

Hawai‘i State Planning Act Phase II Update Workplan

Prepared Pursuant to Act 36, Session Laws of Hawai‘i 2024

**Approved as Amended by the Hawai‘i State Planning Act Phase II Task Force:
December 18, 2025**

OVERVIEW

Background

The [Hawai'i State Planning Act](#) (Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 226, the State Plan), signed into law in 1978, was designed to steer the future development of the state. A significant part of the State's history, the plan addressed long-term goals and considered the needs of Hawai'i's people in balance with the State's limited resources. It also covered key issues at the time, such as population, the economy, facility systems, and socio-cultural progress.

Recognizing the need for an update, the Office of Planning published the Hawai'i State Plan Update [Phase I report](#) in 2018. The report presented findings and recommendations to lay the groundwork for a revised plan and evaluated existing plans across state agencies and their alignment with the functional plans. The report recommended that updates should be made to address contemporary concerns such as environmental issues, emerging economic sectors, and evolving social challenges.

Building on the Phase I report, [Act 36](#) was passed by the 2024 State Legislature and signed into law by Governor Josh Green, M.D., establishing a Task Force to carry out Phase II of updating Chapter 226. Among its duties, the Task Force was first charged with creating a two-year plan to examine the issues described in Act 36. This document—the **Hawai'i State Planning Act Phase II Update Workplan**—sets forth such a plan to guide the Task Force's approach toward generating recommendations to comprehensively update Chapter 226.

Act 36 Requirements

In conformance with Act 36, the Task Force shall (Act 36, Section 2):

- (b)(1) Create a two-year plan to examine the issues established in subsection (c), clarify and articulate findings, develop metrics and benchmarks to measure progress, and develop a final report that describes how the State is addressing the findings set forth in the phase I update completed in 2018;
- (b)(2) Incorporate into the plan how it will coordinate with other groups, agencies, and programs within and outside the State to achieve alignment of plans and their implementation;
- (b)(3) Incorporate into the plan how it will coordinate with the counties to achieve alignment of plans and their implementation; and
- (b)(4) Consider and incorporate into the plan equity concerns, including economic and accessibility impacts to low-income communities.

The Task Force will examine and report on (Act 36, Subsection 2):

- (c)(1) The findings of the original Hawai'i State Planning Act and include any amendments necessary for relevancy;
- (c)(2) Re-establishment and formulation of a list of long-range focus areas for functional plans that place greater emphasis on plan formulation and program coordination to integrate state and county activities, including but not limited to an evaluation of the latest state and county comprehensive economic development strategies;
- (c)(3) Definitions in section 226-2, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, that may require amendments;
- (c)(4) Principles and values considered integral to the State, including tests for current relevancy and necessary amendments;
- (c)(5) Consistency of state goals established pursuant to section 226-4, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, in relation to departments, counties, and the general public;
- (c)(6) The ability of the Hawai'i state plan to provide a relevant, multi-disciplinary planning system and direction to encourage and facilitate cooperation among various entities, including between the State and counties; and
- (c)(7) Objectives and policies established pursuant to 226-5 through 226-27 that may require updates to conform with current and long-range goals.

SCOPE OF WORK

Key Outcomes

The Task Force expects the following outcomes from the execution of this Workplan:

- **Outcome 1:** Findings and recommendations to update the long-range objectives based on assessing the relevance of the Hawai‘i State Planning Act to the current and future needs, priorities, and values of Hawai‘i’s people.
- **Outcome 2:** Findings and recommendations to strengthen effective planning and program coordination through the statewide planning system, including fostering alignment among state and county agencies and the broader planning and implementation ecosystem to achieve the State Plan’s long-range objectives.
- **Outcome 3:** Findings and recommendations informed by an equitable process that elevates the voices of low-income communities.
- **Outcome 4:** Identification of metrics, benchmarks, and indicators to measure progress toward the State Plan’s long-range objectives and guide future implementation.

Administrative, Research, & Engagement Support (OPSD)

To assist the Task Force, the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) will provide administrative, research, and engagement support through the activities described below. A contract with the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Department of Urban and Regional Planning (UHM) has been executed to supplement OPSD’s capacity in conducting these activities.

Stakeholder Interviews: Stakeholders from the public and private sector will be interviewed alongside community leaders to gather insights on current and emerging issues, aspirations, and coordination needs (e.g., interagency coordination and data sharing). The interviews will serve as a primary input to establish a preliminary guiding framework for the update process.

