

JOHN WAIHEE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
P. O. BOX 621 (CFC)
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

Keith W. Ahue
Chairperson
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

DEPUTIES

JOHN P. KEPPELER, II
DONA L. HANAIKE

AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAM
AQUATIC RESOURCES
CONSERVATION AND
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
CONSERVATION AND
RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT
CONVEYANCES
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
PROGRAM
LAND MANAGEMENT
STATE PARKS
WATER AND LAND DEVELOPMENT

Ref. LM-GYT

May 5, 1994

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

Dear Mr. Choy:

Subject: Negative Declaration for Proposed Direct Lease of State Lands at
Waimea, South Kohala, Hawai'i - Tax Map Key:3rd/6-6-03:07
Applicant: Waimea Outdoor Circle

In accordance with the requirements of Chapter 343, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, and Chapter 200 of Title 11, Administrative Rules, a Final Environmental Assessment has been prepared for the subject project.

Notice of availability of the Draft Environmental Assessment for the project was published in the February 8, 1994 OEQC Bulletin. A comment supporting the proposal was received from Mr. Keith Wallis of E Mau Na 'Ala Hele. His comments are included in the Final Environmental Assessment.

As the proposing agency, we are forwarding herewith, one copy of the OEQC Bulletin Publication Form and four copies of the Final Environmental Assessment. We have determined that there will be no significant impacts as a result of the project and, therefore, are filing the Final Environmental Assessment as a negative declaration. We respectfully request that public notice of the Final Environmental Assessment be published in the next scheduled OEQC Bulletin.

Very truly yours,

Handwritten signature of Keith W. Ahue in cursive.
KEITH W. AHUE

c: Hawai'i Land Board Member
Land Management Administrator
Mrs. Carol Hendricks

219

51

1994-05-23-HI-~~FEA~~ Waimea Nature Park MAY 23 1994

FINAL
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

for

WAIMEA NATURE PARK

WAIMEA, SOUTH KOHALA, HAWAII
Tax Map Key 3rd-6-6-03:07

APPLICANT: WAIMEA OUTDOOR CIRCLE

**APPROVING AGENCY: BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL
RESOURCES**

I. INTRODUCTION:

PURPOSE OF THIS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The Waimea Outdoor Circle, a non-profit citizens organization, has applied to the Board of Land and Natural Resources, State of Hawaii, for a Direct Lease for 10.178 acre parcel of State-owned land for a public community park. The applicant is also requesting a non-exclusive easement right over the State of Hawaii owned road reserve for access (.383 acres)

Use of State-owned lands cannot be allowed until the State's environmental review process laws are complied with. This environmental assessment provides basic project information so that the approving agency may make an environmental determination on the project. After that is done the State can take actions required to enable the project to proceed.

II. LIST OF AGENCIES CONSULTED DURING THE PREPARATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT.

- A. Office of Hawaiian Affairs
- B. Department of Land and Natural Resources
- C. The University of Hawaii
- D. The State Department of Health
- E. The Department of Water Supply, County of Hawaii
- F. The County of Hawaii Planning Department
- G. The County of Hawaii County Council
- H. Waimea-Kawaihae Community Association
- I. State of Hawaii Department of Transportation, Highways Division
- J. Waimea Main Street
- K. The Exchange Club of Waimea
- L. Mr. Paul R. Weissich
- M. Dr. Charles H. Lamoureaux
- N. Others

III. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION:

The Waimea Outdoor Circle has developed a far-reaching concept for a community park on ten acres of State-owned land in the center of Waimea. The site is unique in that 1.) It is an excellent site for growing a wide-range of Native Hawaiian trees and shrubs - many of which are endangered, 2.) serving as a site for the study of Hawaiian streams as Waikoloa Stream meanders through the property (using the

Bishop Museum/Moanalua Garden Foundation's recent nature study curriculum for grades K-6 called the Ohia Project. 3.) being used as a passive recreational community park thus filling the need for additional park space in Waimea, and 4.) meeting the needs of the Big Island Na Ala Hele (non-profit) Trails and Greenways master plan which includes a proposal to construct a streamside multi-use trail in the parcel - a trail that will traverse Waimea from behind the Hawaiian Homes Lands' Waimea office to Hawaii Preparatory Academy on the Mountain Road.

