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HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

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COUNTY CLERK
COUNTY OF HAWAII

DATE: March 4, 2026

TO: Dr. Holeka Goro Inaba, Council Chair
and Members of the Hawai'i County Council

FROM: Ashley L. Kierkiewicz, Council Member 

SUBJECT: Proposed Amendments to Bill No. 66, Draft 2; AN ORDINANCE
ADOPTING THE COUNTY OF HAWAI'I GENERAL PLAN 2045 AND
REPEALING ORDINANCE NO. 05-025, AS AMENDED.

Transmitted herewith are proposed amendments to Bill No. 66, Draft 2. The first proposed amendment is shown below in Ramseyer format with respect to Bill No. 66, Draft 2; material to be deleted is bracketed and stricken and material to be inserted is underscored.

1. SECTION 3 of Bill No. 66, Draft 2, is amended to read as follows:

“SECTION 3. Ordinance No. 05-025 (2005 General Plan) and subsequent [amending] amendatory Ordinance Nos. 06-153, 07-070, 09-150, 09-161, [and] 12-089, 14-087, and 15-082 are hereby repealed.”

2. Bill No. 66, Draft 2, is further amended by substituting “Appendix A” with the attached appendix.

A copy of the new draft of this bill that would result if this proposed amendment were adopted is not attached.

Mahalo.

AK:kj
Att.

Comm. No. 372-192
Ref. To: PIP/PL/ED
Ref. Date MAR - 4 2026



Appendix A

General Plan 2026 - 2045

County of Hawai‘i

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INTRODUCTION

Section 1-1. Purpose.

The General Plan establishes the long-range vision, policies, and priorities that guide growth, development, and public investment on Hawai‘i Island. It serves as the County’s primary policy document for land use, infrastructure, housing, transportation, environmental stewardship, and public services.

The Plan provides direction for how and where the island grows, how facilities and services are delivered, and how natural and cultural resources are protected. It informs decisions related to zoning, capital improvements, budgeting, and day-to-day operations across County departments.

The General Plan is not a static document, but a living framework intended to guide decision-making over time and to evolve as community needs, priorities, and conditions change. Its success depends on consistent application and periodic review.

Section 1-2. Legal Authority.

This General Plan is adopted pursuant to Chapter 226 of the Hawai‘i Revised Statutes and Section 3-15 of the Charter of the County of Hawai‘i.

Chapter 226, Hawai‘i Revised Statutes, requires each County to prepare and adopt a general plan to guide long-range development and ensure coordination with the State Plan. Section 226-58 provides, in pertinent part:

The county general plans and development plans shall be formulated with input from the state and county agencies as well as the general public. County general plans or development plans shall indicate desired population and physical development patterns for each county and regions within each county. In addition, county general plans or development plans shall address the unique problems and needs of each county and regions within each county. The county general plans or development plans shall further define applicable provisions of this chapter; provided that any amendment to the county general plan of each county shall not be contrary to the county charter. The formulation, amendment, and implementation of county general plans or development plans shall take into consideration statewide objectives, policies, and programs stipulated in state functional plans approved in consonance with this chapter.

With adoption and ratification of the Charter in 1968, the General Plan emerged as a major policy document to guide development as well as regulatory and investment decisions. Section 3-15 of the Charter further states, in pertinent part:

The county council shall adopt by ordinance a general plan which shall set forth the council's long-range policy for the comprehensive physical, economic, environmental, and socio-cultural wellbeing of the county. The general plan shall contain a statement of development objectives, standards and principles with respect to the most desirable use of land within the county for residential, recreational, agricultural, commercial, industrial, and other purposes which shall be consistent with proper conservation of natural resources and the preservation of our natural beauty and historical sites; the most desirable density of population in the several parts of the County; a system of principal thoroughfares, highways, streets, public access to the shorelines, and other open spaces; the general locations, relocations and improvement of public buildings; the general location and extent of public utilities and terminals, whether publicly or privately owned, for water, sewers, light, power, transit and other purposes; the extent and location of public housing projects; adequate drainage facilities and control; air pollution; and such other matter as may, in the Council's judgment, promote the general welfare, health, and prosperity of its people.

The Charter further provides that the council shall enact zoning, subdivision, and such other ordinances as necessary to carry out the purpose of the General Plan. No public improvement or project, or subdivision or zoning ordinance, shall be initiated or adopted unless it conforms to and implements the General Plan. Amendments to the General Plan may be initiated by the council or the planning director.

Section 1-3. History of the General Plan Program.

Planning efforts in Hawai'i County began in the late 1950s as district-specific initiatives, including *A Plan for Kona* (1960), *A Plan for the Metropolitan Area of Hilo* (1961), and *The Kohala-Hāmākua Region General Plan* (1963). These regional plans were adopted by Ordinance No. 317 in 1965 as the General Plan for the County but lacked a coordinated, islandwide framework. Ka'ū was not covered by these initial plans.

With adoption and ratification of the Hawai'i County Charter in 1968, the General Plan emerged as a major policy document guiding the comprehensive, long-range development of the island. Following the Charter's adoption, the County undertook a coordinated, islandwide planning effort.

The County's first General Plan was adopted on December 15, 1971, establishing a planning hierarchy that remains in effect today. The hierarchy consists of three interrelated levels:

Level 1 – General Plan. The General Plan establishes long-range islandwide goals, policies, standards, and courses of action. It functions as the umbrella plan and sets the outer limits within which County action must operate.

Level 2 – Second-Tier Plans. Community Development Plans, functional plans, and area plans provide more detailed, place-based, or program-specific direction consistent with the General Plan.

Level 3 – Implementation Mechanisms. Zoning and subdivision codes, operating budgets, capital improvement programs, and other ordinances implement the policies of the higher-level plans.

This hierarchy ensures that planning decisions are coordinated across scales, from islandwide priorities to neighborhood-level actions, and that regulatory and investment decisions are grounded in adopted policy.

Comprehensive revisions to the General Plan were adopted in 1989 (Ordinance No. 89-142) and 2005 (Ordinance No. 05-25). This General Plan represents the most recent comprehensive update, reflecting current conditions, community priorities, and the evolving needs of Hawai‘i Island.

Section 1-4. Function.

The General Plan functions as the County’s primary decision-making framework for land use, development, and public investment rather than a detailed technical manual. It does not replace zoning codes, engineering standards, or departmental master plans. Instead, it establishes the policy foundation that those documents, programs, and actions are expected follow.

The purposes of the General Plan are to:

- (1) Guide land use and development patterns across Hawai‘i Island;
- (2) Identify the vision, values, and priorities of the County and its communities;
- (3) Provide a framework for decision-making, capital improvement priorities, and other government programs;
- (4) Improve the physical environment of the County;
- (5) Align departmental actions and priorities;
- (6) Promote and safeguard the public interest and the welfare of the County as a whole; and
- (7) Ensure that growth occurs in a manner consistent with community values.

Section 1-5. How to Use This General Plan.

This General Plan is meant to be actively used. It should inform decisions as they are being shaped, not consulted after choices have already been made.

When reviewing projects, programs, policies, budgets, or investments, decision-makers should consider the applicable elements of the General Plan in full. The Goals, Policies, and Actions are intended to be read together. No single provision should be interpreted in isolation. The Plan is an integrated framework that balances multiple priorities and reflects islandwide and place-based considerations.

In cases where policies point in different directions or where tradeoffs are necessary, decisions should be evaluated for overall consistency with the County's adopted priorities, intended long-term outcomes, and community values. The intent of the Plan as a whole should guide interpretation, rather than by selective reliance on individual provisions.

County departments are expected to use the General Plan when developing work programs, preparing budgets, proposing capital projects, updating regulations, and delivering services. Elected officials should consult it when evaluating proposals, setting priorities, and providing policy direction. Members of the public may look to the Plan to understand how decisions are made and how public investments align with adopted goals.

The General Plan is also designed to evolve. Monitoring, reporting, and periodic updates are essential to ensuring that the Plan remains relevant and effective as conditions change over time.

Section 1-6. The General Plan Land Use Map.

The General Plan Land Use Map is an integral component of this Plan. It provides a broad-brush islandwide graphic representation of the general location and relationship of different land use categories, and reflects the overall growth direction and pattern the County seeks to achieve over the long-term.

The Land Use Map is a policy guide. It is intended to express the County's general land use objectives in spatial terms and to identify, at a broad scale, the relative location of residential, agricultural, commercial, industrial, conservation, and other land use categories across the island.

The Map is not a zoning map. It was not designed to assign a specific land use designation to any individual parcel, and its boundary lines are not intended to be precise or parcel-specific. As a standard of the General Plan, the broad-brush boundaries indicated are graphic expressions of General Plan policies, particularly as they relate to land uses. They are long-range guides to general location, not definitive determinations of any parcel's permitted uses.

The General Plan Land Use Map and County zoning serve distinct and complementary purposes. Zoning is a regulatory instrument that assigns specific, legally enforceable use designations to individual parcels. The Land Use Map operates at a different level; it establishes the general framework and policy direction within which zoning decisions are to be made.

A property's location on the Land Use Map should not automatically foreclose consideration of a rezoning application. The significance of a Land Use Map designation shall be considered in light of the advice of the Planning Director and the recommendations of the Planning Commission, and evaluated in the context of the goals, policies, and actions of the General Plan as a whole. When evaluating a change of County zoning, decision-maker should focus primarily on consistency with the Plan's goals and policies, while remaining mindful of the guidance provided by the Land Use Map.

Community Development Plans ("CDPs") and other second-tier plans may establish more detailed land use patterns for their respective areas. Where CDPs identify desired land use patterns consistent with the General Plan, the Land Use Map should be interpreted in a manner that supports and is generally consistent with those locally adopted visions. At the same time, the General Plan establishes islandwide priorities that apply across the County and informs how resources, regulatory measures, and public investments are directed.

Amendments to the General Plan Land Use Map shall follow the amendment procedures established by the County Charter and applicable ordinances. No amendment to the Land Use Map shall be inconsistent with the goals and policies of this General Plan.

Section 1-7. Structure.

The General Plan is organized to be clear, practical, and easy to use. It is structured to function as a working policy guide. Each element follows a consistent format so that readers can quickly understand the County's intent, priorities, and responsibilities. Each element is organized to move from broad context to specific responsibilities:

- **Findings and Purpose** provide context, describe existing conditions, and explain why the topic matters to the island's future.
- **Goals** summarize the desired long-term outcomes and serves as a reference point for evaluating consistency with County priorities.
- **Policies** describe the principles and outcomes the County seeks to achieve, and guide planning, regulation, and investment decisions.
- **Actions** assign responsibility and identify implementation steps, translating policy direction into day-to-day operations.

Together, these components connect vision, policy direction, and implementation in a clear and consistent structure.

ELEMENT 1. IMPLEMENTATION.

Article 1. General.

Section 1-1-1. Findings and purpose.

The General Plan is the County's primary policy document for guiding growth, public investment, and service delivery. Its effectiveness depends not only on the strength of its individual elements, but on how consistently it is applied across County departments, programs, and decision-making processes.

Implementation of the plan is a shared responsibility. County departments, agencies, leadership, and partners all play a role in carrying out its policies through budgeting, capital improvements, permitting, service delivery, and program development. Coordination, clear policies, and follow-through are essential to achieving the Plan's intent.

The General Plan is also a public document. County services and decision-making processes should be carried out in a manner that is accessible, transparent, and responsive, allowing residents to understand how decisions are made and how public investments advance adopted priorities.

This element establishes the administrative, financial, and procedural mechanisms used to apply, monitor, and periodically update the General Plan in a disciplined and accountable manner. It also consolidates crosscutting implementation responsibilities that apply across multiple elements, including requirements for asset inventories, performance monitoring, and community engagement.

Section 1-1-2. Goal.

Ensure that County actions, investments, and decisions are guided by this General Plan through coordinated administration, responsible financing, meaningful community engagement, ongoing monitoring, and clear accountability.

Article 2. Administration and Coordination.

Section 1-2-1. Policies.

- (1) **General Plan alignment is a shared responsibility across all County departments.** All County departments should work collaboratively to implement the policies of this General Plan when developing programs, reviewing projects, preparing budgets, and delivering services.

- (2) **Coordination improves outcomes and avoids unnecessary conflict or duplication.** Interdepartmental coordination should occur early in planning, project development, and policy formulation to identify conflicts, align expectations, avoid duplication, and improve outcomes.
- (3) **Day-to-day operations should reinforce long-term County priorities.** Departmental programs, regulations, procedures, and work plans should align with the goals and priorities of this General Plan.
- (4) **The County's goals cannot be achieved by County government alone.** The County should coordinate with State, federal, nonprofit, and community partners to advance shared objectives and leverage resources in support of General Plan priorities.
- (5) **Public services should work for residents regardless of which department delivers them.** Public services should be delivered in a manner that is efficient, accessible, and responsive to community needs, with attention to consistency across departments.
- (6) **Planning for services must reflect where people live and how communities are changing.** County operations, services, and planning efforts should align with projected population growth, land use patterns, and service demand identified in this General Plan.
- (7) **Clear leadership direction is necessary when responsibilities or priorities overlap.** County leadership should provide guidance and direction to support cross-departmental coordination and ensure that implementation of this General Plan remains consistent when departmental priorities, policies, or responsibilities conflict.

Section 1-2-2. Actions.

- (a) **Regular self-assessment helps ensure the Plan is actively used, not overlooked.** All County departments shall periodically review their programs, procedures, and operations to assess consistency, ensure alignment with the goals and policies of this General Plan, and make adjustments as necessary.
- (b) **Coordinated review supports informed decision-making on major initiatives.** The planning department shall coordinate interdepartmental review of major development projects, capital investments, and policy initiatives to support General Plan alignment.
- (c) **Projects involving shared authority benefit from early and ongoing coordination.** County departments shall coordinate with State and federal agencies on projects involving shared jurisdiction, regulatory authority, or funding to ensure consistency with General Plan priorities.
- (d) **Digital systems are essential tools for coordination and public access.** The department of information technology shall continue to expand and improve digital systems and online services that support interdepartmental coordination and to improve public access to County information and services.
- (e) **Shared data supports better decisions and accountability.** County departments shall share relevant data, analysis, and information to support coordinated planning, informed decision-making, and monitoring of outcomes.

- (f) **Decision-makers should be able to clearly see how proposals relate to adopted policy.** Major staff reports, policy proposals, and capital project requests submitted for executive or legislative consideration shall include a brief statement describing consistency with the General Plan.
- (g) **Disagreements should be resolved with reference to the Plan's overall intent.** When conflicts arise between departmental priorities, policies, or implementation responsibilities, County leadership shall provide direction to resolve such conflicts in a manner consistent with the goals, policies, and overall framework of this General Plan.

Article 3. Capital Improvements and Financing.

Section 1-3-1. Policies.

- (1) **Public dollars should advance adopted County priorities.** Public investments should align with the goals and priorities of this General Plan.
- (2) **Taking care of what exists is often the most responsible investment.** The County should prioritize capital improvements that maintain, rehabilitate, and replace existing facilities and infrastructure before expanding new systems where feasible.
- (3) **Capital spending shapes growth patterns and community form.** Capital funding should support development patterns that reinforce existing communities, designated town centers, and planned growth areas identified in this General Plan.
- (4) **Implementation depends on more than a single funding source.** The County should pursue diverse and sustainable funding sources to implement General Plan priorities.
- (5) **Infrastructure should be timed to match real demand.** Infrastructure and facility investments should be phased to align with projected growth, land use patterns, and service demand identified in this General Plan.
- (6) **Long-term operating costs matter as much as initial construction.** Capital investment decisions should consider the full lifecycle costs of facilities and infrastructure, including ongoing operations, maintenance, staffing, and replacement.
- (7) **Not all General Plan actions require bricks and mortar.** The County should recognize and plan for non-capital implementation needs that are necessary to carry out the policies of this General Plan.

