

NURTURING THE LAND

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Community-based planning efforts apply principles of Hawaiian life to the development of sustainable communities in West Maui.

MALAMA 'AINA—TO CARE FOR and to nurture the land—is one of the most powerful phrases in the Hawaiian language, evoking as it does centuries of Hawaiian agriculture and stewardship of the environment. It also reminds those who live on Maui of another aspect of care for their island home: the *aloha* spirit of cooperation and togetherness

that unites on one small island many different cultures and traditions.

For more than a century, life on West Maui was dominated by the Pioneer Mill sugar plantation, to the extent that the *bango* number the plantation gave to its employees to use at the company store was just as good as dollars in the plantation

town. It was Pioneer Mill that took care of West Maui's housing, water, and power. Pioneer's sister companies pursued a whole other lucrative industry as it opened West Maui to tourism with the construction of the Ka'anapali Beach Resort. In those heady mid-20th-century years of resort development that produced new jobs, there were few—if any—





questions raised about the company's development decisions.

But during the 1990s, the future of agriculture dimmed in Maui, largely because of cheaper offshore labor, administration, and shipping costs that hindered the ability of Maui products to compete in global agricultural markets. First the Haleakala Dairy, then

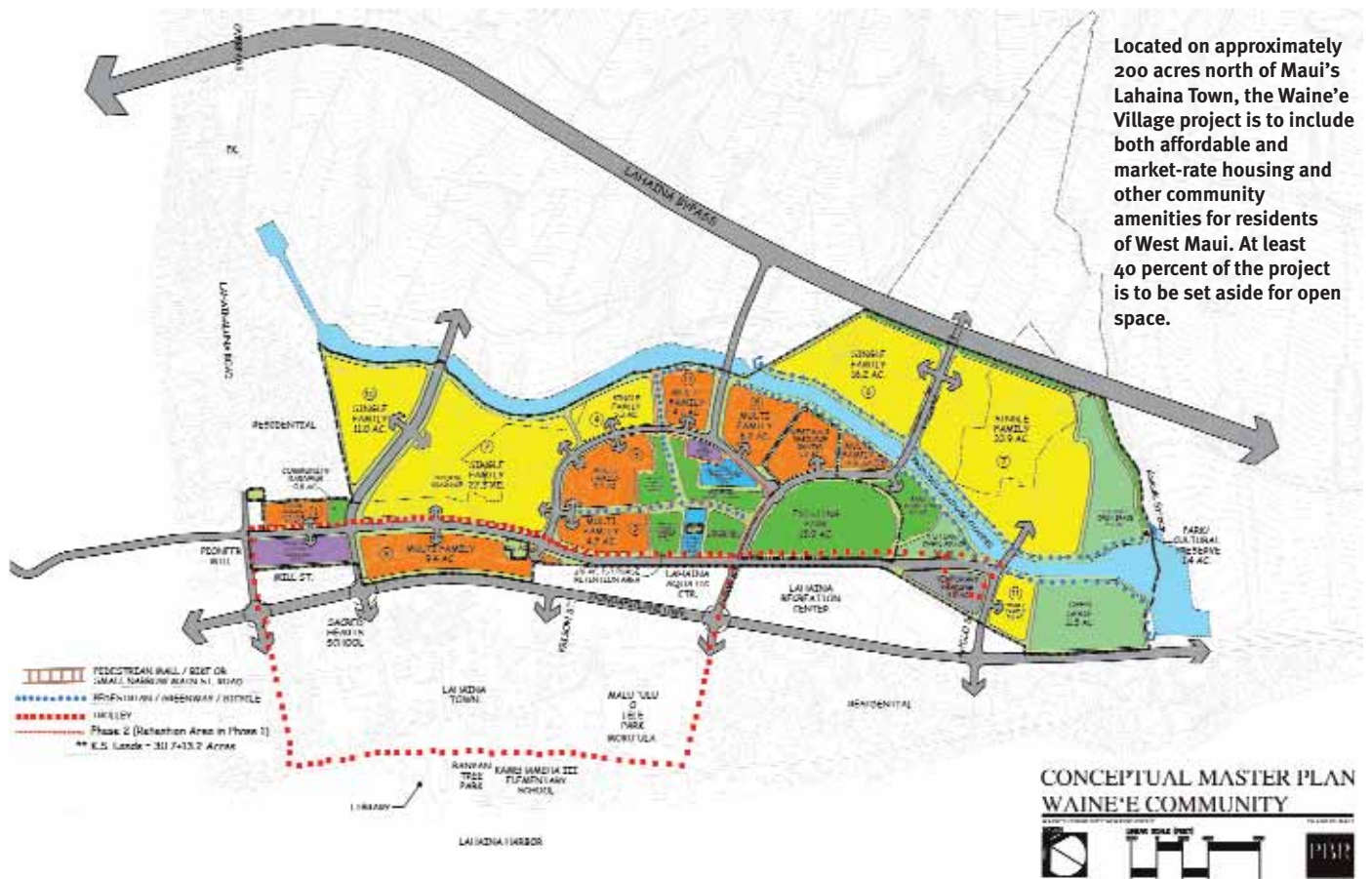


the macadamia groves, and finally the Pioneer Mill closed down. Pioneer Mill continued with experiments in diversified agriculture, eventually settling on the cultivation of coffee groves and producing a much-esteemed brand, Ka'anapali Estates Coffee. Ultimately, the company was unable to market the product to an extent that justified the costs.

Meanwhile, the Ka'anapali Development Corp. (KDC) attempted to develop an entitled parcel of 14 acres of land at North Beach, but, facing community resistance, it sold the land to another developer. The financial woes of the agricultural business decreased significantly the value of the land, forcing KDC to

The conceptual land plan for Ka'anapali 2020 has undergone changes since 1999, revisions that are the result of community input, financial feasibility studies, and zoning considerations. The 4,000-acre project, which is to provide options for residents to varying lifestyles and incomes, will encourage both *malama 'aina* (care of the land) and smart, productive growth. Included will be a mix of residential, recreational, open-space, golf course, and public/quasipublic and commercial uses.

rethink its approach to land development. It had experienced, along with the community, the suffering caused by the cessation of agriculture in West Maui. It had seen bitterness grow as longtime residents, suddenly deprived



