

# Framework Research Report

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HAWAI‘I STATE PLANNING ACT PHASE II  
TASK FORCE MEETING #4  
TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 2026  
11:00AM – 1:00PM

## Workflow

The following graphic organizes the key activities by type and demonstrates the relationships between the different components of the workplan:

	ONBOARDING AND BASELINE RESEARCH January – December 2025	TASK 1: PREPARE PRELIMINARY GUIDING FRAMEWORK AND FORM THEMATIC AREA PIGS December 2025 – April 2026	TASK 2: PREPARE THEMATIC AREA RECOMMENDATIONS March – September 2026	TASK 3: PREPARE FINAL REPORT TO LEGISLATURE September – December 2026	TASK 4: CONDUCT OUTREACH TO RAISE AWARENESS OF PROPOSED UPDATE December 2026 – June 2027	
ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT & RESEARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Execute contract with UH Department of Urban and Regional Planning</li> <li>Research history of Hawaii State Planning Act</li> <li>Design preliminary stakeholder interview guide</li> <li>Interview County Planning Departments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review existing plans, other state examples</li> <li>Interview State agencies associated with current functional plans, community organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporate TF comments into preliminary guiding framework for HRS 226 update</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct literature review of Thematic Areas</li> <li>Identify and interview additional stakeholders per Thematic Area</li> <li>Conduct targeted community outreach per Thematic Area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Synthesize PIGs' findings and recommendations / TF approvals</li> <li>Complete additional policy analysis*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporate TF comments into Final Report</li> </ul>
PRODUCTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>History of Hawaii State Planning Act Annotated Slides</li> <li>Summary Report of Initial Findings from Stakeholder Interviews</li> <li>Draft Work Plan</li> <li>Database of Amendments to HRS 226</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Framework Research Report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preliminary Guiding Framework</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thematic Area Briefs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft Report to the Legislature</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final Report to the Legislature</li> <li>Derivative information products*</li> </ul>
TASK FORCE DISCUSSION / ACTION	<p><b>TF Meetings #1-3</b> <i>May – December 2025</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction to the Hawaii State Planning Act</li> <li>Review Draft Work Plan</li> <li><b>Action: Approve Work Plan</b></li> <li>Review Draft Annual Report to Legislature</li> <li><b>Action: Approve Annual Report</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>TF Meeting #4</b> <i>March 2026</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Framework Research Report findings</li> <li>Deliberate findings and provide input to guide Preliminary Guiding Framework</li> </ul>	<p><b>TF Meeting #5</b> <i>April 2026</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use Preliminary Guiding Framework to determine Thematic Area Permitted Interaction Groups (PIGs)</li> <li>Identify Thematic Area Subject Matter Experts</li> <li><b>Action: Form PIGs</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>PIG Meetings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and deliberate Thematic Area Briefs</li> <li>Investigate and develop recommendations for addressing critical Thematic Area issues, role of planning ecosystem in relation to Thematic Areas, relevant metrics and benchmarks to measure progress, and coordination and implementation systems</li> </ul> <p><b>TF Meetings #6-8</b> <i>July – September 2026</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PIGs present findings and recommendations</li> <li>Deliberate findings and recommendations, provide input to guide Draft Final Report</li> </ul>	<p><b>TF Meeting #9</b> <i>November 2026</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Draft Report to Legislature</li> </ul>	<p><b>TF Meeting #10</b> <i>December 2026</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Action: Approve Final Report</b></li> </ul>

\*Subject to the availability of resources

# Overview

## ***Framework Research Report: Version 1 Summary***

- Objectives
- Methods

## ***Findings, Analysis, and Discussion***

- Statewide Planning System Context
- Relevance and Use of the State Plan
- Current and Emerging Objective Areas, Issues, and Needs

# Framework Objectives

## *Examine:*

**The role of the  
State Planning  
Act**

## *Assess:*

**The relevancy of  
the State Plan's  
overarching  
themes and  
goals**

## *Identify:*

**Long-range  
planning  
priorities**

## *Expand on:*

**Findings and  
Recommendations  
from Phase I**

# Framework Methods

## *Literature Review*

- **Compare existing plans and policy documents** with the State Planning Act and identify emerging themes.

## *Stakeholder Interviews*

- Gather insights on contemporary planning priorities, challenges, opportunities as they relate to the **purpose, goals, and objectives** of the State Plan.

