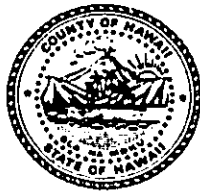


Stephen K. Yamashiro
Mayor



George Yoshida
Director

REC-7

'93 AUG 27 County of Hawaii

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY CONTROL
25 Aupuni Street, Room 210 - Hilo, Hawaii 96720-4252
(808) 961-8311

August 25, 1993

Mr. Brian Choy, Director
Office of Environmental Quality Control
220 South King Street, 4th Floor
Honolulu, HI 96813

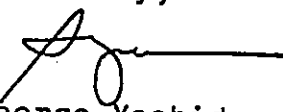
Subject: Final EA/Negative Declaration Determination for Hakalau
Gymnasium Renovation Project, Wailea, South Hilo, Hawaii
TMK: 2-9-02:05

Dear Mr. Choy:

The Department of Parks and Recreation, County of Hawaii, has received no comments on the draft EA during the thirty day public comment period and is submitting this notification of a negative declaration determination for publication in the OEQC Bulletin.

Thank you and please contact this office if any questions should arise.

Sincerely,


George Yoshida
Director

encl-publication form/final EA (4 copies)

cc Office of the Mayor (w/final EA)

1993-09-23-HI-*FEA-Hakalau Gymnasium*
Renovation

SEP 23 1993

NEGATIVE DECLARATION (FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT)
FOR PROPOSED HAKALAU GYMNASIUM RENOVATION
TMK 3-2-9-02-5
SOUTH HILO, HAWAII

Prepared By:

RON TERRY, Ph.D.
HCR 9575, KEAAU, HAWAII, 96749

and

MARTIN STUART, LTD., & NEIL ERICKSON, ARCHITECT
190 KEAWE STREET, SUITE 12
HILO, HAWAII 96720

August 20, 1993

NEGATIVE DECLARATION (FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT)

FOR

PROPOSED HAKALAU GYMNASIUM IMPROVEMENTS
TMK 3-2-9-02-5
SOUTH HILO, HAWAII

PROPOSING AGENCY:

Department of Parks and Recreation
County of Hawaii
25 Aupuni Street
Hilo, Hawaii 96720

CONSULTANT:

Ron Terry Ph.D.
HCR 9575
Keaau, Hawaii 96749

and

Martin Stuart, Ltd., & Neil Erickson, Architect
190 Keawe Street, Suite 12
Hilo, Hawaii 96720

APPROVING AGENCY:

Office of the Mayor
County of Hawaii
25 Aupuni Street
Hilo, Hawaii 96720

CLASS OF ACTION:

Use of State or County lands or use of State or
County funds.

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CHAPTER I: AGENCIES CONSULTED IN PREPARING ASSESSMENT

A. County Agencies

Parks and Recreation Department
Planning Department
Public Works Department, Building Division
Water Supply Department
Fire Department

B. State Agencies

Department of Education
Department of Health
Department of Land and Natural Resources,
Water Resource Management Division

C. Federal Agencies

U.S. Post Office, Hilo

D. Other

Hakalau Community Association

CHAPTER II:

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. Technical

1. Project Location

The proposed project is located on an approximately 4.0 acre parcel of land mauka of the Old Belt Highway in Wailea, TMK 3-2-9-02-5, in the district of South Hilo, Island of Hawaii (Fig. 1).