Located on approximately 200 acres north of Maui's Lahaina Town, the Wai'e Village project is to include both affordable and market-rate housing and other community amenities for residents of West Maui. At least 40 percent of the project is to be set aside for open space.

of their livelihood, came to believe that they now had no say in the future of their community and might no longer be able to afford to live on the land that had been home to them so many years.

It was clear to KDC that the old land management approach of maximizing profits was no longer either responsible or effective. Alienating members of such a tightly knit community was no way to achieve a harmonious and efficient development process.

For its new Ka'anapali 2020 master-planned communities project, KDC sponsored a Future Search Conference to ensure the project reflected the vision of the West Maui community. The theme of the conference was "Making It Pono" (better, more righteous) and to that end, KDC reached out to the public and shared information, including sophisticated land use feasibility studies, with any and all interested community members. The vision of Ka'anapali 2020, embracing more than 4,000 acres of Honokowai property, was worked out through the conference and with written and oral statements from various community participants in a long series of public meetings.

For many years, KDC reached out to all sectors of the community, from private sector executives to public employees, and from archaeologists to businessmen to small farmers. It learned what the public wanted in these new master-planned communities: a heavy component of affordable housing, respect for the region's history and culture, balance between real estate development and traffic management, and preservation of Maui's agricultural heritage through the encouragement of small farms. KDC considered all of these criteria compatible with its own vision of attractive, ethical, and profitable town development. The ongoing Ka'anapali 2020 Plan envisioned distinct communities that provided options for residents of varying lifestyles and incomes, encouraging both *malama 'aina* (care for the land) and smart, productive growth, and including a mix of residential, recreational, open-space, golf course, and public/quasipublic and commercial uses.

KDC's overall vision for West Maui also includes the approximately 200-acre Wai'e Village project, which will provide for a community-planned expansion of Lahaina

Town, adding both affordable and market-rate housing and other community amenities that are expected to enhance the quality of life for residents of West Maui. Once an old plantation camp where many of West Maui's residents were raised, the property is uniquely situated to serve as an infill development. Some 40 members of the West Maui community were intensely involved in the project, right from the raw land stage.