While the site, containing groves of mature exotic trees species, can be quickly made available for almost immediate public passive recreational use through judicious removal and trimming of existing trees, the long-range program calls for the development of a Nature Park which will double as a community park and island-wide educational resource.

The Nature Park will be planted with species of native trees and shrubs typical of North and South Kohala and North Kona. As these grow and prosper, exotic species will be culled toward the day when the ten acres present a botanical cross section of a part of the threatened and endangered Hawaiian flora not grown elsewhere in the world.

The proposed park's location at about 2,600 feet elevation near Waimea's "dry side", but frequently affected by "wet side" weather patterns, makes possible the growing of a wide range of species from both the wet and dry uplands. The addition of overhead irrigation, mistheads and protection from drying winds in selected areas will permit the creation of microclimates representative of almost any mid-elevation environment. A long list of appropriate native species has already been compiled for the project.

The Nature Park is located in the immediate neighborhood (walking distance) of Waimea Elementary, HPA Lower School, Parker School, Kamuela Montessori Grade School and two pre-schools. It is also within short drives from Hamakua Coast schools, 30 - 45 minutes from Kohala schools and Kealakehe Intermediate Schools as well as the planned elementary and high school at Kealakehe and even closer to the planned West Hawaii campus of the University of Hawaii. The Nature Park's environmental education capability is enormous.

Plans call for the construction of public access and parking, trails, picnic sites, benches, provision of interactive signage and for the development of an interpretive center. The center will be designed to contain meeting rooms and instructional space for school groups as well as those from the general community and its visitors as well as an office for maintaining botanical and horticultural records, for volunteer Outdoor Circle staff and for communications. Ample display areas will supplement self-guided tour brochures and eventual docent-guided tours for groups.

The provisions for maintaining records regarding the Hawaiian flora adds an important dimension to the significance of the Nature Park. Such recordkeeping qualifies the center as a participating agency in a group of existing Hawaii institutions as a source of scientific documentation of one of the world's rarest and most unique floras. Other gardens in Hawaii cannot grow the species appropriate to the Waimea Nature Park site and there are no horticultural records for these species. Such records are the key to understand their growth requirements and for their conservation and survival in the wild.

The Nature Park will be a link in a chain of native plant collections banding the Island of Hawaii: Kalopa State Park, the high elevation preserve on Mauna Kea, Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, the Amy Greenwell Ethnobotanical Garden and the dryland preserve at Kealakehe now under design. Each site presents collections typical of its environment. The Waimea site is unique.

It should be noted that while Hawaii constitutes only a very small percentage of the total U.S. landmass, it contains fifty percent of its endangered species. The Hawaiian flora is The Nature Conservancy's number one priority for conservation efforts.

While cooperation with other private and governmental agencies and institutions is anticipated and necessary to the success for the Waimea Nature Park, the Waimea Outdoor Circle is the sole funding source for both development and staffing. Cooperation from all sectors of the community will be actively solicited during this formative phase of the project.

A. **TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION:**

Initial improvements proposed for the 10 acre subject site include the pruning and weeding of existing vegetation, installation of parking area (initially 10 to 20 stalls), comfort station, trails and signage.

After initial civil engineering and design studies are completed, the first increment of construction will be able to commence. Actual construction time of the initial facilities will likely entail 2 to 6 months. The schedule and scope of any future improvements will be determined after the engineering and design studies have been done.

B. **SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION:**

At this time the subject site is vacant and largely unused. Many years ago the site was used for farming by Yutaka Takushi. A revocable permit for this activity was cancelled effective 1978.

The 30 foot wide road reserve (TMK 3rd/6-6-08:Road Reserve) which provides access to the site is currently used by residents of the adjoining Ahuli Park subdivision and the Canada-France-Hawaii Telescope Corporation. Increased traffic over this road reserve will occur due to the construction of the proposed Nature Park.

