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Plan calls for zero growth at resort

*By Eloise Aguiar
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A North Shore development plan calls for no resorts within its boundaries, limited development in the region and no expansions to a hotel complex in the neighboring community at Turtle Bay.

An update for the North Shore Sustainable Communities Plan was released this week after two years of work by a community advisory committee and consultants.

The plan, intended to help guide public policy, investment and decision-making over the next 20 years in the region, seeks to keep the rural qualities of the North Shore from Kaena Point to just before Kawela Bay, which is part of Turtle Bay Resort's property.

It calls for "no further expansion of resort accommodations in the Turtle Bay complex because of the adverse impacts ... on the North Shore's infrastructure, particularly on Kamehameha Highway, and on its quality of life."

Tim Vandever, co-chair of Defend O'ahu Coalition, which opposes expanding Turtle Bay, said the language of the plan is encouraging and yet another source of support to people who oppose development at Turtle Bay. The plan shows that the North Shore Public Advisory Committee that helped draft the document is taking a broader look at impacts one community can have on another, Vandever said.

turtle bay resort

"It's very encouraging just because they recognize the impacts that the North Shore suffers in regards to traffic and other burdens on the infrastructure that the resort expansion would create," he said.

Under a 1986 agreement, the Turtle Bay developer can build up to five new hotels with 3,500 rooms and condominium units, as well as four public parks.

The updated sustainable communities plan is now in the public comment period and people have until Feb. 1 to let the city know what they think. After Feb. 1 it goes to the city Planning Commission and then to the City Council for final approval.

"If it's adopted, it's what the city wants to see happen in the future," said David Tanoue, director for the city Department of Planning and Permitting.

Once the plan is in place, the city will look at land use and where to make changes to implement the plan, Tanoue said.

Tanoue said that though the plan's boundaries do not include Turtle Bay, it's "natural" for the plan to comment on the proposed expansion in the area because it would affect infrastructure and traffic.

"They wanted to make known that they feel any major increase in development at Turtle Bay may affect their region," Tanoue said. "So we put that statement in our plan just for the understanding that it may have some impact."

Other parts of the plan recommend prohibiting the "improper" use of agriculture lands, including for subdivisions, allowing for one small-scale country inn limited to 40 rooms in Hale'iwa Town and keeping Kamehameha and Farrington highways as two-lane thoroughfares .

Growth in the region should be limited to Hale'iwa and Waialua, the plan said.

The plan was last updated in 2000 and is supposed to be updated every five years.

Jacob Ing, who was on the North Shore advisory committee, said he's satisfied with the plan and strongly supported a section to protect and preserve Hawaiian culture.

traffic reminder

It was also necessary to support the Ko'olauloa region and its efforts to limit development at Turtle Bay, Ing said.

"It's important because it does affect our area where transportation is concerned and possibly it could set a precedent in our area as well," he said.

Everyone was reminded recently of the transportation issues in the area when monster waves on the North Shore brought thousands to its beaches to see the waves and watch the Eddie Aikau surf meet. Traffic was bumper-to-bumper and people complained about it taking an hour and a half to drive from Hale'iwa to Turtle Bay.

Carol Philips, also on the planning committee, said she had wanted the plan to take a stronger stance on the Turtle Bay expansion but others wanted to be careful about showing respect to their neighbors.

Generally the committee and the public are happy with the document, Philips said.

"The challenge is to implement it and have it followed," she said.

Additional Facts

at a glance

Key elements of the North Shore plan:

- Maintain rural boundary.
- Promote diversified agriculture.
- Enhance the region's recreational/educational potential.
- Promote Hale'iwa and Waialua as "country towns."
- Support Waialua as the North Shore's industrial center.
- Direct new housing to areas contiguous to Hale'iwa and Waialua towns.
- Provide adequate and appropriately-sized public infrastructure, facilities and services.
- Preserve and protect cultural and historic resources.
- Adapt the ahupua'a concept as a framework for land use and natural resource management.
- Integrate principles of sustainability to decision-making processes.

To read the plan, go to www.honoluluadvertiser.com/planning and scroll down to North Shore SCP.

Send comments on the plan to consultant Helber Hastert and Fee at Pacific Guardian Center, Makai Tower; 733 Bishop St., Suite 2590; Honolulu, HI 96813. Comments can also be faxed to 545-2050 or e-mailed to info@hhf.com.

The deadline for comments is Feb. 1.
