

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND PERMITTING
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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LATE TESTIMONY

MUFI HANNEMANN
MAYOR



DAVID K. TANOUÉ
ACTING DIRECTOR
ROBERT M. SUMITOMO
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

February 13, 2009

The Honorable Ken Ito, Chair
and Members of the Committee on Water,
Land & Ocean Resources
State House of Representatives
State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Ito and Members:

**Subject: HOUSE BILL 1693
Relating to West Oahu**

The Department of Planning and Permitting has **comments** on HB 1693 which calls for the State Office of Planning (OP) to provide a report to the 2010 State Legislature on the "revised Ewa development plan".

Please note that this Plan has not yet been revised. We have not finalized our recommendations for changes to the Plan. We welcome their comments, and all others, as our open comment period ends on March 15, 2009.

Lastly, infrastructure evaluation is very technical and will likely require OP to expend considerable resources in hiring technical staff or an engineering firm to provide an adequate assessment.

Thank you for considering this testimony in your deliberations on HB 1693.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David K. Tanoue".

David K. Tanoue, Acting Director
Department of Planning and Permitting

DKT: jmf
hb1693-kst.doc

Late

House Committee on WLO
HB 1693 Ewa Development Plan
Testimony in Support
Rep. Rida Cabanilla, State Representative,
42nd District, Waipahu, Ewa.

Chair Ken Ito and VC Sharon Har and members of the WLO committee.

Ewa's Role in the Oahu Development Pattern

I am in opposition of the Ewa's General Plan as it stands today. The original plan in the ealy 70's which clearly stated that if the Leeward coast is to become a Secondary Urban Center, there has to be a underwater tunnel that will connect the mobility of residents between the two urban centers. This vision was abandoned and here we are today with traffic congestion. A congestion that will continually get worst. The Oahu Planning Organization prediction with the State's no-build plan between the leeward coast and downtown Honolulu, travel time will be around 2.5 hours. Inspite of these facts, building permit continue to be issued to developers.

I suggest building another freeway to and from town before anymore development.

The Vision for Ewa's future

Even with the creation of local employment within the region, data will show that only 30% of new resident will get employment within the region. The major employers with better paying jobs will remain to be Pearl Harbor, Fort Shafter, the financial center of Honolulu, the Airport and Waikiki, necessitating commute to town.

PROTECTION OF OPEN SPACES

To have Ewa as we know it today, we must preserve open spaces. We must preserve agricultural lands, and we are to preserve agricultural lands, we will alswo preserve the fauna and flora that is endemic in the area, for example the Hawaiian Poeus.

Beach access is becoming harder and harder to locals. Parking access to these marinas are very limited and the parking area is far from the ocean. Minimizing parking is one way to control access.

Access to the beach area Koolina is subliminally made inaccessible due to limited parking and the inability to remedy parking outside of the parking area and an intimidating guard shack at the entrance of the property.

The parking are at the Ocean point marina is also very limited. A State land is adjacent to the marina which can explored as future additional parking space.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE.

Traffic impact analysis requested or provided for new developments must include all past , present, and future developments in its entirety in the region as oppose to just considering one project at a time.

Current traffic congestion in the HI corridor from Ewa to Honolulu is at grade level F. Careful consideration to at this horrendous condition must be applied since adding more homes to these region will adversely worsen the current condition. Developers ask for traffic studies of their own projects independent to other developers or development in the region. These type of impact studies considering one project at a time will not reflect the true severity of current conditions in the region. The only traffic congestion mitigation measure in sight is the Ewa bound zipper lane with predicted completion date of 2009. The rail is scheduled to come on line on year 1216 but with the current economic downturn, it is expected that completion date of both project will be much delayed. These piecemeal studies favor only the particular development filling the application but it is of great inaccuracy. Furtherance of this grave situation impacts the quality of life in the region deeper.

ADEQUATE PLANNING FOR MASS TRANSIT.