Section 1-3-2. Actions.

- (a) **The Capital Improvement Program should reflect adopted policy, not operate independently of it.** The department of finance, in partnership with the planning department, shall work with each County department and agency to prepare and update the Capital Improvement Program in alignment with the priorities of this General Plan.

- (b) **Consistency with the Plan should be clear at the point of request.** County departments shall submit capital improvement requests that demonstrate consistency with applicable General Plan elements.
- (c) **Maintaining existing assets should be a funding priority.** The department of finance shall prioritize funding for maintenance, rehabilitation, and replacement of existing facilities and infrastructure.
- (d) **Coordinated projects reduce cost and disruption.** County departments shall coordinate capital projects across agencies and service providers to improve efficiency and reduce duplication of work.
- (e) **Multiple financing tools may be necessary to move projects forward.** The County shall pursue grants, bonds, improvement districts, and other financing mechanisms to support capital projects that advance General Plan priorities.
- (f) **Active monitoring supports timely delivery and accountability.** The department of finance shall monitor capital expenditures and funding availability to ensure timely project delivery and informed budget decisions.
- (g) **Understanding operating impacts supports sustainable investment.** Capital project proposals shall identify anticipated operating, maintenance, and staffing impacts associated with the project, to the extent practicable.
- (h) **Non-capital needs should be planned alongside capital investments.** When implementing General Plan actions, County departments shall identify non-capital resource needs, such as staffing, programs, or regulatory changes, and consider these needs as part of budget development and work program planning.

Article 4. Community Engagement.

Section 1-4-1. Policies.

- (1) **County programs and services should be reachable by people across the island.** County programs and services should be accessible to residents in all regions of across Hawai‘i Island, including those in rural and geographically isolated communities.
- (2) **Public participation strengthens decision-making when it is meaningful and timely.** The County should provide meaningful opportunities for public participation early and throughout planning and decision-making processes.
- (3) **Engagement should reflect the diversity of the island’s communities.** Engagement efforts should reach a broad cross-section of the community, including youth, seniors, working families, and historically underserved populations that have historically had limited access to decision-making processes.
- (4) **Clear information supports informed participation.** Public information should be timely, accurate, and available through multiple formats and platforms to meet different demands and preferences.

- (5) **Listening to communities helps the County act before problems grow.** The County should design programs and services to anticipate and proactively address community needs, rather than responding only after problems arise.
- (6) **Where services are located affects who can use them.** County facilities and service locations should be planned and distributed to equitably serve communities across the island in a fair and practical manner.
- (7) **Community partnerships expand capacity and build trust.** The County should actively pursue and collaborate with nonprofit and community-based partners to support service delivery, leverage community capacity, and advance the goals and priorities of this General Plan.
- (8) **Community Development Plans provide a place-based foundation for engagement.** Community Development Plans should serve as a primary vehicle for place-based engagement, helping translate General Plan policies into locally informed priorities and actions.

Section 1-4-2. Actions.

- (a) **Residents should be able to easily find and understand County information.** County departments shall provide clear and accessible public information regarding programs, services, and procedures.
- (b) **Major decisions warrant early and visible outreach.** County departments and agencies responsible for major planning efforts, policy decisions, and capital projects shall conduct public outreach early and throughout the process.
- (c) **Multiple channels help remove barriers to participation.** County departments shall provide opportunities for public input through in-person meetings, digital platforms, and other accessible formats.
- (d) **Online systems can expand access beyond in-person engagement.** The department of information technology shall maintain and improve online systems that allow residents to access services, submit applications, and obtain information electronically.
- (e) **Service access should be evaluated, not assumed.** County departments shall evaluate the distribution of service locations and facilities to identify gaps in access, particularly in improving accessibility for underserved areas.
- (f) **Creative approaches can extend the County's reach.** The County shall expand public access to programs and services through strategies such as satellite service locations, mobile services, digital platforms, and targeted improved communication and outreach regarding available programs.
- (g) **Community input should influence outcomes, not disappear into a record.** County departments shall incorporate community feedback into program, project, and policy development where appropriate and shall publicly communicate how community feedback informed or affected decisions or priorities when feasible.

- (h) **Consistent engagement practices improves the public experience.** County departments shall develop and apply consistent community outreach and community engagement practices across departments to improve coordination and public participation.

Article 5. Monitoring, Reporting, and Updating.

Section 1-5-1. Policies.

- (1) **Regular review helps keep the Plan relevant and effective.** The County should regularly evaluate system performance, service levels, capacity trends, infrastructure reliability, and program outcomes to measure progress toward achieving General Plan goals.
- (2) **Reliable data supports informed decision-making.** County departments shall collect and maintain performance data necessary to assess infrastructure capacity, service delivery effectiveness, regulatory compliance, and community outcomes.
- (3) **Transparency strengthens public trust and accountability.** Implementation of this Plan should be measurable and publicly reported in a manner that allows decision-makers and residents to understand progress and challenges.
- (4) **Monitoring informs course correction.** Findings from performance evaluations shall guide capital investment priorities, policy adjustments, regulatory updates, and Plan amendments.
- (5) **Elected officials play a central role in oversight and course correction.** Reporting on General Plan implementation shall provide the County Council with information necessary for policy direction and fiscal oversight.
- (6) **Monitoring responsibilities are shared across departments.** While the planning department coordinates reporting on General Plan implementation, individual departments are responsible for evaluating the performance of systems and programs within their authority.

Section 1-5-2. Actions; general.

- (a) **Periodic reporting keeps implementation visible and accountable.** The planning department, in coordination with County departments and agencies, shall prepare periodic reports summarizing progress toward implementation of this General Plan.
- (b) **Evaluation depends on shared and reliable information.** County departments shall provide performance data necessary to infrastructure capacity service levels, regulatory compliance, and program outcomes.
- (c) **Clear metrics help the public and decision-makers understand progress.** The County shall maintain publicly accessible dashboards, reports, or tools to communicate measurable progress toward General Plan goals.
- (d) **Up-to-date maps and guidance support consistent application.** The planning department shall maintain current land use maps and supporting materials to ensure consistent application of the Plan.

- (e) **Amendments should reinforce the Plan's framework.** Proposed amendments shall be evaluated for consistency with the overall framework of this Plan.
- (f) **Implementing regulations should stay aligned over time.** Zoning, subdivision regulations, and other implementing ordinances shall be reviewed and updated as necessary to maintain alignment with this General Plan.
- (g) **Community-level plans should evolve alongside the islandwide framework.** The planning department shall coordinate updates to Community Development Plans in alignment with this General Plan.
- (h) **Regular review by the legislative body reinforces accountability.** At intervals established by the County Council, progress reports shall be presented for legislative review and discussion.

ELEMENT 2. ECONOMY

Article 1. General.

Section 2-1-1. Findings and purpose.

The County finds that economic conditions shape how Hawai‘i Island residents live, work, and remain rooted in their communities. Employment opportunities, wages, business viability, cost of living, and access to essential goods and services directly influence household stability, community well-being, and the County’s ability to provide public services over time.

Economic conditions do not exist in isolation. They are closely interconnected with land use patterns, housing availability, infrastructure capacity, transportation systems, natural resource stewardship, and public services. Decisions made in one area of the General Plan inevitably affect economic outcomes elsewhere, underscoring the need for coordination across County policies and investments.

While many economic forces originate beyond the County’s direct control, County actions play a meaningful role in shaping local economic conditions. Through land use decisions, infrastructure investment, workforce development, regulatory practices, and partnerships, the County can influence where economic activity occurs, who benefits from it, and how resilient the local economy is to external shocks.

Hawai‘i Island’s economy has historically relied on a single dominant industry, evolving from plantation agriculture to tourism. The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the risks of overreliance on a narrow economic base and highlighted the importance of diversification, local capacity, and economic stability rooted in community needs.

The County further finds that long-term economic prosperity depends on working within the island’s physical, cultural, and ecological limits. Economic activity must be aligned with the island’s community carrying capacity, infrastructure constraints, labor force realities, and the stewardship of ‘āina and community resources. Growth that exceeds these limits can undermine quality of life, strain public systems, and erode the very conditions that support economic opportunity.

In light of these findings, the purpose of the Economy Element is to provide a coherent framework for County decisions that affect economic activity. This Element guides policies and actions that support diversification, strengthen local and community-based economies, improve economic resilience, and ensure that economic development contributes to the long-term well-being for Hawai‘i Island residents.

Section 2-1-2. Goal.

Hawai'i Island's economy supports diverse industries, meaningful work, and local enterprise and entrepreneurship, while strengthening community-based systems and safeguarding the long-term health of our people, places, and environment.

Article 2. Place-Based Revitalization.

Section 2-2-1. Policies.

- (1) **Downtowns and historic plantation towns are anchors of community life.** Downtown and historic plantation-era town centers should be supported as mixed use community hubs that integrate housing, employment, small businesses, civic uses, education, public services, recreation, and daily social life.
- (2) **Revitalization should be place-based and community-led.** Revitalization efforts shall be community-informed, reinforce local character, and prioritize preservation and adaptive reuse over demolition where feasible.
- (3) **Public investment should catalyze local economic activity.** County investments in revitalization areas should be targeted to catalyze local economic activity and strengthen long-term economic viability.
- (4) **Banyan Drive is a priority revitalization and stewardship area.** Banyan Drive should be revitalized through coordinated planning, clear governance, and long-term stewardship that balances community benefit with visitor activity.

Section 2-2-2. Actions.

- (a) **Establish a Community Revitalization Fund.** The department of finance, in coordination with relevant departments, shall establish a Community Revitalization Fund for designated revitalization areas.
- (b) **Prepare targeted Downtown Revitalization Plans.** The planning department and the department of research and development shall coordinate to prepare Downtown Revitalization Plans that focus on economic strategy, infrastructure needs, business attraction and retention, and design guidance specific to town centers.
- (c) **Provide technical assistance and navigation support.** The department of research and development shall provide technical assistance to support revitalization initiatives.
- (d) **Advanced coordinated stewardship of Banyan Drive.** The planning department, in coordination with the department of research and development, shall evaluate and pursue long-term management and governance strategies for Banyan Drive.
- (e) **Reduce regulatory barriers to revitalization.** The planning department and the department of public works shall review and recommend regulatory amendments to

facilitate adaptive reuse, mixed-use development, building rehabilitation, and streetside improvements while maintaining health and safety standards.

Article 3. Tourism

Section 2-3-1. Policies.

- (1) **Tourism must be intentionally planned and responsibly managed.** Tourism should not overburden communities, infrastructure, housing, or natural and cultural resources, and should remain consistent with carrying capacity and community priorities.
- (2) **Tourism should contribute to community well-being.** Tourism should be evaluated not only by visitor activity or revenue, but by measurable outcomes related to resident quality of life and infrastructure performance.
- (3) **Stewardship of place is essential.** Heavily visited places should be managed first and foremost for the benefit of residents and long-term resource health, with visitor access accommodated where it can occur respectfully and sustainably.
- (4) **Tourism revenues should be reinvested locally to offset impacts.** Tourism revenues, including the Transient Accommodations Tax, Green Fee, or similar mechanisms, should be directed toward mitigating tourism impacts, supporting resident-serving infrastructure, and stewardship.
- (5) **Visitor accommodations should be thoughtfully located and scaled.** Visitor accommodations should be concentrated in areas with infrastructure capacity and near visitor attractions or commercial centers to reduce sprawl, infrastructure strain, and undue impacts on residential neighborhoods.

Section 2-3-2. Actions.

- (a) **Align County tourism initiatives with General Plan policy.** The department of research and development shall align tourism initiatives with this General Plan and the County's Destination Management Plan.
- (b) **Evaluate place-based tools for managing visitor activity.** The planning department, in consultation with the department of research and development, shall assess the feasibility of Visitor Destination Areas and similar zoning or management tools to better manage visitor activity.
- (c) **Implement the Destination Management Plan.** The department of research and development shall ensure implementation, regular review, and public reporting of Hawai'i Island's Destination Management Plan, in coordination with State agencies and relevant partners.
- (d) **Prioritize community-aligned tourism enterprises.** In administering tourism-related programs or incentives, the department of research and development shall prioritize locally-rooted, culturally grounded, and community-aligned enterprises.

- (e) **Direct tourism revenues with intention and accountability.** The department of research and development and the department of finance shall develop fiscal mechanisms – such as special funds, a grant program, or budgetary allocations – to ensure tourism-generated revenues are used to:
 - (i) Mitigate visitor impacts on infrastructure, housing, and public services;
 - (ii) Maintain and steward heavily visited natural, cultural, and commercial areas; and
 - (iii) Support resident-serving facilities, access, and community well-being.

Article 4. Agriculture and Food Systems.

Section 2-4-1. Policies.

- (1) **Agricultural land is a critical public resource.** It shall remain County policy to protect lands designated as Important Agricultural Lands from development, with priority given to lands actively used or capable of being used for food production and agricultural livelihoods.
- (2) **Agriculture sustains culture, community, and long-term security.** The County shall prioritize food security, stewardship of ‘āina, and expanded access to Hawai‘i Island grown food for residents while supporting viable agricultural livelihoods.
- (3) **Agriculture should be viable, innovative, and locally rooted.** The County supports diversified, value-added, and regenerative agricultural activities that strengthen farm viability, innovation, local incomes, and intergenerational participation.
- (4) **Public support should advance genuine agricultural use.** County incentives, grants, tax benefits, and regulatory allowances related to agriculture should be directed to legitimate agricultural operations and outcomes, consistent with the purpose and intent of each program.
- (5) **Water is foundational to agriculture.** Reliable and affordable agricultural water systems are essential to long-term viability and drought preparedness.
- (6) **Protecting agriculture requires proactive biosecurity.** The County supports coordinated biosecurity prevention, early detection, and mitigation to protect agricultural productivity, food security, and cultural practices.

Section 2-4-2. Actions.

- (a) **Align land use regulations with active agriculture.** The planning department shall review and update land use designations and regulations to better support active agriculture, including on-farm processing and related activities.
- (b) **Align County agricultural initiatives with General Plan policy.** The department of research and development shall align agriculture-related programs to with this General Plan and resident food security priorities.

- (c) **Preserve agricultural lands for long-term use.** The department of research and development, in partnership with the planning department and the department of finance, shall explore tools to protect agricultural lands for long-term use, including conservation easements, agricultural parks, and long-term leases.
- (d) **Strengthen local food systems.** The department of research and development shall support initiatives such as farm-to-school programs, institutional purchasing, community gardens, and food hubs that connect local food producers with residents and institutions.
- (e) **Invest in shared agricultural infrastructure.** The department of research and development shall support work with farmers, cooperatives, and community organizations to establish or expand shared-use facilities and strengthen local food production and value-added enterprises.
- (f) **Promote Hawai‘i Island agricultural products.** The department of research and development shall establish and maintain distinct “Made on Hawai‘i Island” and “Grown on Hawai‘i Island” designations to strengthen market recognition and consumer trust.
- (g) **Expand access to capital for agriculture.** The department of research and development, in partnership with the department of finance, shall expand access to capital for agricultural operations and food system enterprises.
- (h) **Support agricultural water systems.** The department of water supply shall evaluate opportunities, where feasible and appropriate, to support agricultural water access and irrigation infrastructure in coordination with State agencies.
- (i) **Support small and emerging farmers.** The department of research and development and the department of water supply shall assist small and emerging farmers in accessing affordable water, shared infrastructure, and technical assistance in coordination with State partners.
- (j) **Advance agricultural biosecurity.** The department of research and development, in coordination with relevant State agencies, shall support biosecurity initiatives including early detection, education, response coordination, and invasive species mitigation affecting agricultural lands and food production.

Article 5. Film, Media, and Creative Industries.

