

“A Sense of Place, A Living Legacy” The Hamakua-Kawainui Master Plan
1/24/18

Aloha to all,

I am writing this letter in support of the Hamakua-Kawainui Master Plan because I see it as a unique opportunity for the State of Hawai'i to serve its people for many decades to come.

I can recall passing through the area many times as child in the 1960s. I would eventually learn that it had been a place of significance in Hawai'i's history. From ruins of an ancient Hawaiian Halau Wa'a canoe storage structure near the site of the old Kailua Drive-in Theater, to its use as one of Hawai'i's largest fishponds in ancient times and as a seat of power for Hawaiian rulers, Hamakua and Kawainui are steeped in history and legend. There is even a heiau site, Ulupo, which is said to have been built by the Menehune, the legendary little people of Hawai'i. Learning these things helped to shape my adulthood in positive fashion, and greatly changed the way I see the Hamakua-Kawainui, Kailua Town and Hawai'i's ancient history in general. State plans to restore and embrace some of the area's rich historical past in its modern planning are key.

Watching the activities centered around the Ulupo Heiau with the assistance of the non-profit group “Hika'alani” we see many things in play. The work donated by many diverse community groups, from school-aged children to adults, is very important. As they help to restore lo'i kalo, clear invasive plants and replant indigenous plants, and assist in the preservation of the heiau and other archeological sites, it builds a commonality amongst them and ties them to the place. It teaches the ongoing legacy of the area, stewardship of the land and an appreciation of the past. Regardless of what they do in the future, they are joined together by the 'aina they have worked on. For the school students, it is a source of inspiration and a place of adventure. Who knows how many future botanists, archeologists, historians and anthropologists are being seeded in the 'aina there? That work is a shining example of “learning in place” where many lessons are taught as a cultural anchor for the area is maintained, and a sense of place is affirmed and upheld.

I offer my testimony on behalf of the state's Hamakua-Kawainui plan and hope that the area's history will be continue to an integral part the project going forward. From halau wa'a for canoe paddlers to the expanded rehabilitation of lo'i kalo and fishponds, these are things which serve the areas' past and its future, while encouraging community engagement and stewardship. I applaud the efforts of both the planners and community partners for the good work they have done. In the fruits of your efforts, we see the re-emergence of a sense of place and a living legacy for the entire community of Hamakua-Kawainui and its neighbors. Mahalo nui!

With much Aloha,

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