

Kaua`i Tourism Strategic Plan Update Advisory Group

MEETING #4

Friday, March 13, 2015; 2:00-4:00 PM
Piikoi A/B, Lihu`e Civic Center

MEETING NOTES

Participants:

Fred Atkins	Kilohana Plantation
Katy Britzmann	Grand Hyatt Kaua`i Resort & Spa
Nalani Brun	County of Kaua`i, Office of Economic Development
Randy Francisco	Kaua`i Chamber of Commerce
Lea Kai`aokamalie	County of Kaua`i, Planning Dept.
Sue Kanoho	Kaua`i Visitors Bureau
Lucy Kawaihalau	Vacation Rental Managers of Kaua`i
Jody Kono Kjeldsen	Poipu Beach Resort Association
Laura Richards	Hanalei Colony Resort Associates
Peter Sit	Pono Kai Resort
Dirk Soma	Kaua`i Native Hawaiian Chamber of Commerce
Melissa Sugai	County of Kaua`i, Office of Economic Development
Candace Tabuchi	Kaua`i Community College, Hospitality & Tourism Program
Susan Tai Kaneko	Kaua`i Economic Development Board

Absent:

Kanoe Ahuna	Na Hoku Welo, LLC
Ray Blouin	Aston Aloha Beach Hotel/Royal Coconut Coast Assn.
George K. Costa	County of Kaua`i, Office of Economic Development
Robert Crowell	Hawai`i Dept. of Transportation Harbors Division
Ce Lucente	Outfitters Kaua`i
Dennis L. Neves	Hawai`i State Dept. of Transportation, Airport Division, Kaua`i Office
Thomas Nizo	West Kaua`i Business & Professional Assn.
Neill Sams	Kapa`a Business Association
Denise Wardlow	Hawai`i Lodging & Tourism Assn/Westin Princeville Ocean Resort Villas
Marie Williams	County of Kaua`i, Planning Dept.

Consultants:

Rayne Regush	Kaua`i Planning & Action Alliance
Diane Zachary	Kaua`i Planning & Action Alliance



KAUAI PLANNING & ACTION ALLIANCE

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER TO CREATE A BETTER FUTURE FOR KAUAI

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1. Welcome, Introductions and Review of Agenda.

Diane Zachary welcomed participants and introductions were made. Fred Atkins, Susan Tai Kaneko and Melissia Sugai attended for the first time. Diane reviewed the agenda and no changes were made.

2. Review January 9, 2015 Meeting Notes.

No changes were made to the meeting notes.

3. Framework for Planning to 2018 (Part 3).

A. *Longitudinal Visitor Data 2006–2014-P (Attachment A)* were reviewed and trends were noted.

- Sue Kanoho anticipates Latin America numbers to jump
- Dirk Soma noted that despite low visitor counts in 2007, the length of stay was high; Sue explained this was due to timeshare visitors who purchase a certain length of stay
- U.S. East annual number of visitors has declined due to a reduction in nonstop flights
- Other Asian and Oceanic visitors shows significant growth
- There is a large decrease for Japan visitors due to activities-related language barriers
- Dirk commented on two Native Hawaiian-related trends that are increasing: a) sovereignty rights advocates post signage along highways (example seen on the Westside: “We are not America. Enjoy your visit.”) and some cultural practitioners are accepting donations from visitors at parks.
- An infrastructure for international visitors is lacking
- Dirk noted that expiring union contracts may have impacts
- Acknowledgement and use of Native Hawaiian place names is increasing.

B. *Kaua'i Brand Study* (Sue Kanoho)

- For twenty years, Kaua'i was the “Island of Discovery”
- Kaua'i is now being marketed with a new tag line: “Island of Rejuvenation” (quotes from KVB Slide)
 - **Kaua'i Brand Explained:** Deep within every human being, buried all too often beneath layers of modern life, is a primal connection with nature. It is on Kaua'i that this connection reawakens. Take a step in any direction and plunge into a world of infinite greens and blues, a world that restores your inner equilibrium and reassures you that the Pacific island of your dreams does indeed exist. Peaceful, lush and naturally spectacular, this is Kaua'i.
 - **Brand Pillars:** Lush, Idyllic, Peaceful, Immersed in Nature, Crescent-shaped beaches, Waterfalls, Nāpali Coast, Endless shades of green, Serene tropical rivers, Relaxed pace
 - **Kaua'i Visitor Profile:** attracted to nature and the peaceful, immersive environment it offers. They travel to escape the busy-ness of their life at home and have little interest in urban experiences or crowds. They tend to be less

active, preferring to spend long periods immersing themselves in a single experience rather than sampling a lot of variety. Relaxing on vacation is their number one priority and they don't want to feel pressured to "see all the sights."