Section 2-5-1. Policies.

- (1) **Film, media, and creative industries are key to Hawai‘i Island’s economy and identity.** The County supports locally rooted film, media, and creative industries, as contributors of economic diversification, cultural expression, and career pathways.
- (2) **How Hawai‘i Island is portrayed matters.** Media created on or about Hawai‘i Island should accurately and respectfully reflect the island’s culture, history, people, and lived realities, recognizing the influence media has on public understanding and perception.

- (3) **Productions should approach Hawai‘i Island as a living place, not just a backdrop.** Film, media, and creative productions shall operate in a culturally respectful, environmentally responsible, and community-conscious manner and prioritize local participation where feasible.
- (4) **Local people and businesses should benefit directly.** Productions should prioritize local talent, labor, vendors, and services whenever feasible, contributing to workforce development and the local creative economy.

Section 2-5-2. Actions.

- (a) **Simplify and clarify how productions work on the island.** The department of research and development shall maintain a streamlined assistance and navigation function for productions.
- (b) **Provide a clear County point of contact.** The film office shall serve as the County’s primary liaison for film, media, and creative productions, providing guidance on permitting, locations, workforce resources, cultural awareness, and community coordination.
- (c) **Set clear expectations for responsible production.** The film office, in collaboration with cultural practitioners and community partners, shall develop and maintain:
 - (i) A Media Code of Conduct outlining culturally, socially, and environmentally responsible practices; and
 - (ii) A Local Resource Guide identifying Hawai‘i Island-based talent, businesses, and services.
- (d) **Build local creative careers and Hawai‘i Island storytelling.** The department of research and development shall work with educational institutions, nonprofits, and creative organizations to support training, mentorship, and business development for local creatives and shall prioritize County support for local media projects that tell Hawai‘i Island’s stories and reflect community perspectives.
- (e) **Use public assets intentionally.** When County facilities, lands, or resources are used to support media or creative activity, departments shall ensure such use aligns with General Plan policies, community benefit, and responsible stewardship of place.

Article 6. Construction, Manufacturing, and Entrepreneurship.

Section 2-6-1. Policies.

- (1) **The County should act as a facilitator, not only a regulator.** For large publicly sensitive development projects, the County should play a proactive role in convening developers, regulatory agencies, and the community to support coordination and communication while maintaining regulatory boundaries.

- (2) **Permitting is clear, consistent, and service-oriented.** County review processes should provide predictable requirements, timely review, and clear communication while upholding health, safety, and environmental standards.
- (3) **Construction capacity is essential to meeting island needs.** A strong, locally based construction sector is critical to delivering housing, infrastructure, public facilities, and disaster recovery projects in a timely and cost-effective manner.
- (4) **Local manufacturing strengthens economic self-reliance.** Small- and medium-scale manufacturing should be supported to reduce reliance on imports and strengthen local supply chains.
- (5) **Local production requires appropriate and affordable space.** The County should support access to properly zoned and serviced spaces for light industrial and production uses.
- (6) **Entrepreneurship and local ownership matter.** The County should support entrepreneurs and locally owned businesses as drivers of innovation, job creation, and community wealth, with an emphasis on sectors that meet local needs and build long-term economic stability.
- (7) **Skilled trades are essential to a strong local economy.** The County should support workforce pathways that strengthen construction, manufacturing, and skilled trades capacity.

Section 2-6-2. Actions.

- (a) **Improve permitting systems to reduce unnecessary cost and delay.** The department of public works, in partnership with the planning department, shall continue to modernize and coordinate permitting systems to reduce duplication, clarify requirements, and shorten review timelines, while maintaining health and safety standards.
- (b) **Support cost-reducing construction innovation.** The department of research and development shall support pilot projects that explore cost-reducing and resilient construction methods.
- (c) **Advance a circular manufacturing economy.** The department of research and development, in partnership with the department of environmental management, shall support circular economy initiatives that convert waste streams.
- (d) **Promote Hawai‘i Island-made goods.** The department of research and development shall maintain and promote a “Made on Hawai‘i Island” designation to improve market visibility for locally produced goods.
- (e) **Connect local businesses to markets.** The department of research and development shall support opportunities that connect local producers with local and regional markets.
- (f) **Expand technical assistance for entrepreneurship and trades.** The department of research and development shall expand access to technical assistance for entrepreneurship, manufacturing, and skilled trades.
- (g) **Strengthen work-based learning opportunities.** The department of research and development, in partnership with educational institutions, labor organizations, industry

partners, and County departments, shall support pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, and paid work-based learning opportunities in construction, manufacturing, and skilled trades.

Article 7. Science and Technology.

Section 2-7-1. Policies.

- (1) **Science and technology should serve Hawai‘i Island.** The County supports science and technology as tools for economic opportunity, problem-solving, and environmental stewardship when they produce clear, demonstrable benefits for Hawai‘i Island residents.
- (2) **Hawai‘i Island has unique strengths that should be leveraged responsibly.** Science and technology should be supported where they align with community priorities and contribute to local workforce development, economic opportunity, and community well-being.
- (3) **Innovation must respect place, culture, and natural systems.** Science and technology should respect cultural heritage, natural resources, and physical environment, particularly where projects intersect with culturally sensitive places.
- (4) **Research should lead to real world outcomes.** The County should prioritize efforts that translate research into practical applications and tangible outcomes, including workforce and educational opportunities, local businesses development, improved public services, environmental protection, or solutions to island-specific challenges.

Section 2-7-2. Actions.

- (a) **Coordinate science and technology partnerships.** The department of research and development shall serve as the County’s primary liaison to the University of Hawai‘i system, State agencies, research institutions, and private sector on science and technology initiatives.
- (b) **Support applied and community-relevant innovation.** The department of research and development shall support applied and community-relevant initiatives with direct benefits to Hawai‘i Island.
- (c) **Align science initiatives with County priorities.** The department of research and development shall help align science and technology initiatives with County goals related to energy, environmental stewardship, infrastructure resilience, and long-term community well-being.

Article 8. Health, Wellness, and Healthcare Access.

Section 1-8-1. Policies.

- (1) **Access to care is essential to community stability and well-being.** Timely access to healthcare and wellness services is fundamental to quality of life, workforce participation, and community stability.
- (2) **Health is shaped by place, housing, and daily life.** Land use patterns, housing, transportation, food access, parks, and cultural practices influence well-being and should be considered in County decision-making.
- (3) **Healthcare access must reflect island geography and rural realities.** The County should support distributed, flexible, and place-appropriate approaches to healthcare access, including mobile services, satellite facilities, and telehealth infrastructure, particularly in underserved and remote areas.
- (4) **Cultural and community-based wellness practices matter.** Traditional Hawaiian healing practices and culturally grounded approaches to wellness should be respected and supported alongside modern healthcare services where consistent with safety and applicable law.
- (5) **County actions should enable – not replace – healthcare delivery.** The County’s role is to remove barriers, coordinate infrastructure and land use decisions, and support partnerships that improve access to care, rather than to operate or manage healthcare services directly.
- (6) **Caregiving and health-related work are essential community functions.** Healthcare and caregiving roles should be supported through workforce pathways and supportive infrastructure.

Section 1-8-2. Actions.

- (a) **Identify and address gaps in healthcare access.** The department of research and development shall work with public, private, and nonprofit partners to identify geographic and service gaps and support solutions.
- (b) **Plan for healthcare and wellness facilities through land use decisions.** The planning department shall consider healthcare, elder care, and wellness facilities in land use planning, zoning, and permitting decisions to support compatibility, accessibility, and community needs.
- (c) **Invest in healthy places and preventive infrastructure.** The department of parks and recreation, in coordination with other County departments, shall continue to support parks, trails, and open spaces that promote physical activity, mental health, and social connection.
- (d) **Support culturally grounded wellness partnerships.** The department of research and development shall facilitate partnerships that expand and improve access to culturally competent health education, prevention, and wellness programming.

- (e) **Coordinate healthcare workforce pathways.** The department of research and development shall coordinate with educational institutions, healthcare providers, and workforce partners to support local pathways into healthcare and caregiving careers, consistent with County workforce priorities.

Article 9. County Labor and Workforce.

Section 1-9-1. Policies.

- (1) **The County should lead by example as the employer.** As one of the largest employers on Hawai‘i Island, the County’s commitment to economic opportunity for local families should be reflected in its employment practices, workplace culture, and employee relations.
- (2) **Workplace policies should reflect real life.** In workforce and personnel decisions, the County should recognize the everyday realities facing local working families, including cost of living, childcare, transportation, housing, and access to education and training.
- (3) **Youth pathways are a long-term investment.** The County should prioritize youth employment opportunities, including internships, apprenticeships, and entry-level career pathways to build future workforce capacity.
- (4) **Workforce development should be intentional, adaptive, and forward-looking.** County workforce programs and personnel practices should align with operational needs, service delivery goals, succession planning, and long-term workforce stability.

Section 1-9-2. Actions.

- (a) **Expand County workforce development programs.** The department of human resources, in partnership with the County’s workforce development office, shall expand workforce development programs, including:
 - (i) Internships, apprenticeships, and trainee programs for high school students, college students, and recent graduates;
 - (ii) Career pathway planning to support employee advancement, skill development, and retention;
 - (iii) Training and professional development opportunities accessible across departments; and
 - (iv) Outreach and recruitment efforts that promote the County as a competitive and attractive workplace.
- (b) **Plan proactively for workforce needs.** The department of human resources, in partnership with County departments and agencies, shall regularly assess short- and long-term staffing needs, anticipated retirements, and critical skill gaps to guide recruitment, training, and workforce planning.
- (c) **Remain competitive in the local labor market.** The department of human resources shall evaluate wage and non-wage strategies to support recruitment and retention.

- (d) **Strengthen workforce pipelines into County service.** The department of human resources shall maintain and expand partnerships with schools, the University of Hawai'i, unions, nonprofit organizations, and other feeder programs to support recruitment, training, and career pathways into County employment.

ELEMENT 3. MĀLAMA ‘ĀINA AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES.

Article 1. General.

Section 3-1-1. Findings and purpose.

Hawai‘i Island is defined by its land and waters, and by the enduring relationship between people and place. From mauka forests and upland watersheds to coastal shorelines and nearshore fishing areas, the island’s natural and cultural landscapes sustain life, shape community identity, and carry forward ‘ike passed through generations. These places are not interchangeable or expendable; they are living systems that require care, restraint, and respect.

Hawai‘i Island’s residents have long understood “*He ali ‘i ka ‘āina, he kauwā ke kanaka*” – the land is a chief, man is her servant. Healthy forests protect water sources. Intact shorelines support food systems and public access. Cultural landscapes, historic sites, and wahi pana anchor community memory and belonging. When these systems are tended well, they sustain families, communities, and local livelihoods. When they are neglected or overburdened, the impacts are felt across generations.

Some natural, historic, and cultural places can support education, shared use, and public access. Others require privacy, protocol, or limited access to protect their meaning, integrity, and ongoing cultural practices. Responsible stewardship recognizes that care does not always mean visibility, and that discretion can be essential to preservation.

The island’s economy and daily life are inseparable from its resources. Agriculture, fishing, recreation, and local livelihoods depend on clean water, healthy ecosystems, open space, and continued access to the shoreline. At the same time, Hawai‘i Island is shaped by powerful natural forces—including volcanic activity, earthquakes, flooding, wildfire, coastal change, and erosion – that require humility, preparedness, and land use decisions grounded in local conditions.

Mālama ‘āina includes active management of land and resources. Responsible stewardship may require intervention, including forest and watershed management, game management, invasive species control, and access for subsistence practices such as hunting, fishing, and gathering. When guided by ‘ike, science, and community knowledge, these practices contribute to ecosystem health, food security, and cultural continuity.

Growth and development must work within the limits of the island, not against them. Planning for the future requires balancing use with protection, access with responsibility, and short-term needs with long-term care of ‘āina. This includes honoring cultural practices, protecting public trust resources, and reducing avoidable risks to people and infrastructure.

Hawai‘i Island is also particularly vulnerable to biosecurity threats. Invasive plants, animals, insects, and pathogens pose serious risks to native ecosystems, agriculture, water systems, cultural practices, and public health. Preventing new introductions and managing existing invasive species are essential to the long-term care of ‘āina and require coordinated action across agencies, landowners, and communities.

Accordingly, the purpose of this Element is to guide County policies and actions toward the responsible stewardship of Hawai‘i Island’s natural and cultural resources. This Element provides direction to protect and restore the systems that sustain life, support appropriate access, reduce exposure to known hazards, and ensure that County decisions reflect a lasting commitment to mālama ‘āina for present and future generations.

Section 3-1-2. Goal.

Steward Hawai‘i Island’s land and waters through protection, responsible use, active management, and partnership, ensuring that natural systems, cultural places, public trust resources, and access for subsistence and cultural practice are sustained in ways that support community well-being, resilience, and a strong sense of place for generations to come.

Article 2. Scenic and Environmental Resources.

Section 3-2-1. Policies.

- (1) **Hawai‘i Island’s defining landscapes require intentional protection.** The County should safeguard significant natural landscapes, open spaces, scenic vistas, and shorelines that shape Hawai‘i Island’s character, identity, and sense of place.
- (2) **Plan development with humility toward sensitive places.** Development should be planned and sited to avoid sensitive environmental areas where possible and to minimize impacts to forests, wetlands, beaches, streams, riparian corridors, and watersheds when avoidance is not feasible.
- (3) **Native ecosystems are the foundation of environmental health.** Conservation, preservation, and restoration efforts should prioritize native ecosystems and habitats, recognizing their ecological importance and cultural significance.
- (4) **Invasive species threaten ‘āina and require active response.** The County should actively support the prevention, control, and management of invasive species that threaten native ecosystems, agriculture, water resources, and cultural landscapes, recognizing invasive species as a primary driver of ecological degradation on Hawai‘i Island.
- (5) **Scenic resources depend on scale and setting.** Scenic viewplanes and prominent natural features, including mountains, coastlines, valleys, and other defining landscapes, should be

protected from obstruction or development that is out of scale or incompatible with their surroundings.

- (6) **Landscaping should strengthen ecosystems.** Landscaping for public and private development should incorporate native and drought-tolerant vegetation appropriate to local conditions and contribute to ecological function, resilience, and visual quality.
- (7) **Connected landscapes should support both ecology and livelihoods.** The County should encourage the preservation of large, connected open spaces and green infrastructure, including agricultural, ranching, and forest lands that function as working landscapes and contribute to environmental health, recreation, and scenic continuity.
- (8) **Working landscapes require active stewardship.** Forests, agricultural lands, ranchlands, and open spaces should be managed as living systems, including through practices such as vegetation management, controlled access, game management, and restoration, to maintain ecological function and reduce long-term risk.
- (9) **Access must be balanced with long-term stewardship.** Scenic and environmental resource protection should be carried out in ways that maintain appropriate public access, consistent with safety, cultural practices, and long-term care of the land.
- (10) **County actions should model responsible stewardship.** Through its own projects, facilities, and public investments, the County should demonstrate responsible design, long-term care of the land, and sound stewardship practices.

Section 3-2-2. Actions.

- (a) **Effective protection begins with understanding what exists.** The planning department shall identify and map significant scenic resources, view corridors, working landscapes, and environmentally sensitive areas, and ensure that this information informs zoning, subdivision, and permitting decisions.
- (b) **Design standards should reflect the surrounding landscape.** The planning department shall develop and maintain clear standards or guidelines for site design, building placement, and landscaping that reduce visual impacts, respect surrounding context, and protect sensitive environmental features.
- (c) **County lands should demonstrate best practices in stewardship.** The department of public works and the department of parks and recreation shall prioritize the care, restoration, and long-term maintenance of County-owned open spaces, parks, and shoreline areas, using appropriate native vegetation where practicable.
- (d) **Land use regulations should encourage thoughtful development patterns.** The planning department shall review existing regulations and recommend amendments that support clustered development, protect scenic and natural features, and preserve open space and working landscapes.
- (e) **The County should restore lands under its care where damage has occurred.** The office of sustainability, climate, equity, and resilience shall coordinate efforts to restore

degraded natural areas on County lands where feasible, working collaboratively with other County departments and community partners.

