

PREFACE & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The East Honolulu *Sustainable* Communities Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Charter-prescribed requirements for development plans and is to be accorded force and effect as such for all Charter- and ordinance-prescribed purposes. It is one of a set of eight community-oriented plans intended to help guide public policy, investment, and decision-making through the 2020 planning horizon. Each of the plans addresses one of eight geographic planning regions on Oahu, responding to the specific conditions and community values of each region. The map on the following page illustrates these planning regions.

Two of the eight planning regions, Ewa and the Primary Urban Center, are the areas to which major growth in population and economic activity will be directed over the next 20 years and beyond. The plans for these regions will continue to be titled “Development Plans,” and will serve as the policy guides for the development decisions and actions required to support that growth.

The remaining six planning regions, including East Honolulu, are envisioned to remain relatively stable. The plans for those regions have been titled “*Sustainable* Communities Plans” and are focused on serving as policy guides for public actions in support of that goal. The vision statement and supporting provisions of the East Honolulu *Sustainable* Communities Plan are oriented toward maintaining and enhancing the region’s ability to sustain its unique character and lifestyle.

P.1 THE *SUSTAINABLE* COMMUNITIES PLAN PROCESS

This Plan is the culmination of the Charter-mandated development plan revision effort lead by the City and County of Honolulu’s Planning Department and its successor agency, the Department of Planning and Permitting. This effort was comprised of a process that encouraged and enabled significant involvement from the region’s neighborhood boards, community associations and numerous individuals. This plan will have incorporated input received from:

- Six meetings of the Resident Advisory Group,
- Public workshops,
- Extensive review and evaluation of landowners’ court submissions regarding their long-term development proposals,
- Two Public Information Meetings, and
- Many meetings with community leaders and representatives of government agencies.

P.2 LAND USE PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT IN HONOLULU

The City and County of Honolulu guides and directs land use and growth through a three-tier system of objectives, policies, planning principles, guidelines and regulations. The General Plan forms the first tier of this system. First adopted by resolution in 1977, the General Plan is a relatively brief document, consisting primarily of one-sentence statements of objectives and policies. It has been amended several times, but the basic objectives and policies set forth in the 1977 plan remain intact.

The second tier of the system is formed by the development plans, which are adopted and revised by ordinance. These plans address eight geographic regions of the island; the Primary Urban Center, Central Oahu, Ewa, Waianae, North Shore, Koolauloa, Koolaupoko and East Honolulu. The East Honolulu Development Plan was first adopted in 1983. The development plans for East Honolulu, Waianae, North Shore, Koolauloa, and Koolaupoko are now referred to as *Sustainable Community Plans*.

The third tier of the system is composed of the implementing ordinances, including the Land Use Ordinance (Honolulu's zoning code) and the City's Capital Improvement Program. Mandated by the City Charter, these ordinances constitute the principle means for implementing the City's plans. These ordinances are required to be consistent with the General Plan, the Development Plans (or *Sustainable Community Plans*), and each other.

In addition to these three Charter-mandated tiers, the development plans are supplemented by two planning mechanisms that are not required by the Charter, including the functional planning process and special area planning. Functional planning activities, some of which are mandated by state or federal regulations, provide long-range guidance for the development of public facilities such as the water system, wastewater disposal, and transportation. Special area plans are intended to give specific guidance for neighborhoods, communities or specialized resources.

P.3 AUTHORITY OF THE DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND *SUSTAINABLE* COMMUNITIES PLANS

The authority of the Development Plans is derived from the City Charter, which mandates preparation of a General Plan and development plans to guide “the development and improvement of the city.” Together with the General Plan, the development plans provide a policy context for the land use and budgetary actions of the City. This is the authority the originally adopted development plans carried, and it remains unchanged in the *Sustainable Communities Plan* presented in this document.

The Charter provides that “public improvement projects and subdivision and zoning ordinances shall be consistent with the development plan for that area.” Although the development plans (or *Sustainable Communities Plans*) are not themselves regulatory, they “regulate the regulators.” They are policy tools and are to be used, in conjunction with the programs and budgets of the City, to accomplish the objectives of the City and as guides for the decisions made in the private sector.