2. Purpose and Objectives

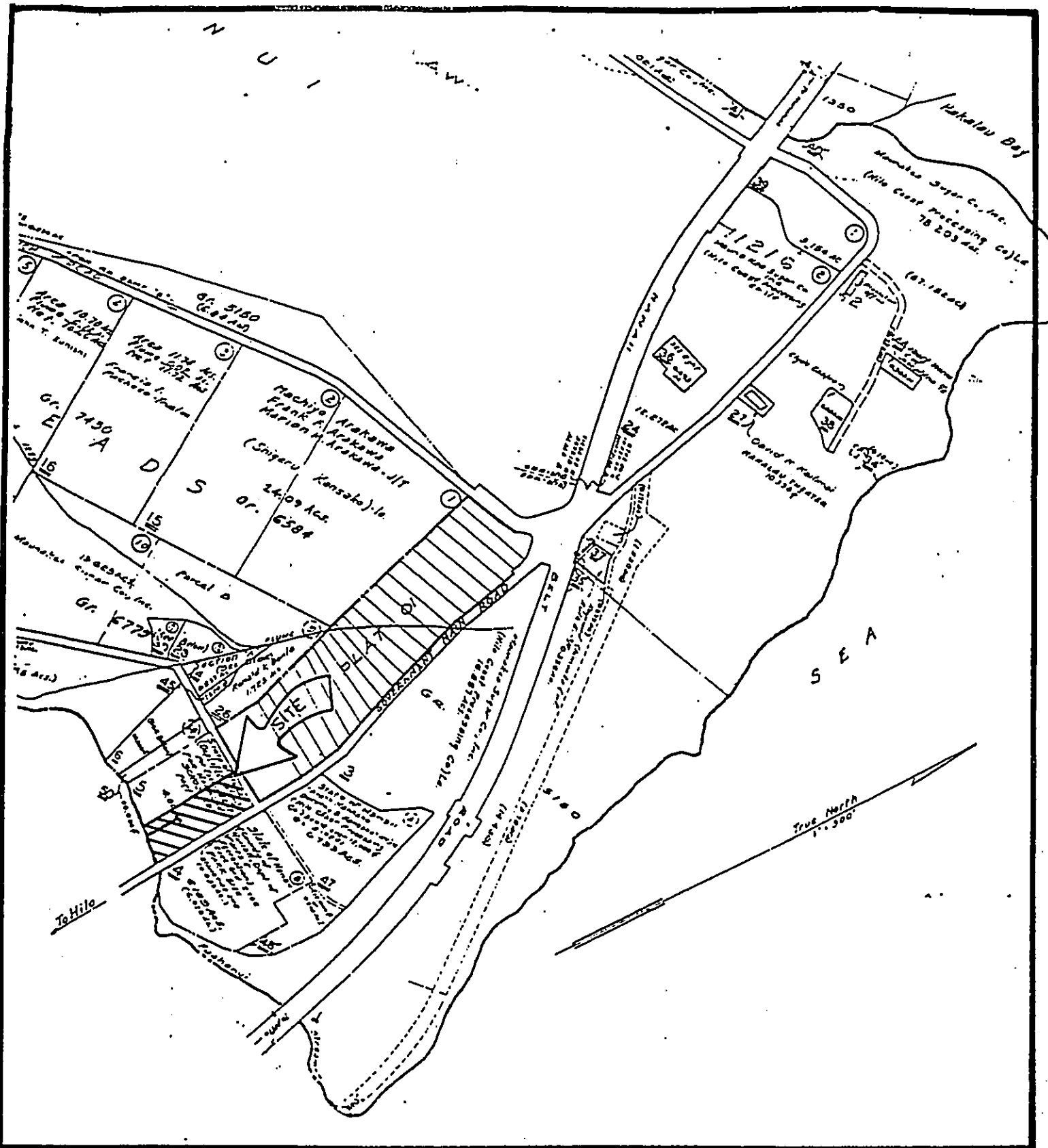
The proposed project involves the renovation of the Hakalau Gymnasium and the redesign of the gym and adjacent grounds into a Community Center. The gymnasium was first constructed in 1933 and was modified in 1945. It has served the community for many decades as a site for basketball and other court sports, for presentations of films, speakers and programs, and other purposes. Current uses are very limited.