- (f) **Coordinate invasive species control on County lands.** The office of sustainability, climate, equity, and resilience, in coordination with relevant departments and partners, shall support invasive species prevention and control efforts on County-managed lands, including early detection, rapid response, and long-term management strategies.
- (g) **Public projects should embed stewardship from the outset.** All County departments shall incorporate native landscaping, water-efficient irrigation, and low-impact development practices into the planning and design of County facilities and capital projects, to the extent practicable.
- (h) **Resource protection extends beyond County boundaries.** The office of sustainability, climate, equity, and resilience shall work with State and federal agencies to support the protection, management, and appropriate public use of coastal and shoreline resources.
- (i) **Support community-led stewardship and management.** Where appropriate, the County shall work with lineal descendants, community organizations, cultural practitioners, hunters, fishers, and land stewards to support stewardship activities – such as hunting, invasive species removal, restoration work, and mālama ‘āina programs– that strengthen ecosystem health, food security, living cultural practices.

Article 3. Public Access.

Section 3-3-1. Policies.

- (1) **Access to land and water is a public responsibility.** The County should ensure that residents and visitors have safe and reasonable access to beaches, shorelines, trails, open spaces, and other public natural areas that support recreation, cultural practice, and daily life.
- (2) **Protect and expand access where it has been lost or constrained.** Public access to shorelines and natural areas should be preserved and, where feasible, restored or expanded, particularly in places where access has been limited development, infrastructure, or physical barriers.
- (3) **Design access with care for place.** Access improvements should be planned and maintained in ways that protect environmental resources, respect surrounding neighborhoods, and honor nearby cultural sites and practices.
- (4) **Stewardship and safety must guide access management.** The County should manage public access in a manner that protects sensitive habitats, respects private property rights, and prioritizes public safety without necessarily restricting appropriate use.
- (5) **Access is essential to cultural practice and continuity.** Traditional and customary Native Hawaiian gathering, access routes, and cultural practices should be recognized, respected, and accommodated in the planning and management of public access.

- (6) **Development should maintain long-standing public connections.** New development should provide, protect, or enhance public access connections where appropriate, particularly where historic routes or shoreline access have existed.
- (7) **Subsistence access supports food gathering and land stewardship.** Public access policies should recognize the role of hunting, fishing, and gathering in local food security, cultural practice, and active land stewardship, and support safe and appropriate access to designated areas in coordination with responsible agencies.
- (8) **Access must remain usable across generations.** Public access infrastructure should be clearly marked, safely designed, and regularly maintained to ensure long-term usability and public benefit.

Section 3-3-2. Actions.

- (a) **Effective access planning begins with knowing what exists.** The planning department shall identify, map, and maintain an inventory of existing and potential public access points, including beaches, shorelines, trails, open spaces, and commonly used access routes.
- (b) **The development process should help secure public access.** The planning department shall require the dedication or preservation of public access easements where allowed by law as part of subdivision, zoning, or development approvals as appropriate.
- (c) **Access improvements should be functional, safe, and context-sensitive.** The department of public works, in coordination with other County departments, shall improve and maintain County-owned access points, including signage, pathways, parking, and basic safety features appropriate to the setting.
- (d) **Coordinate access routes that cross jurisdictional boundaries.** The County shall work with State and federal agencies to secure, enhance, and manage public access across lands with shared or adjacent jurisdiction, including shoreline areas and designated management lands.
- (e) **Subsistence access for hunting and gathering requires coordination.** Where appropriate, the County shall coordinate with State agencies and local community partners to support safe, managed public access to designated hunting, fishing, and gathering areas, consistent with resource protection, public safety, and applicable law.

Article 4. Historic and Cultural Sites.

Section 3-4-1. Policies.

- (1) **Historic and cultural resources anchor Hawai'i Island's identity.** The County should protect, preserve, and honor historic, archaeological, and cultural resources that give Hawai'i Island its identity, history, and sense of place.

- (2) **Cultural review should be early in the process.** Significant historic sites, cultural landscapes, traditional gathering areas, and places of cultural importance should be identified early and thoughtfully considered in land use and development decisions, rather than addressed only as mitigation.
- (3) **Cultural resources are irreplaceable and warrant the highest level of care.** Significant adverse impacts to historic and cultural resources should be avoided wherever possible.
- (4) **Distinguish cultural access from general access.** Where appropriate, access to historic and cultural places should prioritize cultural practitioners and lineal descendants, with broader public access provided only when it can occur without harm to the place or its meaning.
- (5) **Keeping historic places in use supports long-term preservation.** The preservation and adaptive reuse of historic structures and districts should be encouraged to maintain community character, extend the life of existing buildings, and reduce unnecessary demolition.
- (6) **Stewardship depends on partnership and is a shared responsibility.** Planning for and long-term care of historic and cultural places should be grounded in collaboration with cultural practitioners, lineal descendants, community organizations, and relevant State and federal agencies.
- (7) **Cultural landscapes include living practices.** Cultural resources should be understood to include not only sites and structures, but also ongoing practices such as cultivation, gathering, fishing, ceremony, and land-based knowledge that sustain relationships between people and place.
- (8) **Knowledge and mo‘olelo can build care when applied appropriately.** Education, interpretation, and storytelling connected to historic and cultural resources should be supported in ways that strengthen understanding and stewardship across generations, while recognizing that some places require protection through discretion rather than promotion.

Section 3-4-2. Actions.

- (a) **Effective protection begins with accurate and current information.** The planning department shall maintain and periodically update an inventory of known historic, archaeological, and culturally significant sites in coordination with the State Historic Preservation Division and other appropriate agencies.
- (b) **Potential impacts should be understood before decisions are made.** Prior to discretionary approvals that may affect known or potential historic or cultural resources, the planning department shall require appropriate surveys or assessments, consistent with applicable law.
- (c) **Protection must be carried through all stages of review.** The planning department shall ensure that the protection of significant historic and cultural resources is integrated into zoning, subdivision, and permitting decisions.

- (d) **County-owned cultural resources require consistent care.** The department of parks and recreation and the department of public works, in partnership with the planning department, shall prioritize the protection, restoration, and routine maintenance of historic and cultural sites located on County-owned lands.
- (e) **Reuse should be guided, not discouraged by default.** The planning department, in coordination with the department of public works, shall develop guidelines that encourage the preservation and rehabilitation of historic structures and districts, including the consideration of adaptive design and reuse integrates uses, sites, resources, and design elements in an appropriate historically- and culturally-sensitive manner.
- (f) **Engagement should be meaningful and appropriate to place.** The planning department shall consult, as appropriate, with cultural practitioners, lineal descendants, and community organizations when planning projects that may affect culturally significant sites or practices.
- (g) **Interpretation should be applied thoughtfully and selectively.** The department of parks and recreation and the department of research and development shall support interpretive materials and programs where appropriate to increase awareness of historic and cultural resources, recognizing that some places require protection through discretion rather than promotion.

ELEMENT 4. PUBLIC SERVICES & FACILITIES.

Article 1. General.

Section 4-1-1. Findings and purpose.

Public services and facilities are fundamental to the health, safety, and daily functioning of Hawai‘i Island communities. County-provided services such as public safety, solid waste management, parks, and civic facilities support quality of life, enable economic activity, and play a critical role during emergencies and disasters. The availability, condition, and location of these services and facilities directly affect response times, access, operating costs, and public confidence in government.

As Hawai‘i Island continues to change, the demand for public services and facilities will also evolve. Population growth patterns, geographic constraints, aging infrastructure, fiscal realities, and exposure to natural hazards all influence how services are delivered and how facilities perform over time. Deferred maintenance or poorly coordinated investment can increase long-term costs, reduce service reliability, and limit the County’s ability to respond effectively to both everyday needs and emergency conditions.

The County is responsible for managing a wide range of public assets and services in a manner that is practical, efficient, and responsive across urban, town, and rural communities. This responsibility includes maintaining existing facilities, planning for future needs, coordinating with land use and infrastructure decisions, and ensuring that services are accessible to residents throughout the island. While some related systems are managed by State or federal agencies, County services and facilities must be planned with awareness of how those systems affect local operations, access, and public safety outcomes.

This element establishes policies and actions to guide the planning, operation, maintenance, and improvement of County public services and facilities. It focuses on facility stewardship, public safety and emergency readiness, solid waste management, and parks and recreation, with an emphasis on reliability, access, coordination, and long-term public value. Together, these policies are intended to support everyday community needs while strengthening the County’s capacity to serve residents during periods of growth, disruption, and recovery.

Section 4-1-2. Goal.

Provide safe, reliable, and accessible public services and facilities that equitably serve all communities and support the well-being of Hawai‘i Island residents.

Article 2. County Facilities and Asset Management.

Section 4-2-1. Policies.

- (1) **County facilities should serve the public safety and effectively every day.** County facilities should be designed, operated, and maintained to meet safety standards and support the day-to-day needs of the communities they serve.
- (2) **Facility decisions should align with how and where communities grow.** Planning, siting, and expansion of County facilities should be coordinated with land use designations, infrastructure capacity, transportation access, and anticipated population growth.
- (3) **Taking care of what the County already owns should come first.** The County should prioritize the maintenance, rehabilitation, and replacement of existing facilities and assets before constructing new facilities, as a fiscally responsible approach to asset management and managing public resources.
- (4) **Facilities must continue to function during emergencies and disruptions.** County buildings and critical facilities should incorporate durable, hazard-aware design features that support continued operation during disasters and emergency conditions.
- (5) **Facilities should be flexible and serve more than one purpose when possible.** Where feasible, County facilities should be designed or adapted for shared or multi-purpose use to support multiple programs, departments, or community functions and maximize public benefit.
- (6) **Public buildings should be accessible and responsive to diverse users.** County facilities should be planned and operated to accommodate persons with disabilities, youth, seniors, and others with specialized needs through inclusive design and thoughtful programming.

Section 4-2-2. Actions.

- (a) **Maintain a complete and up-to-date inventory of County facilities and major assets.** The department of public works, in coordination with other County agencies as appropriate, shall maintain a complete and current inventory of County-owned buildings, facilities, and major assets to support planning and informed decision-making.
- (b) **Regularly assess facility conditions and maintenance needs.** The department of public works, in coordination with other County agencies as appropriate, shall regularly evaluate the condition of County facilities and identify priorities for maintenance, repair, rehabilitation, and replacement.
- (c) **Capital planning should be coordinated and transparent.** The department of public works shall prepare and update capital improvement plans for County facilities based on condition assessments, service needs, and available funding.
- (d) **Facility planning should reflect land use and population trends.** The planning department shall coordinate with other departments to ensure that facility planning aligns with land use designations and projected population changes.

- (e) **Apply durable and energy-efficient design standards to public facilities.** The department of public works shall incorporate durable, hazard-aware, and energy-efficient design standards into new construction and major facility renovations where feasible.
- (f) **Identify opportunities for shared or joint use of County facilities.** The department of public works shall evaluate opportunities for shared or multi-purpose use of County facilities that could improve access, reduce costs, or better serve community needs.

Article 3. Protective Services and Public Safety.

Section 4-3-1. Policies.

- (1) **Protecting life and property is the core responsibility of public safety services.** Police, fire, and emergency services should be staffed, equipped, and organized to provide timely and reliable response to everyday incidents, emergencies, and islandwide events.
- (2) **Public safety resources should be distributed to serve all communities across the island.** Staffing levels, facilities, and equipment should be allocated based on geography, population, hazard exposure, and service demand to ensure fair and consistent coverage.
- (3) **Public safety facilities and equipment must remain functional over time.** Public safety stations, apparatus, and critical infrastructure should be maintained, repaired, and modernized as needed to support effective operations.
- (4) **Public safety services should maintain a visible and accessible presence in communities.** Public safety facilities and service delivery should be located and operated in ways that promote accessibility, approachability, trust, and responsiveness.
- (5) **Emergency services should remain operational during disasters and major disruptions.** Public safety facilities, systems, and staffing models should be planned and managed to remain operational during natural hazards, power outages, and other emergency conditions.
- (6) **Public facilities should support multiple roles during emergencies.** Where feasible, County facilities should be designed or adapted to serve multiple roles during disasters, including emergency sheltering, coordination, or resource distribution.
- (7) **Public safety planning must align with land use and infrastructure decisions.** The siting, capacity, and access to public safety facilities should be coordinated with land use patterns, transportation networks, and utility systems to ensure response and coverage.
- (8) **Emergency warning systems must function islandwide.** Warning sirens and public alert systems should provide clear, timely, and consistent notifications to residents and visitors in all communities to support life safety during emergencies.
- (9) **Community readiness and prevention should be part of the public safety framework.** The County should support coordination among agencies, communities, and community organizations to strengthen preparedness, education, and risk-reduction efforts.

- (10) **Large-scale emergencies require coordinated response.** The County should coordinate with State, federal, and inter-island partners to strengthen mutual aid, resource sharing, and unified response during major disasters and islandwide or statewide emergencies.

Section 4-3-2. Actions.

- (a) **Maintain staffing, facilities, and equipment for islandwide law enforcement services.** The police department shall maintain the personnel, facilities, and equipment necessary to provide law enforcement services throughout Hawai‘i Island.
- (b) **Maintain staffing, stations, and apparatus for fire and emergency response.** The fire department shall maintain the staffing, stations, and equipment needed to provide fire suppression, rescue, and emergency medical services throughout Hawai‘i Island.
- (c) **Regularly evaluate service coverage and future needs.** The police department and fire department shall regularly assess service areas and identify facility, staffing, and equipment needs based on population changes, development patterns, and risk factors.
- (d) **Strengthen partnerships between public safety agencies and communities.** The police department, fire department, and civil defense agency shall implement community-based programs that support safety education, prevention, and coordination with residents and organizations.
- (e) **Plan and prioritize capital improvements for public safety facilities.** The department of public works shall coordinate with public safety departments to plan and prioritize capital improvements for stations and related facilities to support effective operations.
- (f) **Maintain prevention programs to reduce safety risks.** The fire department shall operate inspection and prevention programs that address fire and life-safety hazards.
- (g) **Maintain clear planning and coordination for emergency operations.** The civil defense agency shall maintain emergency operations plans and coordinate County emergency management activities.
- (h) **Maintain reliable communications systems for emergency operations.** The police department, fire department, and civil defense agency shall maintain communication systems needed to support coordinated emergency response.

Article 4. Natural Hazards.

Section 4-4-1. Policies.

- (1) **Protecting life and critical infrastructure is a core public responsibility.** The County should protect life, property, and critical infrastructure from avoidable exposure to natural hazards through coordinated planning, investment, and mitigation.
- (2) **Growth should avoid areas of highest hazard risk where feasible.** Land use decisions should direct growth away from areas subject to significant risk from flooding, coastal

inundation, erosion, wildfire, lava flow, seismic activity, or other natural hazards where feasible, consistent with adopted land use policies.

- (3) **Development in hazard areas must reduce risk, not compound it.** Development in hazard-prone areas should incorporate appropriate siting, design, and mitigation measures to reduce risk to people, structures, and public infrastructure.
- (4) **Natural systems are critical hazard mitigation infrastructure.** Natural systems, including wetlands, floodplains, dunes, reefs, forests, and other landscape features that provide protective functions, should be preserved and restored as cost-effective hazard mitigation measures.
- (5) **Nature-based solutions should be prioritized whenever practicable.** Hazard mitigation strategies should prioritize nature-based and non-structural solutions before structural or engineered interventions where practicable.
- (6) **Hazard planning must be coordinated across County services.** The County should coordinate hazard planning with infrastructure investment, emergency management, and capital improvement programs to reduce risk and improve long-term resilience.

