

# Pilina Pūowaina



## Community Conversations Updates

---

Land Use - May 28, 2025



# NO KĀKOU, NA KĀKOU... FOR PAPAĀKŌLEA, BY PAPAĀKŌLEA

Hui,

Aloha mai ohana. KULA is happy to share the fourth update on PILINA PUOWAINA, our community development initiative dedicated to creating a Kūpuna Supportive Living Center on the slopes of Pūowaina. The center is envisioned as a kauhale or village for kūpuna to age safely in Papakōlea. This newsletter highlights the takeaways from the Community Conversation held on **May 28 (Land Use)**.

While we deeply appreciate everyone who has come out to our conversations, we need to hear from as many residents as possible. Your thoughts, concerns, questions and expertise in numerous areas of land development, construction, kūpuna housing, health, human and social services are all vital to the project's success.

We would like to send a special shout out to makua, ages 35-55. Your participation is very important in creating this center. Our kūpuna are very clear of the challenges they face every day. And they are equally concerned for those who will follow them. As they've stated to us, "I probably won't be here when it's done. It's really for my kids and my grandkids." And they're right. We need to hear from Papakōlea makua. Please come and join us at an upcoming conversation. Mahalo nui.

There are 10 families who signed up to host a home conversation. These conversations are aimed to provide family members and neighbors of the host a convenient and comfortable space to talk story. Guests are by invitation of the host only. KULA will provide light refreshments and facilitate the meeting for no more than 2 hours. Home conversations will continue in June and throughout the summer. If you'd like to host a home conversation, please contact Puni at 808-358-6732.

In closing mahalo nui Papakōlea, Kewalo and Kalawahine for your prayers, love and support in moving Pilina Pūowaina forward. To attend any future community conversation, please RSVP by QR code or call us at 808-649-3725. A small makana will be provided.

B. Puni Kekauoha  
Senior Vice President, Kula no nā Po'e Hawai'i  
Project Director - Pilina Pūowaina

Dr. Adrienne Dillard, MSW, LSW, PhD  
Chief Executive Officer



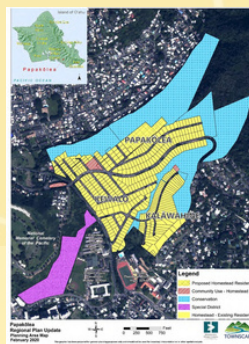
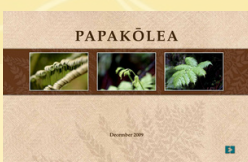
## Background

Since the majority of Papakōlea homes are built against the mountains and only have stairway access, the lack of safe housing conditions is a significant concern. The Kūpuna Supportive Living Center is envisioned as a kauhale or village for kūpuna to age safely in the community. Originally identified as a Priority Project in the 2009 Papakōlea Regional Plan and reaffirmed in the 2020 Papakōlea Regional Plan, this project is for our kūpuna, our community, and our future generations.

Papakōlea  
2009  
Regional Plan



Papakōlea  
2020  
Regional Plan



## 'Auamo Kuleana

As we embark on the Pilina Pūowaina journey, we invite you to 'Auamo Kuleana. 'Auamo Kuleana (carrying responsibilities) is a widely used call to action that encourages individuals & communities to shoulder responsibilities & place them in balance. 'Auamo is a pole or stick used to carry burdens (heavy loads) across the shoulder. The phrase prompts a reflection of how to best balance the diverse responsibilities we assume & have been entrusted with.

'A'ohē hana nui ke alu 'ia  
No task is too big when done  
together by all



### Meeting Takeaways

#### **DHHL's Presentation - Land Use & the Pilina Pūowaina Project**

##### **Hawaiian Homes Commission Act and Commission Authority**

- The Hawaiian Homes Commission (the Commission) is the authority that approves or denies land uses on Hawaiian Homelands
- Several legal cases have clarified rules that the Commission now complies to, including Department of Health environmental statutes for health and safety
  - One specific legal case highlighted by DHHL:
    - Kepo'o v. Watson - In the mid 90's, a case that led to the Department being required to comply with environmental statutes related to health and safety

##### **Clarification on Hawaiian Homelands County Zoning Exemptions**

- While DHHL can exercise land use authorities to not abide by City and County zoning, DHHL is still required to show that buildings are structurally sound and safe
- The Department can implement their own building processes to offset some of the backlog permitting from the City and County