The building is presently dilapidated and partly unusable due to termite and dry rot damage, lack of proper fire exits and general neglect. The structure, however, has been examined by experts and judged basically sound. In a modified and renovated form it may serve expanded needs in the growing community, particularly as a center for senior citizen activities and public programs and meetings. Furthermore, the United States Post Office, which is currently located across the highway adjacent to the defunct sugar mill, isolated from most of the town's residents, is discussing a relocation into new quarters in the rear of the renovated structure.

Considerable rehabilitation and modernization would be necessary, but the total cost for the project would be significantly less than if a similar structure were to be created anew. In addition, the sentimental and historic value of the cherished structure would enhance the connection of the community to its rich past while serving the needs of the present.

3. Existing and Proposed Improvements

The existing structure consists of a building of 9646 square feet. No on-site parking facilities currently exist, and visitors now park across the street, along the Old Belt Highway.



T.M.K. MAP
 TMK 2-9-2:5

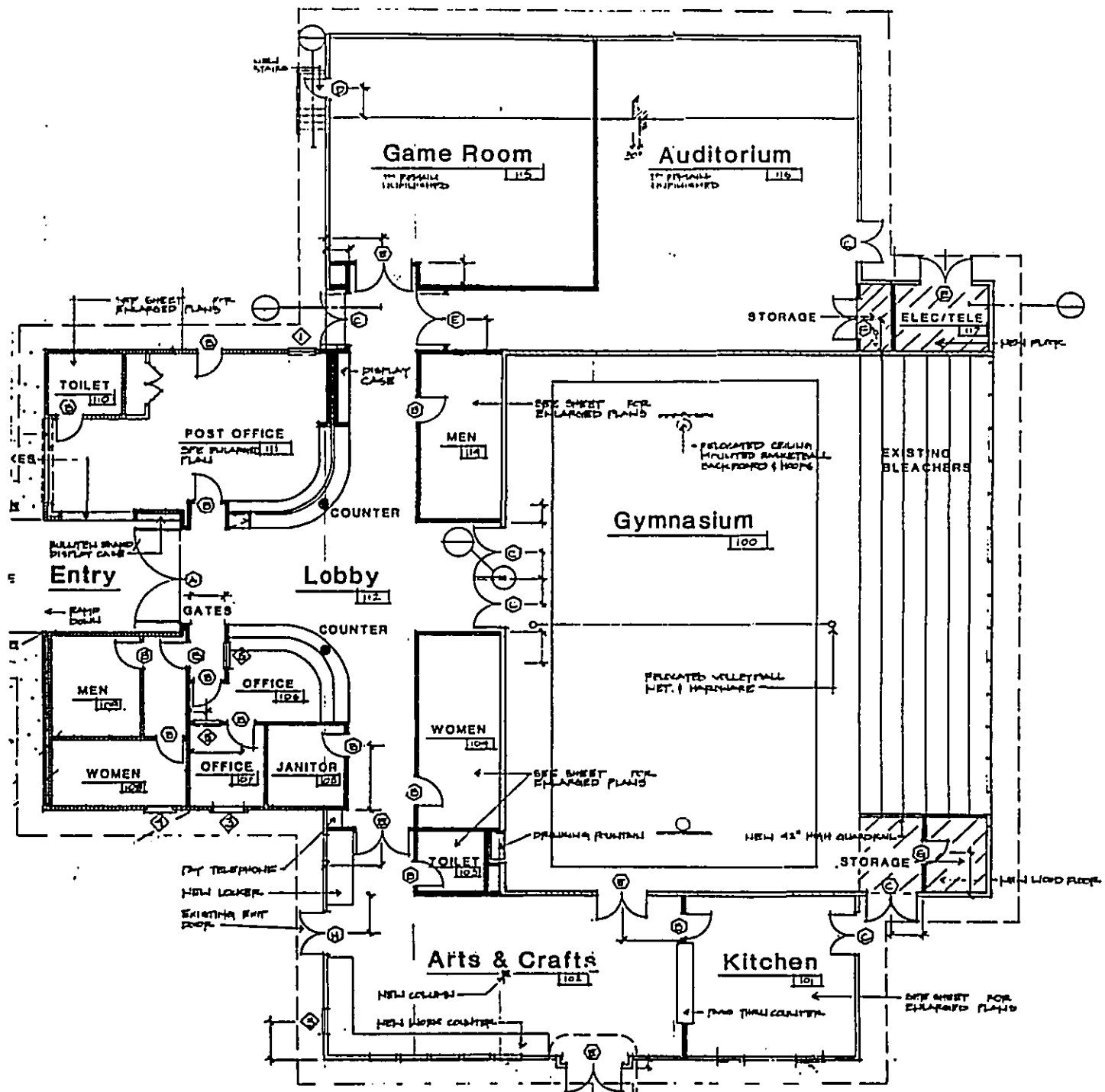
The proposed renovation would result in a new configuration for the structure (Figure 2) and would comprise five basic improvements:

