

# Can we create workable Maui Island Plan?

## THE CHAMBER VIEW

by Pamela Tumpap



An item of constant conversation these days at the Maui Chamber of Commerce is whether the

current process to review and comment on the draft Maui Island Plan can result in a workable document in a reasonable time frame.

Several fundamental concerns continue to be noted, including:

- The plan was created by the Planning Department from input gathered at various meetings, including community meetings, but the events thus far have not included presentations on various land-use methodologies with visual information so members of the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) and the public can understand and visualize the impacts of different growth strategies, discuss trade-offs and provide meaningful input.

- Additional visual data is desired to better understand the impact of this draft plan, represent-

ing one possible future for the island of Maui.

- The plan's premise appears grounded in the model of how development and expansion have occurred on Maui for decades, which many have significant and valid fears about.

- The plan incorporates Urban Growth Boundaries that may not be the panacea they once were thought to be. If the Urban Growth Boundaries are to remain, new data on challenges experienced with Urban Growth Boundaries should be aired publicly for additional discussion.

- Rural Growth Boundaries, required by law, are not spelled out, and are greatly desired by all speaking with us.

- The plan is inconsistent at best, although some contend that there is very little correlation with the companion draft Countywide Policy Plan that is before the County Council for review.

- While a 180-day period was planned for this phase of this review, numerous people feel an extension will be needed and are uneasy because the overall series (as this is only one aspect of the overall General Plan update) already has gone well past the anticipated schedule, with GPAC

members serving years beyond the expected time frame.

All of this has led to several questions in the minds of our members. Can this course of action be fixed with a broader approach and more public input once we better tap the Planning Department's extensive resources (i.e. planning expertise on diverse options, Geographic Information Systems modeling on new solutions, updated land-use data and best practices, etc.) to review choices and build consensus? The exciting news is that we have excellent tools in our tool box; we just haven't used them all.

If the process can be fixed with a broader approach and more input, how long might it hold up the plan? Will we keep on going through this exhaustive means and end up with an unworkable document that countless will challenge when it goes on to the Maui Planning Commission and then to the County Council? And if we go that route, how long will we then have to wait for an updated General Plan? Or is the current method broken and it is time for us to bite the bullet and substitute other procedures?

The challenge is that we are entangled in an arduous course that is well under way and already has experienced numerous delays. There is a huge sense of urgency to "get it done," and both the Planning Department and GPAC are working to make it better within given constraints. However, at this time we at the Maui Chamber of Commerce do not believe that simply "getting through the process" will achieve a workable document because there are too many questions right now.

It is our belief and recommendation that we should take the time to engage in dialogue on alternative-growth scenarios now; otherwise, we predict that challenges will arise in subsequent phases of review, and progress will be hampered continually.

If you agree, contact the Planning Department and GPAC members and ask to hear about further planning models, see additional visual materials, share your interest in added community meetings, and together let's heighten the discussion on a 2030 plan that will benefit us all.

■ *Pamela Tumpap is president of the Maui Chamber of Commerce.*