- However, Kaua'i is not delivering on the promise due traffic congestion impacts
- Lea Kai'aokamalie reminded the group of a long-time motto that "Kaua'i is not for wimps," recognizing the numerous outdoor adventure opportunities
- Laura Richards noted that many visitors are thrill seekers and the portrayal of "rejuvenation" may need to shift or adjust
- Social media is also driving visitors: HVCB is inviting travelers to tag #LetHawaiiHappen in their social media posts to share personal Hawaii vacation experiences broadly. (See <https://youtu.be/ptOp6WeCcwU>.)

C. *Homestays and Transient Vacation Rentals (TVRs).*

- New zoning rules are being drafted based on Maui's formula to permit homestay accommodations whereby the homeowner must be in residence like B&B's
- The maximum allowable homestay units by town under the proposed ordinance is one per 300 people, only in census tracts with a population of at least 1,000
- Homestays with more than 2-bedrooms require a special use permit; maximum number of bedrooms is 5
- These rules are now before the Planning Commission
- Must have septic tanks, not cesspools, and have adequate parking
- TVRs are having a huge impact on hotels and hotel prices
- TVRs allow visitors to get to know locals.

4. Confirm Kaua'i Tourism Strategic Plan Update Goal for 2018.

Review 2006 Goal: To strategically manage tourism on Kaua'i, in a sustainable manner that balances economic activity from the visitor industry, quality of life for residents, preservation of our natural and cultural resources and quality experiences for visitors.

Modified Draft Goal: To responsibly manage tourism on Kaua'i in a sustainable manner that balances the economic activity of the visitor industry with (alternate: while enhancing) quality of life for residents, stewardship of our natural and cultural resources and quality experiences for visitors.

Nalani Brun and Randy Francisco offered to assist if more wordsmithing was necessary. (Note: Diane has requested their assistance.)

5. Should we set a desired target on the number of visitors?

- Past DBEDT studies would not provide capacity numbers and measures are skewed by timeshare occupancy which holds at 90-100%.

- There are a number of clear indicators of distress when capacity volumes are reached. For example, 100,000 visitors a month results in numerous complaints.
- Sue suggests that 1.1 million annually be the cap. HTA's goal to increase visitor levels on Kaua'i is a concern due to lacking infrastructure (e.g., roads and bathrooms) which results in decreased visitor satisfaction.
- If the targeted maximum per day is 23,000-24,000 visitors (which is the high-end as seen during summer months), we are already there. Randy agreed there is a need to articulate a policy, using visitor counts and complaints as a benchmark.
- Are there strategies to balance the peak and valleys and achieve a steadier flow of visitors? Management of shuttles for example can help balance seasonal highs. Development of accommodations on the westside (e.g., Gay & Robinson's Kapalawai resort project) will help distribute visitors more widely island-wide.
- Is it realistic to take the high and low range to get an average?
- Since 1.2 million visitors result in complaints and a deteriorated quality of experience for residents and visitors, then 20,000 to 23,000/day would be acceptable.
- Who does Kaua'i want to be in the next twenty years -- the General Plan update will tell us.

6. Prioritize Top Strategies for 2015-2018 Plan (Attachment C)

Criteria for Selecting Priority Strategies

- Is this a critical need at this time?
- Is the strategy the best action to be taken to achieve the most beneficial impact?
- Is it achievable within the timeline of the plan (2015-2018)?
- Is there energy behind it within the visitor industry? Are there individuals, organizations and businesses willing to do something about it?
- Will the community accept or embrace it? Will they benefit from it?
- Will visitors accept or embrace it? Will they benefit from it?
- If funds will be needed, is it likely that funds can be secured?