P.4 WHY THE DEVELOPMENT PLANS HAVE BEEN REVISED

In 1992 the City Charter Commission recommended, and the voters of Honolulu adopted, amendments to the City Charter. Chief among its findings, the Charter Commission concluded that the development plans were overly detailed and had engendered processes that duplicated the zoning process. To eliminate this unnecessary duplication, the 1992 Charter amendments changed the definition of development plans from “relatively detailed plans” to “conceptual schemes.”

The 1992 Charter amendments established that the purpose of the development plans is to provide:

- “priorities ... (for the) coordination of major development activities”; and
- sufficient description of the “desired urban character and the significant natural, scenic and cultural resources ... to serve as a policy guide for more detailed zoning maps and regulations and public and private sector investment decisions.”

In response to the 1992 Charter amendments, the Planning Department launched a thorough review of the development plans. The goal of that review was the revision of all eight of the development plans to bring them into conformance with the Charter-mandated conceptual orientation. The revised plan presented in this document conforms to that mandate.

P.5 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE EAST HONOLULU *SUSTAINABLE* COMMUNITIES PLAN

This plan, which is incorporated into Ordinance 99-19 by reference, is organized in five chapters and an appendix, as follows:

Chapter 1: East Honolulu’s Role in Oahu’s Development Pattern defines the region’s role and identity within the overall framework of islandwide planning and land use management.

Chapter 2: The Vision for East Honolulu’s Future summarizes the vision for the future of the region and lists important elements of that vision.

Chapter 3: Land Use Policies, Principles, and Guidelines presents the Plan’s core policies, and provides policy guidance for the region’s various land use elements.

Chapter 4: Public Facilities and Infrastructure Policies and Principles outlines policies, principles and actions needed to support the land use policies of Chapter 3.

Chapter 5: Implementation addresses needs for carrying out provisions outlined by the Plan.

The contents of each chapter is briefly summarized below:

P.5.1 Chapter 1: East Honolulu’s Role in Oahu’s Development Pattern

Consistent with the directed growth provisions of the General Plan, East Honolulu is targeted for very little growth over the 20-25 year projection horizon of this plan. Policies in support of this goal limit the potential for expansion of the region’s housing stock, commercial centers and economic activity, and are focussed on maintaining the patterns of development characteristic of its residential neighborhoods.

P.5.2 Chapter 2: The Vision for East Honolulu’s Future

This vision is shaped around two principal concepts. The first of these calls for protection of the community’s natural, scenic, cultural and historic resources. The second principal concept addresses the need to improve and replace, as necessary, the region’s aging infrastructure systems, and to adapt the housing supply to accommodate modest expected increases in residents and the changing demographic profile of East Honolulu’s aging population. Seven key elements of the vision are identified, including:

- Establish an Urban Community Boundary to contain the spread of urban development; and Agriculture Boundaries to protect and preserve the regions’ existing agricultural areas;
- Preserve the scenic value of the Koko Head-Makapuu viewshed;
- Maintain the urban form of ridge-and-valley neighborhoods;
- Expand access to mountain and shoreline recreational areas;
- Protect and preserve natural areas;
- Adapt the housing supply to the region’s changing demographics; and
- Focus the commercial centers on serving the region’s neighborhoods.

P.5.3 Chapter 3: Land Use Policies, Principles, and Guidelines

This chapter presents general policies, planning principles and guidelines for the major concerns related to land use in East Honolulu. General policies related to each land use type are summarized below:

P.5.3.1 Open Space Preservation:

- Protect scenic views, provide recreation and promote access to shoreline and mountain areas.
- Define the boundaries of communities and provide fire safety buffers.
- Create a linear system of landscaped pathways along roadways and drainage ways.

P.5.3.2 Island-Based Parks and Recreation:

- Employ appropriate screening and siting.
- Ensure environmental compatibility in the design and construction of park facilities.
- Integrate recreational opportunities with the characteristics of the surrounding community.

P.5.3.3 Community-Based Parks:

- Increase the inventory of community-based parks to provide appropriately located sports and recreation facilities.
- Modify recreation facilities and increase access to school facilities to respond to changing demographic profiles and recreation needs.
- Require developers of new residential projects to provide land for open space and recreation purposes, rather than paying the park dedication fee.
- Pursue development of linear parkways along streams and drainage channels.

