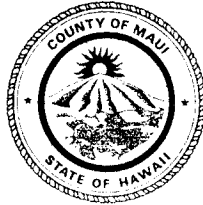


ALAN M. ARAKAWA
MAYOR



KEITH A. REGAN
MANAGING DIRECTOR

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Ke'ena O Ka Meia
COUNTY OF MAUI – Kalana O Maui

August 12, 2016

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MAYOR'S OFFICE

Honorable Don Couch, Chair
Planning Committee
Maui County Council
200 South High Street
Wailuku, Hawaii 96793

Dear Chair Couch,

**SUBJECT: RE-CREATING THE PLANNING PROCESS AND THE COMMUNITY
PLAN UPDATE PROCESS (PC-40)**

Let's face it – no one is happy with our planning process. The public is not happy, the Council is not happy, the Administration is not happy. When I signed Ordinance No. 3166 into law in 2004, we all had high hopes that it would meet the new purpose and intent of Chapter 2.80B, Maui County Code:

This chapter is designed to provide plans that clearly identify provisions that are meant to be policy guidelines and provisions that are intended to have the force and effect of law; to implement and enforce plans through prioritization and accountability; to empower advisory committees; to place more emphasis on island-wide and inter-regional issues; to encourage more frequent updates of plans and to establish deadlines for completion and to increase public and community participation in the planning process.

Instead, twelve years later, we have the Maui Island Plan and the recently adopted updated Lanai Community Plan. Our current estimate is that it will take another 20 years before the last community plan is updated because the process has too many statutory requirements, including extensive content of the plans, details on how the plans are drafted, and specific amounts of time each reviewing body is allocated. In County Communication No. 16-85, you stated emphatically that the delays in adopting the Lanai Community Plan were "*DUE TO PROBLEMS WITH THE PROCESS, NOT PROBLEMS WITH THE PLAN.*"

We do not have a planning process that allows us to react to the closure of the HC&S plantation and appropriately plan for the future of its 36,000 acres, or to protect our other economic engines. Kahului Harbor is the most critical link in our supply chain, and it is in desperate need of restructuring.

We do not have a planning process that clearly and simply directs the government (and informs the public) how and when our infrastructure will be built, maintained and repaired. Our roadway, wastewater, water, park and bus systems need to integrate with land use and with each other.

We do not have a planning process that allows us to adjust and respond to fundamental public trust issues such as water rights and protecting water resources, or to emerging technologies such as alternative energy.

We do not have a planning process that allows us to get ahead of the curve of shoreline erosion, coastal hazards and climate change, or that compels us to protect our natural and built environments through reforestation and wetland restoration. We are consistently reactive—rather than being pro-active—with natural resources management initiatives, such as keeping our forests and watersheds safe from invasive species and feral animals, or protecting our coral reefs from sedimentation and runoff.

And we clearly do not have a planning process that provides adequate housing for all of our people with a variety of zoning and housing types that will accommodate our growing population. We have failed to define and administer how agricultural lands should be used; “agriculture” is our default zoning instead of being a designation that has meaning and incentives for farmers, ranchers, foresters and other agricultural producers. Instead, restrictive uses in the agricultural district have limited growth and housing opportunities while failing to promote real agricultural practices.

I propose that the Council and the Administration have a serious and thoughtful discussion about what our planning process should be, and how we can achieve it. Specifically, I believe that the island of Maui should have one comprehensive plan that has short-term (five to 10 years) actions, mid-term (10 – 20 years) goals, and long-term (20-plus years) policies; each component would be updated as appropriate for its duration. The actions would be realistic, and readily implemented and enforced; then every County department could truly use this plan as its fundamental guiding document for programming, planning, staffing and budgeting purposes. The land use maps would be much more generic, combining the dozens of community plan designations that we have now into only a handful, and the plan should clearly establish the relationship, purpose and regulatory authority of community plans and zoning. The community plans for Lanai and Molokai would have the same function and authority.

To this end, I have directed the Planning Department to suspend its work on the community plan update process so that its senior planners can instead research and propose a new planning process that meets these objectives. The Department will continue to provide staff support to the County Council when it schedules the draft Molokai Community Plan update for consideration, but will otherwise focus its long range planning efforts toward designing a new planning process.

This letter is intended to serve as a starting point for what I hope will be a meaningful and productive dialogue on this critical issue that will help to guide the Planning Department’s efforts. Your thoughts and input on how this can occur would be appreciated.

Sincerely,



ALAN M. ARAKAWA
Mayor

pdfxc:

Sananda Baz, Budget Director
William Spence, Planning Director
Michele Chouteau McLean, Deputy Planning Director
Dailo Agsalog, Director of Finance
David Goode, Director of Public Works
David Taylor, Director of Water Supply
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