It is difficult to estimate how much visitor traffic the park will draw over time. The Nature Park will be largely passive in nature. Visitors will likely be drawn by their interest in learning about the living botanical environment. The area will also be used as a community park but not one with lots of active recreation. It is estimated that 20 to 30 persons per day may be the average visitor rate of the first 10 years of the project. Educational events are likely to draw more persons from time to time.

The site is located in close proximity to Waimea School and other schools in Waimea. (Walking distance to Parker School, two pre-schools, Kamuela Montessori Grade School, and HPA Village Campus.) Over time the educational use of this facility by these schools and others should increase. This will be a social impact of the project.

Additional social and economic impacts will flow from this project during the mobilization and construction period. The initial scope of work will be approximately \$ 200,000 in value. The Outdoor Circle will lead the planning, funding, and construction effort but it is likely that a large segment of the community will be involved. The building of Anuenue Playground at Waimea Park in 1992 was a positive social event bringing many, many community people together to help. A similar effort may likely materialize for this project.

Waimea and the Kona-Kohala districts have been rapidly growing in population; additional usable public open space is desirable; more people need more parks. The town and region has been growing together with the tourist industry and the state economy as a whole. This facility will not in itself cause growth. It will be a part of general growth. Aside from immediate construction jobs and dollars spent in building the limited facility this project impacts on the economy will be hard to measure in dollar terms. Improving open environment of the area should indirectly be positive for the economy.

**C. DESCRIPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL CHARACTERISTIC
OF THE PROPOSED ACTION:**

1. Flood Hazard

As indicated above, the project site is located near the center of Waimea town in close proximity to community schools, shopping and activity areas.

The significant feature of the site is Waikoloa Stream which runs right through the 10 acres. Adjacent to the meandering Waikoloa Stream are flood zone areas. These flood zones cover 25 to 30% of the site. For a Nature Park, this is a desirable feature. However, detailed design must pay heed to this characteristic of the site. Engineering studies of the flood hazards will be completed early in the design development stage. There is adequate area for all contemplated facilities.

2. Soils:

Soil type WMC: sandy loam run off slow is the soil classification for this area. The specific site is somewhat rocky but suitable for agriculture and the contemplated park uses. The site was leased for and used for agriculture in the past.

3. Natural Hazards:

Potential natural hazards to the site could include flood, earthquake, hurricane. The volcanic eruption hazard zone in this area is 5 which is the second lowest on the island.

4. Climate and Meteorology:

The elevation of the site is approximately 2,600 feet, giving it cool Waimea weather with an average temperature of approximately 65 degrees, night time lows can get into the 40 degrees in extremes. Highs would be in the upper 80 degrees. Tradewinds average 15 miles per hour with high winds at times. Rainfall at the site averages approximately 30" annually. Generally, this is a very pleasant upland climate and supports the various trees and shrubs on the site.

5. Air and Noise Quality:

The site is located behind the Canada France Hawaii Headquarters and Ahuli Park Subdivision. These two uses separate it from Mamalahoa Highway and allow it to be quiet and apart from the primary sources of vehicle noise and emissions. The vacant site is not now a generator of noise or airpollution. Installation of a parking lot and park will increase vehicular traffic and therefore some increased noise and air pollution. The vegetation and trees in the area and on the site assist in cleaning the air. There will likely be some additional temporary increase in noise during landscape trimming/ clean up and maintenance activities.

6. Flora and Fauna:

The site contains primarily mature exotic trees such as eucalyptus robusta. A detailed survey of existing flora and fauna will be completed while formulating the park planting plan. Any endangered species, if located, will be retained.

7. Historical and Archeological Resources:

Historical and archeological resources will be investigated and surveyed prior to formulation of the detailed plan. Since the area was farmed in recent years archeological resources are not expected to be extensive. If features are found they can likely be preserved as part of the park.

8. Access:

The existing paved road reserve provides adequate access to the site and connects to Mamalahoa Highway.

