



CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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# WAIPAHU

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WAIPAHU TOWN ACTION PLAN

September 2017

# BACKGROUND & OVERVIEW

Waipahu Town has a long and proud history as one of the largest sugar plantation towns on the island of Oahu. As a plantation town, Waipahu has been a first home to different waves of ethnic groups that have immigrated to the islands. Though the neighborhood has experienced a number of changes over the years, including the demise of plantation agriculture, it has still been able to retain its historic “mill town” character and charm. The unique ethnic and cultural mix of people and experiences, set within a historical context, are what residents and visitors love about the area today.

Over the years, a number of community plans have been developed for Waipahu Town. These plans have helped shape development and preserve its historic character. Most recently, the Waipahu Neighborhood Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Plan was developed to serve as a guide for future development and infrastructure investment in and around the two rail transit stations serving the Waipahu community.

The purpose of this Action Plan is to help prepare Waipahu Town for rail—providing infrastructure so people can access the Waipahu Transit Center Station and positioning the neighborhood to benefit economically from increased activity in the station area. Accordingly, the Action Plan has identified and prioritized near-term projects that can have immediate impact. The Action Plan also includes near-term steps for implementing longer-term strategies that are consistent with previous visioning efforts for the town. These actions have the potential to improve Waipahu Town by emphasizing and building upon its unique quality and character.

The Waipahu Transit Center Station area includes a mixture of different land uses and historic buildings lining Waipahu Street and Waipahu Depot Street mauka of Farrington Highway. Additionally, the Waipahu Sugar Mill smokestack acts as an icon and wayfinding element for the community. In general, the area within ¼ mile of the rail station consists primarily of the Hikimoe Street bus transfer center, small retail centers, business services, single- and multifamily residences, auto services, and civic/public uses. Land uses within ½ mile of the rail station also include single-family homes, parks, and other gathering places.

The goals identified in previous neighborhood plans were used to inform the Action Plan. They include:

- Build on the historic “old town” plantation character.
- Enhance the business district within walking distance of the transit center.
- Introduce new transit, biking, and pedestrian facilities.
- Improve connectivity and livability by extending the existing pedestrian and bicycle network.