Section 4-4-2. Actions.

- (a) **Use development standards to limit exposure in high-risk areas.** The planning department and the department of public works shall evaluate and recommend land use regulations or development standards that limit or discourage intensive development in high-risk hazard areas and mitigate potential impacts of developments within these areas.
- (b) **Design and maintain infrastructure to reduce flood and erosion risk.** The department of public works shall design, construct, and maintain drainage and stormwater infrastructure that reduces flooding, erosion, and runoff impacts consistent with adopted master plans.
- (c) **Protect and restore natural drainage and floodplain systems.** The department of public works and the planning department shall prioritize the protection and restoration of natural drainageways, wetlands, and floodplains that provide stormwater storage and flood mitigation benefits.
- (d) **Public education is essential to community preparedness.** The civil defense agency, in coordination with other County departments, shall continue public education and outreach programs regarding tsunami, hurricane, flood, wildfire, volcanic, and seismic hazards.
- (e) **Hazard data must be kept current and accessible.** The planning department shall coordinate with State and federal agencies to update hazard maps and incorporate new data into County planning processes as it becomes available.
- (f) **External funding should support hazard mitigation and resilience.** The department of research and development shall pursue grants and partnerships that support hazard mitigation, resilience planning, and infrastructure improvements.

Article 5. Solid Waste Management.

Section 4-5-1. Policies.

- (1) **Solid waste services should be reliable and available to all communities.** The County should provide consistent and dependable solid waste services for residents and businesses across Hawai'i Island, regardless of location or community size.
- (2) **Waste reduction at the source should be a long-term priority for the island.** The County should steadily move toward a zero-waste future by prioritizing reduction, reuse, recycling, composting, and other diversion strategies to reduce reliance on disposal and extend the life of existing facilities.
- (3) **Waste diversion options should be accessible islandwide.** Reuse, recycling, composting, and other diversion practices should be reasonably available to residents and businesses in all regions of Hawai'i Island.
- (4) **County operations should model responsible waste practices.** County facilities and programs should minimize waste generation and demonstrate practical approaches to waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and diversion.
- (5) **Solid waste facilities should be planned for long-term service and compatibility.** Solid waste facilities should be designed, sited, and operated to provide adequate capacity, protect environmental resources, and remain compatible with surrounding communities and land uses.
- (6) **Public education should support responsible waste management.** The County should promote awareness and understanding of waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and proper disposal practices through ongoing education and outreach.
- (7) **The County should evaluate innovation carefully and transparently.** Emerging waste management technologies and strategies, including material recovery, reuse, and energy-related systems, should be evaluated where they align with environmental protection, operational reliability, and community needs.
- (8) **Solid waste systems should be prepared to manage debris generated by disasters and major emergencies.** The County should plan for the collection, temporary staging, processing, and disposal of disaster-related debris in a way that protects public safety, environmental resources, and timely community recovery.

Section 4-5-2. Actions.

- (a) **Operate and maintain core solid waste facilities and services.** The department of environmental management shall operate and maintain landfills, transfer stations, and related solid waste facilities to meet islandwide service needs.
- (b) **Expand composting and green waste diversion where feasible.** The department of environmental management shall identify opportunities to add or expand composting and green waste diversion facilities at transfer stations and other appropriate locations.

- (c) **County facilities should participate fully in diversion programs.** The department of environmental management shall coordinate recycling, reuse, composting, and diversion programs at County-owned facilities to reduce disposal volumes.
- (d) **Improve access to collection and diversion services over time.** The department of environmental management shall evaluate and expand collection and diversion services where feasible to improve access for underserved areas.
- (e) **Monitor landfill capacity and plan for future disposal needs.** The department of environmental management shall monitor landfill capacity, diversion rates, and projected disposal needs.
- (f) **Solid waste operations should minimize impacts on surrounding communities.** The department of environmental management shall develop and apply operational standards for solid waste facilities that reduce environmental, traffic, noise, and odor impacts on surrounding communities and natural resources.
- (g) **Provide ongoing public education on waste reduction practices.** The department of environmental management shall maintain outreach and education programs to help residents and businesses understand available waste services and best practices.
- (h) **Facility siting should align with land use and infrastructure planning.** The planning department shall work with the department of environmental management and department of public works to ensure land use decisions support the appropriate siting and expansion of solid waste facilities.
- (i) **Evaluate opportunities to reduce waste streams to landfills.** The department of environmental management shall explore emerging waste management technologies and strategies, including energy-related systems where they align with environmental protection, operational reliability, and community needs.

Article 6. Recreation and Community Well-Being.

Section 4-6-1. Policies.

- (1) **Parks and recreational spaces are essential to community well-being.** County parks, recreational facilities, programs, trails, and open spaces should provide safe, welcoming places that support physical activity, social connection, and quality of life for people of all ages and abilities.
- (2) **Health is shaped by place and daily experience.** Recreation and community spaces should support everyday movement, access to nature, cultural practices, and opportunities for rest and connection, recognizing that well-being extends beyond formal recreation.
- (3) **Recreational opportunities should reflect diverse community needs.** The County should offer a range of recreational facilities and experiences, including active, passive, cultural, educational, and arts-related uses, distributed across communities.

- (4) **Access to recreational and wellness-supporting spaces should be equitable.** Parks, recreational facilities, and programs should be planned and improved to serve youth, seniors, persons with disabilities, and residents in rural or underserved areas.
- (5) **Community gathering strengthens resilience and social connection.** Recreational facilities and open spaces should support everyday use as well as community events, cultural activities, civic participation, and informal gathering that strengthens neighborhood life.
- (6) **Natural and cultural resources must be respected in recreational planning.** Parks and open spaces should provide public access while respecting environmental conditions, cultural sites, and surrounding landscapes.
- (7) **Recreational facilities should be durable, accessible, and easy to maintain.** Design and construction of recreational facilities should emphasize long-term usability, accessibility, and lifecycle maintenance, rather than short-term features that are costly to sustain.
- (8) **Shared use and partnerships can expand access and programming.** The County should pursue partnerships and shared-use arrangements to expand recreational, cultural, educational, and wellness opportunities where appropriate.
- (9) **Parks and recreational facilities should be maintained to remain safe, usable, and welcoming over time.** Ongoing maintenance, repair, and reinvestment should be treated as essential to preserving public access, safety, and the long-term value of parks and recreational facilities, not as secondary to new construction.

Section 4-6-2. Actions.

- (a) **Identify gaps in recreational access and target investment.** The department of parks and recreation shall evaluate islandwide access to parks, aquatic facilities, trails, and other recreational facilities and prioritize improvements in communities with limited options.
- (b) **Maintain an inventory of parks and recreational facilities and their conditions.** The department of parks and recreation shall maintain an inventory of parks and recreational facilities and regularly assess maintenance, repair, and improvement needs.
- (c) **Capital planning should balance growth and upkeep.** The department of parks and recreation shall plan and prioritize capital improvements to address safety, accessibility, and long-term facility needs alongside routine maintenance.
- (d) **Facilities and programs should serve a wide range of users.** The department of parks and recreation shall develop facilities and year-round programming that serves youth, seniors, and other populations with specialized needs, including culturally grounded and intergenerational activities.
- (e) **Accessibility must be built into design and operations.** The department of parks and recreation shall design, upgrade, and manage parks and facilities to meet applicable accessibility standards and reduce barriers to participation.
- (f) **Maintain consistent standards for safety, cleanliness, and strengthened community health outcomes.** The department of parks and recreation shall establish and apply

operational standards to ensure parks remain safe, clean, and functional so that users can perform physical activities and experience social connection.

- (g) **Recreation planning should align with land use and growth.** The planning department shall coordinate with the department of parks and recreation to align park and facility planning with residential growth patterns and land use designations.
- (h) **Coordinate with other jurisdictions where recreational lands overlap.** The department of parks and recreation shall work with State and federal agencies when recreational facilities or lands involve shared or overlapping responsibilities.
- (i) **Balance routine maintenance needs with capital improvements.** The department of parks and recreation shall plan and budget for routine maintenance, repairs, and lifecycle needs to ensure parks and facilities remain safe and accessible over time.

ELEMENT 5. PUBLIC UTILITIES.

Article 1. General.

Section 5-1-1. Findings and purpose.

Reliable public utilities are essential to the health, safety, economic well-being, and daily functioning of Hawai‘i Island’s communities. Water supply, wastewater treatment, stormwater management, energy, and telecommunications systems support homes, businesses, agriculture, public services, and emergency response across the island.

Land use patterns and development decisions directly influence the demand, cost, and performance of utility infrastructure. The location, scale, intensity, and timing of growth affect system capacity, long-term maintenance obligations, and the County’s ability to provide reliable service in a fiscally responsible manner. Coordinating land use planning with infrastructure investment is critical to protecting quality of life and public resources.

Hawai‘i Island’s size, geography, and settlement patterns require flexible, context-sensitive infrastructure solutions. In some areas, centralized systems are appropriate and cost-effective. In others, decentralized or on-site systems may provide a better fit. Uniform, islandwide approaches are not always practical or efficient, and infrastructure solutions should be evaluated and right-sized based on local conditions, risks, and long-term service needs.

Public utility systems are interdependent. Reliable water service depends on electricity. Emergency response relies on telecommunications. Failures in one system can disrupt others. Planning, investment, and operations must account for these interconnections, particularly during emergencies, natural hazards, and service disruptions.

Utility infrastructure requires substantial long-term investment. Decisions about expansion, upgrades, and service levels directly affect affordability for residents, businesses, and ratepayers. Balancing system reliability, environmental protection, and long-term cost impacts is essential to sustaining public trust and ensuring that basic services remain accessible over time.

This element establishes policies and actions to guide the planning, operation, and investment of public utilities in a manner that supports existing communities, aligns with planned growth, protects environmental resources, and ensures responsible stewardship of public infrastructure.

Section 5-1-2. Goal.

Provide safe, reliable, and efficient public utility systems that serve existing communities, support planned growth, protect environmental resources, and remain affordable over the long term.

Article 2. Water Supply.

Section 5-2-1. Policies.

- (1) **Safe and dependable drinking water is a basic public service and public trust.** The County should ensure reliable and adequate potable water service for homes, businesses, agriculture, and public facilities in existing and planned development areas.
- (2) **Meeting future water needs requires shared responsibility.** The County should work proactively with private landowners, developers, and other partners to identify opportunities for shared investment in new water sources and infrastructure that meet County standards.
- (3) **Water system planning should reinforce the County's land use vision.** Water system improvements should be planned and prioritized in alignment with the County's land use policies and designated growth areas.
- (4) **Growth should occur where water service can be provided responsibly and efficiently.** Land use and development decisions should be coordinated with planned or available water system capacity to avoid overextension, service gaps, or unnecessary public costs.
- (5) **Protecting water sources is essential to long-term water security.** Watersheds, recharge areas, and drinking water sources should be protected from contamination, overuse, degradation, and depletion.
- (6) **Maintaining existing infrastructure is as important as building new systems.** The County should prioritize maintenance, repair, rehabilitation, and replacement of aging or inadequate water infrastructure to ensure continued reliability.
- (7) **Efficient water use helps stretch limited resources and control costs.** The County should encourage water conservation and efficiency across residential, commercial, agricultural, and public sectors to reduce demand on limited supplies.
- (8) **Decentralized systems can be appropriate in certain contexts.** Well-designed private catchment and other decentralized approaches should be recognized as viable alternatives where appropriate, reducing unnecessary demand on public infrastructure while supporting household and community needs.
- (9) **New development should minimize its impact on limited water supplies.** In areas with constrained or vulnerable water resources, new development should incorporate design measures that reduce net water demand and move toward water-neutral or low-impact use.
- (10) **Agriculture must be considered alongside other water needs.** Water planning decisions should account for agricultural water demands in coordination with residential, commercial, and public uses.

Section 5-2-2. Actions.

- (a) **Sound planning depends on understanding existing system capacity.** The department of water supply shall maintain a current inventory of water sources, storage facilities, and distribution infrastructure and regularly assess system capacity and deficiencies.
- (b) **Capital investments should be guided by system priorities and long-term needs.** The department of water supply shall plan and prioritize capital improvements to maintain system reliability, address deficiencies, and support planned growth.
- (c) **Rate structures should encourage conservation while supporting system health.** The department of water supply shall evaluate water rate structures and pricing strategies, including progressive rate schedules, to encourage efficient use while supporting financial sustainability.
- (d) **Development standards should reflect limited water resources.** The department of water supply shall develop and apply standards for water-efficient and, where appropriate, water-neutral development.
- (e) **County water assets require active protection and stewardship.** The department of water supply shall protect County water sources and facilities through operational practices, land use coordination, and collaboration with other agencies.
- (f) **Long-range planning supports reliable service over time.** The department of water supply shall maintain and regularly update water master plans to guide phased system improvements and long-term investment.
- (g) **Infrastructure readiness should guide development timing.** The planning department and the department of water supply shall coordinate development approvals with the availability and timing of water infrastructure.

Article 3. Wastewater and Sewer.

Section 5-3-1. Policies.

- (1) **Protecting public health and water quality is the core purpose of wastewater systems.** The County should provide wastewater systems that operate safely, function reliably, and prevent harm to people and the environment.
- (2) **Wastewater infrastructure should reinforce the County's planned growth pattern.** Wastewater system planning and expansion should align with the County's land use policies and designated growth areas to ensure efficient use of public resources.
- (3) **Centralized sewer systems are most appropriate where density supports them.** Public sewer service should be focused in areas with sufficient density and demand to support the cost, complexity, and long-term operation of centralized collection and treatment systems.
- (4) **Existing systems must be kept functional before expanding service elsewhere.** The County should prioritize the maintenance, repair, and replacement of aging or failing wastewater infrastructure to avoid service disruptions and environmental harm.

- (5) **Wastewater solutions should be based on actual risk, not uniform mandates.** Wastewater planning and investment decisions should apply proportionate, risk-based approaches that site-specific conditions such as soil characteristics, proximity to waterways, elevation, density, and system performance.
- (6) **Preventing contamination of water resources is non-negotiable.** Wastewater systems should be designed, operated, and maintained to prevent contamination of groundwater, streams, and coastal waters.
- (7) **State and County coordination is essential for workable wastewater policy.** The County should coordinate with State agencies to pursue context-sensitive wastewater solutions that prioritize areas with the greatest public health and environmental risk while minimizing unnecessary financial and logistical on residents.
- (8) **Reclaimed water can reduce pressure on limited potable supplies.** Treated wastewater and reclaimed water should be reused where to conserve potable supplies and support irrigation, landscaping, agriculture, fire protection, and other suitable non-potable uses.
- (9) **On-site system improvements should be targeted where problems are documented.** Upgrades to on-site, decentralized, or individual wastewater systems should be prioritized in areas with demonstrated environmental or public health risks.

Section 5-3-2. Actions.

- (a) **Effective planning begins with understanding existing systems.** The department of environmental management shall maintain an inventory of both public and private wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal infrastructure and regularly assess system capacity and deficiencies.
- (b) **Capital investments should focus on reliability and risk reduction.** The department of environmental management shall plan and prioritize capital improvements to address system failures, capacity constraints, and documented environmental or public health concerns.
- (c) **Land use decisions must reflect wastewater service realities.** The planning department shall align land use designations and development approvals with available or planned wastewater capacity.
- (d) **Different conditions require different wastewater solutions.** The department of environmental management and the planning department shall coordinate with the State to develop and apply standards for centralized, decentralized, and on-site wastewater systems consistent with site conditions and public health requirements.
- (e) **Areas with the highest risk should receive attention first.** The department of environmental management shall prioritize wastewater improvements in locations where system conditions pose risks to groundwater or surface water quality.
- (f) **Water reuse should be planned as part of the overall wastewater system.** The department of environmental management shall incorporate reclaimed water reclamation opportunities into wastewater system planning and operations where feasible.