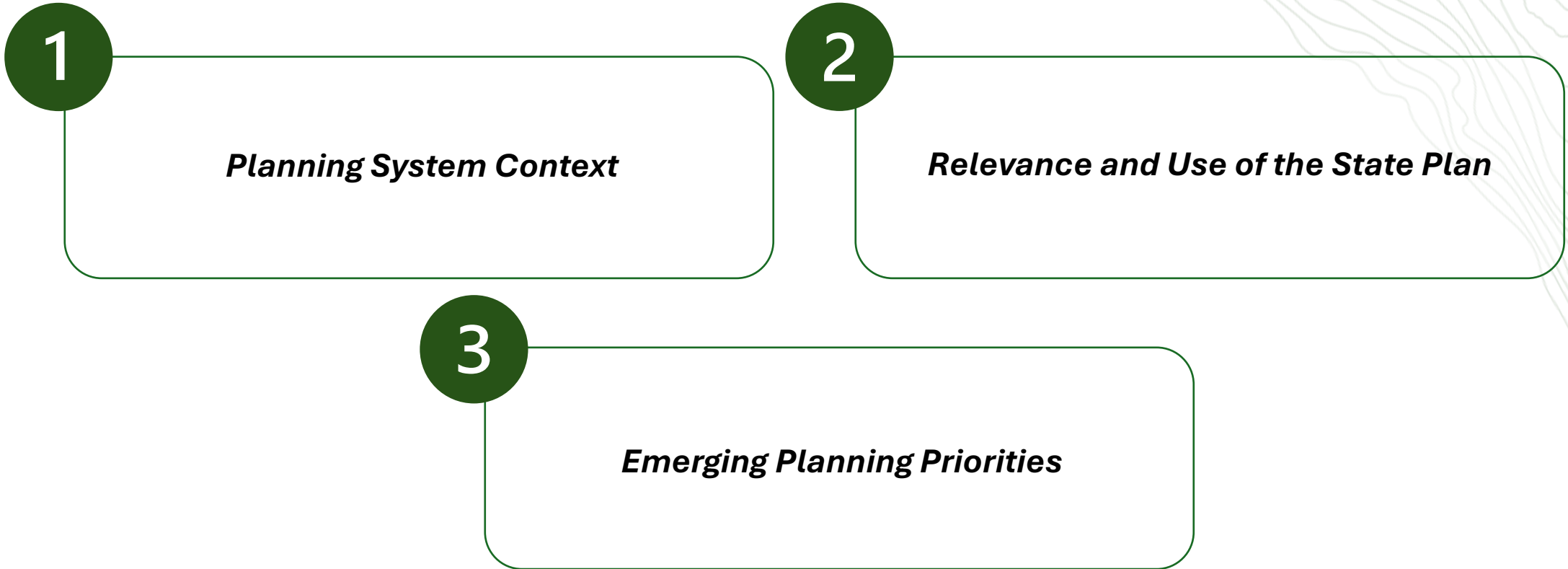
## *Synthesis and Analysis*

- **Extract core findings** from the framework research report

## *Task Force Input*

- **Review and discuss** the preliminary framework.

# Summary, Analysis, and Discussion

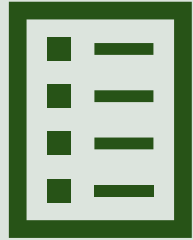


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# **Current Planning System Context**

# Current Planning System Context

The literature review and current interviews suggest:



## *Changing Planning Landscape*

- A planning landscape shaped by mandates, programmatic responsibilities, and evolving policy priorities
- Shifts in planning governance

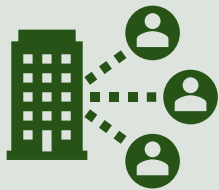


## *Adapting to Changes*

- Use of shorter-term strategic plans to better align resources with emerging needs
- More flexible planning approaches to respond to changing conditions
- Focus on current issues
- Interest in and use of digital tools, technology, and innovation

# Current Planning System Context

The current interviews suggest:



## ***Capacity Challenges***

- Budget constraints
- Staffing shortages
- Lack of state plan guidance



## ***Varied Collaboration Approaches***

- Largely informal coordination practices, with dependence on individual relationships or project champions
- Distribution of planning responsibilities and cross-sectoral planning
- Operational challenges related to continuity across projects