P.5.3.4 Historic and Cultural Resources:

- Recommend in situ preservation and appropriate protection for sites with high preservation value.
- Determine appropriate treatment for a historic site by the particular qualities of the site and its relationship to the surroundings.
- Determine the degree of access appropriate to promotion and preservation of the historic, cultural and educational value of each site.

P.5.3.5 Residential Uses:

- Increase the region's housing capacity primarily through infill development of existing residential areas.
- Respond the changing needs of East Honolulu's aging population by providing for development of a variety of housing opportunities affordable to low- and moderate-income, gap group, and other elderly households.
- Modify residential street design to provide emphasis on safe, accessible, convenient and comfortable pedestrian routes, bus stops and bike routes.

P.5.3.6 Non-residential Development:

- Identify and define commercial uses in various categories appropriate to the character and needs of East Honolulu’s communities, including: neighborhood commercial centers; the regional town center; and areas supporting resort and institutional uses.
- Limit the growth of commercial centers, resorts and institutions to current sites.

P.5.4 Chapter 4: Public Facilities and Infrastructure Policies and Principles

This chapter presents general policies and planning principles for the major concerns related to public facilities and infrastructure in East Honolulu. General policies related to each facility type are summarized below:

P.5.4.1 Transportation Systems:

- Reduce reliance on the private passenger vehicle by promoting transportation system management (e.g., contraflow lane operations) and travel demand management (e.g., transit, carpool and vanpool programs) measures for both commuting and local trips.
- Provide adequate and improved mobility between communities, shopping, and recreation centers, especially by enhancing pedestrian, bicycle and transit modes of travel.
- Maintain adequate person-carrying capacity for peak-period commuting to and from work in the Primary Urban Center.

P.5.4.2 Water Systems Development:

- Integrate management of all potable and nonpotable water sources, including groundwater, stream water, storm water, and effluent, following State and City legislative mandates.
- Adopt and implement water conservation practices in the design of new developments and the modification of existing uses, including landscaped areas.

P.5.4.3 Wastewater Treatment:

- Connect all wastewater produced within the Urban Community Boundary area to a municipal or publicly-regulated sewer service system.
- Treat and re-use, where feasible, wastewater effluent as a water conservation measure.
- Provide buffer zones and landscape elements between the East Honolulu WWTP and adjacent residential designated areas.

P.5.4.4 Electrical Power Development:

- Design system elements and incrementally replace facilities such as sub-stations, transmission lines

and towers to avoid or mitigate any potential adverse impacts on scenic and natural resource values and to enhance system reliability.

P.5.4.5 Solid Waste Handling and Disposal:

- Continue efforts to establish more efficient waste diversion and collection systems.
- Expand the use of automated refuse collection in residential areas.

P.5.4.6 Drainage Systems:

- Promote drainage system design, which emphasizes control and minimization of non-point source pollution and the retention of storm water on-site and in wetlands.
- View storm water as a potential irregular source of water for recharge of the aquifer that should be retained for absorption rather than quickly moved to coastal waters.
- Select natural and man-made vegetated drainageways and retention basins as the preferred solution to drainage problems wherever they can promote water recharge, help control non-point source pollution, and provide passive recreation benefits.
- Keep drainageways clear of debris to avoid the flooding problems that have occurred in the past.

P.5.4.7 School Facilities:

- Approve new residential developments only after the State Department of Education certifies that adequate school facilities will be available when the development is completed.
- Require that developers pay their fair share of all costs needed to ensure provision of adequate school facilities for the children living in their developments.

P.5.4.8 Civic and Public Safety Facilities:

- Provide adequate staffing and facilities to ensure effective and efficient delivery of basic governmental service and protection of public safety.

P.5.5 Chapter 5: Implementation

This chapter discusses the various measures that will be necessary to ensure timely implementation of the plan, including those measures that will minimize disruption during the transition into the plan. Among the measures addressed by this chapter, changes to the zoning maps and the Land Use Ordinance will be necessary to achieve required consistency with the *Sustainable Communities Plan*, as will various other regulatory codes and standards. This chapter also addresses monitoring of plan implementation and provides for comprehensive review of the plan at five-year intervals.

P.5.6 Appendix A

The appendix provides three color maps that illustrate some of the plan's textual provisions. Because these maps are intended merely to be illustrative of the text, if there are any conflicts between the maps and the text, the text shall prevail.