The Wai'e homes will be on 200 acres *mauka* (on the mountain side) of Lahaina, which is ideally suited to foster smart growth and inhibit urban sprawl. The homes will be located close to residents' jobs in Lahaina Town. Community volunteers collaborated to include in the plan affordable housing throughout the community, mixed-use zoning that will enable residents to live near the places where they work, seniors' housing and community services, and at least 40 percent of the community set aside for open space.

KDC brought in outside experts to assess the development potential of the Ka'anapali 2020 property. Community representatives, along with public governing and regulatory

bodies, vetted the experts' reports on every aspect of the project, from engineering to economic impact to water quality to cultural resources.

Among the public facilities planned for the Ka'anapali 2020 lands is West Maui's first acute-care medical facility. Front-end costs will include funding of a new access road to mitigate traffic congestion—a major issue in developing any Maui property—and a multifaceted transportation system, involving bikepaths, greenways, and dedicated space for trolleys.

Meanwhile, in the Honokowai Gulch, Maui Cultural Lands, a Maui-based land trust led by environmental advocate Ed Lindsey, has been working to preserve the cultural treasures of the Honokowai Valley, including archaeological sites such as *heiaus* (shrines and altars). It also plans to restore Hawaiian agricultural practices, with the ultimate goal of propagating and renewing a whole ancient Hawaiian ecosystem in the valley.

More than 500 acres of Ka'anapali coffee groves have been revived in an arrangement that fosters both upscale real estate development and maintains the footprint of commercially viable agriculture in West Maui. The late KDC vice president Jim Wriston, believing that the Pioneer Mill sugar cane fields should not be allowed to remain fallow, voiced the notion, "Numerous private owners of smaller farms could help support and, if necessary, subsidize farming operations . . . that would help keep the West Maui mountains green and growing."

Resulting from this vision is Ka'anapali Coffee Farms, a private agricultural community that weaves contemporary island living into the rich farming culture of West Maui. On 336 acres upslope from Ka'anapali Resort, four- to seven-acre, fee simple farm lots now are available in a limited offering. Owners can build homes with some of the most attractive views on Maui under the condition that existing agricultural activities will be allowed to continue. MauiGrown Coffee, Inc., will manage the coffee groves, and the homeowners association will reap a share of the profits without any obligation to share in the hands-on labor, yet their land will remain in genuine working farms.

It seems most fitting that the man spearheading this effort today is the former Pioneer Mill superintendent James "Kimo" Falconer.

Falconer had had to preside over the closing of the mill and the discharging of employees who also were his friends. It was Falconer, a lifelong farmer, who led the effort to start up a coffee crop for Pioneer Mill, and who, refusing to give up on the coffee groves, leased the acreage from KDC, revived the groves almost single-handedly with the help of Pioneer Mill's current agricultural crew, and developed his own brand of unroasted "green bean," MauiGrown Coffee. Currently looking forward to a harvest of almost 100,000 pounds of coffee, Falconer is poised to do

occur, a company can grow more knowledgeable both politically and financially, and by doing so, can strengthen its identity.

Because of a planning process that has included the participation of everyone from

Ka'anapali Coffee Farms, a private agricultural community situated on a 336-acre parcel located above the Ka'anapali Beach Resort area will be zoned exclusively for agriculture and will include four- to seven-acre fee simple farm lots. MauiGrown Coffee Inc.'s veteran team of local farmers will grow, harvest, and market the crop under a contract with Ka'anapali Coffee Farms' Lot Owners Association.



very well in local and world markets, due to the reputation of the "Maui Mokka" bean and an established customer base of more than 3,000 companies. In this way, development and irreplaceable Maui agriculture are expected to complement each other synergistically for years to come.

The most important lesson for any land development company in any pristine, isolated environment such as Maui's is to respect and reflect the people's concerns, including the need for new community housing. When this kind of respect and interaction

government officials to the local people who will make their homes there, Ka'anapali 2020 and Waine'e are expected to combine smart growth, conscientious urban planning, and respect for the values of the land and of the Maui *'ohana* (family) for generations to come. **U**

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