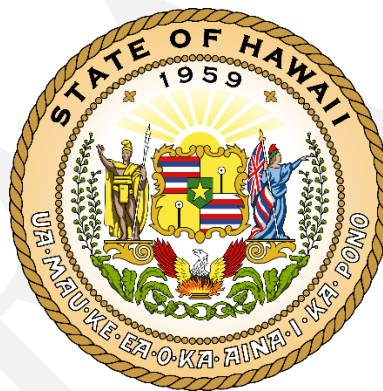


**Hawai‘i State Planning Act Phase II Update 2025
Annual Report
Report to the Thirty-Fourth Legislature Regular Session
of 2026**



**Prepared Pursuant to Act 36, SLH 2024 by the Office of Planning and Sustainable
Development and the State Planning Act Task Force**

**Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, State of Hawai‘i
December 2025**

State Planning Act Phase II Update Task Force

List of Members and Designees as of December 2025

Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD)

Director: Mary Alice Evans (Task Force Chair)

Department of Education (DOE)

Superintendent: Keith Hayashi

Designee: Ken Kakesako

Honolulu Planning Department

Director: Dawn Takeuchi Apuna

Designee: Dina Wong

Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA)

Chair: Kai Kahele

Designee: Stacy Ferreira

Designee: Summer Sylva

Designee: Lein ā'ala Ley

Kaua'i Planning Department

Director: Ka'āina Hull

Designee: Marie Williams

Maui Planning Department

Director: Kate Blystone

University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization (UHERO)

Representative: Carl Bonham

Designee: Steven Bond-Smith

Hawai'i Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Commission

Co-Chair: Dawn Chang

Co-Chair: Mary Alice Evans

Designee for Mary Alice Evans: Chris Liu

Hawai'i Economic Development Board

Chair: Nahua Guilloz

Designee: Jacqui Hoover

Oahu Economic Development Board

Chair: Jeffrey Overton

Designee: Cat Awakuni Colón

Kaua'i Economic Development Board

Chair: Laurie Yoshida

Designee: Jackie Kaina

Maui Economic Development Board

Chair: Tiare Martin

Designee: Leslie Wilkins

1 Introduction

1.1 The Hawai'i State Planning Act: History

The [Hawai'i State Planning Act](#) (Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) 226, the State Plan), signed into law in 1978, was designed to guide the future development of the State and addressed a broad range of topics based on trends and issues at the time. Organized into 3 parts, I) Overall Theme, Goals, Objectives and Policies, II) Planning Coordination and Implementation, and III) Priority Guidelines, the plan established policies and systems into law to ensure it was effectively carried out by the State's counties and agencies. Through extensive research and public input, an update to the State Planning Act was completed in 1986 to reflect changes in the State. Additional amendments have been made to the Plan since 1986, but the plan has yet to undergo another substantial update process. Consequently, some components of the plan have become out-of-date and are no longer actively referenced.

1.2 The Hawai'i State Plan Update: Phase I

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) worked with SSFM International to complete a [Phase I Update report](#) in 2018. This report provided an analysis of data collected from state agencies on the status of the functional plans (issue-specific plans intended to support the implementation of Parts I and III of the State Plan) and on planning documents departments and agencies were using at the time. The report concluded with a set of findings and recommendations for the next phase of the update.

1.3 The Hawai'i State Plan Update: Phase II

Following recommendations from the Phase I report, the Phase II update was initiated through [Act 36, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2024](#). Act 36 established a Task Force and appropriated funds to develop a two-year plan and two legislative reports on the Task Force's progress, completed actions, and findings and recommendations. The reports must be submitted to the legislature at least 20 days prior to the commencement of the 2026 and 2027 legislative sessions, and the Task Force will cease to exist on June 30, 2027.

2 Activities and Accomplishments

2.1 Staffing

2.1.1 Special Plans Branch Support

2(d) The Task Force shall appoint a coordinator, who shall be exempt from chapter 76, Hawaii Revised Statutes. [Act 36, SLH 2024].

Being administratively placed with OPSD, staffing support for Phase II is provided by OPSD's [Special Plans Branch](#) (SPB), whose duties are to "[carry] out the functions of the Office of Planning related to statewide planning under the Hawai'i

State Planning Act.” This past year, SPB hired a Project Coordinator, completed desk research projects, administratively supported Task Force meetings, established a [Phase II update webpage](#) on the OPSD website, managed contractual work, and developed work plans for the Task Force’s review.

2.1.2 Contractual Support

OPSD contracted University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Department of Urban and Regional Planning (UHM DURP) to undertake the stakeholder interview, literature review, targeted community outreach, and thematic area paper sub-projects (as described in 3.1 and Appendix C).

2.1.3 Hele Imua Internship Support

An intern was hired through the State’s Workforce Development Division Hele Imua Internship Program in August 2025. The intern conducted legislative research and assisted with stakeholder interviews and Task Force meetings.