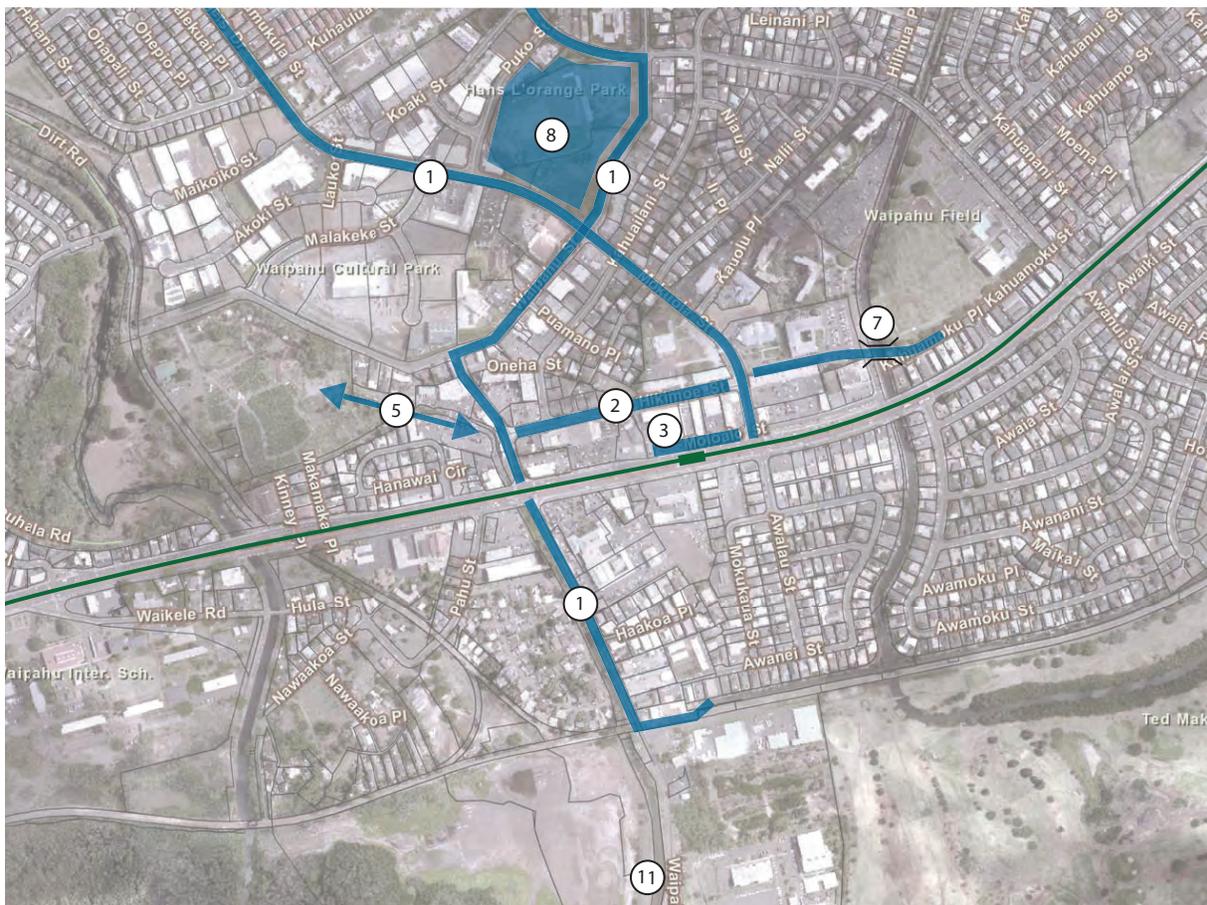
The Action Plan is the direct result of community discussions on challenges, issues, needs, and opportunities in the neighborhood. It outlines short-term actions that government, businesses, residents, and civic organizations are planning, or beginning to undertake, to create a clean, safe, unique, and economically healthy neighborhood.

# PLAN SUMMARY

The Waipahu Town Action Plan is a set of strategies identified by the community for improving the area around the future Waipahu Transit Center rail station. The actions build on the Waipahu Neighborhood TOD Plan, whose central theme is to “Celebrate Waipahu,” and input from the Waipahu Town Action Plan Community Workshop held in July of 2016. The Action Plan is intended to help agencies and community partners focus their resources on near-term implementation projects, while refining longer-term strategies. The **bolded** actions were identified as top priorities at a second community meeting in March of 2017. Proposed projects include the following:

- 1 Implement a Network of Connected Bicycle Facilities
- 2 Upgrade Waipahu Transit Center**
- 3 Redesign Moloalo Street
- 4 Upgrade Street Lighting
- 5 Connect Hawaii’s Plantation Village to Waipahu Town Core**
- 6 Implement Placemaking Strategies
- 7 Connect Waipahu District Park to Waipahu Town Core
- 8 Develop a Master Plan for Hans L’Orange Park
- 9 Address Areawide Flooding**
- 10 Establish Areawide Wayfinding
- 11 Develop Pouhala Marsh Educational Signage

Priority Action	
	Site Specific Action
	Area-wide Action
	Future Rail Station



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Participants at the two Waipahu Town Action Plan Community Workshops brainstormed neighborhood improvement ideas.

A community-based planning effort served as the foundation for the Waipahu Town Action Plan, and helped to identify realistic neighborhood improvement actions.

The community engagement effort included outreach to the Waipahu Neighborhood Board and stakeholder meetings held during the summer of 2016 with area businesses, landowners, elected officials, government agencies, and community groups and organizations. These meetings helped identify key issues such as drainage and flooding, an auto-oriented environment not conducive to pedestrians and bicyclists, and concerns with homelessness and safety. The meetings also helped identify ideas for placemaking, connectivity, safety, and maintenance that would improve economic opportunities and attract more people to Waipahu Town. These ideas became the basis of the Waipahu Town Action Plan Community Workshop held on July 13, 2016.

