

HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL
KE KANIHELA O KE KALANA O HONOLULU
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

No. 26-65

RESOLUTION

URGING THE CITY ADMINISTRATION TO RESTORE THE MAUNA LAHILAHİ CULTURAL GARDEN BY ACTIVATING AND IMPLEMENTING THE MAUNA LAHILAHİ CULTURAL GARDEN MASTER PLAN.

WHEREAS, Mauna Lahilahi Cultural Garden, located in Mākaha, O'ahu, at 84-105 Lahilahi Place (Tax Map Key 8-4-001:008 (portion)), is a property owned by the City and County of Honolulu ("City") that was acquired to develop a cultural garden and passive recreational park; and

WHEREAS, the Wai'anae Sustainable Communities Plan identifies Mauna Lahilahi as a prominent coastal feature that should be limited to preservation and conservation uses to ensure access for cultural practices; and

WHEREAS, in September 1999, the Department of Design and Construction completed an Environmental Assessment ("EA") for the Mauna Lahilahi Cultural Garden and issued a "Finding of No Significant Impact," after determining that the proposed park improvements would not have significant adverse environmental effects on the area and would instead result in positive cultural, natural, and social benefits; and

WHEREAS, the approved EA and Mauna Lahilahi Cultural Garden Master Plan ("Master Plan") identified Mauna Lahilahi as a significant natural, cultural, historic, and archaeological resource, including documented prehistoric sites, petroglyphs, native and Polynesian-introduced plants, and long-standing importance in Native Hawaiian cultural practices and intergenerational knowledge transfer; and

WHEREAS, the stated goals of the Mauna Lahilahi Cultural Garden include:

1. Creating a gathering place to perpetuate Native Hawaiian culture and providing space for kūpuna to pass on 'ike and wisdom to the community, especially the youth of the Wai'anae Coast;
2. Preserving and protecting archaeological sites, petroglyphs, and native plants; and
3. Providing safe, accessible, and low-impact cultural and recreational facilities consistent with surrounding residential uses; and



HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL
KE KANIHELA O KE KALANA O HONOLULU
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

No. 26-65

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the City has established, developed, and maintained other botanical and cultural gardens through legislated policy, land dedication, and management by the Department of Parks and Recreation ("DPR"), including but not limited to Ho'omaluhia Botanical Garden, Foster Botanical Garden, Lili'uokalani Botanical Garden, and Wahiawā Botanical Garden, all of which serve defined cultural, educational, and conservation purposes under DPR stewardship; and

WHEREAS, the Master Plan envisioned modest, culturally appropriate improvements, including an open-air pavilion designed in a traditional style with modern, vandal-resistant materials; mauka and makai medicinal gardens; the preservation of all existing large trees in good health; the introduction of culturally significant trees and shrubs; pedestrian beach access; and the protection of archaeological sites through recommended buffers and in-situ conservation; and

WHEREAS, despite the approval of the EA and the City's stated intent to develop Mauna Lahilahi Cultural Garden as a low-impact cultural and botanical garden, the park has remained largely closed, underutilized, and without consistent City investment, maintenance, or implementation of the approved Master Plan for over two decades; and

WHEREAS, prolonged inaction has contributed at various times to overgrowth, deterioration of cultural landscape features, and unsafe conditions in the park, placing additional burdens on nearby residents and community volunteers to maintain the area and keep it safe; and

WHEREAS, according to news reports, Mākaha neighbors and community members have demonstrated extraordinary stewardship by organizing cleanups, informal maintenance, neighborhood watch efforts, and cultural restoration activities, successfully reclaiming the park from crime, blight, and neglect and restoring it as a safe community gathering place; and

WHEREAS, community-led stewardship, while commendable, should not be a substitute for the City's responsibility to manage, invest in, and activate its public park lands in accordance with adopted plans, environmental approvals, cultural obligations, and established City practices for botanical and cultural gardens under the DPR; and

WHEREAS, reactivating the Master Plan aligns with the City's General Plan objectives for culture and recreation, natural environment protection, historic preservation, and equitable access to public parks in the Wai'anae District; now, therefore,



HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL
KE KANIHELA O KE KALANA O HONOLULU
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

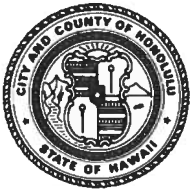
No. 26-65

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City and County of Honolulu that it urges the City Administration to restore the Mauna Lahilahi Cultural Garden by activating and implementing the Mauna Lahilahi Cultural Garden Master Plan ("Master Plan"); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Administration is requested to take immediate and coordinated action to:

1. Reaffirm and publicly recommit to the Master Plan, recognize the project as a low-impact cultural and botanical garden with no effect on significant historic sites, and prepare a Supplemental Environmental Assessment, if necessary;
2. Direct the Department of Parks and Recreation, in coordination with the Department of Design and Construction and other relevant agencies, to assume lead responsibility for the Mauna Lahilahi Cultural Garden and develop a clear implementation timeline and funding strategy for the restoration and activation of a cultural and botanical garden;
3. Prioritize culturally appropriate, low-impact improvements consistent with the approved Master Plan, including protection of archaeological sites, restoration of native and medicinal gardens, and provision of basic park facilities;
4. Establish a formal partnership framework with Mākaha community members, cultural practitioners, and existing neighborhood stewards to ensure community-based management, cultural integrity, and long-term care of the park;
5. Ensure regular maintenance, security, cultural site monitoring, and horticultural management consistent with other City-designated botanical and cultural gardens, to prevent future neglect, environmental degradation, or unsafe conditions at the park; and
6. Report back to the Council and the community within a specified timeframe on progress, funding needs, and implementation milestones; and



HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL
KE KANIHELA O KE KALANA O HONOLULU
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

No. 26-65

RESOLUTION

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that restoring the Mauna Lahilahi Cultural Garden and activating and implementing the Master Plan is an act of cultural justice, environmental stewardship, and community investment, honoring both the intent of the City's own approved plans and the enduring commitment of the Mākaha community to mālama 'āina and mālama kūpuna; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Mayor, the Managing Director, the Director of Parks and Recreation, and the Director of Design and Construction.

INTRODUCED BY:

A. Fyola

DATE OF INTRODUCTION:

MAR 17 2026

Honolulu, Hawai'i

Councilmembers

Report Title:

Mauna Lahilahi; Mauna Lahilahi Cultural Garden; Mauna Lahilahi Cultural Garden Master Plan; Cultural Garden; Botanical Garden; Makaha; Mākaha; Department of Parks and Recreation ("DPR"); Department of Design and Construction ("DDC"); Environmental Assessment ("EA")

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.