##### **DHHL Island Plans Articulate Land Use Policy For Each Ahupua'a**

- The [O'ahu Island Plan](#) Page 6-9 (Figure 6-3) has the Honolulu ahupua'a land use designations that includes Papakōlea, Kalāwahine, and Kewalo. The Pilina Pūowaina project area currently sits in a special district land use designation

[O'ahu  
Island  
Plan](#)



- **Explanation of Special District Land Use Designation**

- These areas are identified as requiring special attention because of the unique resources that exist on the land
- DHHL and the Commission require additional studies and planning to be completed so that DHHL can make recommendations regarding the land use
- This differs from the City and County Special District Designation Guidelines for Punchbowl which includes design guidelines to better ensure the Punchbowl landmark is preserved

- **DHHL Land Use Designations**

- Driven by beneficiary input & assessments of the project area & surrounding area to determine what is an appropriate use

### Meeting Takeaways

#### **DHHL's Presentation - Land Use & the Pilina Pūowaina Project**

##### **Right Of Entry (ROE) Process and Requirements**

DHHL has provided KULA with a short term disposition ROE (ROE #752) for the project

- **Section 22 (Special Conditions) of the ROE** requires completion of a due diligence study to ensure potential long term lessees are aware of constraints on site and what may need to be done in order to move the project forward

#### **The Due Diligence Process Includes:**

##### **Submittal of Master Plan**

###### **(Section 22 A) - 3 items:**

- Written descriptions of activities done on-site (Section 22 A)
  - Written description of the activities and projects that would take place on site. This does not need to be extremely detailed or lengthy
- Map of activities done on-site
  - Will be completed by G70, as part of their contract with KULA
  - For improvements KULA intends to make to the site, whether it is a building, garden, or other projects, the map will show where on the property to activity will take place and how much space the project will take

##### **Submittal of Business Plan**

###### **(Section 22 B)**

- What KULA will do to fund the initial project and future operations to maintain the property
- Funding resources and how KULA plans to secure resources over time, (e.g.) grants or long term donations
- How KULA will be able to pay for the site

##### **HRS 6E (State Historic Preservation**

###### **Compliance) Compliance (Section 22 C)**

- KULA is required to submit project recommendations and whether any of its planned activities will impact historic resources on site
- KULA, with the assistance of a licensed archaeologist, will need to determine the presence of historic resources on the property
- This may include conducting a surface survey of the project area and a literature review of past archaeological studies that have been conducted in the ahupuaa
- If there are historic resources in the project and if those resources may be impacted by the proposed project, a mitigation plan in the case that historical resources are impacted
- SHPD will follow-up to accept or request a revision of KULA's determination whether historic properties are affected and any associated proposed mitigation measures

##### **Bi-Annual Progress Reports (Section 22 D)**

- DHHL requires KULA to submit Progress Reports once the ROE is signed
- Reports do not need to be lengthy, should include updates on progress made towards special conditions, potential roadblocks, and any other necessary updates

### Meeting Takeaways

#### **DHHL's Presentation - Land Use & the Pilina Pūowaina Project**

##### **Consideration to Convert Land Designation from Special District to Community Use**

- Based on KULA's identified uses of the land to date, DHHL's Planning Office suggested that KULA consider seeking Hawaiian Homes Commission approval to convert the current designation from special use to a community use designation
- Through the planning process KULA is currently undertaking, the master plan and environmental assessment reports should be used to justify the designation change
- The land use designation change may make sense based on the programs and projects Kula foresees tied to Pilina Pūowaina
- Special Use & Community Use are defined as:
  - **Special Use Designation**
    - Areas requiring special attention because of unusual opportunities and/or constraints, e.g. natural/man-made hazards, open spaces, cultural resources, mixed use areas, greenways, and limited infrastructure access, etc.
    - The purpose of this land use is to address the unique opportunities and constraints identified with further planning
  - **Community Use Designation**
    - Areas designated for community uses and facilities
    - This could include space for parks and recreation, cultural activities, schools, water storage, emergency facilities, and other public amenities and facilities
    - The purpose of this land use is to provide space for homestead and public community facilities

