



State Planning Act Task Force

Meeting #1

MEETING MINUTES

May 29, 2025

1PM – 3PM

Office of Planning and Sustainable Development, 6th Floor Conference Room
State Office Tower – Leiopapa A Kamehameha Building
235 South Beretania Street, Honolulu
and Via Videoconference

Recording: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YWxc1-azuU8&list=PL3omSppSU-aFHRPFAGrRyh2JxewQT_nW

All meeting materials are posted at <https://planning.hawaii.gov/spb/hawaii-state-plan-update-phase-2/meeting-materials/>.

Members/Designees Present:

Mary Alice Evans, Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD), Task Force Chair
Kate Blystone, Planning Department, County of Maui
Steven Bond-Smith, University of Hawai‘i Economic Research Organization
Dawn Chang, Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission
Jeff Darrow, Planning Department, County of Hawai‘i
Stacy Ferreria, Office of Hawaiian Affairs
Jacqui Hoover, Hawai‘i Economic Development Board
Ka‘āina Hull, Planning Department, County of Kaua‘i
Jackie Kaina, Kaua‘i Economic Development Board
Ken Kakesako, Department of Education
Chris Liu, Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission
Leslie Wilkins, Maui Economic Development Board
Dina Wong, Planning Division, City and County of Honolulu

Members/Designees Excused:

Cat Awakuni Colón, O‘ahu Economic Development Board

Other Designees/Alternates Present:

None

OPSD Special Plans Staff:

Scott Allen, OPSD

Claire McCreery, OPSD

Lauren Primiano, OPSD

Guests:

Vice Speaker Linda Ichiyama, Hawai'i House of Representatives

Representative Mahina Poepoe, Hawai'i House of Representatives

Michelle Ahn, Deputy Director for the County of Kaua'i

Leo Asuncion, Public Utilities Commission

Nick Courson, Office of Speaker Nakamura

Ruby Edwards, Office of Planning and Sustainable Development

Thomas Eisen, Office of Planning and Sustainable Development

Tracey Erker, Holomua Collective

Bekah Kim, Office of Vice Speaker Linda Ichiyama

J. Nakama, House Finance Committee

1. Call to Order, Roll Call, and Quorum

With a quorum and 13 members present, Mary Alice Evans, the Director of OPSD and Chair of the Task Force, called the meeting to order at 1:08 PM.

2. Welcome & Introductions

Director Evans called for introductions from additional attendees during the roll call.

Presentation: Commencing the Hawai'i State Planning Act Update

Director Evans provided an overview of the Hawai'i State Planning Act (HRS 226), including the origins of the Act, the organizational structure of the State Plan, and previous revisions in 1986 and post-1986. She also provided information on today's planning ecosystem and OPSD's role in administering the State Planning Act.

The Hawai'i State Plan is a broad, long-range policy document aimed at setting the standards and policies to coordinate the activities, programs, and decisions made by the State and county agencies and policymakers, to address statewide problems and needs to guide Hawai'i's future. The creation of this plan was an extensive process that took place over the course of many years. For example, some processes used to inform the Plan included statewide household surveys, technical studies, and public informational

workshops. The plan was motivated by changes in the State's population, economy, physical environment, facility systems, and socio-cultural advancement.

The State Planning Act eventually led to the establishment of a variety of plans (e.g. State Functional Plans, Community General Plans, State Programs, the Hawaii 2050 Sustainability Plan, Transit-Oriented Development Plan) in addition to complementary plans and planning systems that exist outside of HRS 226 (departmental/programmatic plans, federal funding plans, and special purpose plans).

Leo Asuncion, Chairperson of the Public Utilities Commission and former Director of OPSD, provided an overview of the Phase I report. Completed in 2018, the Phase I Update report reviewed how the State Plan and other plans are being used by agencies and analyzed how effectively the plan addressed local needs and provided direction for the future of the State. The report is organized by 1) an inventory, review, and status of all State department plans, strategic plans, Functional Plans, and capital improvement plans, 2) a review of the plans' common themes and policy directions, and interconnectivity and opportunities, and 3) findings and recommendations.

Lauren Primiano, Special Plans Branch Manager of Strategic Initiatives, presented information on the Phase II update. With the enactment of Act 36 in 2024, Phase II picks up where Phase I left off. This Act established the Hawaii State Planning Act Phase II Task Force, which ceases to exist on June 30, 2027, and appropriated FY25 funding for a coordinator position and contractual services. Under Act 36, the Task Force will create a two-year workplan and submit annual reports to the legislature no later than 20 days prior to the 2026 and 2027 legislative sessions. Assisting with the update process, the Task Force will receive staffing support from OPSD's Special Plans Branch.