The developments must have adequate thoroughfares from one subdivision to another to insure that mass transit, and buses to allow pedestrian access to these service areas. Promote the use of pedestrians bike lanes, bike racks and small quiet vehicles running along Fort Weaver

PRESERVATION OF IMPORTANT AGRICULTURAL LANDS.

Important agricultural lands must be identified and preserved as agricultural lands. Such land are located but are not limited to :

The land Mauka of Farrington Hwy, from Kunia Road to Fort Barrett Road.

PRESERVATION OF OPEN SPACES, PARKS, GREEN BELTS AND RECREATION AREAS.

ADEQUATE OPEN SPACES AND VIEWS AND VISTAS WILL BE PRESERVED TO RETAIN THE OPEN FEELING OF THE EWA PLAINS.

Parks: There should be the creation of "dog parks" and "graffiti parks. Graffiti is such a problem in the entire Ewa Plains specially in Waipahu. Violators feel the need to express themselves or enhance their God given talent that result in the defacement of our neighborhoods. By giving them the place to do it with less impact and the expense it brings to our community.

Dog Parks brings completeness to a well plan community. Having pets is an innate need to some of our community members that its presence will added value to our neighborhoods.

Baseball Parks: Ewa Beach is the home of Little League World Champions. Their winning brought Ewa Beach to the world. They became a source of pride and encouragement to parents for their children's participation. Resultant to that now is the need for more park space. We must add more parks and park acreage to our community.

PRESERVATION OF ENDANGERED SPECIES.

We preserve and protect endangered species such as the Pueos or Hawaiian Owl. The Ewa plains is the breeding and hunting place for the Hawaiian Pueos. Cementing the area will definitely drive these birds to extinction. Acreage must be set aside for them.

PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES.

Ewa's historic and cultural resources will be preserved and enhanced by preserving historic features from the plantation era and earlier periods including but not limited to the following:

The Ewa Manager's Mansion. It should be willed or leased to Ewa Historical Society.

Verona Villages

Renton Village

Tenny Village

Lincoln Village

Ewa Mill

Chemical Mixing Plant

Chemical Mixing Plant : The metal structures can be cleaned, preserved and stored for future rebuilding of structures. The area it stands on need to capped and cemented over so the structure can be rebuild on top of the concrete. This landmark needs to be re-constructed at the current site and entered for historical protection with the State and Federal Governaments.

2.2.6 These communities can be developed but not at the expense of agricultural lands.

2.2.9 Include Renton Road as a historical corridor in historic Ewa Villages. Design and architecture of current and future buildings must conform with the overall design of the villages during the plantation Era.

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LATE TESTIMONY

February 13, 2009

Glenn J. Oamilda
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Reference: House Bill 1693: Relating to West O'ahu

Aloha Ano'ai, Madam Chair and Member of the Committee,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to present my comments and opinions on the 'Ewa Development Plan (EDP), the long over due public / government document that missed the first and second five-year cycles, ten year late from public review and assessment. My name is Glenn Oamilda, born and raised in Waipahu on the O'ahu sugar plantation, now residing in nearby 'Ewa Beach, where for the last twenty-five (25) years I have remained active and continue to be involved in community organizations and activities - political, social and cultural - with greater concerns over development issues and problems that have directly impacted my community and the greater 'Ewa region.

Lot of us in the region who were there at the very first meeting nearly fifteen (15) years ago, came together to-talk-story, and with planning goals in mind brought forth a vision for a second city. Throughout the years, many have lost sight of that vision, but I still continue to speak out that Kapolei, and all of the 'Ewa plains is the Second City, and we should continue to plan as such.

After the closing of both 'Ewa and Waipahu sugar plantations, people watched and witnessed as sugar lands were slowly being transformed and developed into a city. Although, along with the many positive changes, came all the negative changes as well. Today, many who reside in the region are angry and frustrated with the everyday hassles of meandering through the myriad of traffic and development problems, issues and impacts, just to get to work and back. Some people remain very cynical that positive changes will come soon; while other feel that more on-going and continuous planning is really needed to insure a well maintained, sustainable and balanced growth throughout the region.

