

# Measuring What Matters for Kaua'i

## Community Indicators Report 2010

### Executive Summary

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT



LAND USE &  
RURAL CHARACTER

CULTURES & ARTS



NEIGHBORHOOD &  
COMMUNITY WELL-BEING



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

ECONOMIC &  
BUSINESS CLIMATE



PUBLIC EDUCATION



KAUAI PLANNING & ACTION ALLIANCE

# Executive Summary

## Why Track Indicators?

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Community indicators measure and track information important to a community on a variety of issues that, when considered as a whole, reflect the community's quality of life, progress and resilience. Basically, they answer the question, "How are we doing?" They can be tracked over time to identify trends as an area develops, grows and changes. For Kaua'i, they can be helpful in determining if the island is moving in a desired direction. And if not, the indicators help to suggest where changes in policies, strategies or programs are needed to correct the course. In short, they can be tools to assess Kaua'i's social, economic and environmental sustainability.

The *Kaua'i General Plan 2000* included an implementing action directing County government to "Collaborate with community organizations in developing indicators and benchmarks to measure progress" on issues included in the plan. This led to a community-based effort to form an organization that would undertake a community indicators project to determine progress toward the General Plan's community vision for the island's future. The nonprofit Kaua'i Planning & Action Alliance (KPAA) is the result of that effort. *Measuring What Matters for Kaua'i – Community Indicators 2006* was KPAA's first report, published in 2007. The report is updated biannually; the second report (2008) was published in 2009 and this document (2010) represents the third report.

## Project Purpose

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Are the policies, programs and activities of government, business and nonprofits meeting the needs of the community? Are citizens making choices that benefit themselves and that do not adversely affect the community as a whole? These are key questions this report attempts to answer by focusing on 50 aspects of life on Kaua'i that residents have said are important to them. This community indicators report is designed to:

1. Track areas important to the community, drawing on the values and community vision in the *Kaua'i General Plan 2000*, to determine Kaua'i's trends.
2. Provide tracked information to government, businesses, nonprofits and citizens to assist in planning, policy-setting and budget decisions.
3. Identify and promote opportunities for action that will move Kaua'i toward the vision and directions the community has established.

The Kaua'i County Profile in this report is intended to provide a broader overview of the island and information not necessarily tracked annually.

This report is widely distributed to leaders and groups and is intended as a useful reference and decision-support document for the island. The report may be viewed or downloaded from KPAA's website [www.kauainetwork.org](http://www.kauainetwork.org) (see Publications section).

## **Events Impacting Recent Indicator Data**

A global recession began affecting Kaua'i in 2008, with more serious impacts in 2009 and 2010. Unemployment, increased poverty, foreclosures, loss of medical insurance – these are among the economic and social impacts of the recession. This report reflects the pain caused by this economic downturn as well as some of the more positive outcomes, such as reduction in energy use and vehicle miles traveled, increased bus ridership and an increase in home food production. In August 2011, as this report goes to print, the economic recovery continues to be slow, unemployment is over 9% and there is speculation nationally about a second recession.

## **Indicator Selection and Data Gathering**

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The indicators in this report represent seven areas important to Kaua'i:

- ◆ Economic and Business Climate
- ◆ Public Education
- ◆ Neighborhood and Community Health and Well-Being
- ◆ Civic Engagement
- ◆ Natural Environment
- ◆ Land Use and Rural Character
- ◆ Cultures and Arts

For the 2006 report, Kaua'i Planning & Action Alliance formed a Community Indicators Advisory Committee that developed criteria to review and select possible indicators. Those indicators were discussed at a series of public meetings and revised based on input, resulting in 55 indicators. In the subsequent 2008 and this 2010 report, some indicators were deleted when information was unreliable or not available. A few indicators were added. This report covers a total of 50 indicators.





















Indicators included are limited by the availability of data. For example, measurements for carbon emissions and carbon footprint are desirable indicators but data gathering is still in the early stages of development locally.



For this report, 29 government departments and nonprofit organizations provided data or offered guidance to understand key issues. Wherever possible, data for 2000 through 2010 are shown so that trends over the decade can be identified. In March 2011, a telephone survey of 400 Kaua'i residents over age 18 was conducted to gather qualitative information for 11 indicators. Ken Stokes of The Kauaian Institute was again contracted to analyze data and prepare understandable text, tables and charts. Kaua'i Planning & Action Alliance staff prepared the final report.

