

**Ali'i Pauahi Hawaiian Civic Club
P.O. Box 2785,
'Aiea, Hawai'i 96701**

**Committee on Planning and the Economy
Special Meeting: Bill 24 (2024) - Revised Primary Urban Center Development Plan**

**August 26, 2024, 6:00 p.m.
Leeward Community College
Room ED-201B
96-045 Ala 'Ike Street
Pearl City, Hawai'i 96782**

Testimony presented by Kehaulani Lum
Ali'i Pauahi Hawaiian Civic Club
President

2401530 HM 9:01 CITY CLERK

Aloha Chair Kia'āina, Vice Chair Cordero, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Ali'i Pauahi Hawaiian Civic Club, a 50 year chartered member of the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs which is based in the ahupua'a of 'Aiea, we thank the Committee for this opportunity to recommend changes to the proposed PUC DP language.

We are deeply concerned that the plan, as currently proposed, fails to:

- 1) Include language approved by the City Council regarding the protection of Native Hawaiian cultural and historic sites in TOD Neighborhood Plans;
- 2) 2) Ensure that the community's decades-long vision of the former 'Aiea Mill Site's use is honored; and,
- 3) 3) Recognize the "built out" nature of the Mill Site and the 'Aiea Town Center area and provide a green community resource in place of recommended infill.

(1) Protection of Native Hawaiian Cultural Sites.

To ensure the protection of Native Hawaiian cultural and historic sites and monuments, the PUC DP should cite amendments adopted by the Council in 2023 to the Revised Ordinances for TOD Neighborhood Plans.

Bill 50 (2023), CD2, adopted on Dec. 6, 2023, amends the Revised Ordinances of Honolulu 2021, to read as follows:

"Each neighborhood TOD plan must address, at minimum, the following:

...(6) Preservation and protection of Native Hawaiian cultural and historic, and pre-contact sites and monuments.”

We are grateful to the City Council for approving this important amendment.

Though the language relates specifically to TOD, the PUD DP does not include it in its Guiding Principles, as it does other subject matters that were listed in the same section of Bill 50, such as affordable housing, infrastructure, etc. The PUD plan was drafted prior to the approval of this language. Thus, only the Council can amend it.

We respectfully request that Paragraph 6 of Bill 50 (above) be added as a separate Guiding Principle on page 7 of the PUD DP, so that the preservation of Native Hawaiian sites receives due consideration.

2) Ensure that the community’s decades-long vision of the former ‘Aiea Sugar Mill Site’s use is honored.

As a founding member of the Board of the ‘Aiea Community Association (ACA), ***we echo comments raised in opposition at the area meeting to mixed-use redevelopment at the so-called “vacant” mill site.***

The redevelopment of the Sugar Mill Site is a model of how a beloved community and a benevolent government can create meaningful outcomes. Nearly three decades ago, the community saved the historic site from being turned into a KMART (which no longer operates in Hawai’i), after the mill was torn down in the 1990s. Thanks to the hard work, foresight and perseverance of residents, government leaders, planners, and friends, a multi-phased plan that called for a new library, a kupuna housing resource, and a community space, was championed. That plan has secured the site as a multi-generational community treasure.

The PUC DP calls for mixed-use redevelopment at the remaining site, in complete disregard of the community’s vision and over 30 years of effort.

We recommend removal of the mixed-use redevelopment of the mill site language from the plan.

3) Recognize the “built out” nature of the ‘Aiea Sugar Mill Site and the ‘Aiea Town Center area and provide a green community resource.

The proposal of a mixed-use development with hundreds of new homes at the Mill Site and the vaguely-worded vision of “some” infill in the ‘Aiea Town Center area would overburden a long recognized overbuilt area whose transportation, water, parking, sewer infrastructure and green space is already seriously challenged. Especially, now that the BWS has shut down the ‘Aiea Well.

The PUC DP calls for preserving the 'Aiea Town Center's "small town character," through the development of 500 new homes which, ironically, could only be accomplished by building massive towers (given the area's limited physical capacity). This would, instead, cause the demise of 'Aiea's special character.

The plan should recognize the "built out" nature of the Mill Site and 'Aiea Town Center and this language should be removed.

Rather than increasing development in this area, and, potentially displacing long-time residents in the process, we believe that infill and mixed-use development would be better suited at the old Kamehameha Swap Meet site on Ka'ōnohi and Moanalua. That site is already permitted for several multi-unit buildings ("Live Work Play 'Aiea,") and remains vacant.

Parking Issues

In the Town Center area, street parking is already at a premium, as residents are forced to "reserve" their parking spaces (on public land noted as "undeveloped sidewalks") with orange cones. It is clear that the narrow roadway cannot absorb an increase of parked cars, or even traffic, for that matter.

As well, the employees of the 'Aiea Town Center often park their cars in the neighborhood, as there is no where else to go (parking is not allowed along upper Kauhale Street, 'Aiea Heights Drive and the Moanalua Road corridor abutting the Town Center, nor on Kamehameha Highway below).

Seating for the annual Bon Dance at 'Aiea Soto Mission, a popular decades-old practice that brings together the community, usually spills out onto the neighborhood street.

Historic Preservation Issues

Next to the U.S. Post Office, the two tall historic royal palm trees that were planted when King Kalakaua visited on his tour to Honouliuli are constantly threatened by cars compacting the soil above its roots and even knocking holes into their trunks.