# Comparison to Other State Planning Systems

## States with Strong Roles in Planning and Coordination

### Maine: Growth Management Act

- “Finding of Consistency” Requirements
- Voluntary Municipal Participation
- Consequences and Incentives for Compliance

### Maryland: Planning Principles

- Eight Planning Principles
- Mandated Local Plan Elements
- Review Cycles and Periods
- Issue-Specific State Mandates
- Time, Process-Based, and Substantive Consequences for Compliance

### California: Long-Term General Plan

- Mandatory Elements
- Two-Track Plan Enforcement
  - Vertical Consistency Doctrine
  - Legal Enforcement
- State Review

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# **Relevance and Use of the State Plan**

# Current State Plan: Relevance

The current review of County General Plans and interviews suggest:

## *Purpose*

- The **purpose** remains relevant
- Agencies continue to rely on planning tools and mandates that align with the State Plan's goals of **coordinated, long-term planning**

## *Principles, Values, and Goals*

- The State Plan's broad goals can be **difficult to translate into actionable strategies**
- County General Plans are **less economically-focused and individualistic** compared to the State Plan's values and goals
- Nonprofit/community stakeholders found that the principles remain **highly relevant but could be clarified to reflect current priorities.**

**Do these findings  
resonate with you?**

**Findings on pp. 10,  
26, 27, 34**

# Applicability of the State Plan to the Public Sector

## The current interviews suggest:

The State Plan is **viewed as outdated**, reflecting planning assumptions, policy categories, and land use references developed decades ago

**Overlapping and conflicting policies**

**A lack of clear guidance:** implementation, update frequency and process

Agencies tend to rely on **sector-specific plans, county plans, and federal regulatory frameworks** to guide their implementation

**If the Plan is updated, what is the role that the State Plan should play in today's world?**

**Findings on pp. 27, 30**

# Applicability of the State Plan to the Nonprofit / Community Sector

## The current interviews suggest:

The State Plan and related planning frameworks  
have not kept pace with contemporary  
challenges

The State Plan is outdated, lacks “teeth,” is overly  
broad, and weakly enforceable

There is a gap in implementation and a lack of  
ownership related to the State Plan

**If the Plan is  
updated, what is  
the role that the  
State Plan should  
play in today’s  
world?**

**Findings on pp. 34-35**

# Current State Plan: Relevance

The literature review and current interviews suggest:

## Objectives

- The State Plan’s overarching objectives, such as supporting economic development, environmental stewardship, and community well-being, remain consistent with State agencies’ missions
- The existing objective areas still capture the major dimensions of statewide planning, but policy contexts have evolved since the plan was last revised in 1986
- More recent county general plans have shifted from the original five objective areas

## Original Objective and Policy Areas

<b>Economy</b>
<b>Population</b>
<b>Environment</b>
<b>Facility Systems</b>
<b>Socio-Cultural Advancement</b>

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# **Emerging Planning Priorities**

# Topics in County General Plans

Findings on pp. 9-10

<b>Economy</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Environment</b>	<b>Infrastructure / Transportation</b>	<b>Housing / Community</b>	<b>Culture / Heritage</b>
<b>Economic Diversification</b>	<b>Growth Management</b>	<b>Sustainability</b>	<b>Utility Systems</b>	<b>Affordable Housing</b>	<b>Cultural Preservation</b>
<b>Innovation</b>	<b>Directed Growth</b>	<b>Stewardship</b>	<b>Energy Systems</b>	<b>Available Housing</b>	<b>Heritage</b>
<b>Emerging Industries</b>	<b>Urban / Rural Growth</b>	<b>Natural Resource Preservation</b>	<b>Public Facilities</b>	<b>Workforce Housing</b>	<b>Sense of Place</b>
<b>Sustainable Economic Development</b>		<b>Ecosystem</b>	<b>Transportation Networks</b>	<b>Complete Communities</b>	<b>Traditional Knowledge</b>
<b>Expand Local Industries / Businesses</b>		<b>Climate Change Resilience</b>	<b>Multi-Modal Transportation</b>	<b>Safe Neighborhoods</b>	<b>Cultural Resources</b>
<b>Small Business Development</b>		<b>Environmental Health</b>	<b>Mobility</b>	<b>Access to Services / Amenities</b>	
		<b>Hazard Mitigation</b>	<b>Infrastructure Capacity</b>		
		<b>Energy Resilience</b>			
		<b>Environmental Justice</b>			
		<b>Clean Air</b>			
		<b>Clean Water</b>			