Types of Actions to Achieve Strategies

- Provide Information
- Strengthen Visitor Industry Voice, Advocate
- Modify Policy
- Provide Support
- Align Resources
- Develop New Programs
- Training and Professional Development
- Change Physical Environment
- Reduce Barriers
- Change Consequences

Using the criteria and types of actions listed above, participants reviewed the top priorities to accomplish 3 things:

- (1) assess whether the priority meets the criteria
- (2) determine if the suggested strategies should be retained or eliminated
- (2) determine if any wording changes are needed for the strategies to be retained

The order of the objectives reflects the TSPUAG priorities as of March 13, 2015. The bolded strategies are the top five priorities, with the priority ranking noted. Items to eliminate are shown with strikethroughs. Some strategies require additional discussion.

Objective 1: To make positive contributions to the quality of life for residents.

- #1** 1a **Advocate for significant progress and/or completion of essential infrastructure improvements, including permanent relief route in Kapa'a; traffic circulation improvements for Po'ipu; cruise ship harbor improvements.**
(Notes: Initiatives in progress or completed were deleted, as they are already being handled: Ha'ena State Park Master Plan; Princeville/Ha'ena Park & Ride; Koke'e Master Plan)
- 1b Support traffic management systems to address and reduce traffic congestion and improve pedestrian safety.
Possible Actions
- Develop feeder roads to mitigate traffic (*need to specify where*)
- Improve street design and town centers
- Develop bus and shuttle service from airport to resort areas and within resort areas
- Create pedestrian networks in resort areas
- 1c Encourage implementation of additional affordable workforce housing solutions for Kaua'i residents to maintain and attract workforce for the visitor industry.
- 1d Support efforts within the visitor industry for the current and future workforce to be well prepared, qualified to work, to be able to advance within their fields, and for newcomers to be acculturated to Kaua'i.
SEEMS LIKE A DUPLICATE OF 2B; COMBINE? DISCUSS AT 4.10 MEETING
- #2** 1e **Support the development and promotion of community-driven programs that reinforce the unique sense of place of communities, such as those with historical and/or cultural significance.**
Possible Actions
Encourage all employees to have an understanding of the host culture.
ALMOST A DUPLICATE OF 5A; COMBINE? DISCUSS AT 4.10 MEETING

- 1f Support adequate funding and staffing for capital improvements, including maintenance and enforcement for public parks, trails and recreation areas.
- 1g Support the development of regulations to appropriately monitor and enforce Bed & Breakfasts (homestays) and Individual Vacation Units.
- 1h Support the protection of view planes mauka to Makai.
- ???

~~Increase resilience (of infrastructure?) to climate change~~

Objective 2: To increase the economic contribution of the visitor industry to Kaua'i.

- 2a Develop and implement annual marketing plans that highlight Kaua'i's unique positioning, target desired active markets, and increase occupancy during shoulder periods.
- #4 2b Support programs to attract employees to the visitor industry and increase the available workforce.**
 - Possible Actions
 - Create career pathways for visitor industry jobs
 - Support higher visitor industry pay
 - Encourage entry into visitor industry career pathways
- 2c Encourage the visitor industry, airlines and the growing cruise line industry, to buy and promote Kaua'i products and support businesses on Kaua'i.
- 2d Support the return of additional TAT funds to Kaua'i.
- ~~2e Advocate for close monitoring of the impacts of cruise ships and the planned SuperFerry on all aspects of the island.~~
- ~~2d Support current and future efforts to ensure that Kaua'i's harbors are adequate to meet the needs of residents and visitors.~~
- ~~2e Advocate for an appropriate assessment for cruise passengers visiting the island, allocating a substantial portion to the county.~~

Objective 3: To increase communications, interactions, and understanding between stakeholder groups, especially between residents and the visitor industry.

- #5 3a Encourage two-way communications between residents and the visitor industry.**
Group Recommendation: Delete - always ongoing. TO BE DISCUSSED 4.10

- 3b Promote activities that appeal to visitors and residents, including community events, sports events, and festivals. Promote kama'aina rates, especially during shoulder periods.

Group Recommendation: Delete - already happening; continue website postings.
TO BE DISCUSSED 4.10

Objective 4: To maintain and improve visitor satisfaction with their experience on Kaua'i.

- #3 4a **Advocate for and support the development of a means of educating visitors prior to or upon arrival by providing basic information that will enhance their safety, enjoyment, and appreciation of Hawaiian culture and the island's natural resources.**

Possible Actions

- Teach visitors when not to interact with the environment, such as: avoid walking on reefs or touching wildlife, such as sea turtles, and avoid picking flowers, plants or leaves.
- Improve information on accessibility for visitors with disabilities.
- Educate visitors not to introduce nor transport invasive species.
- Develop apps for smartphones and tablets to provide information and educate visitors.