1. An addition to reorient the building to new onsite parking would be built and would initially house County Parks and Recreation Offices and the Community Center Office. This addition would also offer a site for the potential relocation of the Post Office.
2. The remainder of the building would be redesigned to accommodate facilities for senior activities, arts and crafts, restrooms, a future kitchen and multipurpose spaces for games and presentations.
3. Existing shower room facilities would be demolished.
4. Interior electricity, plumbing and telephone structures would be completely replaced with modern equipment.
5. New asphalt driveways and parking areas would be constructed.

The existing architectural style would be preserved and enhanced in order to encourage integration of the structure as the center of the community. The structure would be completely accessible to the elderly and disabled.

The proposed project would be implemented in three phases:

1. Phase 1 would begin with measures to prevent further deterioration. Construction of parking facilities, disabled access, and some activity facilities would also occur. The initial phase may also provide the new U.S. Post Office facilities, depending upon demand and level of funding.
2. The second phase would renovate the gymnasium, replace plumbing, electricity and phone facilities, install new restrooms, and construct the addition to provide new offices.
3. Activities in the final phase would be based on community need and funding. Items would include additional activity and office spaces, restrooms, and kitchen facilities.



Floor Plan

It is estimated that construction costs for all improvements would be between \$600,000 and \$750,000, depending upon the extent of community participation and the timing of construction. The cost estimate for Phase 1 is approximately \$225,000; for Phase 2 the figure is \$275,000; Phase 3 costs would range between \$100,000 and \$250,000.

4. Ownership

The parcel is currently owned by the State of Hawaii under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education (DOE). It contains both the Hakalau Gym and the existing buildings of the old Hakalau School, which are currently in use as an alternative school. As part of the project, this parcel would be subdivided to yield a 1.8 acre parcel dedicated to the proposed community center, with jurisdiction transferred to the County of Hawaii, and a 2.2 acre parcel that would remain under DOE jurisdiction.

B. Social, Cultural and Economic Setting

1. Existing Land Uses

Current uses are restricted to weekly senior citizen get-togethers and occasional community meetings. Very limited use is made of the gymnasium by the Huki Like Alternative Intermediate School, which is located on the grounds of the former Hakalau School.

Since the project site is located on the "Old Road" and not the Belt Highway, current traffic is minimal. The only non-resident users are the users of Hakalau Park and the small number of cars that enter and exit Kolekole County Park, 1 mile to the southeast on the Old Road, via Hakalau instead of through the main entrance.

2. Social Makeup

From 1970 to 1980, the population of Hakalau remained fairly stable at about 750. Changes at Hilo Coast Processing sugar plantation induced a population decline after 1980. By 1990, only 250 residents remained, according to the *County of Hawaii Data Book*. The County stopped compiling population statistics for Hakalau in 1990, but local information indicates that population of the Hakalau/Wailea area has actually been slowly rebounding for about a decade. If nearby Ninole and adjacent areas are added, there are likely over 400 residents in the area. The full spectrum of ethnic and household types is represented, with a large proportion of senior citizens, many of whom once worked for the plantations.