# Emerging Issues and Needs

The current interviews suggest:

## Public Stakeholders

- **Climate Change and Environmental Hazards** (e.g. sea level rise, shoreline erosion, wildfire risk)
- **Outdated Hazard Data** (e.g., flood mapping, hazard mapping, regulatory frameworks, risk assessments)
- **Water Availability and Watershed Protection** (e.g., housing growth, infrastructure capacity, water resources, climate resilience)

## Nonprofit/Community Stakeholders

- **Native Hawaiian Cultural Knowledge and Community-Based Perspectives in Long-Term Planning**
- **Economic Diversification**
- **Workforce development**
- **Housing stability**
- **Social infrastructure**

Do these emerging issues and needs resonate with you? What should be added?

Findings on pp. 33, 37

# Planning-Specific Issues and Needs

The current interviews suggest:

## Public Stakeholders

- Accounting for Uncertainty in Long-Term Planning
- Scenario Planning
- Reliability of Conventional Planning Models and Tools
- Capacity Challenges
- Opportunities to Leverage Emerging Technologies

## Nonprofit/Community Stakeholders

- Addressing Advances in Technology
- Implementation-Oriented Planning

What other planning-specific issues are your agency / organization facing?

What other issues do you think will need to be addressed by your agency / organization?

Findings on pp. 33, 37

# Framework Research Report: Key Takeaways

Findings on pg. 37

Maintain the Overall Structure but Update the Scope of Each Policy Area

Strengthen Integration Across Policy Areas

Reflect Emerging Planning Priorities

Address Data, Technology, and Evidence-Based Planning

Strengthen Links Between Objectives and Implementation

Reinforce the Role of Community Engagement and Cultural Knowledge

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# **Emerging Planning Priorities: OPSD Analysis**

# Climate Adaptation & Resilience

Summary	Links to County Plans
<p>Examines how Hawai‘i can respond to climate change by reducing risk, strengthening adaptive capacity, and enhancing the resilience of communities, ecosystems, and infrastructure. Focuses on long-term environmental change, hazard mitigation, and integrated strategies across sectors and scales.</p>	<p><b>Environment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sustainability</li><li>• Stewardship</li><li>• Ecosystem</li><li>• Climate change resilience</li><li>• Environmental health</li><li>• Hazard mitigation</li><li>• Energy resilience</li><li>• Environmental justice</li><li>• Clean air / water</li></ul> <p><b>Infrastructure/Transportation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Infrastructure capacity</li><li>• Energy systems</li></ul>

# Housing & Community Stability

Summary	Links to County Plans
<p>Explores the conditions necessary for people to live, remain, and thrive in their communities, including housing affordability, availability, and quality, as well as access to services, infrastructure, and safe, supportive environments. Considers how land use, economic forces, and infrastructure systems shape stability and displacement.</p>	<p><b>Housing/Community</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Affordable / workforce housing</li><li>• Complete communities</li><li>• Access to services</li><li>• Safe neighborhoods</li></ul> <p><b>Population</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Growth management</li><li>• Directed growth</li><li>• Urban/rural growth</li></ul> <p><b>Infrastructure/Transportation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mobility</li><li>• Access to services</li></ul>

# Economic Stewardship & Resilience

Summary	Links to County Plans
<p>Assesses how Hawai'i can cultivate a resilient and locally grounded economy through responsible management of resources, support for local industries, and strategic diversification. Considers workforce development, innovation, and the relationships between economic activity, environmental limits, and community wellbeing.</p>	<p><b>Economy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Economic diversification</li><li>• Innovation</li><li>• Emerging industries</li><li>• Sustainable economic development</li><li>• Small business development</li></ul> <p><b>Also intersects with:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Infrastructure (enabling systems)</li><li>• Housing (workforce stability)</li><li>• Environment (sustainability)</li></ul>