Literature Reviews: A variety of literature reviews will be conducted to: 1) assess the relevancy of the findings and purpose, definitions, overall theme, and goals of the State Plan, 2) complement stakeholder interviews in identifying and framing long-range issues that should be addressed by the State Plan, and 3) help determine targeted community outreach needs, approaches, and topics.

Targeted Community Outreach: Outreach (e.g., through online polling, stakeholder interviews, and/or focus groups) will be conducted with community-based and non-profit organization stakeholders that serve historically underrepresented communities. Where

feasible, engagement efforts will be coordinated with related outreach initiatives to minimize duplication and engagement fatigue. Measures will be taken to ensure clear and transparent communication about how input will inform final recommendations and subsequent actions.

Legislative and Policy Research and Analysis: Legislative research will ground recommendations to update Chapter 226 in an understanding of both the historical context of the statute’s evolution and existing long-range statutory targets. In addition, identifying state and county laws that reference Chapter 226 will help the Task Force and policymakers better assess the potential impacts and implications of proposed updates. Targeted, issue-area policy research will also be conducted to inform the development of specific recommendations.

Report Drafting, Presentation, and Legislative Outreach: OPSD will assist the Task Force in preparing the annual and final reports for the legislature, including potential draft legislation. At the direction of the Task Force, OPSD will pursue opportunities to present the Task Force’s findings and recommendations to various stakeholders which may include, but not be limited to, the legislature, general public, and state and county agencies.

Products

A number of interim and final products will be prepared to synthesize research and engagement insights and assist the Task Force’s actions. Key products are described below.

Database of Amendments to Chapter 226: This database will provide a centralized and user-friendly record of all amendments to Chapter 226 since its enactment in 1978. It will catalog more than 150 amendments and allow users to organize and filter entries by year and by amendment type (e.g., structural, major, or minor changes). Hyperlinks to the corresponding session laws will be included to facilitate access to relevant legislative history and contextual background. The database will serve as a reference tool for stakeholders seeking to better understand the Hawai’i State Planning Act and as a resource for Task Force members as they consider and develop recommendations for its update.

Framework Research Report: The report will synthesize findings from the literature review of existing plans, reviews of other states’ planning frameworks, stakeholder interviews, and the Phase I report. Its purpose is to equip the Task Force with the information needed to consider the continued relevance of the State Plan’s findings and purpose, definitions, overarching themes, and goals, as well as the effectiveness of the statewide planning system established in Chapter 226—particularly in relation to the broader planning

ecosystem. The report will also examine the organization and role of other state planning acts for comparative consideration.

Preliminary Guiding Framework: This product will compile and organize the Task Force’s discussion of the Framework Research Report into a preliminary guiding document to support the update of Chapter 226. The framework will identify and group thematic issue areas and associated long-range objectives for review, noting where existing provisions may require clarification, consolidation, or amendment. The framework will be used to define the scope of work and discussion prompts for Permitted Interaction Groups, which will examine each issue area in more detail and develop issue area-specific findings and recommendations.

Thematic Area Briefs: These briefs will provide data and analyses on relevant findings from stakeholder interviews, literature reviews, and targeted community outreach. The briefs will serve as direct inputs to Permitted Interaction Groups, informing their deliberations to investigate and develop recommendations related to key thematic issues, the role of the planning ecosystem in addressing those issues, appropriate metrics and benchmarks to measure progress, and coordination and implementation mechanisms.

Final Report: The Final Report will compile and synthesize the Task Force’s discussions, findings, and recommendations for updating Chapter 226. The report is expected to include draft legislation reflecting the Task Force’s recommendations. In addition, derivative products may be prepared, as appropriate and subject to available resources, at the direction of the Task Force.

APPROACH

Tasks

Task 1: Prepare Preliminary Guiding Framework and Form Thematic Area Permitted Interaction Groups (PIGs)

- **Timeframe:** December 2025 – April 2026
- **Planned Task Force Meetings:** March, April
- **Supporting Research:** Stakeholder interviews and literature reviews will be completed to:
 - **Examine the role of the State Planning Act** within the present-day planning ecosystem.
 - **Assess the relevancy of the State Plan’s overarching themes and goals** in relation to the current and future needs, priorities, and values of Hawai‘i’s people.
 - **Identify long-range thematic issue areas** to inform and guide the update process and associated recommendations.

