L. Lee; Mike J. Molina; Riki Hokama; Yukilei Sugimura
Subject: Testimony for 8/22 Meeting Re: Wailuku Civic Center Parking
Attachments: Jonathan & Helen letter 8 21 19.pdf

from the desk of Jonathan Starr & Helen Nielsen

August 20, 2019

Re: Item NO.(EDB-76) for the Wailuku Civic Complex

Aloha,

Economic Development and Budget Committee
Chairwoman Keani Rawlins Fernandez,

Vice Chairwoman Kelly King,

All honorable Council Members,

It was with great concern that we heard that a Bill is to be considered that would defund the approved Bonding for the Parking Structure at center of the Wailuku Improvement Project.

The need for additional public parking has been at the center of discussion in Wailuku for over 25 years. Countless meetings, consultant studies and reports, design charrettes over the years have had a singular consensus: that in order for Wailuku to regain it's traditional role as the active, vibrant center of Maui's business, arts, entertainment and affordable walkable residential community, parking along with multi-modal transportation is the key.

We are major property owners in the center of the Redevelopment Area of Wailuku, which we acquired around 25 years ago in the hope of improving the existing, tired and not very relevant automotive service buildings into something useful for future generations. Within a mile and a half of the center of Wailuku, approximately 35,000 of Maui's residents work daily, or are in the area for medical, educational, government, legal purposes etc. It is unfortunate that relatively few of these folks stay in town after hours or on weekends for dining, entertainment, shopping, or for residency. Greater thriving, interesting activity around the Market Street and Main Street retail core would attract a lot more activity and the ability to safely walk on busy sidewalks to the stores, jobs, schools, churches, and service facilities that abound.

Parking has been the limiting factor in the town core for decades, and the small size of Wailuku's lots has prohibited most property owners from being able to create new residences, restaurants and cafes; which all require parking both for functionality and for permitting. We are among the very few property owners who have sufficient space to be able to provide adequate parking, both for current and future uses.

Currently retail is slow in town, and storefront rents in Wailuku do not generate enough income for the merchants to allow property owners to afford maintenance, management or rejuvenation of the old buildings. We want to see the area thrive, as the trend around the world is away from malls and big box retail, and back to smaller, locally owned and sourced shopping and dining. This will require additional parking for the properties that are Wailuku sized, to support the type of vibrant activity for Maui residents that Wailuku once did. This is why no redevelopment has actually occurred in the Redevelopment Area. Located next to a plethora of jobs, redevelopment would reduce traffic load throughout Maui island.

It has taken the Wailuku community over 20 years to come together over the parking project, and to attain a good design with bonded funding and permits and archeological approvals and other entitlements. Major funding has been spent.

Please don't take this away from our community, and that of Maui's future residents.

Mahalo,

Jonathan Starr
Helen Nielsen