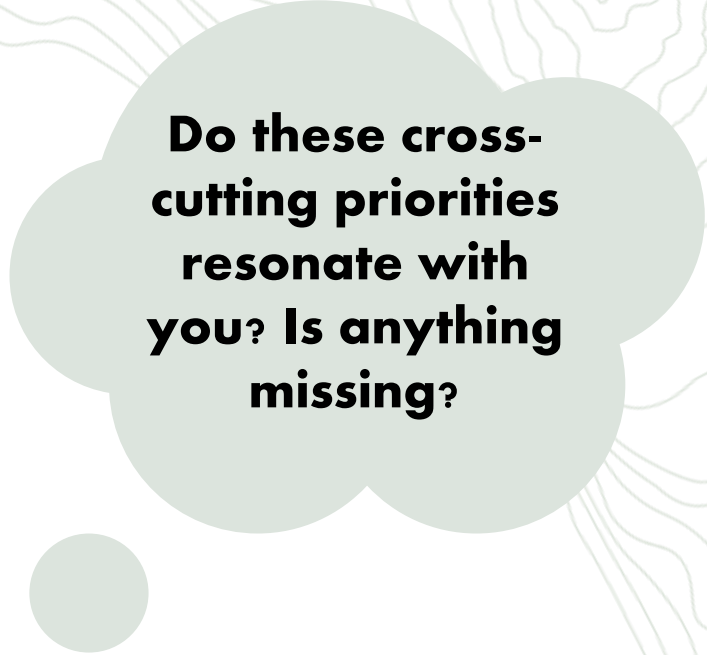
# Culture & Place

Summary	Links to County Plans
<p>Centers the relationships between people, land, and identity, including the protection and perpetuation of Native Hawaiian knowledge, cultural practices, heritage, and sense of place. Examines how planning can support belonging, continuity, and meaningful connection to place across diverse communities.</p>	<p><b>Culture/Heritage</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cultural preservation</li><li>• Heritage</li><li>• Sense of place</li><li>• Traditional knowledge</li><li>• Cultural resources</li></ul> <p><b>Housing/Community</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community wellbeing</li><li>• Safe neighborhoods</li></ul> <p><b>Population</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community composition and change</li></ul>

# Planning Systems & Coordination

Summary	Links to County Plans
<p>Evaluates how the planning system functions across agencies and scales, including decision-making structures, public engagement practices, data and information systems, and interagency coordination. Identifies systemic barriers and opportunities to improve alignment, transparency, and effectiveness in statewide planning.</p>	<p>Draws indirectly from all categories, but especially reflects gaps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Not strongly represented in existing domains, but implied through:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Growth management (Population)</li><li>• Infrastructure planning (coordination needs)</li><li>• Environmental justice (participation + equity)</li></ul></li></ul>

<b>Cross-Cutting Priorities</b>	<b>General Plan Themes</b>	<b>Key Topics Integrated</b>
Climate Adaptation & Resilience	Environment, Infrastructure	Climate adaptation, hazard mitigation, environmental health
Housing & Community Stability	Housing/Community, Population, Infrastructure	Affordability, growth, access, livability
Economic Stewardship & Resilience	Economy (+ others)	Innovation, local capacity, resilience
Culture & Place	Culture/Heritage, Housing/Community	Identity, place, wellbeing
Planning Systems & Coordination	Cross-cutting (implicit gap)	Engagement, coordination, decision systems



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# **Announcements**

# Coming Up

## *Continued Analysis, Planning, and Research*

- Stakeholder Interviews and Community Engagement
- Thematic Area Briefs
- PIGS: Planning and Coordination
- Research

## *Next Meeting*

- Finalize the Guiding Framework
- Form PIGs
- Target: April 2026

# Permitted Interaction Group (PIG) Objectives

## *Investigate:*

- **Critical long-range issues** and recommendations to address these issues
- **The role of the current planning ecosystem** in relation to long-range issues
- **Relevant metrics and benchmarks** to measure progress
- **Effective systems for planning coordination and implementation** to address the identified issues

## *Identify:*

- **Thematic Areas** to support the formation of Permitted Interaction Groups (PIGs), targeted for April 2026

# **Mahalo!**

**The meeting recording will be posted on the OPSD YouTube channel and minutes will be posted on the OPSD Phase 2 Update webpage.**

**Please submit any questions or comments to [claire.p.mccreery@hawaii.gov](mailto:claire.p.mccreery@hawaii.gov).**

**Mahalo!**