The University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Department of Urban and Regional Planning (UHM) will support OPSD in carrying out the supporting research. OPSD will compile and synthesize the resulting findings into a Framework Research Report and present it to the Task Force for review and discussion. Task Force input and direction will then be synthesized into a Preliminary Guiding Framework, which will inform the formation and scope of Permitted Interaction Groups (PIGs), each focused on a broad thematic area.

Task 2: Prepare Thematic Area Recommendations

- **Timeframe:** March – September 2026
- **Planned Task Force Meetings:** July, August, September
- **Supporting Research:** Stakeholder interviews, literature reviews, targeted community outreach, legislative and policy research and analysis will be conducted and compiled to prepare Thematic Area Briefs that inform the deliberations of thematic area PIGs.

During this task, thematic area Permitted Interaction Groups (PIGs) will be convened to develop recommendations that identify key issues, drawing on insights from the Thematic Area Briefs. Their work may include investigation of:

- 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; and

- Effective systems for planning coordination and implementation to address the identified issues.

PIGs will present their findings and recommendations to the Task Force on a rolling basis for deliberation. OPSD may procure vendor services in support of the PIGs.

Task 3: Prepare Final Report to the Legislature

- **Timeline:** September – December 2026
- **Planned Task Force Meetings:** November, December
- **Supporting Research:** Report drafting, legislative research (subject to the availability of resources)

OPSD will synthesize the Task Force’s deliberations and adopted findings and recommendations into a draft final report. OPSD will also complete legislative research to identify state and county laws that reference Chapter 226 to better understand the downstream effects of potential changes, subject to the availability of resources. OPSD will then present the draft report to the Task Force for feedback and approval. The Task Force will subsequently finalize its recommendations and submit a final report to the Legislature prior to the start of the 2027 legislative session.

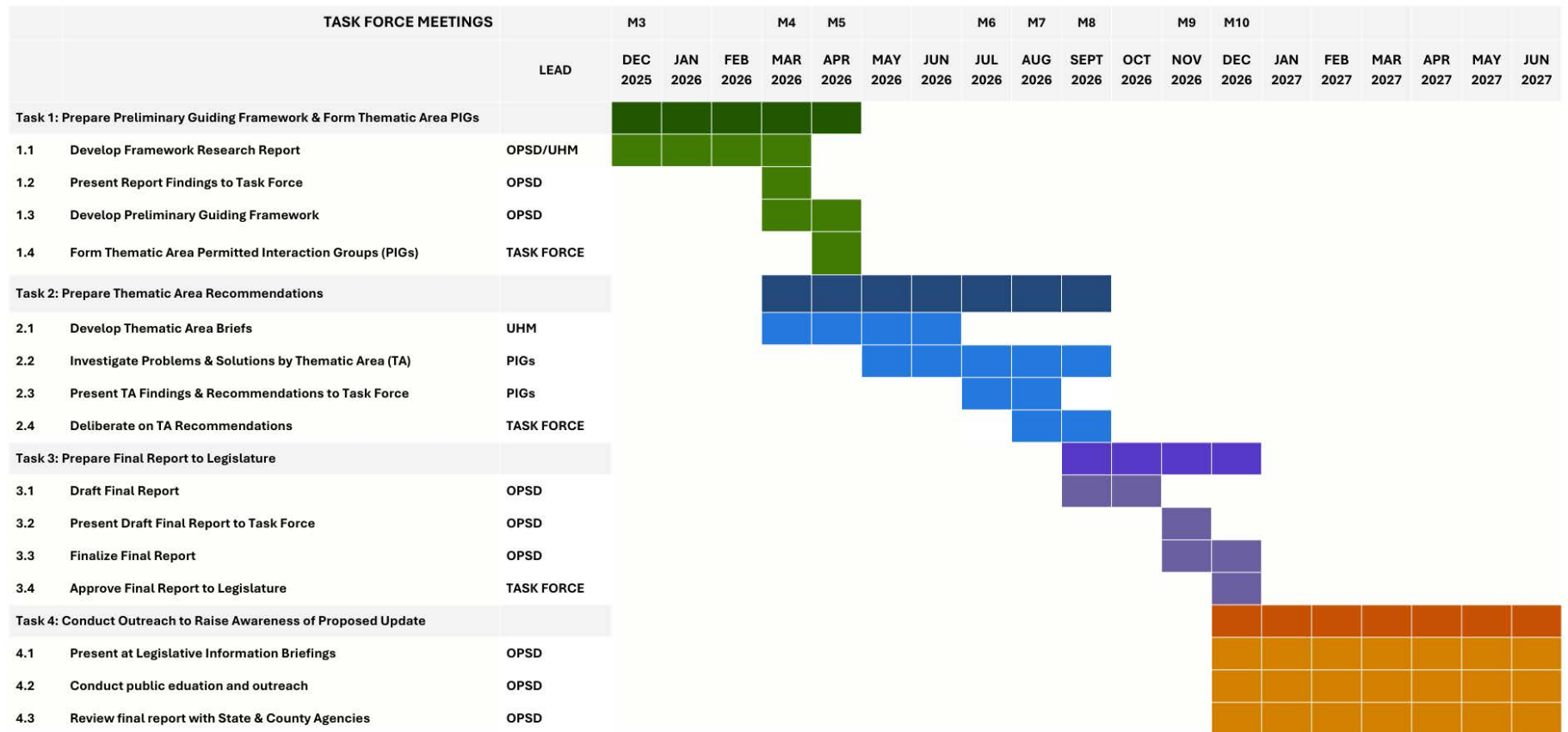
Task 4: Conduct Outreach to Raise Awareness of Proposed Update