- (g) **Infrastructure readiness should guide the pace of development.** The planning department and the department of environmental management shall coordinate development approvals with the availability and timing of wastewater infrastructure.

Article 4. Stormwater and Green Infrastructure.

Section 5-4-1. Policies.

- (1) **Stormwater systems must protect people and property from flooding.** Stormwater infrastructure should be designed and managed to reduce flood risk, prevent damage to homes, properties, roadways, public facilities, and other critical infrastructure.
- (2) **Managing runoff upstream helps prevent harm downstream.** Stormwater planning and design should minimize erosion and reduce downstream impacts to streams, coastal waters, and sensitive natural resources.
- (3) **New development should manage stormwater close to where it falls.** New development and redevelopment should incorporate on-site stormwater management measures that slow runoff, promote infiltration, and reduce the burden on downstream systems where site conditions allow.
- (4) **Natural drainage features are assets, not obstacles.** Streams, wetlands, floodplains, and other natural drainage features should be preserved and integrated into stormwater management systems where practicable.
- (5) **Stormwater can be managed as a resource, not just a waste product.** Where feasible, stormwater should be captured and reused for appropriate purposes such as irrigation, landscaping, or groundwater recharge.
- (6) **Green infrastructure should be applied where it will perform effectively.** Green infrastructure practices and low-impact development practices, such as vegetated swales, permeable surfaces, infiltration basins, and similar techniques, should be used where site conditions support their effectiveness in reducing runoff and improving water quality.

Section 5-4-2. Actions.

- (a) **Effective stormwater management depends on knowing what infrastructure exists.** The department of public works shall maintain an inventory of drainage infrastructure, including culverts, channels, basins, and related facilities.
- (b) **Flood risks and system failures should guide capital priorities.** The department of public works shall plan, prioritize, and implement capital improvements to address drainage deficiencies and areas prone to flooding.
- (c) **Clear standards help ensure consistent and effective stormwater design.** The department of public works shall develop and apply stormwater design standards for public and private development.

- (d) **On-site stormwater management should be a routine part of development review.** The planning department shall require new development to incorporate on-site stormwater management measures that are consistent with County standards and site conditions.
- (e) **County projects should demonstrate effective stormwater practices.** The department of public works shall incorporate green infrastructure practices into the design and improvement of County roads, parks, and public facilities where feasible.
- (f) **Existing drainage systems require ongoing attention to function properly.** The department of public works shall maintain, rehabilitate, and upgrade existing drainage facilities to improve long-term performance and reduce failures.
- (g) **Tracking system performance helps guide future investment.** The department of public works shall monitor drainage conditions, impervious surface trends, and system performance to inform stormwater planning and capital improvement priorities.
- (h) **Long-term system reliability may require dedicated funding.** The department of public works shall evaluate the feasibility of establishing a stormwater utility or other dedicated funding mechanism to support long-term system maintenance and capital improvements.

Article 5. Energy and Electricity.

Section 5-5-1. Policies.

- (1) **Reliable and affordable electricity is essential to daily life and economic activity.** The County should support reliable and affordable electrical service for residents, businesses, agriculture, and public facilities across Hawai'i Island.
- (2) **Energy facilities should fit their surroundings and respect nearby communities.** Energy infrastructure should be planned and located in a manner that is compatible with surrounding land uses and that minimizes environmental, visual, and community impacts.
- (3) **Reducing energy waste helps control long-term costs.** The County should encourage energy efficiency and conservation as practical ways to reduce overall demand and long-term system costs.
- (4) **Locally produced energy can strengthen self-sufficiency when appropriately sited.** Renewable and locally generated energy resources, including solar, wind, geothermal, waste-to-energy conversion and other appropriate technologies, should be supported where they make sense for the island and are compatible with community context.
- (5) **Diversifying energy sources improves system stability.** The County should support a diversified mix of energy sources and increased local generation to reduce reliance on imported fuels and improve long-term energy security.
- (6) **Energy decisions should account for full costs and ratepayer impacts.** Energy policies and investments should consider lifecycle costs, system reliability, and affordability for residents and businesses.

- (7) **Alternative ownership and partnership models may be appropriate in some cases.** The County should evaluate opportunities for public, cooperative, or public-private ownership or partnership models that could improve local control, service quality, or affordability, where feasible and consistent with applicable law.
- (8) **Public facilities should lead by example in energy use.** County buildings and infrastructure should incorporate energy-efficient design and on-site renewable energy systems where feasible and cost-effective.
- (9) **Energy systems must withstand disruptions and hazards.** Electricity infrastructure should be planned and maintained to reduce vulnerability to storms, natural hazards, and service interruptions.
- (10) **Land use planning should anticipate future energy needs.** The County should coordinate land use decisions with the siting and expansion of energy facilities and transmission infrastructure needed to serve planned growth.

Section 5-5-2. Actions.

- (a) **Energy facility needs should be considered early in the planning process.** The planning department shall incorporate energy facility siting considerations into land use planning and development review as appropriate.
- (b) **County renewable systems must be properly maintained to deliver benefits.** County departments shall maintain and operate installed renewable energy systems to ensure they function as intended and provide expected performance benefits.
- (c) **Clear siting standards can reduce conflict and uncertainty.** The planning department shall develop and apply siting and design standards for energy facilities to minimize impacts on adjacent uses and environmental resources.
- (d) **County projects should prioritize efficient energy use.** The department of public works shall incorporate energy-efficient design practices into County facilities and infrastructure projects.
- (e) **The County should remain engaged in State energy decision-making.** The department of research and development shall monitor and participate in the State Public Utilities Commission proceedings, where appropriate, to advocate for Hawai'i Island interests and ratepayers.
- (f) **Improving County energy performance requires understanding current use.** The department of public works shall assess energy use and performance across County facilities and prioritize upgrades based on cost-effectiveness and operational benefit.
- (g) **Major infrastructure decisions should account for energy reliability.** The planning department and the department of public works shall consider energy resilience and reliability when planning capital improvements and large infrastructure projects.

Article 6. Telecommunications and Broadband.

Section 5-6-1. Policies.

- (1) **Reliable communications are essential for modern daily life and public safety.** The County should support dependable, affordable, and high-speed telecommunications services for residents, businesses, schools, and public facilities.
- (2) **Access to broadband should not depend on where someone lives.** Broadband infrastructure should be available in both urban and rural communities to reduce service gaps and support economic, educational, and civic participation.
- (3) **Telecommunications facilities should be thoughtfully integrated into communities.** Telecommunications facilities should be sited and designed to minimize visual, environmental, and neighborhood impacts while meeting service needs.
- (4) **System reliability improves when infrastructure reflects local conditions.** Telecommunications systems should prioritize resilient and durable infrastructure, including underground or hardened installations where feasible, to reduce vulnerability to storms and natural hazards.
- (5) **Public safety and emergency response rely on dependable communications.** Public facilities and critical infrastructure should maintain reliable dependable telecommunications capacity to support emergency coordination, disaster response and public safety operations.
- (6) **Digital tools can improve how residents access County services.** The County should use digital technology to make public services more accessible, efficient, and responsive to community needs.
- (7) **Digital access must be paired with digital skills.** The County should partner with schools, libraries, and community organizations to support digital literacy and technology training, particularly for seniors, students, and underserved populations.

Section 5-6-2. Actions.

- (a) **County facilities should have reliable and modern connectivity.** The department of information technology, or other applicable departments, shall maintain and improve broadband connectivity at County buildings and facilities.
- (b) **Clear siting standards help balance service needs and community character.** The planning department shall develop and update siting and design standards for telecommunications facilities.
- (c) **Infrastructure projects should coordinate utility installation whenever possible.** The department of public works shall coordinate the placement of underground or co-located telecommunications infrastructure in conjunction with roadway and capital improvement projects where feasible.

ELEMENT 6. HOUSING.

Article 1. General.

Section 6-1-1. Findings and purpose.

Access to safe, stable, and affordable housing is essential to the health, economic security, and overall well-being of Hawai‘i Island residents. Housing availability directly affects workforce stability, educational outcomes, public health, and the strength of families and communities. A sufficient supply of housing across a range of types and price points is fundamental to sustaining a high quality of life and a locally rooted economy.

For decades, Hawai‘i has faced a housing crisis that has deepened following the 2009 Great Recession and the 2020 global pandemic. On Hawai‘i Island, housing pressures are intensified by rising construction and land costs, home prices and rents that outpace local incomes, and a high share of properties owned by individuals or entities that do not reside on the island. These conditions contribute to housing cost burdens, overcrowding, displacement, and homelessness, and make it increasingly difficult for local families to rent or own homes in the communities they call home.

Housing challenges on Hawai‘i Island are interconnected and affect residents differently depending on income, life stage, and housing tenure. Renters face escalating costs and limited options; first-time buyers struggle to find attainable starter homes; older housing stock continues to deteriorate; and housing development is constrained by land use policies, development standards, funding gaps, insurance costs, and regulatory complexity. As housing becomes less attainable, some residents are forced to leave the island in search of stability and opportunity, while others remain but face increasing financial and personal strain.

While much of the housing supply is delivered through the private market, the County plays a critical role in shaping housing outcomes through land use decisions, infrastructure investments, permitting processes, partnerships, and public funding programs. The County also has a responsibility to preserve and maintain existing housing, create conditions that support responsible investment and a strong local construction industry, reduce barriers that unnecessarily constrain housing production, and intervene strategically to protect at-risk housing during periods of market instability. Housing stability is also most vulnerable in the aftermath of disasters, underscoring the importance of preserving existing housing and planning for recovery in ways that support residents remaining in their communities.

Housing instability exists along a continuum, from cost-burdened and overcrowded households to housing insecurity and homelessness. Homelessness represents the most acute outcome of a constrained housing system and cannot be addressed through emergency response or enforcement alone. Long-term reductions in homelessness depend on increasing housing

supply, preserving existing units, and ensuring access to appropriate housing options that meet a range of needs.

This work cannot be accomplished by the County alone. Meaningful progress requires coordination among County, State, and federal partners, as well as collaboration with nonprofit organizations, community foundations, financial institutions, landowners, and the private development community. Residents across Hawai‘i Island are calling for housing solutions that are attainable, truly affordable, and grounded with local needs – solutions that move beyond top-down approaches toward more collaborative, community-informed models that prioritize people, place, and long-term stability.

Accordingly, this element establishes policies and actions to preserve and rehabilitate existing housing, increase housing supply, expand affordable and homeownership opportunities, and address homelessness through housing-based solutions. Through a proactive and locally informed approach, Hawai‘i County seeks to strengthen its housing ecosystem and ensure that residents can continue to live, work, and build futures on this moku.

Section 6-1-2. Goal.

Ensure that all Hawai‘i Island residents have access to safe, stable, and affordable housing across a range of types and price points, supporting family stability, community well-being, and long-term economic security.

Article 2. Affordable Housing.

Section 6-2-1. Policies.

- (1) **Affordable housing solutions should reflect local conditions, not one-size-fits-all models.** Affordable housing strategies should be locally driven and reflect Hawai‘i Island’s distinct community priorities, cultural values, environmental conditions, and regional differences.
- (2) **Public resources should be directed to households facing the greatest housing pressure.** The County should prioritize the development and preservation of housing affordable to low- and moderate-income households, including workforce families, seniors, and residents with special needs.
- (3) **Public tools should be used strategically to grow lasting affordability.** Public investments, incentives, and regulatory tools should be used to increase the supply of income-restricted and below-market housing units. When public incentives or resources are involved, affordability requirements should be clearly defined, measurable, and enforceable to ensure long-term community benefit.

- (4) **Affordable housing should be located in proximity to daily life.** Affordable housing should be sited in areas with reasonable access to infrastructure, employment, schools, services, and transportation.
- (5) **Affordable housing should contribute to complete neighborhoods.** Affordable housing developments should support livable communities through appropriate infrastructure, open space, and community-serving amenities, rather than being isolated from surrounding uses.
- (6) **Public land is a long-term community asset.** County- and State-owned lands should be leveraged to support affordable and workforce housing through long-term ground leases, land trusts, and similar mechanisms that preserve long-term affordability.
- (7) **Invest in the infrastructure that makes affordable housing possible.** The County should treat infrastructure as a prerequisite to affordable and workforce housing by investing in or helping to finance infrastructure needed to support housing development, particularly in planned growth areas.
- (8) **Make the path to approval clear and predictable for affordable housing projects.** Development review processes for affordable housing should be coordinated, transparent, and continuously improved to reduce unnecessary delays while maintaining public accountability.
- (9) **Housing forms should balance cost efficiency and community fit.** Affordable housing strategies should support a range of housing types and scales, including multi-family, small-lot, and other cost-effective housing forms, suited to local needs and contexts.
- (10) **The County should act as a connector across sectors.** The County should serve as a strategic funder, facilitator, and convener to align public, private, nonprofit, and philanthropic partners around shared affordable housing goals.

Section 6-2-2. Actions.

- (a) **Dedicated funding tools provide stability for affordable housing efforts.** The office of housing and community development shall administer and maintain funding mechanisms to support the development, acquisition, and preservation of affordable housing.
- (b) **County dollars should be leveraged to their fullest extent.** The office of housing and community development shall leverage financing authorities, including the general excise tax and improvement districts, and pursue State, federal, and private funding sources, such as tax credits, grants, and partnerships.
- (c) **Affordable housing projects should move through review efficiently.** All County departments involved in reviewing affordable housing project permits and plans shall prioritize and expedite permit reviews and approvals for qualifying affordable housing projects, consistent with County law.
- (d) **Regulations should not add cost without clear public benefit.** The planning department shall evaluate zoning, subdivision, and land use regulations and recommend changes that reduce unnecessary barriers to the development of affordable housing.

- (e) **Work directly with partners to turn ideas into completed homes.** The office of housing and community development shall coordinate with nonprofit and private developers to identify suitable sites, assemble financing, and advance affordable housing projects.
- (f) **Public investments should result in lasting affordability.** The office of housing and community development, in partnership with the planning department, shall evaluate and strengthen County laws and policies to ensure housing developed with public assistance, land, or regulatory incentives remains affordable for a defined period through enforceable mechanisms.
- (g) **Clear expectations improve consistency and accountability.** The office of housing and community development shall develop guidance and best practices for community engagement, project delivery, and affordability outcomes for affordable housing projects to manage expectations and improve consistency and accountability.

Article 3. Housing Supply and Production.

Section 6-3-1. Policies.

- (1) **Meeting community needs requires more homes and different types.** The County should increase the overall supply and diversity of housing units to better meet the current and projected needs of Hawai'i Island residents.
- (2) **Housing options should reflect how people actually live.** A wide range of housing types, sizes, and price points should be allowed and encouraged, including single-family, multi-family, small-lot development, accessory dwelling units, multi-generational housing, and other compact or "missing middle" forms.
- (3) **New housing should be focused where services and infrastructure already exist.** New housing development should be prioritized in areas with existing or planned infrastructure, access to services, employment, public services, and transportation.
- (4) **Infill and reuse should come before outward expansion.** Infill development and the efficient use of vacant or underutilized land within established communities should be prioritized ahead of expansion into undeveloped areas.
- (5) **Regulatory systems should protect safety without constraining production.** Land use regulations, building codes, and permitting processes should protect public health and safety while minimizing unnecessary costs, delays, or complexity that constrain housing production.
- (6) **Existing buildings are an important housing resource.** The County should support rehabilitation, redevelopment, and adaptive reuse of existing residential and non-residential structures for housing where appropriate.
- (7) **Housing growth must be coordinated with infrastructure capacity.** Housing production should be aligned with planning for water, wastewater, drainage, transportation, and other essential infrastructure.