3. Current Recreational Facilities

A County park consisting of a baseball field, tennis courts and playground equipment is located across the street from the project. This is the only recreational facility in Hakalau aside from the gymnasium. One mile away is Kolekole County Park, which offers several pavilions and stream swimming. Adjacent towns provide a wider range of recreational activities, which are described in the chapter on alternatives below.

4. Economic Setting

Residents of Hakalau are employed both locally, in plantation sugar cane, macadamia nuts and diversified small farming, and also in Hilo, in the service, public and other sectors.

C. Environmental Characteristics

1. Geology, Soils & Hazards

The surface geology of the project area is Quaternary basaltic lava from the Upper Member of the Hamakua Volcanic Series of Mauna Kea, with a deep coating of weathered volcanic ash (MacDonald et al 1983:361). The site elevation is 210 feet. Slopes range between 4 and 10 percent, and are not anticipated to pose any problems in grading.

The soil that has developed from the coating of volcanic ash is termed Hilo Silty Clay Loam. It is a well-drained, brown, acidic soil that has been used principally for sugar cane cultivation (U.S. Soil Conservation Service 1973). The soil is highly compressible, with low bearing capacity and low shear strength.

Volcanic hazard is low in Hakalau because of its position on the slopes of Mauna Kea, a dormant or inactive volcano. The United States Geological Survey classifies the area as Lava Flow Hazard Zone 8, on a scale of ascending risk 9 to 1 (Heliker 1990:23). Seismically the area shares with the entire island of Hawaii a Zone 3 on a scale of ascending risk 1 to 4 in the Seismic Probability Rating (Furumoto et al 1973:34). Major damage corresponding to a score of 7 or above on the Modified Mercalli Scale is possible. The relevant design implications of this setting are to follow suitable lateral load specifications according the Uniform Building Code. It should be noted that the building has withstood many local quakes of magnitudes between 6.0 and 7.2 since it was constructed.

2. Weather and Climate

The average annual rainfall in Hakalau is 137", according to a nearby gauge with 66 years of record (Taliaferro 1959:130). Average annual temperature is approximately 77 degrees F., with small diurnal and seasonal variation (UH-Manoa Dept. of Geography 1983:64). Winds are normally light in the area, even by Hawaiian standards. Wind patterns for nearby Hilo display a dominance of northeasterly winds of less than 12 MPH in the daytime, while somewhat gentler drainage winds from Mauna Kea are present at night (UH-Manoa Dept. of Geography 1983:65).

Average weather is not expected to have any significance in terms of the design or use of the proposed structure. Occasional storms involving violent weather activity such as high wind or rainfall may have effects. As is common in the Hawaiian Islands, Hamakua experiences few hurricanes or tornadoes. Hurricanes directly impact some location in the Hawaiian Islands about every 20 years, and are thus not a factor in normal structural design criteria. Winter storms such as cold fronts, kona storms, and other disturbances periodically supply the region with abundant rainfall, occasionally bringing floods. High winds also may accompany such storms, with gusts over 50 MPH likely at least once during each winter. Damaging windstorms from any source, however, are rare in Hamakua. Similarly, thunderstorms and lightning are infrequent events in the lowlands of Hawaii. Hilo airport, where measurements of thunderstorm frequency are made, experiences less than 10 per year on the average, most in association with winter storm passage.

In summary, weather hazards are slight, except for occasionally heavy rainfall and high winds. Redesign of the building, which has withstood storms for nearly 60 years, would incorporate similar and/or superior weather-resisting features.

3. Hydrology

The project area lies between two small intermittent streams that are mapped but not named on the USGS Papaaloa 7 1/2 minute quadrangle. Some sheet wash is present during high flows. Surface drainage runs to the street and from there crosses the Old Mamalahoa Highway, but has never seen significant flooding.