After many years, the public has learned, understood, faced and dealt with all the complexities that development brings, and yet they can all agree, more

importantly, the "Ewa Development Plan (EDP) as outlined should be reviewed and assessed. The EDP is a guide on development that offers a more realistic approach instead of groping effortlessly in the dark to find solutions and remedies. So why then is government dragging its feet on initiating a meeting, a task force or a conference that would address and deal with all the issues to related development and traffic? But the city has shown no willingness or desire to engage in a partnership with members of the community in a concerted effort to find answers.

This is 2009, between now and the next twenty-one years when the city estimates by 2030 the second city of Kapolei will be built-out, what hopeful suggestions can the city make to the commuting public ? If there are no suggestions, then commuters can continue crossing their fingers, hoping for the best, chug-a-long in daily traffic as they normally did, and just pretend nothing is going on.

Historically as far back as the early '80s, every community on the 'Ewa plains and along the Wai'anae coast foresaw a massive influx and an island shift in population with huge developments. Indicators and predictors proved to be correct, now we all share the same common development impacts, issues and problems.

When Kapolei was designated the second city by the state of Hawai'i, there were no concerted efforts or suggestions made by past city administrations, or even this one, to all the players in the region to come together in partnership and engage in the planning process with serious and continuous ongoing dialogues, discussions and discourses.

The 'Ewa Beach community, for example, which relies primarily on the Fort Weaver Road corridor, the only main arterial roadway in and out of the area, requested and pressed the city and county for an alternate road, one that was parallel and within the federal limited guidelines, in and out of 'Ewa Beach. But after years and years of political "foot dragging," and with mauka housing developments moving rapidly makai into 'Ewa Beach, the community unfortunately lost out and is now tucked away on the leeward side of O'ahu, ocean- and land-locked.

Today without an alternate route out of the area, 'Ewa Beach commuters must deal unbearably with twelve (12) traffic lights, daily road work and home construction; for residents who waste time sitting in traffic and drivers who must drive daily the five (5) miles distance just to get to H-1, doing the math calculation is a no brainer *its total insanity!*

The political and social strategies was to relocate business employers to the second city bringing workers along by offering them businesses tax incentives and tax credits; and at the same time, attracting housing developers who would design and build well-planned communities. Newly relocated workers would move in these planned communities, commuting workers would return to the region to work and together they all can live, work and play in the area, thereby spending more time strengthening family relationships, community ties and enhancing the *life-style* values from Hawai'i's unique cultures and traditions.

When the housing developers arrived, in the mid-to late '90s, they were noticeable by the staggering numbers of permit requests for land zoning, rezoning, waivers, amendments and agreements. The high numbers of permit approvals for housing developments, easily out paced government's ability, not only to provide guidance and leadership toward a *balanced* and *sustainable* growth, but also the power to control and mitigate the predictable mounting impacts caused by the uncontrollable and rampant developments on the 'Ewa plains. Moreover, with development came more housing construction, but businesses never kept pace with development and the growing working population, and as a result, many area workers had to travel back and forth to town. With the lack of over-sight and aggressive control over housing construction and traffic congestion, some people have grown more leery, angry, apathetic and the lost of trust and confidence in government and elected politicians; while others have deeper resentment that the city had simply yielded its authority and acceded its power to the developers.

Residents strongly believe that construction of only houses creates bedroom communities, minimizes the *qualities-of-life* and diminishes *life-styles*; hearing talks by the developers of making profits, meeting deadlines, rushing to build-out and building more homes because of buyers' markets, have been seen by the general public as greed! These sorts of thinking and behavior has only lessened the chances and prospects of ever obtaining a well *balanced* and *sustainable* growth in the region.

