



ʻOʻoma Beachside Village

Creating a sense of place to live harmoniously with our natural surroundings

Overview:

The concept of ʻOʻoma Beachside Village is an out growth of citizen involvement and input over an eight month period from May 2005 to January 2006. This document is intended as a beginning point around the “best” design for the community at ʻOʻoma Beachside Village with continued in-depth community involvement and meetings scheduled for June through December of 2007. The following information is intended as a designed frame for an intentional sustainable community with Smart Growth criteria in the ahupuaʻa of ʻOʻoma, North Kona, Hawaiʻi with 302 acres of mixed land use, including:

1. Approximately 75 acres of coastal preserve/open space and shoreline park (to include 600' to 2500' setbacks) and the Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail and a public canoe hale,
2. Public multi-modal trails will enable residents and visitors to travel throughout ʻOʻoma Beachside Village and to access the shoreline. Approximately 7 acres for the Mamalahoa Trail and buffer zone are included,
3. 20% attainable/affordable single family homes and town homes, mixed within the market units. The major distinction between Affordable and Attainable Housing is that Affordable Housing has income guidelines, whereas Attainable Housing does not require the buyers' income be limited to qualify for purchase,
4. A mixed use village centered around an interactive open space with retail live-work opportunities, public restaurants, gathering places, office use and multi-family residences,
5. Preservation of cultural sites,
6. Approximately 12 acres of community and neighborhood parks.

The purpose of this report is to:

- Document the citizen involvement efforts carried out by social ecologists of the James Kent Associates (JKA) firm to determine the best use of the land from the perspective of local citizens,
- Summarize the key citizen issues and management concerns regarding property development; and,
- Show how the major design elements of the current proposal reflect and respond to the input received from residents.

The sections of this report are:

Key Citizen Issues
`O`oma Beachside Village Design Criteria
The Influence of Citizen issues on Design Features
The JKA Approach

Key Citizen Issues

West Hawai`i is the setting of intensive development pressures. Not only are real estate prices some of the highest in the country, but government does not often keep up with the impacts created by development. Moreover, development occurs in the context of differences in economic standing and ethnicity, so it appears to many people that there are winners and losers with development. Indeed, the displacement of native Hawaiians from their own homeland is a very real occurrence and reflects the gap between the “haves” and “have not’s” that is probably as wide as anywhere in the U.S.

There was a high level of skepticism among residents that development can make a positive contribution to people who live nearby. Initial reactions to further development were almost universally negative and occasionally even hostile. As one observer put it, West Hawai`i has learned how to say ‘No’ to development. Now it has to learn the conditions under which it wants to say ‘Yes.’” The standard JKA question came to be: “How can development be done in a way that makes a contribution to community life?”

Over time, reactions to this question began to shift from negativity and skepticism, and began to be neutral, curious and then positive. People got excited that development might mean their kids could come home, or not have to leave, that there would be housing for people who live here year-round, that commuting might be reduced and not be such a burden on family life, that there would be business opportunities for local people. A pattern emerged in what people said that would shape this future project around particular key design features.

The following nine items are the major categories of issues and concerns raised commonly by residents and are summarized so that the guidance provided by local residents will be clear to decision-makers.

1. A regional beach park, “airport to airport”, oriented for local use.

Access to the beach is a time-honored interest of residents of Hawai`i that has been supported in recent years by a key state Supreme Court ruling. A survey of beach users conducted by JKA revealed that most people wanted a future beach park not to be very developed. The public wanted restrooms but did not need or want showers, snack bars, or recreation facilities. Residents emphasized that the beach park should be locally-oriented with no guard houses or gates, or other symbols of division between visitors and residents.

2. A looped trail system within the property and linked to other systems.

Residents stated that there are few places in West Hawai`i where they can walk or ride bikes with their children and be safe. People want to be able to get out of their cars and walk or ride a bike for recreation and exercise. The desire for trails is often linked to the “airport to airport” park idea and people have said that loops are preferable. Many residents said to add the existent

historical and prehistoric trails to new trail development, believing that the ancestors built trails to be used. The Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail is being planned along the coast of West Hawai'i and a citizens' group has been meeting to advocate for the area north of Kailua -Kona to be the first segment of this trail to be completed. Such community -based planning dovetails nicely with the development of the 'O'oma property.