9. Waste Disposal:

There is no municipal sewer in the area. Solid waste is disposed of at the Waimea Transfer Station. An on site waste water system for the comfort station will be required as part of the project. This will have to meet the requirements of the Department of Health.

Any green waste created in the park will be mulched, composted and utilized.

10. Electric and Telephone Utilities:

Demand for these in the project site are nil or minimal. Capacity is available from existing lines on the access road.

11. Schools:

As noted earlier, the subject site is very close to Waimea School and Parker School. The Nature Park will not burden the schools but rather provide another needed outdoor classroom.

12. Healthcare Facilities:

Existing facilities in Waimea will not be impacted by this project.

13. Police and Fire Protection Services:

Waimea Police and Fire stations at the Waimea Civic Center provide public safety services to this area.

14. Recreational Resources:

Waimea Park is nearby as is Thelma Parker park. These facilities (especially the Waimea Park) are used by a wide cross section of the community. The subject project should supplement these areas as centrally located open space/passive recreation area.

The trail along Waikoloa Stream will connect the Nature Park to Thelma Parker Park along Kawaihae Road.

D. SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF THE AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

1. Probable Social/Economic Impacts and Mitigation Measures:

This project is not a primary generator of social/economic impacts. It is intended to service an existing and growing Waimea population. By opening up the site to passive recreation and education the project should add balance to the community.

The site is zoned for commercial use but is not particularly well suited to such use due to its flood zones and existing stream. Expensive construction of a commercial development project here would also likely fail due to a lack of highway frontage.

Usable open space at this site should mitigate some results of the pressure of population growth.

Short term economic impacts will include jobs for construction crews. Most of the improvement work will be handled by volunteers. Volunteers will also manage daily operations and programs upon completion.

2. Probable Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures:

a. Physical Environment:

The site will be cleaned up for recreation and educational use. The Nature Park will serve as an example of the elements of the natural native environment.

b. Flood Hazard:

The flood zone will remain as well as Waikoloa Stream and the flood hazard associated with it. Clearing debris from the stream will lessen the flood hazard within the park. In extremely high water situations, the park volunteers will have to direct people to move from the Nature Park to higher ground.

c. Other natural hazards will remain as threats.

d. Air and Noise Quality:

With provisions for automobiles on site there may be some diminishing of air quality. Increased use will also raise the noise level. Establishment and maintenance of the vegetation will mitigate both of these conditions as the trees tend to muffle sound and absorb carbon monoxide.

e. Visual Attributes:

Establishment of the park should increase the visual attributes of this area through trimming, maintenance and management.

f. Flora and Fauna:

The Nature Park will continue to provide a home for native flora and fauna. Undesirables will be controlled and/or eliminated.

g. Access:

Existing access via the road reserve will adequately serve the park. Additional trail access will improve non-vehicular access.

h. Schools:

Additional educational facilities are always in demand. The Nature Park will be an additional facility for all schools to use. It will not be built or operated with Department of Education funds and therefore will not divert funds from other school projects.

i. Police and Fire Protection Services:

Existing police and fire facilities in Waimea have capacity to service this site. With increased usage, there will be the possibility of crime or fire. Management by community members should mitigate these risks.

j. Recreational Resources:

Development and operation of the Nature Park will place 10 more acres of well located land in passive recreation and educational use - enhancing and adding to community recreational resources is the purpose of the project.

k. Public Water Service:

Daily water demand will be estimated. Domestic use is estimated at 1200 gallons per day.

3. Summary of the Major Impacts and Alternatives Considered:

Short Term Impacts:

Impact: Short term impact will result from land clearing, construction and planting activities. The impacts will consist of noise, dust and exhaust fumes from cars and equipment.

Mitigation: The applicant shall restrict all land clearing, construction and planting activities to day light hours. Should dust pose a problem, the applicant shall apply water to reduce the levels of dust on the site.

Long term impacts:

No long term impacts are expected as a result of this project.

D. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

1. No Action

There is a great need for increased park space in South Kohala. The proposed Nature Park will enhance the quality of life in our island community. The no action scenario would deprive our residents of the opportunity of enjoying a Nature Park filled with native plants and trees.

E. PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES:

The mitigation measures proposed to ensure that potential adverse environmental impacts resulting from the establishment of the proposed Nature Park include: limiting construction to daylight hours; adhere to all federal, state and county environmental protection, health, safety and construction, rules and regulations; coordination of development plans and activities with appropriate agencies; preservation of any archeological and historic resources in accordance with appropriate state and county regulations; preservation of native flora; opening the park with minimal manmade improvements, restricting intrusion on the adjacent State U.H. Agricultural Experiment Station; Utilization of knowledgeable Hawaiian Kupuna from the Waimea Area for program development.

F. DETERMINATION:

Based on the information available, the proposed Nature Park would result in positive community, social, economic and environmental impacts and that the negative impacts on the environment, if any, would be minimal. Therefore the department has determined that a negative declaration is appropriate and that the preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required.

G. FINDINGS AND REASONS SUPPORTING DETERMINATION:

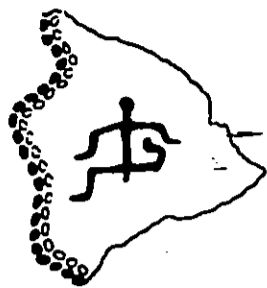
In considering the significance of potential environmental effects, the applicant has considered the sum of effects on the quality of the environment and evaluated the overall cumulative effects of the proposed action. The applicant has considered every phase of the proposed action, the expected consequences, both primary and secondary and the cumulative as well as the short- and long-term effects of the proposed action. As a result of these considerations, the applicant has determined that:

1. The proposed action does not involve an irrevocable commitment to loss or destruction of any significant natural or cultural resource;
2. The proposed action increases the range of beneficial uses of the environment.
3. The proposed action does not substantially adversely affect the economic or social welfare of the community or state;
4. The proposed action does not involve substantial secondary impacts, such as population changes or effects on public facilities that are not already contemplated;
5. The proposed action does not substantially affect public health;
6. The proposed action does not involve substantial degradation of environmental quality;
7. The proposed action does not substantially affect rare, threatened or endangered species or habitats;
8. The proposed action does not detrimentally affect air or water quality or ambient noise levels;
9. The proposed action does not substantially affect an environmentally sensitive area such as flood plain, tsunami zone, erosion-prone area, geologically hazardous land, estuary or coastal waters. The existing stream shall be incorporated into the Nature Park plans; and the proposed action is individually limited and cumulatively does not have a considerable effect upon the environment or involve a larger commitment for larger actions.

Further, it appears that the proposed action is compatible with the locality and surrounding project area and appropriate to the physical conditions and capabilities of the area to be served; the existing physical and environmental aspects of the subject area will be preserved; the proposed action will not result in any significant adverse effects to the environment; and the proposed action is in keeping with the objectives and purposes of the project site and area. The applicant will be responsible for and comply with all applicable statutes, ordinances and rules of the federal, state and County of Hawaii governments.

END

10-A-7 A ... Circle



**E MAU
NA ALA HELE**
P.O. BOX 6384
KAMUELA, HAWAII 96743

RECEIVED
DIVISION OF
LAND MANAGEMENT
HILO, HAWAII
MAR 4 2 02 PM '94

February 27, 1994

Glenn Taguchi
State of Hawai'i
Department of Land and Natural Resources
Division of Land Management
P.O. Box 936
Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

Subject: Comments on Waimea Outdoor Circle Lease of State Land for a Nature Park
and Environmental Education Center, TMK: 6-6-03:07 and 6-6-08