- (8) **Construction methods and delivery models affect affordability and timing.** The County should encourage innovative, cost-effective, and efficient construction methods and development approaches that reduce housing costs and speed delivery while meeting safety and quality standards.

Section 6-3-2. Actions.

- (a) **Regulatory capacity should be reviewed and updated.** The planning department shall periodically evaluate zoning, subdivision, and land use regulations and recommend amendments that increase housing capacity and allow a wider variety of housing types.
- (b) **Housing growth should be directed to the most appropriate locations.** The planning department, in coordination with the office of housing and community development, shall:
- (i) Identify and map areas suitable for infill and higher-density housing based on proximity to infrastructure, services, and employment and prioritize these areas for residential development; and
 - (ii) Consider and propose land use policies and regulations that increase residential density in such areas.
- (c) **Small-scale and missing middle housing should be easier to deliver.** The planning department shall allow or expand opportunities for accessory dwelling units, multi-family housing, and other small-scale or missing middle housing types consistent with County objectives.
- (d) **Infrastructure planning should support housing priorities.** The department of public works, in coordination with the planning department, shall align capital improvement planning and infrastructure investments with areas targeted for increased housing.
- (e) **Permitting processes should be coordinated and efficient.** The planning department and the department of public works shall streamline and coordinate permitting processes to reduce review time for housing projects, consistent with County law.
- (f) **Standards that add cost without benefit should be revisited.** The department of public works, in coordination with the planning department, shall review building and development standards and recommend revisions that reduce unnecessary construction costs while maintaining life-safety standards.
- (g) **Adaptive reuse should be supported with clear standards.** The department of public works shall develop or refine standards to facilitate adaptive reuse of commercial, industrial, or institutional buildings for residential purposes.
- (h) **Redevelopment opportunities should be actively pursued.** The office of housing and community development shall collaborate with nonprofit and private partners to identify underutilized or redevelopment-ready properties that could support new housing.

Article 4. Homeownership.

Section 6-4-1. Policies.

- (1) **Homeownership helps anchor families and communities.** The County should expand opportunities for Hawai'i Island residents to purchase and retain homes in the communities where they live, work, and have family ties.
- (2) **Public efforts should on households excluded from the current market.** Homeownership programs should prioritize low- and moderate-income households, workforce families, and first-time homebuyers.
- (3) **Preventing displacement is as important as creating new opportunities.** County policies and programs should support long-term housing stability for resident homeowners and reduce the risk of displacement.
- (4) **Affordability over time requires more than one ownership model.** A range of ownership models should be encouraged, including fee-simple, leasehold, shared-equity, cooperative, and community land trust arrangements that balance individual ownership with long-term affordability and local stewardship.
- (5) **Public land should advance lasting homeownership outcomes.** County-owned or County-controlled land should be strategically used to support affordable and attainable homeownership opportunities and should prioritize long-term community benefit over short-term unit production.
- (6) **Existing homes are a critical part of the ownership landscape.** The rehabilitation, repair, and maintenance of existing owner-occupied housing should be supported to preserve neighborhood stability, prevent loss of housing stock, and help residents remain safely housed.
- (7) **Homeownership supports long-term household and community stability.** Homeownership strategies should strengthen local wealth-building, inter-generational continuity, and long-term stability for Hawai'i Island residents.

Section 6-4-2. Actions.

- (a) **Upfront costs are a major barrier for first-time buyers.** The office of housing and community development shall establish or expand down payment assistance programs for eligible first-time and income-qualified homebuyers across Hawai'i Island as appropriate.
- (b) **Access to fair financing expands who can realistically buy a home.** The office of housing and community development shall coordinate with financial institutions, community lenders, and nonprofit organizations to develop affordable mortgage products, shared-equity models, and first-time buyer financing options.
- (c) **Education and preparation to support successful, long-term homeownership.** The office of housing and community development shall provide or support homebuyer education, financial literacy training, and counseling services for prospective and current homeowners.

- (d) **Public land can be leveraged to create permanently attainable homes.** The office of housing and community development shall evaluate the use of County-owned or County-controlled land, including long-term ground leases or land trust models, to support permanently affordable homeownership opportunities.
- (e) **Community-based ownership models strengthen local stewardship.** Where appropriate, the office of housing and community development shall explore and pursue opportunities for collaboration with community land trusts, cooperative housing organizations, and similar entities to preserve affordability and strengthen community stewardship of housing.
- (f) **Helping homeowners maintain their homes prevents displacement.** The office of housing and community development shall maintain or expand housing rehabilitation and renovation loan or grant programs to assist low- and moderate-income homeowners with repairs, safety improvements, and modernization.
- (g) **Home repairs should be achievable without compromising safety.** The planning department and department of public works shall review permitting and code requirements for residential repairs and renovations and recommend revisions that facilitate cost-effective improvements while maintaining life-safety standards.
- (h) **Tracking outcomes helps improve future programs.** The office of housing and community development shall maintain data on homeownership rates, affordability metrics, and program participation.

Article 5. Homelessness.

Section 6-5-1. Policies.

- (1) **Stable housing is the foundation for addressing homelessness.** The County should prioritize housing-based solutions as the primary response to homelessness, recognizing that long-term reductions depend on access to safe and stable housing.
- (2) **Different needs require different housing responses.** A continuum of housing options should be supported, including emergency shelter, transitional housing, rapid rehousing, permanent supportive housing, and other service-enriched housing models.
- (3) **Housing and services are most effective when coordinated.** Housing solutions should be paired with supportive services that address the underlying needs such as health care, behavioral health, employment, and social connection, as appropriate.
- (4) **Location matters for long-term housing success.** Housing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness should be located in areas with reasonable access to services, employment opportunities, and transportation.
- (5) **Timely solutions can prevent harm and reduce system strain.** Practical, cost-effective, and appropriately scaled housing solutions should be encouraged where they can be delivered quickly and safely.

- (6) **Coordination improves outcomes and stretches limited resources.** The County should collaborate with nonprofit organizations, service providers, and State and federal agencies to align efforts, maximize resources, and avoid duplication.
- (7) **Dignity and safety must be central to all responses.** Programs and facilities serving individuals and families experiencing homelessness should be designed and operated in ways that respect dignity, safety, cultural context, and the diverse needs of those served.

Section 6-5-2. Actions.

- (a) **Strong partnerships are essential to expanding housing options.** The office of housing and community development shall collaborate with nonprofit and community-based organizations to develop, fund, and operate emergency, transitional, and supportive housing programs.
- (b) **Rapid pathways to housing reduce time spent unhoused.** The office of housing and community development shall work with service providers to implement rapid rehousing and rental assistance programs that support timely transitions into stable housing.
- (c) **Data helps improve effectiveness and accountability.** The office of housing and community development shall maintain and analyze data on homelessness trends, housing placements, and program outcomes to inform policy decisions and resource allocation.
- (d) **Preventing homelessness is more effective than responding after the fact.** The office of housing and community development shall support prevention and stabilization efforts, including rental assistance, mediation, and short-term support services, to reduce the risk of households entering homelessness.

ELEMENT 7. TRANSPORTATION.

Article 1. General.

Section 7-1-1. Findings and purpose.

Transportation connects Hawai‘i Island residents to work, education, healthcare, recreation, and to one another, shaping how people participate in their communities and the local economy on a daily basis. Because of the island’s size, dispersed settlement patterns, and limited route options, access to reliable transportation is essential to daily life and community functioning across urban, rural, and remote areas.

In an increasingly interconnected world, Hawai‘i Island is particularly vulnerable to disruptions beyond the County’s direct control. Much of what residents rely on, including food, fuel, construction materials, and medical supplies, arrives by air and sea. Internal transportation networks must function reliably so people and goods can move efficiently from where they arrive to where they are needed, especially during emergencies and periods of disruption.

While harbors, airports, interisland transportation infrastructure, and some roadways fall under State jurisdiction, County-managed infrastructure—including roads, bridges, sidewalks, and public transit—forms the backbone of everyday movement for residents. These systems determine how easily people reach jobs and services, how communities connect with one another, and how well public investments support daily life.

Transportation investment decisions, including how the County balances maintenance of existing infrastructure with new improvements, directly influence where housing can be supported, how communities function, and how economic activity occurs across Hawai‘i Island. Poorly coordinated investments can increase long-term costs and constrain access, while strategic investments can improve safety, reliability, and connectivity.

For many years, transportation planning has primarily prioritized private vehicle travel. As a result, options for walking, bicycling, using mobility devices, or taking public transit are often limited or inconsistent in many areas. This has reduced choice, affected safety, and created barriers for residents who do not drive or cannot rely on a personal vehicle.

In addition, many communities on Hawai‘i Island developed without County or State roadway standards. In these areas, roads are often privately owned or maintained by community associations with limited capacity and resources, leading to uneven conditions, gaps in connectivity, and ongoing challenges related to drainage, safety, and emergency access. In some regions, the lack of alternate routes and interconnected networks further compounds these challenges.

This Transportation Element builds on existing County efforts, including the *Mass Transit and Multimodal Transportation Master Plan* (August 2018), the *Complete Streets Policy* (June 2022), and the *Vision Zero Action Plan* (May 2024). These adopted plans provide detailed guidance for transit service, street design, and traffic safety. This element does not replace or restate those plans; rather, it places them within the broader General Plan framework to guide priorities, coordination, and long-term investment decisions for transportation infrastructure and services under County jurisdiction.

Section 7-1-2. Goal.

Provide a safe, reliable, and connected transportation system that supports access to daily needs, aligns with planned growth, and serves residents across Hawai‘i Island’s diverse communities.

Article 2. Mass Transit.

Section 7-2-1. Policies.

- (1) **Public transit should provide a reliable mobility option for island residents.** The County should provide safe, reliable, and accessible public transit service that supports everyday travel needs for residents across Hawai‘i Island.
- (2) **Transit service should reflect how and where people live and work.** Routes, schedules, and service levels should align with population centers, employment areas, schools, healthcare facilities, and other essential services and destinations.
- (3) **Transit should offer a practical alternative to driving where feasible.** Public transit service should support the efficient movement of residents and visitors in ways that help reduce congestion and reliance on private vehicles.
- (4) **Transit should prioritize communities with limited transportation choices.** The County should prioritize transit service for communities and populations with limited access to private vehicles, including youth, seniors, persons with disabilities, and low-income households, particularly in rural and underserved areas.
- (5) **Transit facilities should be safe, comfortable, and easy to use.** Bus stops, shelters, and passenger amenities should be designed and maintained to support safety, visibility, weather protection, and accessibility.
- (6) **Transit works best when it connects seamlessly with other modes.** Transit planning should be coordinated with pedestrian, bicycle, and roadway improvements to support safe and convenient first-mile and last-mile connections.
- (7) **Transit systems must function during emergencies and disruptions.** Transit services should maintain operational readiness to support evacuations, emergency response, recovery efforts, and essential travel during emergencies and natural hazards.

- (8) **Good transit decisions rely on data and rider experience.** Transit routes, schedules, and service levels should be evaluated and adjusted using ridership data, travel demand information, and feedback from riders and communities.

Section 7-2-2. Actions.

- (a) **Daily operations are the foundation of a reliable transit system.** The mass transit agency shall operate and maintain County bus and paratransit services consistent with adopted plans, service standards, and available funding.
- (b) **Regular evaluation helps keep service aligned with demand.** The mass transit agency shall periodically evaluate routes, schedules, and service coverage using ridership data, performance measures, and community input.
- (c) **Safe and functional facilities improve the rider experience.** The mass transit agency shall maintain and improve transit stops, shelters, signage, and related facilities, with attention to safety, accessibility, and comfort.
- (d) **Transit needs should be build into roadway projects from the outset.** The mass transit agency shall coordinate with the department of public works to incorporate transit accommodations into roadway planning, design, and construction projects where appropriate.
- (e) **Clear and timely information supports transit use.** The mass transit agency shall provide accurate, timely, and accessible transit information through digital tools, including schedules, mobile applications, and real-time service updates.
- (f) **Fare policies should balance affordability and system sustainability.** The mass transit agency shall periodically evaluate fare structures, considering affordability, ridership impacts, administrative cost, and overall system performance.

Article 3. Roadways and Transportation Infrastructure.

Section 7-3-1. Policies.

- (1) **County roads are essential to daily life and must function reliably.** The County should maintain a safe, reliable, and connected roadway network that supports residents, businesses, emergency and public services, and public access throughout Hawai‘i Island.
- (2) **Roadway investments should respond to documented needs.** Roadway improvements and expansions should be guided by safety concerns, maintenance needs, connectivity gaps, and community context.
- (3) **Roadways must safely accommodate different ways people travel.** Streets should be planned and designed to safely serve pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, motorists, and people using mobility devices.

- (4) **Reducing conflict and serious injury is a core responsibility.** Roadway design and operational strategies should prioritize reducing conflicts between users and preventing serious injuries and fatalities.
- (5) **Connectivity supports access and emergency response.** The County should improve connectivity between neighborhoods, employment, schools, parks, and public facilities, particularly where gaps limit access or emergency response.
- (6) **Roadway design must reflect island-specific hazards.** Roadways and bridges should incorporate design features that address flooding, erosion, slope instability, and other natural hazards common to Hawai‘i Island.
- (7) **How development connects to roads affects safety and performance.** Access management practices and roadway standards should support safe and efficient circulation and reduce unnecessary conflict points.
- (8) **Durability and lifecycle costs should guide decisions.** Construction and maintenance practices should prioritize durable materials and cost-effective methods to improve long-term roadway performance.
- (9) **Roadway standards should reflect community context and function.** Roadway design, construction, and improvement standards should reflect whether a road serves an urban, town, rural, or agricultural context, recognizing differences in traffic volumes, surrounding land uses, safety needs, and environmental conditions.
- (10) **Road ownership and maintenance responsibility must be clear and transparent.** Transportation planning and development review should clearly distinguish between County-maintained roads and privately owned or maintained roads, including substandard roads and roads in transition, to ensure realistic expectations for maintenance, safety, and emergency access.
- (11) **Maintaining existing roads should come before expanding the system.** When allocating limited transportation resources, the County should prioritize maintenance, repair, and safety improvements to existing roadways ahead of system expansion, except where new connections are necessary to address documented access or safety needs.
- (12) **Transportation networks should support redundancy and emergency access.** The roadway system should, where feasible, provide alternate routes and network redundancy to support emergency response, evacuation, and continuity of access when primary routes are disrupted.

Section 7-3-2. Actions.

- (a) **Ongoing maintenance is the foundation of a functional roadway system.** The department of public works shall operate and maintain County roads, bridges, and related transportation infrastructure.
- (b) **Good decisions require accurate information about roadway conditions.** The department of public works shall maintain an inventory of roadway assets and periodically assess conditions, maintenance needs, and rehabilitation priorities.

- (c) **Limited resources should be directed where provide the greatest benefit.** The department of public works shall prioritize capital improvements for roadway repair, rehabilitation, and safety upgrades based on documented need, risk, and available funding.
- (d) **Known safety and operational problems should be addressed systematically.** The department of public works shall evaluate intersections and corridors with documented safety or operational issues and implement appropriate improvements.
- (e) **Hazard mitigation should be integrated into roadway projects.** The department of public works shall incorporate drainage improvements, slope stabilization, and hazard-resilient features into roadway design and construction where needed.
- (f) **New access points should not compromise roadway safety or function.** The planning department and the department of public works shall coordinate roadway access permits and roadway connections to maintain safe and efficient traffic flow.
- (g) **Shared responsibility requires coordination across jurisdictions.** The department of public works shall coordinate with State and federal agencies on roadway and bridge improvements affecting facilities under shared jurisdiction.
- (h) **Context-sensitive standards should guide roadway improvements.** The department of public works, in coordination with the planning department, shall evaluate, develop, and apply context-sensitive roadway standards that distinguish between urban and rural conditions when planning roadway improvements, consistent with safety, access, and maintenance needs.
- (i) **Understanding roadway ownership is essential for safety and planning.** The department of public works, in coordination with the planning department, shall maintain and update records identifying County-owned, privately owned, and unresolved roadway segments, including roads-in-limbo.
- (j) **Emergency access should not be compromised by ownership ambiguity.** The department of public works shall coordinate with emergency response agencies to identify privately owned or substandard roads that present emergency access concerns and prioritize risk-reduction strategies where feasible.
- (k) **Planning should identify critical access vulnerabilities.** The department of public works, in coordination with emergency management and public safety agencies, shall identify locations where limited access or lack of alternate routes presents safety or evacuation concerns and consider improvements or operational strategies to reduce risk.