The Community Workshop was held at Waipahu High School and was publicized through flyers, postcards mailed to property owners, emails to the City's mailing list, and social media. The workshop was attended by about 55 people who represented many facets of the community, including residents, employees, landowners, business owners, elected officials, government representatives, the Neighborhood Board, and representatives from community and advocacy groups (such as Hawaii's Plantation Village and the Weed and Seed program). At the workshop, participants helped to define and prioritize concerns and actions to help enhance economic activity, strengthen the sense of place and connectivity, and provide a safer environment.

On March 21, 2017, a second Community Meeting was held to share the draft Action Plan and solicit feedback. Top priorities identified in the final Action Plan are based on community feedback from that meeting.

The actions outlined in this plan include both near-term "tactical" projects, as well as steps to initiate longer-term efforts. While this plan focuses primarily on actions that require leadership or support from the City and County of Honolulu, community partners will need to take the lead on some actions with the City in a support role.

# OVERALL OBJECTIVES

The Action Plan lays out eleven discrete actions to improve Waipahu Town. Many of these help meet several of the following planning objectives identified by the Waipahu community. In general, the implementation of most actions will require successful public-private partnerships.

## **PLACEMAKING**

Placemaking is the process of creating special places and destinations that create lasting memories—places people want to experience, use, and enjoy. Waipahu Town is already rich with places that often host special events and activities, including the Filipino Community Center, Hawaii’s Plantation Village, Hans L’Orange Park, and Waipahu Festival Marketplace. Enhancing these existing destinations, and providing seamless connections between them, can improve the experience of all residents and visitors and generate a host of economic and social benefits.

Specific placemaking strategies identified by the community include murals on blank building facades; activities and events in underutilized places, such as a park or a parking lot; and new destinations and activities that would draw people to Waipahu Town, such as sidewalk cafes, food markets, and food trucks, among others.

## **STREETS AS PLACES**

Communities are increasingly recognizing the value of their streets as vital public spaces. The focus of developing “streets as places” is to change the common perception that roadways are just a place for cars, but rather where community members of all ages can interact and experience their community. In Waipahu Town, this means attracting more people to walk and stroll with nice streetscapes, street furniture, shade, and places for people to hang out in reclaimed space between storefronts and roadways. New signage, trails, and bicycle facilities will also activate area streets by making it simpler and safer to travel throughout Waipahu Town without a car.

## **CATALYST FOR DEVELOPMENT**

Workshop participants highlighted the need to improve conditions for existing businesses, especially those impacted during construction of the rail system, and provide opportunities for new ones. Public art, renovated building facades, improved access, and transportation alternatives were all identified as strategies to address the current challenges area businesses face. These and other neighborhood improvements are also intended to improve real estate market dynamics in the station area and attract new transit-oriented development.

## **SAFETY AND MAINTENANCE**

The community felt that increased safety and a higher standard for maintenance of the public realm are essential to improving the image of Waipahu Town. Making progress in these areas will depend on the coordination of public and private efforts.

The specific measures identified at the Community Workshop are to improve lighting throughout the district, repair building elements such as broken awnings and neglected facades, organize community clean-up days, and develop a proactive approach to maintenance of the public right-of-way. Participants also expressed a desire for streets that are safer to walk along and cross.



# IMPLEMENT A NETWORK OF CONNECTED BICYCLE FACILITIES

**Lead:** City Departments of Transportation Services, Design & Construction, and Facility Maintenance

**Implementation Status:** Repaving and striping improvements anticipated by the end of 2017; funding being identified for Waipahu Depot Street improvements

At the Community Workshop, participants identified a host of desired improvements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities on area streets. As part of ongoing implementation of the City's Complete Streets law (2012), complete streets features, including bicycle lanes, will be incorporated into an upcoming street repaving effort for Waipahu Street and Mokuola Street/Managers Drive, as well as nearby Leoku and Leowahine Streets. Additionally, a mini-circle will be installed at the intersection of Managers Drive and Hiapo Street.