## 2010 Indicator Trends



The following shows the 50 indicators selected for Kaua'i and the trend and recommended response for each. It should be noted that the trend arrow is based on the change from the 2008 report. Trends may be up, down, unchanged or both up and down if the indicator has two elements. The response symbols indicate whether the trend is in a desired direction (Go sign), should be monitored because the trend is mixed or inconclusive (Caution sign) or requires action at the earliest opportunity to change to a more desired direction (Stop sign). Indicators with an asterisk (\*) next to the number denote that the data were gathered in March 2011 through a telephone survey of 400 Kaua'i residents over 18, sponsored by KPAA and conducted by a research firm.



Tables, charts and a narrative are available within the body of this report for each indicator, offering specific data, visual representations of trends and a discussion of the relevance of the indicator and data.

<u>NO.</u>	<u>INDICATOR</u>	<u>TREND STATEMENT</u>	<u>TREND</u>	<u>RESPONSE</u>
<b><i>Economic and Business Climate</i></b>				
1	Poverty rate	Poverty rate is rising and more children are living in poverty		
2	Cost of living	Island prices are rising faster than the national inflation rate		
3	Median family income	Family income increases recently but lags behind inflation		
4	Employment sectors	Total job count declines as tourism begins recovery		
5	Unemployment	Unemployment continues to remain high after setting record lows		
6 *	Workers with multiple jobs	Multiple jobs remain important to Kaua'i families		
7	Visitors and spending	Visitor counts and daily spending remain flat in 2010		
8	Visitor accommodations	Traditional lodging losing share as total units decline		
9	Home sales	Home sales are bouncing back from recessionary lows		
10	Affordability of home purchase	Housing affordability improves as home values stay low		

11	Affordability of home rental	Median rents rise sharply as affordability declines		
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**Public Education**

12	Kindergarten readiness	Kindergartners rate well as preschool attendance declines		
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13	Student achievement	Signs of improvement at Grade 3 while Grade 10 slips further		
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14	Graduation rate	On-time graduation rates slipping, yet still above State rates		
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15	Post-high school education and training	Share of 4-year college-bound graduates still climbing		
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16	College readiness	Need for remedial or developmental math and English decreases slightly among recent grads		
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**Neighborhood and Community Health and Well-Being**



17	Emergency food	Emergency food requests skyrocket as low month doubles		
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18	Homelessness	Homelessness fell slightly in 2010, still less than half are sheltered		
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19 *	Perception of neighborhood safety	Four of five residents feel safe walking in their neighborhood at night		
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20	Violent and property crime	Violent crime rates and arrests inch up while property-related arrests fall slightly		
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

21	Drug and alcohol arrests	Adult drug and alcohol arrests rise as youth arrests decline		
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22	Child abuse and neglect	Child abuse and neglect cases fall slightly		
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23	Medical insurance coverage	Number of medically uninsured jumps sharply in 2009		
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24	Leading infectious diseases	Four of five reportable leading infectious diseases decrease in 2010		
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25	Leading causes of death	Death rate continues to climb as heart disease rate drops		
26	Physical activity and body weight	More than half stay active at recommended levels, yet more than half weigh too much		
27	Tobacco use	Share of smokers continues to decline		
28	Drownings	Number of drowning victims declines in 2010 as does visitor share		
29 *	Internet access	Internet goes to all but 17% of homes and most have high-speed access		
30 *	Aloha spirit	Two-thirds say the aloha spirit is the same or stronger		
<b>Civic Engagement</b>				
31 *	County government services	Satisfaction high for County services, while bus and parks lag		
32 *	Community volunteerism	Residents contributing volunteer time falls slightly, yet more than 60% volunteer		
33 *	Community philanthropy	Fewer residents donated to church and community groups		
34	Voting participation	Fewer voters turned out as registered voters declined		
<b>Natural Environment</b>				
35	Coastal water quality	Monitoring standards loosen, as sub-standard beaches decrease		
36	Water service	Connections and water main miles climb as daily consumption falls		
37	Energy use and diversification	Electricity sales still falling as usage per residence declines		
38 *	Renewable energy production	One-third of residents have solar hot water, 3% have PV for electricity		