3. Contribution to address traffic, a connector road near the airport.

Traffic is one of the most widespread citizen issues in West Hawai'i. It seems like everybody has stories of being stuck in traffic, of commuting times increasing more and more, and of the attendant stress on personal and family life as a result. Part of the traffic solution are connector roads, both mauka/makai and parallel roads to the main highway. In the 'O'oma area, a connector road parallel to the Queen Ka'ahumanu Highway is being planned to run between the airport and Kohanaiki. 'O'oma planners, the County of Hawaii and the State of Hawaii are currently discussing this connector road as a design element. In addition, nearby residents in Palisades and other neighborhoods believe that "practical" shopping in the vicinity would reduce their need to go into Kailua -Kona so frequently and thus reduce traffic.

4. Contribution to youth education.

A recurring theme of residents is that they want developers to "give back to the Island." The perception of developers flying in and out with little regard for the well-being of local residents is a popular stereotype. Residents want evidence that developers are making contributions to community life through their projects and kids and education are most often cited in this regard. Currently project planners are considering appropriate means of providing support to education as a way to "give back" to the community.

5. Respect for and interpretation of cultural resources according to local protocols.

Long-time residents and newcomers alike value the cultural resources that richly decorate the landscape. Many horror stories were told of cultural sites in the past not being adequately protected, with the attendant loss of archeological resources and knowledge. Residents want the cultural protocols regarding archeological sites to be followed in two ways: first informing the kupuna from the affected ahupua`a and having the kupuna participate in determining the disposition of the sites and ; informing the State Office of Historic Preservation. The interpretation and education about these sites is highly valued and many residents believe that the sites should be incorporated into the design elements of new development.

6. Respect for the landscape, "light footprint on the land."

The term, a "light footprint on the land" was used by Kepa Maly, a well-respected cultural historian, when asked about development in the 'O'oma ahupua`a. This value was repeated in different form by numerous residents; both native people with long histories on the island, as well as newcomers who wish to honor Hawaiian culture and history. A light footprint was defined as using indigenous and native plants, minimal disturbance to the slope and topography of the landscape, development for people for whom the island is home, and incorporating the existing cultural sites into site design in a way that adds quality of life to the homes and community.

7. On-site worker housing in a self-sufficient, pedestrian-oriented village.

The last two points 8 and 9, also relate to the concept of a village and how it is conceived. This topic is covered in some detail in the section that follows titled: "'O'oma Beachside Village

Design Criteria.” It is important to stress that affordable and attainable housing is a critical element of development from the perspective of citizens. Residents believe the county program is ineffective and believe that paying “in lieu of” fees for the creation of off-site housing is not a good answer. On-site creation of housing-as-shelter (not investment); so that the average worker can afford the mortgage, is what people are looking for in new development.

8. Opportunities for local residents to own their own businesses on site.

Residents have an active interest in growing businesses locally. Too often they see that businesses are from the mainland and they draw money out of the community without making a sufficient contribution. Locally-owned businesses are seen to give more to the community through their spending patterns, employment, and contributions. A local definition of what is a “local business” is that “the income from the business must be able to support the family and make their home mortgage payment; and not mainland owners that do not have to make a living off the business.”

9. Live/work units, with living units above commercial and retail ventures.

Live/work units were talked about as a means for local residents to live above their place of work and are tremendously appealing for a variety of reasons. Primary among them is the notion of scale. A live/work unit represents a scale that is attainable for the majority of people and is something they believe they can achieve.

O`oma Beachside Village Design Criteria

In one form or another people talked about “Hawaiian style community.” This was discussed as a village that is more town centered, is auto accessible but emphasizes pedestrian activity, and has a greater mix of housing, commercial and retail uses. This Hawaiian-style village would have “all necessities right in the village—there are homes that are affordable and shopping that enhances my life, not tourist shopping. That way families are not driving all the time.” Kainaliu and Kealahou in South Kona were used as examples of Hawaiian-style villages.