- 4b Support the development of consistent, accurate signage to assist visitors and residents.

Possible Actions

- Provide easy directions
- Identify communities and cultural/historic sites
- Identify areas that are dangerous
- Provide interpretive methods to educate/enhance cultural, natural, and historical sites where appropriate.

- 4c Support efforts to increase safety and security for visitors and residents at public places, such as beach parks, events, harbors, and cultural sites.

- 4d Support the development of a process by which visitors can easily access information in case of an emergency, natural disaster, etc.

- 4e ~~Support the completion of the Kaua'i Emergency Preparedness Plan.~~

Objective 5: To reinforce authentic Hawaiian culture and local Kaua'i culture, the foundations of our unique sense of place. (Suggested rewording)

- 5a Increase awareness of the Hawaiian culture among residents of all ages and the

visitor industry, including employees and employers. This process will require guidance from respected Hawaiian cultural advisors and practitioners on Kaua'i to ensure that what is perpetuated is authentic for Kaua'i. The proper use of the language will be encouraged, and Hawaiian culture and history will be integrated into ongoing training.

ALMOST A DUPLICATE OF 1E; COMBINE? DISCUSS AT 4.10 MEETING

Possible Actions

Develop "Hawaiian values" book for Kaua'i, with stories; share via brochures, at airport, etc.

- 5b Support the inventory and designation of historic and cultural sites **(through the Kaua'i Historic Preservation Commission?)** by levels of interaction desired with the community. Promote these sites appropriately and, for those sites where we encourage visits, provide appropriate interpretive signage.
- 5c Engage in dialogue with Native Hawaiian regarding the integration of Native Hawaiian/host needs aligning with visitor industry development, such as activities, lodging, etc. **ADDED AT 3.13 MEETING; DISCUSS AT 4.10 MEETING**

Objective 6: To contribute to the preservation and enhancement of the natural resources on Kaua'i, including land and ocean.

- 6a Direct visitors to parks, beaches, and other natural resource areas that are well equipped and intended to accommodate resident and visitor usage
 - Possible Actions
 - Advocate for completing the design of new bathrooms in county parks, using funds already allocated
 - Advocate for maintaining clean bathrooms
- 6b Promote and encourage green initiatives and green practices such as recycling, and energy and water conservation efforts throughout the visitor industry and community.
- 6c Encourage organizations within the Kaua'i visitor industry to participate in the "Adopt-A-Park" program. The Adopt-a-Park program has successfully provided park stewardship as well as given the community a sense of pride and ownership. Industry involvement will allow for more parks to be included in the program and increase positive experiences for residents and visitors.
- ~~6d Advocate for the protection of open spaces to help preserve the rural nature of Kaua'i. (Note: This should be handled by the General Plan)~~

~~???~~ You suggested: Increase resilience (of infrastructure?) to climate change.

Objective 7: To establish a process for ensuring Kaua'i County TSP implementation and coordination with other county and state plans. Develop a mechanism to track plan objectives, regularly review scorecards, and make revisions as necessary.

- 7a Successfully implement the Kaua'i County TSP by contracting an organization to facilitate plan implementation. This organization will coordinate meetings of an advisory committee, track action plans, bring data together to update scorecards, and facilitate public updates.

Next step is to prioritize strategies; we may make use of use Survey Monkey.

7. Quick Assessment of Meeting – what worked/what didn't

- + Breakout group activity; many contributors; good location
- Limited time

8. Next Advisory Group Meeting

The next meeting was set for **Friday, April 10, 2015, 1-4 PM** (3 hours) at **Līhu'e Public Library Meeting Room.**

- Confirm vision for tourism
- Finalize three-year goal
- Confirm desired strategies
- Confirm/refine achievable priorities for the next three years
- Discuss responsibility for strategies
- Determine measures of success
- Discuss May stakeholders meeting – Location needed; confirm date

Following Meeting: Friday, May 22, TSPU Advisory Group and Stakeholder Meeting for feedback on Draft Goals, Objectives and Strategies (2 hours)

Visit Website for resource materials, meeting notes and agendas:

<http://www.kauainetwork.org/programs/tourism-strategic-plan-advisory-group/>

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