Public protest and anguish over too much cars! too much traffic lights! too much housing construction! no alternate roads out! no infrastructure!, of over building, of over development, of traffic impacts, of the lost of a life-style and the quality-of-life continues until this very day. It has intensified to a point that for many residents living in 'Ewa has become so unbearable *mentally, physically and financially!*

In addition, public dissent and dissatisfaction has manifested itself in other area of the island as well. Community leaders and residents living in the Central O'ahu area from Waipio Gentry, Mililani, Wahiawa, and others communities mauka, are skeptical that short term traffic solutions can be found. They have made it also

clear at many community gatherings and meetings, that increased traffic congestion from the west side, has made it tougher for them to get to town every morning and back home every evening.

The Honolulu city council, in late 1997, adopted the 'Ewa Development Plan. Through a *visioning team* consisting of community members and leaders from local boards, activities, organizations and in partnership with the city's planning department came together to address all future developments on the 'Ewa plains. After months and years of public discourses, dialogues and discussions, the team set in place a regional plan, a public/government document, consistent with a vision, concepts and policies, principles and goals with realistic guidelines for a *balanced and sustainable growth*.

Clearly, the EDP underscores two (2) important points: 1) In provision 5.1.2 that says "the city must take an active role in the planning and coordinating construction of needed infrastructure And the development of the regional transportation system," and, 2) In provision 2.2.10 "as a condition for zoning approval to insure that development does not outpace infrastructure development "

The 'Ewa Development Plan, however, is ten (10) years late and over due for public review. It missed the first and second five (5) year review cycles. Nevertheless, as of November, 2008, after ten years of added proposed and on-going projects in the region, the public will finally get to review and assess the draft EDP proposal.

Yea but, what happens to all those construction projects from the last ten (10) years that have been included and approved by the Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP) that have already been built, in the paper mill or shovel ready? Furthermore, does the public get to decide what projects stay and what projects go? And is the city willing to partner with the players the region in reviewing and assessing the draft EDP? And as a follow-up, is the city willing to engage the public in continuous discussions, dialogues and discourses on solutions to the present traffic and development issues, problems and impacts? And is the city willing to be involved in present, on-going and continuous future planning?

Today mind you, the city have shown no interests or hints of wanting to come together in partnership to seriously discuss present and future plans for the second city. I think the city purposely and intentionally side-stepped the public's EDP review process on all the new proposals and on-going projects. This passive inaction and insensitive display only heightens and further increases public tensions with deepening negative feelings. With on-going daily psychological pressures, financial

and physical stresses, residents living in the region cannot continue to remain positive and hopeful their vision and goal will ever come to fruition in the planning and the building of the second city.

Everyone should be reminder that the 'Ewa Development Plan came to life as the result of government partnering with the public. To repeat again, the EDP is a government / public document that outlines the principles, policies and goals and serves as a planning guide to on-going and future developments in the region that would help mitigate most of the present and future impacts and issues. With a "lone ranger" attitude, the city is moving full speed ahead, proposing to build a massive rail transit project costing taxpayers billions of dollars that would move people daily to Honolulu to work and home, as the only solution to 'Ewa's problems.

And yet, in the EDP, mass transit is not mentioned at all, and void of any provision. At the initial meeting on the Plan, nearly fifteen years ago, rail was never on the agenda, never an agenda item at subsequent meetings, never a topic of conversation by any committee member, not even a subject of interest at public community meetings.

There is no doubt in 2005, when the incoming mayor made a serious pitch for mass transit, it became a top priority on his political agenda; and he aggressively challenged anyone who dare to oppose or even question his motive on how to solve the leeward traffic congestion problems. After his first term in office, the mayor, had shown no interest, gave no indication of redirecting, or further advancing the Plan in the 'Ewa region. Perhaps this administration is not willing to further the EDP by a previous feel not in its capacity to delineate and to articulate a plan and a process for the second city.