##### **Punchbowl Special District Design Guidelines**

- Created by the City and County, KULA can use this document to identify parts of the Pilina Pūowaina project that align with the Design Guidelines and those that may not be able to conform to the specific provisions
- Thoughtful communication with stakeholders such as neighborhood boards will have to be considered if KULA decides to veer from the Special District Design Guidelines
- Specific sections of the guidelines that may overlap include:
  - Preservation and Enhancement of Viewscapes - of Pūowaina as it looks out to Honolulu
  - Height of Development - based on the viewscape while keeping in mind the desires of the community (continued on next page)

**Punchbowl Special District Design Guidelines**



### **Punchbowl Special District Design Guidelines - (Continued)**

- To be clear, DHHL does not have to comply with the Punchbowl Special District Design Guidelines. But DHHL does want to be good neighbors within the larger community and be respectful of other people's values. If we need to deviate from the Punchbowl Special District Design Guidelines, then we should be able to communicate why the project needs to deviate from the guidelines.
- The Height limit for the Puowaina Project area is zero feet (no vertical construction). We will need to deviate from that Design Guideline since buildings are envisioned for the project.
- There may be other aspects to the Punchbowl Special District Design Guidelines that the project might be able to conform to such as the color of buildings or the orientation and layout of the buildings to the hillside.
- The Punchbowl Special District Design Guidelines were created to honor and protect this special place. There may be other ways to honor place besides conforming completely to the design guidelines. The project may want to identify other ways in which Pūowaina can be uplifted and honored while also providing critical programs and services to Papākōlea kūpuna.

### **Community Thoughts Tied to Land Use**

#### **Creating Commercial Spaces to Bring in Revenue**

If KULA is allowed to build commercial space to create revenue and whether that would be a hindrance to the viewscape of Pūowaina

#### **Mindfulness of Pūowaina Viewscape and Neighbors**

KULA requests that the community keep in mind the viewscape of Pūowaina knowing that KULA's project will be a reflection of the Papākōlea community

KULA is also mindful of the neighborhood boards that may be wary of the Pilina Pūowaina project

Specific viewscape examples mentioned were Mottsmith and concern tied to building up

#### **Community to Discuss and Decide on Designation**

Though DHHL recommends that KULA change from a Special Use to a Community Use Designation, it may make sense for the community to discuss and come to a decision on what would work

#### **Developing Below Ground at Pūowaina**

If there is an option to dig below ground for development projects at Pūowaina

### Questions & Answers

Questions shared by community members in attendance and answered by project team members

**Q: Are public health issues tied to vacant lots encumbered by DHHL or lessees the responsibility of DHHL?**

**A:** (DHHL): This is a big issue in Papakōlea and other homestead communities. In certain situations, the Department's delay to repair and fix a dilapidated home is that the lot has an existing homestead lessee. While the lessee may have abandoned property, the Department has to go through a process to give the lessee a chance to come back into compliance. Once exhausted, then the Department must go through a process of lease cancellation and a legal process to take control of the property. During that process the current lessee does have his or her due process rights in the court system. The lessee can contest DHHL's action to cancel his or her lease in the court system. Once the legal process to cancel the lease is completed, then the Department can begin to make the necessary improvements and award the lot to a waitlist beneficiary.

**Q: Does the Department or community notify elected officials that DHHL is not required to follow provisions of the City and County?**

**A:** (DHHL): DHHL recommends that they (DHHL) communicate with elected officials via written letter regarding DHHL's land use authority.

**Q: How can we create a building that will not intimidate the community?**

**A:** (G70): The design charette would detail this and identify a suitable site layout for the project within the characteristics of the surrounding area. G70 would like to know KULA's program needs first before identifying a suitable area for development.

### Questions & Answers

Questions shared by community members in attendance and answered by project team members

**Q: What are the limitations of building below ground?**

**A:** (DHHL): Excavation for underground projects can be costly and impact the ground stability.

**A:** (G70): It may also impact archaeological resources that are underground.

**Q: What is the benefit of converting the land use designation from Special Use to Community Use?**

**A:** (DHHL): From DHHL's staff perspective, it helps to create a record of use of the property and a record of Commission's decision on the property. This is to ensure that if staff turnover occurs, there will still be a record of land use changes and Commission approvals for this project.

**Q: When should KULA begin looking at the land use amendments??**

**A:** (DHHL): The typical protocol is that both the Land Use Amendment and Environmental Assessment (EA) are brought to the Commission as the EA would provide a justification for the Amendment. DHHL's process considers beneficiary input, existing environment of where the planning will take place, and the surrounding area.