People talked about Hawaiian-style village as a return to climatically, geographically, and culturally appropriate ways to use architecture and to have buildings growing out of the landscape and aligning with the elements such as wind and sun to use natural cooling processes (creating energy efficiency), in combination with new technologies.

Based on innumerable discussions with local residents and officials, the `O`oma Beachside Village will consider the following criteria:

- Cultural center for education, concerts, Hawaiian living history
- Parks—small intimate parks spread throughout the village with one for large gatherings
- Pedestrian friendly—parking underground or invisible, not dominant. Bikes and pedestrian pathways abound in the village
- Loop Trail system for walking, hiking and running, connecting to Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail and the Mamalahoa Trail
- Shoreline Park; Mayor Harry Kim’s airport to airport beach park
- Beach Access oriented to local use (no guard houses or gates)
- Several community gathering places
- Restaurants/Cafes/Coffee shops

- Locally owned and operated businesses
- Live/work, commercial or retail on first floor, residential units on second floor
- Worker housing
- Affordable and attainable housing
- Economic viability —businesses and commercial activity that are diversified beyond tourism
- Retail/commercial/office with opportunity to own the physical space
- Post Office
- Bank
- Grocery and general merchandize stores like O shimas in Kainaliu
- Many landscaped spaces in commercial area where people can sit and talk in comfort and in a relaxing environment
- Flowing water features and ponds
- The village should flow mauka/makai , linking the community to communities makai of the Queen Ka`ahumanu Highway.
- Medical offices
- Alternative health center
- Farmers Market/fish market near community center
- Road connectivity to NELHA and the Kona International Airport

As these criteria became clear, JKA sought out specialists with experience in Hawaiian architecture. A number of them used the term “vernacular architecture” to describe the design intent of `O`oma project planners.

Vernacular architecture is defined as: (www.Wikipedia.com)

“...the non-verbal language through which cultures express a shared heritage in patterns of construction of their shelter. It is a term used by the academic architectural culture to categorize structures built by non-academically trained builders. Although modernity should not be cause for exclusion, true vernacular is most apparent in the third world where indigenous populations produce their own shelter based on traditions of using locally available materials. The definition can include a wide variety of structures, though domestic and agricultural buildings are the most common. Another distinguishing feature of vernacular architecture is that design and construction are often done simultaneously, onsite, with non-manmade materials. Also, some of those who eventually use the building are involved in its construction, or at least have direct input in its form.”

The concept of vernacular architecture is captured well by Mary Philpotts McGrath in her book, Hawai`i A Sense of Place:

“First in every Islander’s mind is a love of their natural surroundings and a desire to connect to the environment. Situated in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, Hawai`i has for centuries been inspired by the cultures of the Pacific Rim, influenced by both Asia and the United States.” (page xi).

`O`oma's architectural design mission reflects McGrath's goal of connecting people with their environment, creating with them a sense of place, "of living harmoniously with our climate and people." (page xi).

The following design concepts come from community specialists when asked, "What does local design look like?"

- "There is no Hawaiian traditional building style. Over the years Hawai'i building styles have been influenced by the Chinese culture, the Japanese culture, Polynesian cultures and others. The appropriate term to use in Hawai'i building design is the 'vernacular of architecture.' This includes influences of the climactic region and ethnicity. The vernacular of Waimea is Paniolo, the Hawaiian cowboy culture, which influenced the homes that Parker Ranch built for their employees —red roof, green door, and a certain pitch to the roof. The vernacular design of the coffee region of South Kona to Captain Cook is the small coffee shack depicted on cards, art and coffee labels —small one room homes with green exterior paint and red roofs. The problem is there is no one vernacular of the area around `O`oma and Kona is in-between vernaculars and it does not really have a particular vernacular style. However, there are certain characteristics that apply from Hawai to Captain Cook. They are:
 - ❖ Corner windows, door trim, 1" to 6" extension of horizontal above windows.
 - ❖ Double pitch roof going from 3 to 12 and 8 to 12.
 - ❖ Double and triple hung windows.
 - ❖ Ornamentation around the roof lines and at the eaves."
- "...colonial plantation -style homes with large louvered doors and windows, with large wooden slatted doors that open up to the outdoors. Kona housing designs need to accommodate 60% outdoor living and 40% indoor living."
- People live in Kona to be outdoors. If you create an open air atmosphere in the commercial area you will create ambiance and flow and people will want to stay longer and gather at the small cafes or restaurants. The pitch of the roof is very important and the layout of the home is important to get the mauka/ makai breezes and open screened ventilation in the eaves. "
- "The idea is to create enough density to have a viable, diverse, interactive community. The second or third story should be used carefully given the slope of the `O`oma land from Queen Ka`ahumanu Highway to the sea. View plains and view corridors are important and can be designed into the village so that one can see to the mountains and to the sea from different locations. Some of the buildings would house live/work units which have commercial on the first floor and business owners above their enterprises on the second floor."