The community also expressed strong interest in connecting Old Waipahu Town with the Pearl Harbor Historic Trail through an upgrade of the Kapakahi Stream/Waipahu Depot Street corridor. This project will improve recreational opportunities, enhance connectivity from the trail system to Waipahu Town and the rail station, and serve as an attraction to nearby businesses. The unimproved shoulders along Waipahu Depot Street could be paved to allow space for pedestrians and cyclists to travel safely between the trail and downtown Waipahu; similar improvement could also be made to the terminal segment of the Pearl Harbor Historic Trail as it approaches Waipahu Depot Street. Additional desired improvements include new lighting, signage, and landscaping and shade.



Proposed network of connected bicycle facilities



Existing conditions along Waipahu Depot Street



Proposed improvements to Waipahu Depot Street



Existing condition of trailhead near Pearl Harbor Historic Trail (left). Illustrative rendering of trail improvements (right).

# 2 UPGRADE WAIPAHO TRANSIT CENTER

**Lead:** City Department of Transportation Services

**Implementation Status:** Project funded through a design-build contract, with construction anticipated in 2019; property owner support needed for elements not included in this project

Hikimoe Street currently serves as both a local street and a transfer center for TheBus. The adjacent rail station will deliver thousands of additional pedestrians and bus riders a day to this street. Workshop participants wanted Hikimoe Street, and other streets immediately adjacent, to be safer to cross and walk along, to become a place to meet people and connect with neighbors, and to improve business access.

The planned Waipahu Transit Center improvements include sidewalk widening on the makai side of Hikimoe Street, improved bus shelters, an extra lane for improved bus operations and kiss-and-ride, sharrows for cyclists, relocation of the raised crosswalk closer to the rail station, a new crosswalk on the makai side of the Hikimoe Street/Mokuola Street intersection, and new curb ramps. Street trees for shade are also being planned. These upgrades will improve the pedestrian and transit-rider experience. The community would also like to see improvements that will not be included in the current City project, including period-style light fixtures on the ewa end of Hikimoe Street and public art.

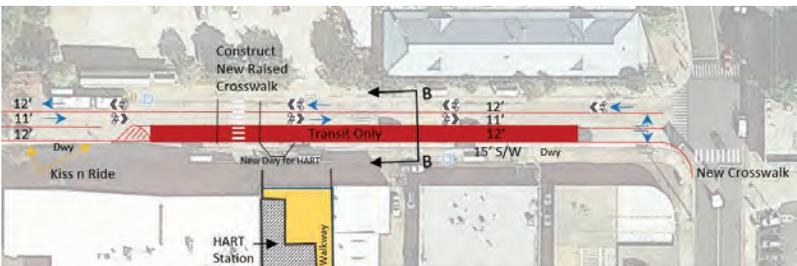
Proposed improvements (Ewa half of Hikimoe Street)



[Section A-A]



Proposed improvements (Diamond Head half of Hikimoe Street)



[Section B-B]



Conceptual plan only. Not to be used for detailed design/construction plans.

Source: Streetmix.net (April 2017)

Proposed improvements to the Waipahu Transit Center

### 3 REDESIGN MOLOALO STREET

**Lead:** City Departments of Transportation Services and Parks & Recreation, State Department of Transportation, Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation

**Implementation Status:** No dedicated funding identified for complete redesign; pedestrian improvements being built in conjunction with rail station construction