The building itself has leaky redwood gutters which leads to poor drainage on its perimeter. These would be replaced as part of the renovation.

Much of the precipitation that falls on the Hamakua coast finds its way to the ocean directly or indirectly as groundwater. A shallow freshwater basal lens is presumed to underlie the entire coast. A well used for drinking water is present approximately 180 feet from the property in the mauka direction. The State Department of Health therefore would require an approved septic tank wastewater treatment (See Section III-B-3).

4. Flora, Fauna, and Ecosystems

The original vegetation of the project area was Lowland Wet Forest (Gagne and Cuddihy 1990), but the region has been extensively modified by Hawaiian cultivation and especially sugar cane plantations. The area around Hakalau gymnasium has supported many structures in the last century, and the project area has thus had its entire surface modified by human activity.

Today, little native vegetation or fauna survives in the area. The site's vegetation consists of a lawn, with weeds and ornamental plants surrounding the area. Ruderal species such as hononono (Commelina diffusa), Bush beardgrass (Andropogon glomeratus), Broomsedge (Andropogon virginicus) Bamboo orchid (Arundina bambusaefolia), sourbush (Pluchea odorata), Spanish needle (Bidens pilosa), morning glory (Ipomea congesta), and sensitive plant (Mimosa pudica) dominate the unmowed areas. Several moribund cypress trees line the frontage of the property.

Near the southeast edge of the property is a patch of overgrown ornamentals (gingers, dracaenas, cassava, turk's cap, heliconia, jasmine, philodendron, Pride of India, kukui, banyan, orchids, passion fruit, taro, African tulip tree, avocado etc.) reportedly planted over the years by the Future Farmers of America. Renovation plans would not impact this area.

The only native species apparent were the moa (Psilotum nudum) and several ferns including hapu'u (Cibotium sp.) and kupukupu or swordfern (Nephrolepis multiflora). No endangered species or habitat is present.

Native fauna in such disturbed lowland habitats is not abundant. No native passerine bird species are known to frequent the area. The two native raptors, the Hawaiian hawk or 'io (Buteo solitarius) and the Hawaiian owl or pueo (Asio flammeus sandwichensis) can easily be spotted in the area. Although the Hawaiian hawk is an endangered species, the Hakalau town area is not considered to be part of its essential habitat, and no hawk nests are present on the site. The project would have little or no effect on hawk activity. Indigenous and migratory seabirds such as the Pacific golden plover or kolea (Pluvialis fulva) also

typically rest or forage on grassy areas such as those found in the project area. Again, the proposed project is not expected to impact such occasional use.

The only native Hawaiian land mammal, the Hawaiian hoary bat (*Lasiurus cinereus semotus*), may also be present in the area, as it is common in many lowland forest on the island of Hawaii. No impact on bat habitat is anticipated.

5. Air Quality and Noise

Air pollution in the Hakalau area is minimal. When present, it is chiefly derived from volcanic emissions blown northwest due to occasional southerly winds. The marginal increase in road use would lead to slightly higher automotive emission pollution, but the impact may be considered insignificant because of the modest expected use, the low population density of the area, and the dissipative effect of the winds.

Ambient noise in the area is low, and comes mainly from the highway, motorized gardening equipment such as lawnmowers and weed eaters, and sugar cane cultivation. Activities in the renovated gymnasium may include occasional events (such as live music or volleyball games) that produce noise slightly above usual rural decibel levels. The placement of the structure, which is over 200 feet from the nearest residence and 100 feet from the neighboring alternative school, would enable the dissipation of any noise to very low levels for neighbors.