The above criteria and descriptions enhance the community-based concepts described earlier. The information from all these sources show that planning `O`oma Beachside Village includes mixed use, where commercial and residential come together to create a working sustainable village. There will be open spaces with hiking and bike trails, a pedestrian-friendly environment, restaurants with major outdoor seating, offices above retail, and residences above that, access to

beach/ocean, cultural arts center for the preservation of local history, cultural events, as well as living history such as “talk story at `O`oma,” and gathering places for all ages to sit and talk.

The Influence of Public Contact on Design Features

There are a number of key features of the early designs that were changed substantially, dropped or added because of public contact.

- Golf course and private beach club (dropped)
- Development as second home market (dropped)
- Total residential development (added)
- Beach park (added)
- Residential Village design (added)
- Attainable housing for shelter not just investment (added)
- Practical shopping (added)
- Local business ownership (added)
- Connector roads (added)

Primary among the items that were dropped was the proposal for a golf course and more secondary homes. Many residents were ambivalent about having a golf course, partly because it's a symbol of catering to the wealthier, and partly out of ecological concern of golf course impacts on water and shoreline resources. When project planners gave up the golf course as a design element, sighs of appreciation and surprise were the outcome in the community. It is also seen as setting a trend for development in West Hawai'i —residential community with villages, neo-traditional design with lanais and front porches, garages out of site, pedestrian oriented community, and a major number of housing units provided at the affordable and attainable level.

The JKA Approach

JKA is an applied sociology firm that uses the Discovery Process™ as a form of ethnography and citizen contact. The Discovery Process is a well-established and accepted method of citizen contact and has been used for over 40 years in over 300 communities throughout the United States and internationally. The Discovery Process is a way of entering the routines of the community to engage in the activities and communication patterns of everyday life in order to see the world as local residents do. Gathering places are key locations for the sharing of information and informal discussions about the events of the day. Team members also went to public events and meetings to learn of citizen interests regarding growth and development.

With respect to the families of the land JKA members sought counsel from the kupuna and family members associated with the `O`oma property. Some have become advisors to the project. To ensure that all interests and all geographic areas were contacted community contact occurred as far north as Waimea and Waikoloa Village, to the Palisades neighborhood, businesses and workers at the Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawai'i Authority (NELHA) site, the Honokohau Harbor and Kealakehe High School and Intermediate School, Kailua-Kona and other residential areas as far south as Ocean View to understand commuting patterns, income levels, and development concerns. JKA engaged in

dialogue with over 500 citizens who gave input in various forms to the development of land known as `O`oma.

For More Information...

1. To review the Environmental Impact Statement Preparation Notices (EISPN), go to: <http://luc.state.hi.us/> click on Pending Petitions , see Environmental Impact Statement.
2. For more information on vernacular architecture in Hawai`i , refer to: McGrath, Mary Philpotts, Hawai`i , A Sense of Place: Island Interior Design. Honolulu: Mutual Publishing, 2005.
3. For more information on `O`oma Beachside Village, contact:

James Kent Associates
James Kent
Kevin Preister
Trish Malone
P.O. Box 1214
Kailua-Kona, HI 96745
808-324-4543

www.jkagroup.com

Enhancing Productive Harmony between Human and Natural Environments