Claire McCreery, Special Plans Branch Project Coordinator, provided information on milestones, Phase II subprojects, upcoming tasks, and next steps for the Task Force. In addition to hiring a project coordinator, OPSD secured funding for FY26 and is beginning work with the University of Hawai'i for project support. Similar to the sub-projects completed during the creation of the initial State Plan and based on the Phase I recommendations, the Phase II sub-projects will include technical studies, stakeholder interviews, generational workshops, polls, subgroup meetings, issue papers, and community conferences. In preparation for the project's next steps, it was recommended that the Task Force reviews Act 36, the State Planning Act, and the Phase I report.

Comments were raised during the presentation. Stacy Ferriera requested that diaspora be added under "social justice" on slide 19 as a trend that drove changes to the State Plan post-1986. Jacqui Hoover made a comment on the addition of the Comprehensive

Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to slide 26. This comment was resolved by previewing the inclusion of the CEDS on slide 29.

3. Q&A About Phase II

After Director Evans's initial call for questions, Representative Linda Ichiyama asked about the cadence of the Task Force meetings. Director Evans responded that the meetings would take place approximately once per quarter.

Ken Kakesako stated that he noticed that food-related themes were not included in the current Phase 2 process and asked if a food-related or agriculture advocate could be added to the Task Force. Director Evans responded that an advocate for sustainable food systems will be added as a member of the Task Force.

Leslie Wilkins gave input on community engagement in planning initiatives, highlighting the importance of being respectful in community engagement and acknowledging prior offerings of ideas to prevent people from feeling that their ideas are being repeated. Director Evans validated that community engagement is important for the planning process and that the CEDS should be incorporated in some way for the update.

Ka'āina Hull provided commentary that while inclusivity is a crucial part of the planning process, genuine policy can often become sacrificed. Hull also raised concerns about ensuring voices are equal and about having a safe space provided for those involved in the process.

Jeff Darrow provided commentary that Task Forces are often limited to its members and what they are assigned to do. He also explained that because the State Plan drives other plans, the State Plan should be solid to help to give direction for all other plans. He highlighted the importance of these plans for decision-making in the State and Counties.

Dina Wong commented that the community engagement aspect of the update might have to get flushed out later and asked how community engagement would be included. Lauren Primiano responded that community engagement would be a part of a future discussion.

Kate Blystone noted that the State Plan Update is an important effort, and that there are different types of plans and different roles for each of those existing plans. Blystone emphasized that the Task Force needs to make sure plans do what they are supposed to do and wants to ensure meaningful community engagement.

Dawn Chang provided commentary that the State Plan needs to be relevant and implementable and that participation is necessary to ensure the plan's implementation. Chang encouraged the use of different methodologies for community engagement, including a dashboard or a platform where people can make public comments. Chang also elaborated that the plan should be reflective of changing dynamics and diaspora, taking into consideration why people are leaving and how they can return. To conclude, she suggested that cultural consideration should be integrated in the update approach.

Chris Liu provided commentary that although much time has passed since the original State Plan effort, there are relevant historical perspectives that can guide and provide lessons for the Task Force's kuleana in this effort.

Jackie Kaina expressed that she was interested in "the how" of community engagement and of implementing and funding plans, particularly at the county level.

Steven Bond-Smith provided comments that he would like the plan to be resilient and for the plan to become a functional document for use in future decades. Bond-Smith stated that the main purpose of the plan is to have strong monitoring and governance of planning and decision-making. Regarding Task Force work and the sub-projects, he inquired if establishing principles for the issue papers and technical studies should be addressed at an early stage of the update.

Ken Kakesako provided comments on the role of existing plans, such as the Department of Education's (DOE) departmental plans. Kakesako asked about how departmental plans fit into the Functional Plans system. In response, Bond-Smith stated that the Functional Plans are meant to guide lower-level plans to become effective plans.

In response to Kakesako and Bond-Smith, Leo Asuncion suggested that the current plans that the DOE has might have to be supplemented by Functional Plans or that there be separate plans for different components of the Functional Plans.

Lauren Primiano called attention to a Zoom comment from Jacqui Hoover: "is it possible to engage students (middle, high, college) in the process with specific focus-group opportunities?" Director Evans acknowledged this comment for the update process.

4. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:01 PM.