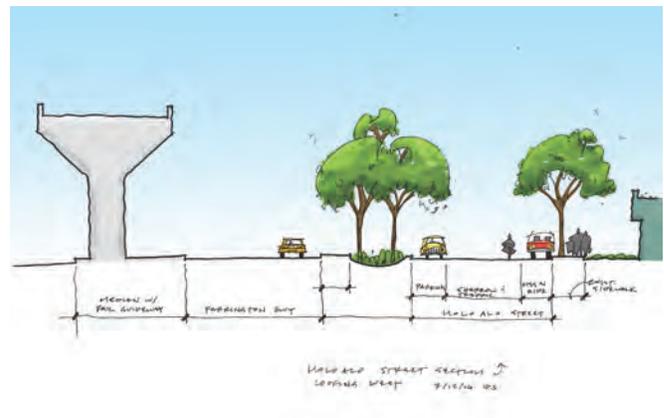
Moloalo Street is the local frontage road on the mauka side of Farrington Highway. The street, and the developments along it, give passersby their first impression of Waipahu Town—not a particularly inviting one. A redesign of Moloalo Street could improve access to the rail station, bicycle and pedestrian connectivity, access to businesses, and overall perception of the neighborhood. Proposed improvements include street trees and landscaping, sidewalk repair, bicycle accommodations, crosswalks, a “kiss-and-ride” drop-off area for rail passengers, signage, and changes to vehicular circulation.



Current conditions on Moloalo Street as a two-way, single-entrance service road, primarily for car access and business parking



Proposed redesign includes conversion to a one-way street with lanes for car parking, bike access, and kiss-and-ride space for easy access to the Waipahu Transit Center rail station. Landscaping should be included to enhance walkways and business frontages.



## 4 UPGRADE STREET LIGHTING

**Lead:** City Department of Design & Construction

**Implementation Status:** LED conversion contract being executed, to be installed by 2019

The community has expressed concerns about safety and lighting in Waipahu Town. The City's planned conversion of streetlights from sodium to LED bulbs will illuminate the streets with a "whiter" light. This will improve an individual's ability to distinguish colors, giving the area an improved sense of safety, and saving energy. The new lights will be implemented as part of an islandwide streetlight replacement project.



Example of street lighting with traditional sodium bulbs (left) versus LED bulbs (right)

Source: [gelighting.com](http://gelighting.com)

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# CONNECT HAWAII'S PLANTATION VILLAGE TO WAIPAHU TOWN CORE

**Lead:** Department of Planning and Permitting, Hawaii's Plantation Village

**Implementation Status:** No dedicated funding identified

Workshop participants wanted a pedestrian connection between Hawaii's Plantation Village and Waipahu Depot Street to connect the historic town core with other landmarks in the community. A pathway from Hawaii's Plantation Village to Waipahu Festival Marketplace would activate areas along the stream that are currently inaccessible and would encourage more people to visit the educational facility. This improvement would also create an opportunity to enhance the gathering space outside the Waipahu Festival Marketplace.



Illustrative diagram of a path between Waipahu Festival Marketplace and Hawaii's Plantation Village. The dashed line is an existing pathway; the solid green line is the proposed improvement. The proposed gate marked in red could limit access during non-business hours.



Concepts for improving the experience in the parking lot of Waipahu Festival Marketplace



## IMPLEMENT PLACEMAKING STRATEGIES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LANDOWNERS

**Lead:** Area landowners, City Department of Planning & Permitting

**Implementation Status:** Community partners needed

With the exception of the historic buildings and structures, much of Waipahu Town was designed to accommodate vehicular traffic—resulting in many parking lots, paved surfaces, and blank facades that face the street. Workshop participants were very interested in repurposing these and other underutilized neighborhood features to improve the aesthetics of the neighborhood and create new gathering spaces. The strategies listed below are primarily on private property and are intended to improve safety, provide opportunities for new businesses, and enhance conditions for the existing ones that have been impacted by rail construction.

Specific actions for activating the area include installing new signage, restoring historic facades, enhancing blank building facades, filling vacant storefronts, creating parklets and outdoor dining and seating areas, and programming events such as block parties and food truck festivals.

Property owners can also enhance their frontage with streetscape improvements that include landscaping elements, bicycle racks and bike share stations, lighting, and expanded sidewalks.