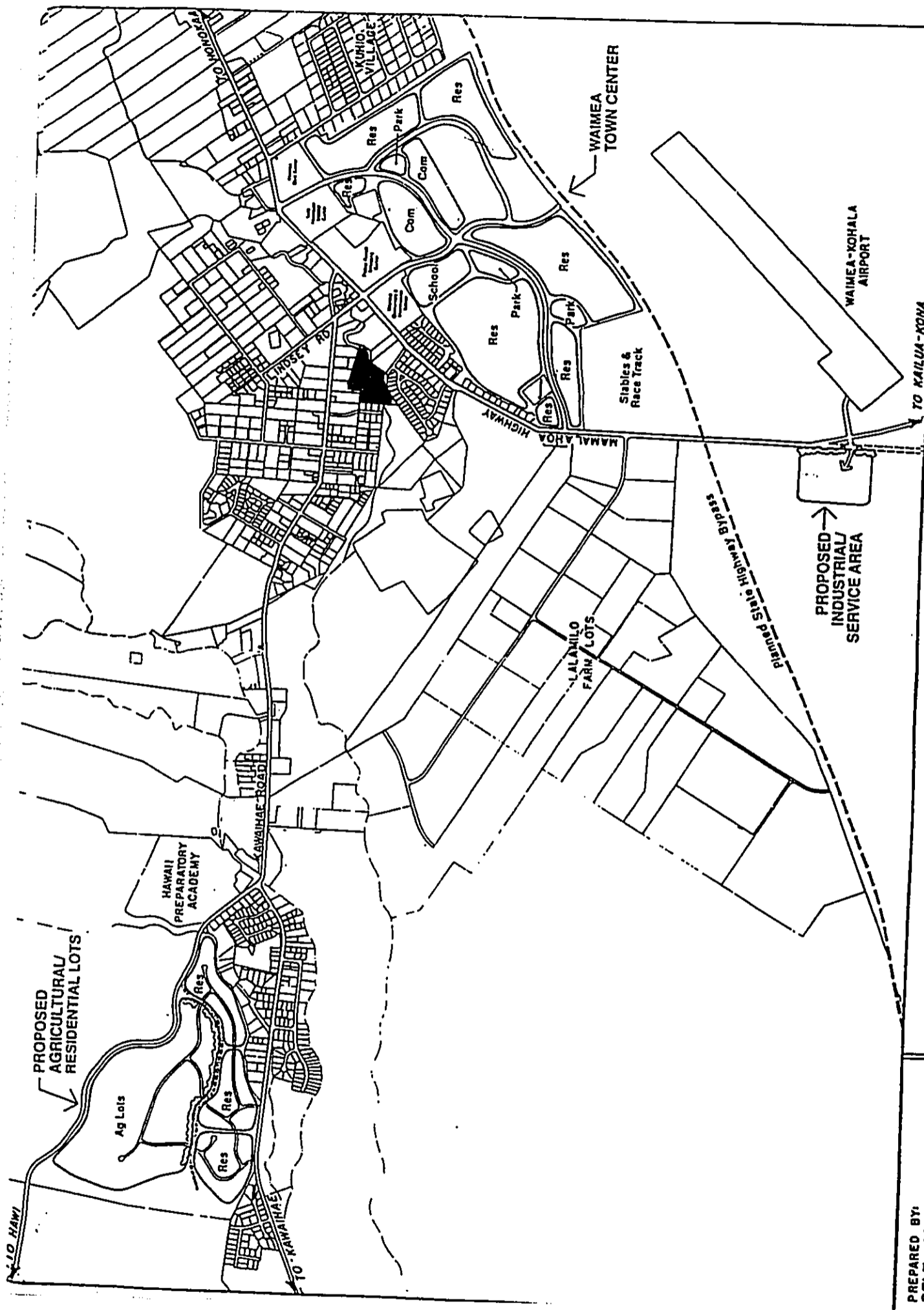
Dear Mr. Taguchi,

The members of E Mau Na Ala Hele wish to add our support for the creation of the nature park and environmental center in Waimea. We concur with the Waimea Outdoor Circle that the "Nature Park", as proposed, will be a great asset to Waimea and the State. We applaud the Outdoor Circle for undertaking this admirable project.

Sincerely,

Keith Wallis
Board of Directors

cc: Carol Hendricks



PREPARED BY:
BELT, COLLINS & ASSOCIATES

0 2000 FEET

NORTH

PARKER RANCH 2020

WAIMEA TOWN
 Waimea Town Center and
 Vicinity Concept Plan
 South Kohala, Hawaii