39	Solid waste disposition	Waste stream and diversion rate drop as per capita waste trends down		
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**Land Use and Rural Character**



40	Vehicle miles traveled	Vehicle miles and gas demand still falling as traffic counts turn down		
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41	Registered vehicles	Vehicle counts still falling as vehicles per capita drop further		
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42	Bus ridership	Bus ridership still climbing yet growth rate slows		
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43 *	Alternative transport	Few commuters use bus or carpool yet many more say it is practical		
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44	Planning approvals	General Plan and zoning amendments stay low as subdivision approvals and zoning permits drop		
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45	Residential building permits	Residential building permits fall sharply outside towns while share inside towns rises		
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46	Residential building type	Multi-family share drops sharply as residential construction hits bottom		
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**Cultures and Arts**

47	Hawaiian language students	Enrollment in Hawaiian language classes still rising		
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48 *	Subsistence food gathering	Large share of families gather or grow their own food		
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49	Canoe paddling	Total canoe paddlers dips slightly		
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50 *	Cultural dance and songs	Native Hawaiian hula and other cultural dance and songs attract broad participation		
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## Opportunities for Action – What You Can Do

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The data from each of the indicators provide guidance on topics important to Kaua'i. Where trends are a cause for concern, everyone – government, business, nonprofits, community groups and individuals – has the responsibility and opportunity to take action for change toward an outcome that better meets the present and long-term needs of the island and its people.

Suggested actions for each group of indicators are listed below. These “opportunities for action” are designed to move the trend in a more desirable direction. Some of these opportunities focus on what individuals and families can do. Others focus on needed improvements in policies, initiatives, programs and investments. Consider where you can make a difference.

### ***Economic and Business Climate***

- Promote greater economic resilience through expanded agriculture and food production, energy efficiencies, renewable energy generation, and other clean technologies.
- Support/create government policies and programs that provide encouragement, training and incentives to make farming a viable economic sector, such as continued support for marketing and branding programs like Kaua'i Made and Kaua'i Grown, strengthening processing and distribution capability, promoting agritourism, and fostering “agriculture in the classroom” activities to encourage a new generation of farmers.
- Encourage large stores on the island to regularly sell Kaua'i grown and Kaua'i made produce and products.
- Continue to pursue economic diversification that creates new employment opportunities with living wages.
- Promote creation of mixed use developments in urban areas that offer a variety of housing types for rental and for purchase, including affordable housing and multi-family units, to serve a range of income and age levels.
- Support home ownership preparation and education programs.

### ***Public Education***

- Encourage the Hawai'i Department of Education to analyze and explain data and trends related to student achievement, school performance and graduation rates so it is easier for the public to assess how well each school and our education system are preparing students for careers and life – and identify ways the community can provide support or assist.
- Identify and support collective approaches that focus on nurturing and developing young people from cradle to career, so they: have strong role models in their life; are prepared for school; are supported in and out of school; have the skills and character to succeed academically; graduate from high school; and are encouraged to attend college or other training, graduate and then begin a career.
- Offer vocational education programs for interested youth.
- Strengthen the middle school and high school curriculum that covers interpersonal communications, financial literacy and family management to provide needed life skills.

- Develop activities to encourage and support student academic achievement, comparable to the community's strong support for sports achievement.

### ***Neighborhood and Community Health and Well-Being***

- Support programs that provide emergency food and temporary housing or shelter options for those needing assistance.
- Encourage individuals and families to establish home or community gardens to grow their own nutritious foods and become more self-sufficient.
- Support efforts to strengthen and promote public safety, and continue support for expanded funding and staffing for the Kaua'i Police Department.
- Continue to encourage neighborhood watch programs.
- Support programs aimed at reducing domestic violence and child abuse.
- Identify and promote options for those without medical insurance coverage.
- Expand public awareness related to the prevention of infectious diseases such as influenza and Chlamydia.
- Support community education and activities, such as Get Fit Kaua'i, that promote a healthy lifestyle, good nutrition and livable communities.
- Strengthen water safety education for visitors and residents to prevent drowning in streams, rivers and ocean waters.