Illustrative rendering of how mural art (this one representing a historic timeline of Waipahu Town) can improve building facades



Existing conditions at the Moloalo/Hikimoe Street intersection (left). Illustrative rendering of improvements to the building façade and a new crosswalk to improve access to the businesses at the end of Hikimoe Street (right).



An existing parking lot along Hikimoe Street separates businesses from pedestrian traffic (left). Illustrative rendering of a parklet that could increase community use of the space and pedestrian connectivity to storefronts (right).



Existing view of the terminus of Waipahu Depot Street, looking mauka (left). Illustrative rendering of landmark signage and historic information displays (right).

# 7 CONNECT WAIPAHU DISTRICT PARK TO WAIPAHU TOWN CORE

**Lead:** City Departments of Design & Construction and Parks & Recreation, State of Hawai'i

**Implementation Status:** No dedicated funding identified; coordination required between City and State landowners

The community identified a need for a more direct connection between Waipahu District Park and the Waipahu Town core to improve transit access and walkability, economic activity, and access to existing open space. Workshop participants supported the idea of installing a pedestrian and bicycle bridge from Waipahu District Park across the existing drainage canal. Destinations immediately adjacent to the canal include the library, a social services office, senior and affordable housing, and various commercial establishments. The transit station and the historic core are just a few blocks further.



Existing conditions of the drainage canal that separates Waipahu District Park from the Waipahu Town core



An example bridge that could connect Waipahu District Park to the Waipahu Transit Center (Kapa'a to Kealia Bike Path, Kaua'i)



## DEVELOP A MASTER PLAN FOR HANS L'ORANGE PARK

**Lead:** City Departments of Parks & Recreation and Design & Construction

**Implementation Status:** Planning consultant selection underway

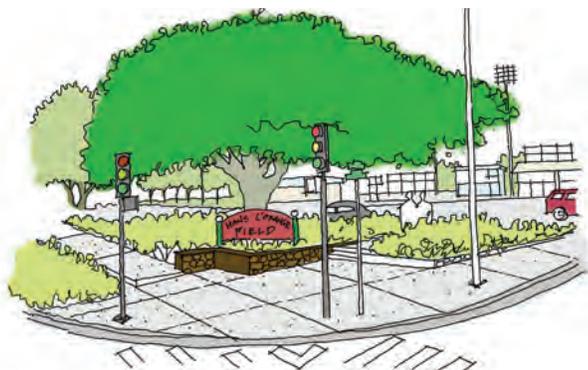
High-quality parks complement the goal of creating a safe, livable, and healthy community while fostering a sense of pride. Parks offer a place of refuge and calm in an urban environment for people to recharge, reflect, connect, and play. Park improvement actions include forming partnerships and developing a master plan for future enhancements of the park.

Many workshop participants expressed strong support for improving Hans L'Orange Park to showcase the historic outdoor space. Based on community input, the City will develop a master plan for Hans L'Orange Park. Some ideas from the community include: improve lighting and security, wider sidewalks, improving use of parking lot, such as for food trucks and events.

The park master plan will identify, prioritize, and determine the feasibility of physical improvements, while additional recreational programs would help increase usage and safety. This effort would complement other areawide actions such as improved crossings and bicycle lanes on adjacent streets.



The existing Hans L'Orange Park entrance is understated, and the park itself is mainly used for baseball games.



A rendering of potential park entrance improvements with additional landscaping and improved sidewalks and signage.

## 9 ADDRESS AREA WIDE FLOODING

**Lead:** City Departments of Design & Construction and Facility Maintenance

**Implementation Status:** Funding identified for preliminary engineering studies

Community stakeholders identified the need to address areawide flooding issues as a key action to spur future development and investment in the area. The Waipahu Transit Station area is located in a Special Flood Hazard Area flood zone (AEF) associated with Waikele Stream, as identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Flood Insurance Rate Maps. This area is defined as a high-hazard risk zone with mandatory flood insurance and building standards that apply. As such, areas located in zones A/AE/AEF have elevation requirements and use restrictions, and the AEF zone requires additional studies. In general, this can result in regulations that require substantial, cost-prohibitive improvements for new development.