Article 4. Multimodal Mobility and Safety.

Section 7-4-1. Policies.

- (1) **Safe walking and bicycling routes are a basic part of the transportation system.** The County should provide a safe, accessible, and connected network of pedestrian and bicycle

facilities that support everyday travel, recreation, and access to essential destinations throughout Hawai‘i Island.

- (2) **Pedestrian and bicycle facilities should connect people to the places they need to go.** Sidewalks, pathways, and bicycle routes should link neighborhoods with schools, parks, transit stops, employment areas, and public services and facilities.
- (3) **Safety investments should reflect where risk is greatest.** The County should prioritize pedestrian and bicycle improvements in areas with higher concentrations of residents, youth, seniors, and transit users, and people with limited access to private vehicles.
- (4) **Transportation facilities should work for users of all ages and abilities.** Pedestrian and bicycle facilities should accommodate people of all ages and abilities, including persons with disabilities and users of mobility devices, recognizing that not all users experience streets in the same way.
- (5) **Walking and biking access should be into projects from the start.** New development and roadway improvements should incorporate pedestrian and bicycle access where appropriate, based on context and expected use.
- (6) **Design choices play a critical role in safety and visibility.** The County should improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists through facility design, traffic calming, visibility improvements, and context-sensitive street treatments.
- (7) **Multimodal networks strongest when they reinforce each other.** Pedestrian, bicycle, and transit networks should be coordinated to support safe and convenient first- and last-mile connections.
- (8) **Off-street facilities can support both transportation and recreation.** Trails, shared-use paths, and other off-street facilities should be used, where feasible, to expand transportation options while also supporting recreational access.

Section 7-4-2. Actions.

- (a) **County roads provide the primary opportunity for multimodal improvements.** The department of public works shall plan, construct, and maintain sidewalks, pathways, bicycle lanes, and related facilities within County rights-of-way where appropriate.
- (b) **Understanding gaps helps target improvements.** The department of public works shall maintain an inventory of pedestrian and bicycle facilities and identify gaps, barriers, and priority improvement areas.
- (c) **Roadway projects should be used to improve access whenever feasible.** The department of public works shall incorporate pedestrian and bicycle facilities into roadway improvement and reconstruction projects where appropriate.
- (d) **Locations with repeated conflicts require focused attention.** The department of public works shall prioritize safety improvements at locations with documented accidents or access challenges.
- (e) **Connections should function safely in real-world conditions.** The department of public works shall coordinate pedestrian and bicycle improvements with transit stops, schools,

parks, and public services and facilities where appropriate to support safe and practical access.

- (f) **Accessibility standards must be met consistently.** The department of public works shall ensure pedestrian facilities comply with applicable accessibility requirements and address identified barriers.

ELEMENT 8. LAND USE.

Article 1. General.

Section 8-1-1. Findings and purpose.

Land use patterns shape how people live, work, and move throughout Hawai‘i Island. Decisions about where and how development occurs directly affect housing availability, transportation needs, public service delivery, infrastructure costs, and the long-term protection of natural and cultural resources. Because these systems are interconnected, land use decisions must be made with an understanding of their cumulative and long-term impacts.

Hawai‘i Island includes established towns, town centers, rural communities, agricultural lands, and conservation areas, each with distinct roles, capacities, and constraints. These places are not interchangeable. Development that aligns with existing infrastructure and established communities supports efficient service delivery and responsible public investment, while scattered or leapfrog growth increases infrastructure costs, strains public facilities, and places pressure on environmental and cultural resources.

Land use planning should follow a gradient-based approach to development. This approach directs higher-intensity development toward urban areas and town centers served by infrastructure and services, transitions through rural and agricultural lands, and tapers toward conservation and open space areas. The gradient provides a clear and predictable framework for evaluating development proposals, infrastructure investments, and changes in land use intensity across different contexts.

This gradient-based approach reflects both practical planning considerations and traditional place-based land relationships, including ahupua‘a. This system recognizes the interconnectedness of upland and coastal resources and the need to balance human settlement with the capacity of the land and water systems that sustain it. Applying a gradient-based approach helps ensure that development patterns respect natural systems, cultural relationships, and long-term resource limits.

Future growth should reinforce existing communities, support local economic activity, and maintain the island’s rural landscapes and natural systems. Changes in development intensity should occur gradually to ensure compatibility between uses and to preserve community character. Land use planning must also remain consistent with adopted County policies, and Community Development Plans, which provide place-based guidance for implementing this element and should be used to refine land use patterns, growth areas, and transitions consistent with the islandwide gradient.

This element establishes policies and actions to guide the location, pattern, and intensity of development using this gradient framework and to align land use decisions with infrastructure capacity, public services, and long-term community needs.

Section 8-1-2. Goal.

Direct growth toward existing communities served by infrastructure and public services, while protecting rural lands, agricultural resources, and conservation areas, and ensure compatible transitions between land uses that support strong, livable communities.

Section 8-1-3. Land Use Administration.

- (1) **Land use decisions should be implemented in a manner that is clear, measurable, and enforceable.** Development approvals should include clear and measurable conditions tied to infrastructure capacity, environmental protection, and community needs, where appropriate.
- (2) **Ongoing monitoring supports effective land use planning.** The planning department shall monitor and enforce compliance with development conditions and mitigation measures to ensure consistency with this Land Use Element and other applicable elements of the General Plan.

Article 2. Urban and Commercial Areas.

Section 8-2-1. Policies.

- (1) **Most new growth belongs where services, jobs, and civic life already exist.** Urban areas and town centers should accommodate the majority of new housing, employment, commercial activity, and civic uses.
- (2) **Growth should follow infrastructure, not outpace it.** Growth should concentrate in locations with existing or planned infrastructure, public facilities, and transportation access.
- (3) **Strengthen existing places before expanding outward.** The County should prioritize infill development, redevelopment, and reuse of underutilized or vacant land within established urban areas and town centers before expanding development into new areas.
- (4) **The Urban Growth Area boundary defines where urban development belongs.** Urban Growth Area (UGA) designations define the outer limit of where urban and urban-expansion development is intended to occur and is the County's primary tool for directing growth.
- (5) **Urban Growth Area boundaries should expand only when justified and infrastructure-ready.** Expansion of UGA designations should only occur when demonstrated need exists, adequate infrastructure capacity is available or committed, the proposed expansion is consistent with the goals and policies of this General Plan, and the expansion has been evaluated through an appropriate planning process.

- (6) **Growth receiving areas concentrate development within the UGA.** Within UGA designations, the County should establish Growth Receiving Areas – specific, geographically defined nodes where higher-density, mixed used, and infill development will be actively supported through flexible infrastructure standards and a package of regulatory and financial incentives, established in the County Code.
- (7) **Daily needs should be met close to where people live and work.** Urban areas and town centers should support a mix of residential, commercial, employment, and civic uses that meet the daily needs and reduce the need for long-travel distance.
- (8) **Urban intensity should support walkability and services.** Development intensity in urban areas and town centers should be scaled to support walkable environments, efficient public services, and access to transit where available.
- (9) **New development should connect to existing communities.** Development should be designed to integrate with surrounding streets, neighborhoods, and public facilities to improve connectivity, access, and circulation.
- (10) **Public investment should reinforce planned growth patterns.** Public investments in infrastructure, facilities, and services should prioritize urban areas and communities identified for growth.
- (11) **Change should respect what makes each place distinct.** Urban design and site planning should respect existing neighborhood character while allowing incremental growth, reinvestment, and change over time.
- (12) **Employment and industrial uses require appropriate locations and buffers.** Industrial and employment uses should locate in designated areas that provide adequate access, utilities, and buffering to ensure compatibility with surrounding uses.
- (13) **Older areas are opportunities for reinvestment.** The County should support the revitalization and redevelopment of aging commercial and industrial areas to improve safety, functionality, and long-term economic opportunity.
- (14) **Existing developed areas should be optimized before new land is consumed.** Existing industrial and resort areas should be rehabilitated, modernized, and more efficiently utilized before additional land is designated or expanded for those uses.

Section 8-2-2. Actions.

- (a) **Development intensity should reflect what infrastructure can reasonably support.** The planning department shall evaluate proposed development intensity based on available or planned infrastructure capacity, public services, and transportation access.
- (b) **Capital improvements should align with adopted growth priorities.** The department of public works, in coordination with applicable departments, shall prioritize capital improvements that support planned growth in urban areas and town centers.
- (c) **New development should connect to its surroundings.** The planning department shall require new development to provide connections to existing streets, sidewalks, and public facilities where appropriate.

- (d) **Design standards should reinforce mixed-use areas.** The planning department shall evaluate existing design and site planning standards and accordingly adjust, amend, or update standards that support mixed-use development, pedestrian-oriented design, and compatibility with surrounding uses where appropriate.
- (e) **Clearly defined growth areas support consistent decision-making and action.** The planning department shall identify Urban Growth Area on the Land Use Map. CDPs and all related planning processes shall be consistent with these designations and shall serve to refine and implement them at the local level.
- (f) **Establish the Growth Receiving Area program through the County Code.** The planning department shall develop and recommend a Growth Receiving Area ordinance that establishes designation criteria, a nomination and review process, and the package of incentives and entitlements.

Article 3. Rural and Agricultural Lands.

Section 8-3-1. Policies.

- (1) **Rural and agricultural lands play a distinct role on Hawai'i Island.** Rural and agricultural lands should support agriculture, open space, and low-intensity uses that reflect the island's rural character and working landscapes.
- (2) **Productive agricultural lands are a finite resource.** The County should protect productive agricultural lands and natural resources from fragmentation and incompatible development.
- (3) **Development intensity must match local conditions.** Residential and commercial development in rural areas should occur at a scale and intensity compatible with agricultural viability, infrastructure availability, and surrounding land uses.
- (4) **Rural areas are not intended to absorb urban growth.** Development patterns in rural areas should not function as extensions of urban or suburban development through lot size reductions, cumulative density increases, or infrastructure-driven intensification.
- (5) **Scattered growth undermines both agriculture and public investment.** New development should avoid creating scattered or leapfrog patterns that extend infrastructure inefficiently or strain public services.
- (6) **Agriculture requires flexibility to remain viable.** Agricultural uses, farm dwellings, and agriculture-supporting activities, including processing, storage, and value-added operations, should be accommodated to strengthen local food production and agricultural viability.
- (7) **Rural communities have distinct identities worth preserving.** Rural communities should retain their distinct cultural landscapes, historic settlement patterns, and sense of place.
- (8) **Natural systems should guide rural development decisions.** Development in rural areas should minimize impacts to natural systems, drainage patterns, scenic resources, and groundwater.

- (9) **Infrastructure expansion should be deliberate.** Public investments in major infrastructure should prioritize established communities and avoid inducing growth in undeveloped rural areas unless consistent with adopted plans.
- (10) **Transitions help reduce conflict at rural edges.** Buffering and graduated transitions should separate higher-intensity uses from agricultural and rural lands.
- (11) **Land classifications should support viable rural use.** The County should coordinate with the State to periodically evaluate land use classifications and soil capability to ensure rural designations reflect on-the-ground conditions and support productive agricultural use.
- (12) **Rural communities may support small local services.** Small-scale businesses and community-serving uses that primarily serve local residents may locate within rural communities when compatible with surrounding uses.

Section 8-3-2. Actions.

- (a) **Zoning and subdivision standards are primary implementation tools.** The planning department shall apply zoning and subdivision standards that maintain rural and agricultural land use patterns.
- (b) **Land divisions should not create long-term service burdens.** The planning department shall discourage land divisions that result in inefficient infrastructure extensions, cumulative density increases, or scattered development.
- (c) **Coordinate infrastructure decisions across departments.** The planning department shall coordinate with the department of public works and utility departments to limit extension of major infrastructure into undeveloped rural areas unless consistent with adopted plans.
- (d) **Site design can reduce land use conflicts.** The planning department shall require appropriate setbacks, buffers, and site design measures to reduce conflicts between agricultural and non-agricultural uses.
- (e) **Farm-related uses should be supported, not constrained unnecessarily.** The planning department shall support agricultural support uses and farm-related structures consistent with County regulations.
- (f) **Community plans should reflect rural land suitability.** The planning department shall identify and incorporate suitable areas for the State land use rural classification into CDPs and related planning efforts.

Article 4. Conservation and Open Space Lands.

Section 8-4-1. Policies.

- (1) **Conservation lands are intended to remain largely undeveloped.** Conservation and resource lands should remain predominantly in open space, agricultural, or resource-based uses to protect natural systems, open space, and cultural resources.

- (2) **Sensitive lands require a higher level of protection.** The County should protect environmentally sensitive areas, natural systems, and cultural landscapes from incompatible development that would compromise their long-term integrity.
- (3) **Clear limits on outward growth protect both people and resources.** Urban and suburban development patterns should not extend into conservation and open space lands, reinforcing clear boundaries on outward growth.
- (4) **Only limited, purpose-driven uses belong in conservation lands.** Development within conservation lands should be limited to uses that support resource management, cultural practices, public access, or essential infrastructure where no feasible alternative location exists.
- (5) **Hazard-prone areas should guide land use decisions.** Land use decisions should avoid areas subject to natural hazards, including flooding, erosion, wildfire risk, and unstable slopes, where development would threaten public safety or require disproportionate public investment.
- (6) **Large, connected open spaces are critical to ecosystem function.** The County should maintain large, contiguous areas of open space to preserve habitat, scenic resources, watershed function, and ecosystem connectivity.
- (7) **Public access should be balanced with protection.** Public access to natural, shoreline, and open space areas should be preserved and improved where appropriate and consistent with resource protection and public safety.
- (8) **Cultural relationships to land must be respected.** The County should respect traditional and cultural relationships to land and natural resources when evaluating land use decisions affecting conservation areas.
- (9) **Conservation lands play a buffering role.** Conservation lands and open space should serve as buffers between higher-intensity development and sensitive resources or working landscapes.

Section 8-4-2. Actions.

- (a) **Regulatory controls are the primary implementation tool in conservation areas.** The planning department shall apply zoning and subdivision regulations that limit development intensity within designated conservation and resource lands.
- (b) **Development proposals should be evaluated against protection and safety criteria.** The planning department shall evaluate development proposals in conservation areas for consistency with resource protection, hazard constraints, and infrastructure availability.
- (c) **Urban services should not induce growth in conservation lands.** The planning department shall discourage extensions of urban services and major infrastructure into conservation and open space lands unless necessary for public safety or essential public facilities.

- (d) **Careful site planning can reduce environmental disturbance.** The planning department shall require site planning and design measures that minimize disturbance to natural features, cultural resources, and sensitive areas.
- (e) **Land stewardship requires coordination across agencies.** The planning department shall coordinate with County departments and State and federal agencies responsible for environmental protection and land stewardship when reviewing projects in conservation areas.
- (f) **Conservation guidance should be carried into community-level planning.** The planning department shall incorporate conservation and open space land guidance into Community Development Plans and related planning effort.