Serious Lack of Green Space

Of great concern to us, as well, as the island's heat index rises, is the lack of green space in the area. The closest State park is not easily accessible, being over a half mile away and reached only by climbing two hills, traversing west for half a mile on a narrow sidewalk along a crowded highway, crossing six lanes of Kamehameha Highway, and doubling back. It is further only open until 5:30 p.m. **Children cannot, and do not, walk or ride their bikes safely to this space.**

The closest City park is nearly one mile away, up hill, and can only be reached by crossing the busy Moanalua Road, crossing over the freeway, continuing in the middle of surface streets that have no sidewalks, and crossing busy 'Ulune Street.

We further recommend the creation of an 'āina-based community resource on lands that fed the community of 'Aiea for over 100 years and which can do so again.

The area of the 'Aiea Town Center, from Moanalua Road to Kamehameha Highway, was the site of the original kuleana lo'i kalo lands, rich in food for the Ali'i and maka'āinana alike. The springs that provided them with fresh water still flow underground. Fish swim in ditches that flow only a few feet beneath the surface of the land. And, abundant fresh water winds its way to the channelized 'Aiea Stream, through a labyrinth of 'auwai and tunnels that exit from its cement walls. Restoration of these once-abundant lands, for community purpose, would truly preserve the "small town" character envisioned in the plan. Lineal descendants, some of whom belong to Ali'i Pauahi Hawaiian Civic Club, are willing to help restore the site.

To summarize, we respectfully recommend the following changes to the UDC DP:

- (1) Add Paragraph 6 of Bill 50 (above) as a separate Guiding Principle on page 7 of the PUD DP, so that the preservation of Native Hawaiian sites receives pono recognition;***
- (2) Remove language referring to mixed-use redevelopment and infill at the 'Aiea Sugar Mill and 'Aiea Town Center sites and move it to the "Live Work Play 'Aiea (former Kamehameha Swap Meet site), instead;***
- (3) Create an 'āina-based community green space resource on former lo'i lands that fed the community of 'Aiea for over 100 years and which can do so in myriad ways again.***

Mahalo nui loa for your serious consideration.

Kehaulani Lum
Ali'i Pauahi Hawaiian Civic Club
Pelekikena

Testimony by Kehaulani Lum, Image #1: Cars parked on Federal government property in the ‘Aiea Town Center area (Kauhale Street), next to historic palm trees and stone monument.



Image #2-3: Parking spaces reserved with cones below ‘Aiea Town Center (on “undeveloped sidewalks”)



Image #4-5: Kauhale Street abutting 'Aiea Town Center: traffic and parking challenged



Image #6-7: Historic Royal Palms Damaged



Trunk damage

Images 8-9: “Live, Play, Work ‘Aiea” Site (Former Kamehameha Swap Meet site on Ka’anohi). Recommend mixed-use and infill on that site, rather than in ‘Aiea Mill or Town Center sites. Site has been vacant, since the swap meet moved to Aloha Stadium.

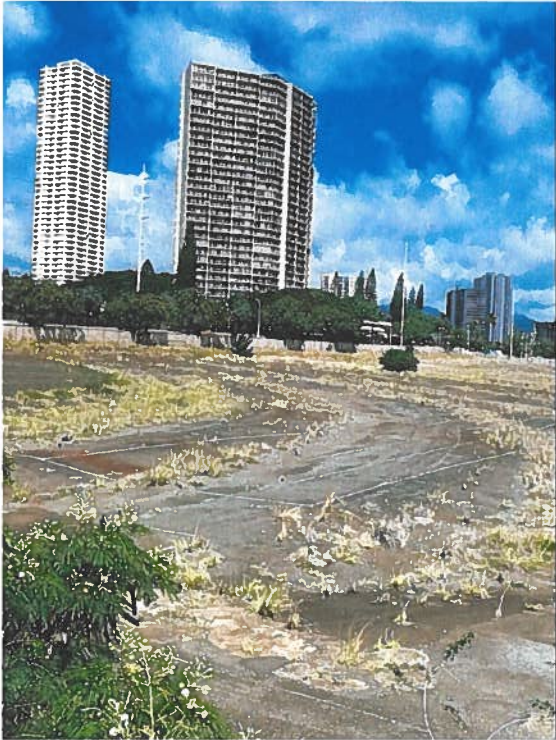


Image #10: Potential green space community resource in Mikalemi and Kauhale Streets area, makai of the ‘Aiea Town Center.

This former lo’i kalo kuleana was filled in and turned into home lots in the 1950’s, after a City Sheriff forced its lineal descendant owners to sell the property to speculators. 60 years later, the homes were torn down, and the land has sat vacant and overgrown with weeds. The property was sold to foreign investors. Flowing fresh water, abundant fish and other aquatic life live in the subterranean waters below the land, just as they did when they were in lo’i kalo use. Lineal descendants continue to reside alongside the property and are willing to support the restoration of a community resource.

Except for a derelict “mini park” that lacks amenities, the closest City green space for this neighborhood is nearly one mile away, and requires traversing the busy Moanalua Road, crossing over the H-2 freeway, and navigating surface streets that do not have sidewalks.



Mā’ona (“The feeling that one gets when one is full”): Fresh water springs still flow beneath this once-thriving kuleana land that was stewarded in lo’i from 1848 to the 1940s.