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Community Plan Advisory Committee, South Maui
Community Plan Update
c/o Department of Planning
2200 Main Street
Wailuku, HI 96793
Sent via email

Re: Agenda Item C.2, Sub Area 2, North Kihei
Further Response to Harry Lake's Letter to CPAC

Residential Use of the 88 Acre "Mega Mall" Site Is Superior to Small Town Center Use

I. Avoidance of Urban Sprawl

By locating several acres of new retail and commercial space in the 88 acre property under the guise of Small Town Center use, additional stress will be put on existing retail centers in the Kihei area, the likely result of which would be to make existing retail conditions worse, much like what the sprawling shopping center complex along Ho'okele has done to Kahului retail with particular impact on the Ka'ahumanu Shopping Mall which appears to be on the brink of commercial collapse.

When will we (the county planning department) learn that by creating new retail sites on the outskirts of existing communities, usually on cheap land, as is the case with the 88 acre parcel - former scrub ranch land - and Ho'oleke - more scrub land located far from Kahului's core - customers are drawn from existing businesses causing urban decay. Kahului is Exhibit A.

Good planning enhances community viability.

II. Traffic in the Area will be Increased

Acres of new retail space along Pi'ilani Highway would significantly increase traffic compared to housing. While in theory mixed use development can localize some traffic, the county's definition of Small Town Center recognizes that traffic will be drawn to the site from other areas. Not so with residential development. The last thing we need is to attract more traffic to this stretch of highway.

III. Brick and Mortar Retail is Challenged

Expected growth of online retail sales will continue to reduce the need for brick and mortar retail space. According to Forbes, mobile commerce accounted for more than \$360 billion in sales in the U.S. in 2021, increasing to \$431.4 billion in 2022, and is expected to grow to 511.8 billion in 2023, 6.0 billion in 2024 and 710.43 billion in 2025.

(See: <https://www.forbes.com/advisor/business/ecommerce-statistics/#:~:text=Mobile%20commerce%20accounted%20for%20more,and%20710.42%20billion%20in%202025.>)

Aside from availing themselves of the convenience and cost effectiveness of online sales, many South Maui residents make regular trips to Central Maui for basics to shop at Target, Costco, Walmart, Whole Foods, Home Depot, Lowes and other major retailers. None of these enterprises are expected to co-locate in south Maui nor would their presence be consistent with the concept and definition of Small Town Center uses.

IV. We Need Affordable Housing for Residents

South Maui (read that families and people) suffers from a lack of affordable housing. Contrary to modern urban planning concepts embodied in mixed use development mythology, do Maui families really want to live above an ABC store? In a high traffic “neighborhood”? Is the word “neighborhood” even consistent with acres of retail uses existing beneath “homes”? Most want to live in a true neighborhood where kids can thrive and ride their bikes without having to play tag with commercial traffic.

Where is the data supporting the proposition that Maui families want to live above stores in a mixed use shopping center environment? I suspect there is none.

V. The 88 Acre Parcel is Ideal for Residential Use

The 88 acre parcel is ideal for infill housing, which by the way is the opposite of urban sprawl.

Many essential services are located nearby. For example (See Google Maps, from midpoint of existing Kaonoulu Street, assuming travel by car):

Schools:

- Kulanihakoi High School (literally next door)
- Lokelani Intermediate School: 5 minutes, 1.9 miles
- Kihei Elementary School: 4 minutes, 1.7 miles

Food and Drugs:

- Safeway Shopping Center (includes a pharmacy): 5 minutes, 1.6 miles
- Times Market: 4 minutes, 1.5 miles
- Foodland: 6 minutes, 2.6 miles
- Hawaiian Moons: 7 minutes, 4.2 miles
- Tamara's: 4 minutes, 2 miles
- Longs Pharmacy: 4 minutes, 1.4 miles

Medical and Hospital Services:

Kaiser Kihei Clinic (medical and pharmacy services for members): 5 minutes, 1.5 miles
Miscellaneous Medical Providers including urgent care sites
Maui Memorial Medical Center: 20 minutes, 10.8 miles

Fire and Police Services:

Kihei Fire Department: 6 minutes, 2.5 miles
Kihei Police Department: 8 minutes, 4 miles

Multiple Gas and Propane Stations, Auto Parts and Auto Repair Shops

Multiple World Class Beaches for family and individual recreation

Amazon - daily deliveries for all manner of goods.

VI. LUC Order

Just as Small Town Center use would be noncompliant with the 1995 LUC Order so would residential use. Both would require amendment of the order. The difference between the two is that the community wants residential development while the land owner wants to inject retail to increase its return on investment. It should be pointed out that the property owners are responsible for the situation they find themselves in as a result of their blatant disregard of the 1995 Order which approved land use reclassification for development of a light industrial center.