There is an existing berm at Hawaii's Plantation Village, which may be able to address the flood hazard risk, but additional studies need to be undertaken to determine if it is sufficient to meet minimum design, operation, and maintenance standards as established in the NFIP to provide protection from flood hazard conditions.

The City will pursue engineering studies and consultation with floodplain managers to determine specific actions to address floodplain requirements and improve development feasibility in Waipahu Town.



Waipahu Town flood hazard map



## ESTABLISH AREA WIDE WAYFINDING

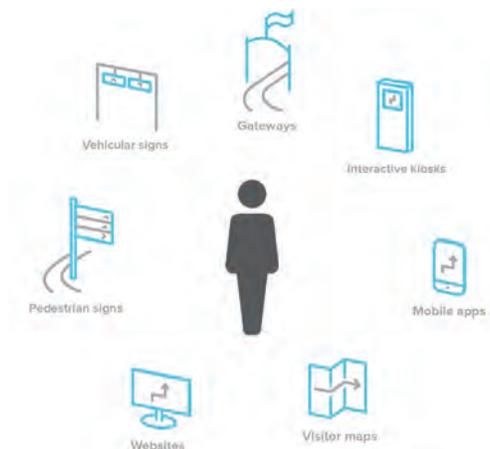
**Lead:** City Departments of Information Technology, Planning & Permitting, and Transportation Services, and Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation

**Implementation Status:** Rail corridor wayfinding strategy complete; preparation of a wayfinding master plan will begin in 2018

In order to prepare the rail station neighborhoods for new visitors—and orient riders to station locations and neighborhood destinations—the City is developing a wayfinding master plan for the rail transit corridor. Wayfinding provides consistent and clear information to guide people to destinations in an area while enriching their experience of the place. It encourages exploration, repeat visitation, and use of different transportation modes.

Waipahu Town has a wide range of destinations for tourists and residents alike which can be highlighted through an integrated wayfinding strategy that directs individuals to these locations. The City plans to install pedestrian-scale wayfinding signs to highlight important area destinations, transportation information, and nearby services.

To complement this system, the City is also planning to develop an informational website (at [www.hnl.info](http://www.hnl.info)) and smartphone apps. Digital signs, such as the new “Transit Screen” sign currently being tested on the first floor of the Fasi Municipal Building which shows real-time bus arrival information, may also be explored. This real-time information will benefit transit riders at the integrated bus and rail stations, as well as Waipahu Town residents and visitors.



Potential elements of a wayfinding system



# DEVELOP POUHALA MARSH EDUCATIONAL SIGNAGE

**Lead:** State Departments of Transportation and Land & Natural Resources (Division of Forestry and Wildlife)

**Implementation Status:** No dedicated funding identified

Workshop participants expressed interest in highlighting the Pouhala Marsh wildlife sanctuary through educational signage for residents and visitors alike. The signage is envisioned as a way to improve awareness of local natural resources and native species in the area. The signage should be located along the Pearl Harbor Historic Trail near the intersection with Waipahu Depot Street.



Pouhala Marsh is a natural and recreational asset for the Waipahu community. (source: [www.hawaiianforest.com](http://www.hawaiianforest.com))



Example signage for Pouhala Marsh

# MOVING FORWARD

Waipahu Town is a special place because of its rich history and the involvement of residents and businesses in maintaining its unique character. To build on this commitment, the City will continue to support community goals, to encourage forward thinking actions, and to celebrate the ongoing efforts of this important rail station neighborhood. But the City cannot do it alone—community members, property owners, businesses and civic organizations, and public agencies are all essential to creating a bright future for Waipahu Town.

## **Comments or questions?**

If you would like to contribute to any of the above actions, or if you have any questions, comments, or ideas about the Waipahu Town Action Plan, please contact the Department of Planning and Permitting at 808-768-8012 or [andrew.tang@honolulu.gov](mailto:andrew.tang@honolulu.gov).



# WAIPAHU TOWN

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ACTION PLAN