Throughout the years, I have come to understand the 'Ewa Development Plan as being a two (2) tiered planning process. One is regional; and the other is community. On the regional level, communities on the 'Ewa plains should come together to participate in reviewing and reassessing the EDP; and then, discuss and dialogue the solutions to the present and possible future development issues, impacts and problems. On the other level, each community should locally discuss solutions and answers to the present and future issues, problems and impacts caused by development. However, with the assurance and the understanding that each separate tiered planning processes don't conflict with each another.

In the 'Ewa Beach community, members of the community, met on two (2) occasions. Discussions were centered and concentrated specifically on just the 'Ewa region and the City of Kapolei. The results were these resolutions: 1) That the Urban Growth Boundary "be redrawn so as to place outside of the Urban Growth

Boundary all of the land area intended for the Ho'opili project TMK (1) 9-1-17: 04, 59, and 72; TMK (1) 9-1-18: 01 and 04, with the exception of the land specifically designated by the University of Hawai'i, West O'ahu as both necessary for its mission and for purposes other than housing, and; 2) That all references to Ho'opili as a development be stricken from the 'Ewa Development Plan." In other words, the UGB which is presently makai of the H-1 freeway, move to the mauka of the H-1. The rationale is to keep the agricultural land in agriculture free of development.

Years ago, the 'Ewa Beach community which relies primarily on the Fort Weaver Road corridor, the only main arterial roadway in and out of the area, requested and pressed the city and county for an alternate road, one that was parallel and within the federal limited guidelines, in and out of 'Ewa Beach. But after years and years of political "foot dragging," and with mauka housing developments moving rapidly makai into 'Ewa Beach, the community unfortunately lost out and is now tucked away on the leeward side of O'ahu, ocean- and land- locked.

The practical legal precedence of the "up stream, down stream" concept, of building a river dam up stream that restricts water flow, simply denies the public living down stream access to water usage. The same metaphor can be applied to the Ho'opili construction projects that have been proposed mauka, or north of the Fort Weaver Road (FWR) corridor. Community leaders now believe that approving Schuler's development mauka of the 'Ewa Beach community will restrict the free flow access to H-1 to drivers and commuters is considered counter-productive and irresponsible.

The second resolution adopted by the community is, a) "Under the General Policy, Transportation System Functions" found on page 4-12, paragraph 1, line 3: change "should" to "shall." (This section has three sub-headings. Connecting line 3 to the third sub-heading, the sentence will then read " its transportation system shall provide adequate capacity for major peak-hour commuting to work in the primary Urban Center." b) Under "Adequate Facilities Requirement" found on page 5-16: paragraph 1, line 4 strike "will be established during the Capital Improvement Program" and add "are established by this Plan as Level of Service B. This sentence will then read, "Level of Service Guidelines Adequate public facilities and infrastructure requirements are established by this Plan as Level of Service B," and; c) In paragraph two, strike "should" and replace it with "shall." The sentence will now read, " zoning and other development approvals for new developments shall be approved only if the responsible City and State agencies indicate that adequate public facilities and utilities will be available at the time of occupancy"

The last resolution adopted by the community relevant to the 'Ewa region was :

Page - 7 - The 'Ewa Development Plan (EDP): Comments and Opinions

Support insertion of wording into the EDP that will: a) Require the City and County of Honolulu to be in compliance with the federal rules and regulations and specifications for sewage that are set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and; b) Require that all planned development projects within the area that is covered by the 'Ewa Development Plan (EDP) and which will be users of the sewage line grid pay a "user fee" for sewage processed in 'Ewa.

Aside from regional issues, these community issues were discussed and resolutions adopted: 1) That the Ewa Neighborhood Board thenceforth place on all agendas, under "community reports" the following participants: real estate developers D.R. Horton, Gentry Homes, as well as representatives from Hawai'i Community Development Authority (HCDA), and the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL. In pursuit of rational and sensible planning, mahalo 'io 'oe!

Glenn Oamilda