### ***Civic Engagement***

- Encourage County and State government to regularly solicit and consider diverse citizen input to clearly understand community needs and ensure that actions pursued provide public benefit. Convene stakeholders with divergent views at the same table for discussion and to establish areas of agreement.
- Expand use of technology such as webcasts and social media to better reach the community to share and gather information.
- Undertake activities that promote, recognize and celebrate community volunteerism and philanthropy among all age groups.
- Promote greater voter participation in elections through activities to increase public understanding of the electoral process, candidates and complex ballot issues.

### ***Natural Environment***

- Prepare a comprehensive assessment of the island's sustainability systems (such as ground and surface water, energy, transportation, lands, food, solid waste, wastewater, building stock, impacts of climate change, etc.), to serve as a baseline for future analysis and decision making.
- Measure and track the island's carbon footprint and initiate public and private efforts to minimize and mitigate carbon emissions.

- Direct sufficient funds and effort toward protecting rivers and coastal waters by requiring use of best practices and enforcing such practices for any development project that might result in discharge or runoff.
- With private, County and State cooperation, prepare a comprehensive water study for agricultural lands to determine sources, capacity, current distribution and distribution problems, including irrigation ditches and water reservoirs, then establish the cost and methods needed to restore, distribute and/or develop water sources to support expanded agricultural production.
- Strengthen the watershed management within each ahupua`a by encouraging partnerships, collaboration and cooperation among users and landowners, such as through watershed councils.
- Support the Department of Water in its efforts to invest in infrastructure improvements to increase drinking water reliability and capacity, especially in areas designated for development.
- Expedite the installation of energy-efficient technologies at Department of Water facilities.
- Support and expedite efforts by KIUC and local energy producers to generate safe, clean renewable energy as alternatives to fossil fuel in order to increase our self-sufficiency and reduce carbon emissions.
- Continue to update building codes to encourage more energy-efficient building materials and practices, along with more sustainable designs for homes, commercial buildings and communities; encourage practices that yield the highest levels of efficiency.
- Initiate a public education campaign designed to minimize unnecessary consumption and maximize the 3 R's (reduce, reuse, recycle) to conserve resources.
- Vigorously promote resource conservation programs for residents and businesses in areas such as water, energy and solid waste to reduce per capita use and encourage the reuse or recycling of resources whenever possible.
- Develop the infrastructure and support needed to sort and manage recycled resources, including a Materials Recovery Facility, and explore new economic opportunities from the recycled resources.

### ***Land Use and Rural Character***

- Support and strengthen efforts to increase Kaua'i Bus ridership among residents and visitors by making the system more user-friendly through expanded routes, increased frequency, availability of route maps, more bike racks, adding luggage and surfboard racks, installing GPS on buses so people can track bus arrivals, creating more park and ride sites and building bus shelters at all stops.
- Determine the need for additional transportation alternatives, such as a shuttle feeder system and carpools, to augment the Kaua'i Bus in order to save energy and reduce the number of vehicles on the road.
- Utilize land protection tools such as conservation easements and transfer of development rights to assure that an adequate number of acres are preserved for the island's food security.

- Develop integrated, self-contained, closed loop food systems that utilize sustainable practices, maximize available resources and increase food self-sufficiency.
- Develop and promote methods to replenish agricultural soils for farming and biomass production, such as composting and use of sustainable methods and technologies for alternative fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides.
- Centralize and improve data collection and analysis related to the subdivision of all lands, including condominium property regimes (CPRs), and development of land in all zoning categories, to provide comprehensive information for forecasting, analysis, planning and decision making.
- Strengthen local controls to curb the conversion of agricultural lands to CPRs in order to prevent non-farm “gentlemen’s estates”.
- Define town boundaries then support development that utilizes land within these boundaries; limit expansion beyond town boundaries to maintain rural character.

### **Cultures and Arts**

- ◆ Continue to support Hawaiian language and bi-lingual programs that help perpetuate Hawaiian culture.
- ◆ Ensure continued access to traditional food gathering and hunting sites to support self-sufficiency and food security.

### **Sponsors and Supporters**

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### **Final Note**

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An electronic version of *Measuring What Matters for Kaua'i – Community Indicators Report 2010* may be downloaded from the Kaua'i Planning & Action Alliance website [www.kauainetwork.org](http://www.kauainetwork.org) (see Publications section). Comments or questions about the report may be addressed to:

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If the reader notes any inaccuracies in this report, it would be greatly appreciated if these could be brought to the attention of KPAA and if the correct information and data source could be provided.