6. Archaeological/Historic Environment

The old plantation town of Hakalau has been recognized as having scenic and historic value in the State Historic Preservation Division's Inventory surveys (SHPD 1974). The sugar company was founded in 1876 by Claus Spreckels, and the plantation prospered for many decades. Hakalau was said to provide some of the best conditions and benefits for its workers and thus experienced little labor trouble. An item in the 1920 *Honolulu Star Bulletin Centenary Issue* (quoted in the SHPD report) mentioned the "pronounced social distinction" of the manager and his home, a center of social activity on the sugar coast.

Many structures, including the credit union, community hall, the Jodo mission, the plantation office building and the manager's house were singled out as having significant interest. None of these structures or sites were listed on the state or federal Historic Registers, however, and all therefore lack special protective status. Many of the town's buildings, despite their acknowledged architectural and historic interest, are at risk of decay and ultimate collapse because of a lack of funds and a

program for renovation. Some have already disappeared.

Although the gymnasium was not identified as having special significance, the fact that it is still standing in reasonably good shape adds to its value as a historical symbol. In an interview conducted in August of 1992, a longtime local resident and former schoolteacher at Hakalau School recalled a time when the gymnasium functioned as the heart of the campus. Not only indoor sports, but also rainy day activities, school plays and other programs were conducted inside. The County Parks and Recreation Department centered its Summer Fun program in the building each summer. On holidays, the school sponsored functions in the gymnasium. As the Department of Education gradually shifted grades away from Hakalau school - it lost its intermediate school in 1963, and then the elementary grades in 1971 - use of the gymnasium declined. The building soon started to decay from lack of attention. The proposed renovation of the Hakalau Gymnasium would preserve most elements of the original structure and remain in keeping with the architectural spirit of the town.

Because the site has been reworked through cultivation and construction activity repeatedly since the early 19th century, there is little chance of archaeological discoveries. No known cemeteries or burials are on or adjacent to the site. Shallow grading for the parking lot may possibly unearth artifacts. Should any human burials, artifacts or charcoal deposits be found, work shall stop in the immediate vicinity and the State's Historic Preservation Division shall be contacted. The significance of these finds shall then be determined and approved by the Division, and an acceptable mitigation plan shall be approved by the Division (if needed).

CHAPTER III. SUMMARY OF MAJOR IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

A. Short Term:

Adverse impacts: There would be slight interruptions in normal traffic patterns during construction. Some noise, dust and excess runoff would also result temporarily from the grading and renovation work.

Mitigation: Dust and noise control shall be exercised during construction to reduce their impact. Care shall be exercised to control excess runoff during construction.

Beneficial Impacts: Construction would provide one-time economic benefits for the area, which has recently experienced high unemployment due to the nationwide recession and the phase-out of plantation jobs.

B. Long Term:

1. Traffic and Circulation

Impacts: With increased use of the facility, traffic would also increase. Senior group meetings would probably attract more participants, and may also increase in frequency. Although the precise magnitude of this increase is difficult to gauge, it is unlikely to create a nuisance. If the Post Office moves into the facility, additional traffic would be generated. The current Post Office has 375 rented boxes, and the Hilo Assistant Postmaster estimates that in a town such as Hakalau approximately 75 percent of the boxes are checked daily. This implies some 300 visits per day. Again, this level of traffic (which translates to one visit every 4.8 minutes, some of it pedestrian) is unlikely to cause a traffic problem, although after-work hours may see small crowds develop.

Mitigation: The proposed parking facilities plan (visitors currently park across the street, along the highway) would be more than adequate to accommodate visitors. The parking area would be contained on the site itself, and may actually reduce the small amount of roadside congestion occasionally present nowadays. The separate routing of traffic behind the building for the Post Office would redress any problems in circulation created by postal patrons.

2. Social, Land Use, Population and Employment

Impacts: Residents of Hakalau would have more recreational opportunities available, increasing the quality of life by encouraging more recreation and decreasing the time and length of trips necessary to enjoy similar pursuits in adjacent towns.

Construction of the proposed project would provide a small number of jobs, some of which may be filled by local residents. Maintenance of the facility, which currently involves approximately one-eighth of a full-time position, is expected to increase to at least one full-time position, thus providing additional ongoing employment.