2.2 Legislative and Policy Research and Analysis

2.2.1 The History of the State Planning Act

Materials on historical state planning efforts were sourced from the Hawai‘i State Archives and the OPSD Library. The materials, including research papers, household survey reports, and policy recommendation papers, were used to develop informational materials on the State Planning Act and to identify potential processes that could be incorporated into the Phase II update (Appendix A).

2.2.2 Amendments to the State Planning Act

2(c)(1) [The Task Force shall examine and report on] the findings of the original Hawaii State Planning Act, including any amendments necessary for relevancy. [Act 36, SLH 2024].

Through a review of [HRS 226](#) and the [Session Laws of Hawai‘i](#), all amendments to the State Plan were recorded in a database. The database contains over 150 amendments which can be organized by year and by type of amendment (e.g., amendments with structural changes, major changes, or minor changes). This database will be posted to the Phase II update webpage in 2026.

2.3 Draft and Revised Work Plans

2(b)(1) [The task force shall] create a two-year plan to examine the issues established in subsection(c), clarify and articulate findings, develop metrics and benchmarks to measure progress... [Act 36, SLH 2024].

A preliminary work plan was completed for the Task Force’s review in October 2025 (Appendix B). This work plan was informed by Act 36, stakeholder interviews with the county planning departments (as described in 2.4 and Appendix B), and historical processes related to the initial establishment and updates to the State Planning Act. Utilizing the Task Force’s feedback on the work plan, it was revised for a second

review and approval in December 2025 (Appendix C). The approved work plan notes the following key outcomes:

- **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.

2.4 The work plan outlines tasks which will be taken to achieve these outcomes, as well as administrative, research, and engagement efforts to support task completion.. Supporting efforts include stakeholder interviews, literature reviews, legislative and policy research and analysis, targeted community outreach, and legislative outreach.

2.5 Stakeholder Interviews

Interviews were conducted by OPSD with the four county planning departments in August and September 2025 to gather insights on inter-agency coordination, community engagement, and areas of interest for the Phase II update. These interviews were summarized by DURP through a preliminary stakeholder interview summary report (Appendix D).

The remaining interviews with stakeholders from the public sector, private sector, and community leaders will be completed by DURP and included in downstream reports to inform Task Force recommendations. Thus far, DURP has developed a preliminary stakeholder outreach list and interview guide.

2.6 Task Force Meetings and Informational Presentations

The Task Force convened three times in 2025. Informational presentations, discussions, and voting on action items took place during the meetings.

- 2.6.1 Meeting #1, May 29, 2025: Introduction to the Hawai'i State Planning Act Update**
[Agenda](#) and [Materials](#)

OPSD Director and Task Force Chair Mary Alice Evans, former OPSD Director Leo Asuncion, and SPB staff presented an overview of the history and evolution of the Hawai'i State Planning Act, key revisions made to the plan over the years, OPSD's role in administering HRS 226, the present-day planning ecosystem (both directly and indirectly related to HRS 226), the findings of the Phase I Report, the charge of the Task Force for Phase II (2024-2027), and next steps. During this meeting, the Task Force discussed areas of interest for the update such as community engagement and the roles of existing plans.

2.6.2 **Meeting #2, October 30, 2025: Work Plan**

[Agenda](#) and [Materials](#)

During this second meeting, OPSD staff presented a draft two-year work plan (as described in section 2.3 and Appendix B) to the Task Force and posed discussion questions for their feedback. Discussion topics included potential issue areas to be added to the State Plan, the organization and framing of the Plan's Objectives and Policies, intergovernmental coordination, and community engagement.

2.6.3 **Meeting #3, December 18, 2025: Revised Project Work Plan and Legislative Report**

[Agenda](#) and [Materials](#)

OPSD shared the revised work plan and draft legislative report with the Task Force for their discussion and approval. Notable changes to the revised work plan include the addition of tasks (as described in 2.3) and changes to the timing of the sub-projects, as reflected in the updated workflow chart (Appendix C).

3 Planned Activities for 2026

3.1 Administrative, Research, & Engagement Support

In 2026, the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) will provide support to the Task Force through the following activities:

- **Stakeholder Interviews (Continued):** 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.
- **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.

3.2 Continued Task Force Meetings and Membership

Task Force meetings are anticipated for reviews of sub-project progress, the formation of PIGs, and the development of final recommendations to the Legislature.

3.3 Continued Administrative Support from OPSD

OPSD’s SPB staff will continue to provide administrative support to the Task Force through meetings, project planning, and contract management in the coming year.

**4 Appendix A: Introduction to the Hawaii State Plan Update
Annotated Presentation**

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5 Appendix B: Draft Work Plan Informational Presentation

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6 Appendix C: Revised Work Plan

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**7 Appendix D: Initial Findings from Stakeholder Interviews
with County Planning Departments**

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