
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE HAWAII STATE PLANNING ACT.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that sustainable design
2 concepts for public infrastructure incorporate green vegetation
3 and trees to decrease urban temperatures, reduce carbon
4 emissions, improve air quality, and capture water to replenish
5 the water table. The effects of climate change have made
6 implementing sustainable design concepts more critical, as each
7 passing year has seen increased temperatures and other negative
8 impacts from climate change.

9 Studies have determined that people who live in areas that
10 have more trees and green space are less likely to have acute
11 respiratory symptoms and less likely to die of heart or
12 respiratory disease. Studies have also found that green
13 vegetation, trees, and properly designed and well-maintained
14 infrastructure can produce significant improvements to mental
15 health and have positive psychological and quality-of-life
16 benefits in a community. The Walt Disney Company uses these
17 principles in park design, including painting unsightly



1 infrastructure, such as trash cans and street lights, a standard
2 shade of neutral green to blend them into the surrounding
3 environment, improving visitor experience. The same can be done
4 in local communities to produce similar mental health and
5 quality-of-life benefits.

6 The legislature further finds that Hawaii is world-renowned
7 for its vegetation, and that residents and tourists alike
8 actively seek out green spaces. Increasing the number of parks
9 and green spaces in Honolulu's urban core will improve the
10 quality of life of residents and visitors alike.

11 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to improve the
12 quality of life in the State by:

13 (1) Establishing objectives, policies, and priority
14 guidelines in the Hawaii State Planning Act to promote
15 the use of green infrastructure, vegetation, and trees
16 in state facility systems, infrastructure, and transit
17 projects; and

18 (2) Requiring the office of planning and sustainable
19 development to make recommendations for implementing
20 the green infrastructure objectives, policies, and
21 priority guidelines established by this Act.



SECTION 2. Chapter 226, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to part I to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

"§226- Objectives and policies for state facility systems, infrastructure, and transit projects; green infrastructure. (a) Planning for state facility systems, infrastructure, and transit projects with regard to green infrastructure shall be directed toward the achievement of the following sustainability design objectives:

(1) Minimizing stormwater runoff and replenishing the water table;

(2) Reducing the urban heat-island effect;

(3) Encouraging the removal of pollutants from the air;
and

(4) Encouraging the removal, sequestration, and storage of greenhouse gas emissions.

(b) Planning for state facility systems, infrastructure, and transit projects shall incorporate the achievement of the following quality of experience design objectives:

(1) Creating a visual and sound barrier to enhance the quality of life in the surrounding community;



- 1 (2) Incorporating as much live foliage, trees, green
2 infrastructure, and open green space as possible; and
3 (3) Finishing exterior exposed appurtenances and concrete
4 surfaces not covered in foliage or green
5 infrastructure with a standardized paint scheme to
6 protect against weathering, blend appropriately with
7 Hawaii's natural environment, enhance a sense of
8 place, and provide for a better experience."

9 SECTION 3. Section 226-2, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
10 amended by adding a new definition to be appropriately inserted
11 and to read as follows:

12 "Green infrastructure" means the range of measures that
13 use plant or soil systems, permeable pavement or other permeable
14 surfaces or substrates, stormwater harvest and reuse, or
15 landscaping to store water or allow water to infiltrate or
16 evapotranspire and reduce flows to sewer systems or to surface
17 waters."

18 SECTION 4. Section 226-12, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
19 amended by amending subsection (b) to read as follows:

20 "(b) To achieve the scenic, natural beauty, and historic
21 resources objective, it shall be the policy of this State to:



- (1) Promote the preservation and restoration of significant natural and historic resources.
- (2) Provide incentives to maintain and enhance historic, cultural, and scenic amenities.
- (3) Promote the preservation of views and vistas to enhance the visual and aesthetic enjoyment of mountains, ocean, scenic landscapes, and other natural features.
- (4) Protect those special areas, structures, and elements that are an integral and functional part of Hawaii's ethnic and cultural heritage.
- (5) Encourage the design of developments and activities that complement the natural beauty of the islands.
- (6) Promote the increase of outdoor public green spaces.
- (7) Connect outdoor public green spaces with existing trails.
- (8) Promote the increase of urban tree canopy."

SECTION 5. Section 226-104, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:



1 "§226-104 Population growth [~~and~~], land resources, and
2 green infrastructure priority guidelines. (a) Priority
3 guidelines to effect desired statewide growth and distribution:

4 (1) Encourage planning and resource management to insure
5 that population growth rates throughout the State are
6 consistent with available and planned resource
7 capacities and reflect the needs and desires of
8 Hawaii's people.

9 (2) Manage a growth rate for Hawaii's economy that will
10 parallel future employment needs for Hawaii's people.

11 (3) Ensure that adequate support services and facilities
12 are provided to accommodate the desired distribution
13 of future growth throughout the State.