3. Wastewater Treatment

Impacts: Wastewater quantities would increase as a result of the proposed improvements and uses.

Mitigation: An Individual Wastewater System Plan has been developed for treatment of wastewater from the proposed facility. The plan incorporates two fiberglass septic tanks, an Ekofinn aerobic unit and two leach fields. All facilities are located on-site. This plan will be submitted to the State Department of Health and is expected to mitigate any adverse impacts from the anticipated increase in wastewater.

4. Drainage

Impacts: The addition of impervious area would add to the potential quantity of surface runoff. However, no drainage facilities currently exist.

Mitigation: Two drywells and associated drainage water collection facilities are planned to handle on-site drainage.

5. Flora and Fauna

No significant impact to flora and fauna is expected.

6. Archaeology/Historic sites

No significant impact to archaeological or other historic sites is expected.

7. Visual

Impacts: The renovated gym would significantly improve the appearance of the project area. The parking area would be less appealing than the current grassy area, but a considerable area of lawn would still remain, meaning minimal impact on the overall aesthetics.

Mitigation of Adverse Impacts: Trees, shrubs, and flowers shall be planted around the facility to enhance the landscape and offset the effects of a parking area.

C. Required Permits and Approvals

1. Underground Injection Control Permit, State DOH
2. Subdivision Approval
3. Transfer of Land State to County

CHAPTER IV.

ALTERNATIVES

1. No Action

If no action is taken, the Hakalau Gymnasium would continue to decay, and unless some other measures are taken, it would eventually require the expense of demolition. Indoor recreational opportunities desired by senior citizens would continue to lack a venue in Hakalau, and social services for the area would thus continue to suffer. The area would continue to do without a gymnasium for volleyball and basketball games, meetings, and social functions, which would either not be conducted or would be conducted at a site not within the community.

2. Support Recreation in Neighboring Towns

Several adjacent towns currently offer recreational opportunities similar to what has been lost (small indoor sports court, meeting room, etc.) in Hakalau with the decay of the Gym.

Community	Facilities	Miles from Hakalau
Honomu	Gymnasium	2
Papaikou	Gymnasium, Clubhouse	10
Pepeekeo	Community Center	5
Papaaloa	Gym	9
Laupahoehoe	Community Center	10

Additional improvements to such facilities could allow them to match the proposed additional improvements (kitchen, projection capabilities, etc.) conceived for the project.

The distances from Hakalau to these alternative sites are relatively small by comparison with common commuting distances in the region. However, local residents may perceive such sites as overly distant, inconvenient to access, and not part of their own community. Because the target population is largely made up of senior citizens who have restricted access to transportation and strong ties to the Hakalau community, far less use than may be expected is made of external facilities.

CHAPTER V FINDINGS AND REASONS

1. The proposed project will not involve an irrevocable commitment or loss or destruction of any natural or cultural resources.
2. The proposed project will not curtail the range of beneficial uses of the environment.
3. The proposed project will not conflict with the State's long-term environmental policies.
4. The proposed project will not substantially affect the economic or social welfare of the community or State.
5. The proposed project will not involve substantial secondary impacts, such as population changes or effects on public facilities.
6. The proposed project will not involve a substantial degradation of environmental quality.
7. The proposed project will not substantially affect any rare, threatened or endangered species of flora or fauna or habitat. No endangered species of flora or fauna are known to exist on the project site.
8. The proposed project will not detrimentally affect air or water quality or ambient noise levels.
9. The proposed project will not be located in any environmentally sensitive area, such as flood plain, tsunami zone, erosion-prone area, geologically hazardous land, estuary, fresh water, or coastal waters.

For the reasons above, the proposed project will not have any significant effect in the context of Chapter 343, Hawaii Revised Statutes and section 11-200-12 of the State Administrative Rules.

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