### Questions & Answers

Questions shared by community members in attendance and answered by project team members

**Q: *Would G70's archaeological studies satisfy SHPD requirements?***

**A:** (G70): G70 completed preliminary archaeological studies on the Pūowaina site. As part of the EA process, G70 would need to complete a literature review and Field Inspection Report which will be informed by archival data. This process would start the consultation process with SHPD who will review the report and identify whether further studies are necessary.

**A:** (DHHL): DHHL is aware that this is a long and cumbersome process. DHHL has a cultural resource specialist who can support KULA in the SHPD compliance process.

**Q: *Given the sensitivity of the Pūowaina space and SHPD requirements, how long might the EA process take to complete?***

**A:** (DHHL): A reasonable timeline may be between 1-2 years tied to the Master Plan and Environmental Assessment completion.

**Q: *Would KULA be able to complete a preliminary phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) of the site prior to signing the ROE due to the prior construction that was done on the property?***

**A:** (DHHL): It is not a requirement, but KULA can complete a Phase I ESA if it wants to. A Phase I ESA researches the historic uses that have occurred on the property to determine the probability of the presence of hazardous materials in the project area. DHHL received feedback that the asphalt left on the site could be an asset to KULA's future development. Based on that feedback, the construction contractor was not asked to remove any of those items

**A:** (DHHL): A Phase I ESA could be done and is within the permitted uses and scope of the project. While DHHL is unsure whether it would be helpful or not, it may help to limit the areas that Kula would consider building on or around, depending on what is found.

### Questions & Answers

Questions shared by community members in attendance and answered by project team members

**Q: Where does the Honuiaiakea process fit into this project?**

**A:** (DHHL): The Honuiaiakea process does not identify archaeological items on the Pūowaina property. The process may identify traditional knowledge about the characteristics of the place that should be incorporated into the planning and future design of the project. Place-based knowledge is embedded in mo'olelo, oli, or mele related to the place that are performed within the property or ahupua'a. The process can bring awareness of this place based knowledge and can better ensure that development incorporates these knowledge sources during the planning for a project.

**A:** (G70): The Environmental Assessment process includes a Ka Pa'akai Analysis which will identify traditional customary practices that may occur in the project area or natural resources that are commonly used for traditional customary practices. The Ka Pa'akai Analysis will also recommend mitigation measures to avoid negatively impacting traditional customary practices caused by the project.

**Q: If KULA signs the ROE, are there allowable uses on the site that can take place, prior to any structural development or construction?**

**A:** (DHHL): The ROE permit states that anything done outside of the studies be communicated to the Commission and that any early uses of the land, prior to construction be added into the ROE. Anything that is done after the ROE is signed would require Commission review.

# Community Conversations

# Project Team

Wednesdays, 6:00-7:30pm  
Papakōlea Park  
*Light Refreshments Served*



- April 2 Project Introduction - Open Community
- April 16 History & Culture
- April 30 Aging in Place & Health Services
- May 14 Aging in Place & Research
- May 28 Land Use
- June 4 Pūowaina Conversations Recap
- June 18 Fund Development



DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS



**\*\*This round of Community Conversations is complete.**

A new round of Community Conversations will begin in September.



Announcement for the Homestead Health Survey coming soon!

# Acknowledgements

**Mahalo Ke Akua for His many blessings. By His love and guidance --we serve. We are humbled and honored that He has joined our lives with yours.**



This research is supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Evidence for Action Program, Grant #82208.

Evidence for Action (E4A), a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), funds research that expands the evidence needed to build a Culture of Health. A Culture of Health is broadly defined as one in which good health and well-being flourish across geographic, demographic, and social sectors; public and private decision-making is guided by the goal of fostering equitable communities; and everyone has the opportunity to make choices that lead to healthy lifestyles.

Kula No Nā Po'e Hawai'i  
2150 Tantalus Drive  
Honolulu, HI 96813  
808.649.3725  
[www.kula-papakolea.org](http://www.kula-papakolea.org)



Kula no na Po'e Hawaii  
Pilina Pūowaina  
PO Box 23268  
Honolulu, HI 96823

# Pilina Pūowaina

## Community Conversations

### Next Steps:

- Homestead Health Survey coming soon!
- Home Conversations - ongoing
- Community Conversations will continue in September