14 (4) Encourage major state and federal investments and
15 services to promote economic development and private
16 investment to the neighbor islands, as appropriate.

17 (5) Explore the possibility of making available urban
18 land, low-interest loans, and housing subsidies to
19 encourage the provision of housing to support
20 selective economic and population growth on the
21 neighbor islands.



(6) Seek federal funds and other funding sources outside the State for research, program development, and training to provide future employment opportunities on the neighbor islands.

(7) Support the development of high technology parks on the neighbor islands.

(b) Priority guidelines for regional growth distribution and land resource utilization:

(1) Encourage urban growth primarily to existing urban areas where adequate public facilities are already available or can be provided with reasonable public expenditures, and away from areas where other important benefits are present, such as protection of important agricultural land or preservation of lifestyles.

(2) Make available marginal or nonessential agricultural lands for appropriate urban uses while maintaining agricultural lands of importance in the agricultural district.

(3) Restrict development when drafting of water would result in exceeding the sustainable yield or in



1 significantly diminishing the recharge capacity of any
2 groundwater area.

3 (4) Encourage restriction of new urban development in
4 areas where water is insufficient from any source for
5 both agricultural and domestic use.

6 (5) In order to preserve green belts, give priority to
7 state capital-improvement funds which encourage
8 location of urban development within existing urban
9 areas except where compelling public interest dictates
10 development of a noncontiguous new urban core.

11 (6) Seek participation from the private sector for the
12 cost of building infrastructure and utilities, and
13 maintaining open spaces.

14 (7) Pursue rehabilitation of appropriate urban areas.

15 (8) Support the redevelopment of Kakaako into a viable
16 residential, industrial, and commercial community.

17 (9) Direct future urban development away from critical
18 environmental areas or impose mitigating measures so
19 that negative impacts on the environment would be
20 minimized.



1 (10) Identify critical environmental areas in Hawaii to
2 include but not be limited to the following: watershed
3 and recharge areas; wildlife habitats (on land and in
4 the ocean); areas with endangered species of plants
5 and wildlife; natural streams and water bodies; scenic
6 and recreational shoreline resources; open space and
7 natural areas; historic and cultural sites; areas
8 particularly sensitive to reduction in water and air
9 quality; and scenic resources.

10 (11) Identify all areas where priority should be given to
11 preserving rural character and lifestyle.

12 (12) Utilize Hawaii's limited land resources wisely,
13 providing adequate land to accommodate projected
14 population and economic growth needs while ensuring
15 the protection of the environment and the availability
16 of the shoreline, conservation lands, and other
17 limited resources for future generations.

18 (13) Protect and enhance Hawaii's shoreline, open spaces,
19 and scenic resources.



1 (c) Priority guidelines to promote the use of green
2 infrastructure in state facility systems, infrastructure, and
3 transit projects:

4 (1) Design all new state facilities, infrastructure, and
5 transit upgrades to include best practices for tree
6 planting and other green infrastructure.

7 (2) Make provisions for maintaining trees in accordance
8 with standards set by the Accredited Standards
9 Committee of the Tree Care Industry Association.

10 (3) Select tree species matched to site conditions to
11 maximize tree health.

12 (4) Select tree and vegetation species for larger size at
13 maturity where possible to maximize environmental
14 benefits.

15 (5) Select varied native tree and vegetation species for
16 biodiversity to increase resilience.

17 (6) Promote traffic safety with placement of foliage and
18 trees consistent with Federal Highway Administration
19 guidance, outside of "clear zones".

20 SECTION 6. The office of planning and sustainable
21 development shall submit a report to the legislature, no later



1 than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session
2 of 2027, that includes:

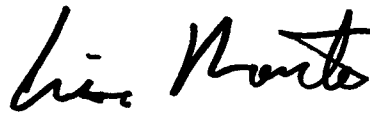
3 (1) Recommendations for implementing the green
4 infrastructure objectives and policies set out by
5 section 226- , Hawaii Revised Statutes, as
6 established by section 2 of this Act, and the priority
7 guidelines set out by section 226-104(c), Hawaii
8 Revised Statutes, as established by section 5 of this
9 Act; and

10 (2) Any other findings and recommendations, including any
11 proposed legislation.

12 SECTION 7. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
13 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

14 SECTION 8. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

15
INTRODUCED BY:



JAN 23 2026



H.B. NO. 1927

Report Title:

Hawaii State Planning Act; Green Infrastructure; Office of Planning and Sustainable Development; Report

Description:

Establishes green infrastructure objectives, policies, and priority guidelines for state facility systems, infrastructure, and transit projects in the Hawaii State Planning Act to improve the quality of life for residents and visitors. Adds a definition of "green infrastructure". Requires the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development to submit a report to the Legislature making recommendations for implementing green infrastructure objectives, policies, and priority guidelines.

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