- **Timeline:** December 2026 – June 2027
- **Planned Task Force Meetings:** None
- **Supporting Engagement:** Report presentation and legislative outreach (subject to the availability of resources)

At the direction of the Task Force, OPSD will prepare derivative products (subject to the availability of resources) and conduct legislative outreach to present the Task Force’s recommended changes to Chapter 226. OPSD will also conduct outreach to state and county agencies, as well as the general public (subject to the availability of resources), to raise awareness about the proposed updates. The Task Force will sunset June 30, 2027.

Timeline

The following chart summarizes key activities and milestones:



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">• Execute contract with UH Department of Urban and Regional Planning• Research history of Hawaii State Planning Act• Design preliminary stakeholder interview guide• Interview County Planning Departments | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review existing plans, other state examples• Interview State agencies associated with current functional plans, community organizations | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incorporate TF comments into preliminary guiding framework for HRS 226 update | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct literature review of Thematic Areas• Identify and interview additional stakeholders• Conduct targeted community outreach per Thematic Area | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Synthesize PIGs' findings and recommendations / TF approvals• Complete additional policy analysis* | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incorporate TF comments into Final Report |
| PRODUCTS | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• History of Hawaii State Planning Act Annotated Slides• Summary Report of Initial Findings from Stakeholder Interviews• Draft Work Plan• Database of Amendments to HRS 226 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Framework Research Report | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preliminary Guiding Framework | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thematic Area Briefs | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draft Report to the Legislature | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Final Report to the Legislature• Derivative information products* |
| TASK FORCE DISCUSSION / ACTION | <p>TF Meetings #1-3 <i>May – December 2025</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction to the Hawaii State Planning Act• Review Draft Work Plan• Action: Approve Work Plan• Review Draft Annual Report to Legislature• Action: Approve Annual Report | <p>TF Meeting #4 <i>March 2026</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review Framework Research Report findings• Deliberate findings and provide input to guide Preliminary Guiding Framework | <p>TF Meeting #5 <i>April 2026</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use Preliminary Guiding Framework to determine Thematic Area Permitted Interaction Groups (PIGs)• Identify Thematic Area Subject Matter Experts• Action: Form PIGs | <p>PIG Meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review and deliberate Thematic Area Briefs• 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 <p>TF Meetings #6-8 <i>July – September 2026</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• PIGs present findings and recommendations• Deliberate findings and recommendations, provide input to guide Draft Final Report | <p>TF Meeting #9 <i>November 2026</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review Draft Report to Legislature | <p>TF Meeting #10 <i>December 2026</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Action: Approve Final Report |
| | | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Present Final Report at legislative information briefings• Conduct public education and outreach sessions (re: Final Report / draft legislation)*• Review final report with State and County agencies*• TF sunsets June 30, 2027 | |

*Subject to the availability of resources