



State Planning Act Task Force

Meeting #2

MEETING MINUTES

October 30, 2025

10AM – 12PM

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=bS4w7_j-iIY&t=3s

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

Members/Designees Present:

Mary Alice Evans, Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD), 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
Jacqui Hoover, Hawai'i Economic Development Board
Marie Williams, 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, Coastal Zone Management
Leslie Wilkins, Maui Economic Development Board
Dina Wong, Planning Division, City and County of Honolulu
Cat Awakuni Colón, O'ahu Economic Development Board

Members/Designees Excused:

Stacy Ferreria, Office of Hawaiian Affairs
Summer Sylva, Office of Hawaiian Affairs

Other Designees/Alternates Present:

None

OPSD Special Plans Staff:

Claire McCreery, OPSD
Lauren Primiano, OPSD
Isabelle Sholes, OPSD

Guests:

Michelle Ahn, Deputy Director for the County of Hawai‘i
Priyam Das, University of Hawai‘i Department of Urban and Regional Planning
Chip McCreery
Pane Meatoga III, OE3
Brian Lee, Hawai‘i LECET
Josh Wisch, Holomua Collective
Matthew Prellberg, Holomua Collective
Bekah Kim, Office of Vice Speaker Linda Ichiyama
Representative Mark Hashem, Hawai‘i House of Representatives

1. Call to Order, Roll Call, and Quorum

Mary Alice Evans, the Director of OPSD and Chair of the Task Force, called the meeting to order at 10:07 AM.

2. Action Item: Approval of Meeting Minutes

The Draft Meeting Minutes from the Task Force meeting on May 29, 2025 were approved as circulated.

3. Presentation: Work Plan

OPSD staff Lauren Primiano and Claire McCreery presented a draft two-year work plan for the Task Force’s consideration, to identify the primary tasks and activities to fulfill the requirements of Act 36, SLH 2024. The draft work plan is informed by recommendations from the Phase I report (2018) and from stakeholder interviews with the county planning departments.

The work plan is organized around four key tasks. Task 1 examines the relevancy of State Planning Act to the current and future needs and values of Hawai'i's people. Task 2 assesses the effectiveness and coordination of the existing statewide planning system. Task 3 designs and implements an equitable process to inform recommended updates. Task 4 develops indicators of progress toward the revised goals and objectives. Sub-projects in support of each Task, including stakeholder interviews, issue data studies, community workshops, legislative research, and issue recommendation papers, were also introduced.

After each Task was presented, discussion questions were shared with the Task Force and members of the public for their commentary. The first question presented in relation to Task 1 was, "What new or emerging issues are missing from the current Part I and Part III, HRS 226?"

In response, Kate Blystone commented that climate mitigation and adaptation may be missing from the State Plan. Mary Alice Evans clarified that climate mitigation and adaptation was more recently addressed in Part III of the State Plan and suggested that it may be incorporated into Part I.

Steven Bond-Smith asked about the difference between Parts I and III of the State Plan. Evans explained that her guess would be that Part I was adopted into the State Plan in the 1970's through an extensive process and that topics in Part III emerged after the original adoption of the Plan.

Leslie Wilkins provided commentary that Part I of the Plan was reflective of the economic drivers of the 1970's due to references to the agriculture and visitor industries. Based on references to these sectors, Wilkins recommended referring to the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the update. Wilkins added that the terms "telecommunications" and "leisure" may need to be updated.

Chris Liu added that he liked the idea of paring down the Objectives and Policies. Using water as an example, he noted that water related to multiple topics, including agriculture and housing. Liu then posed questions that addressed how to connect the work of agencies, what our main needs are, and what might be missing from the State Plan.

Steven Bond-Smith advised that the State Plan should not call out specific areas or industries and suggested using a framework that any industry would be able to work with.

Jacqui Hoover recommended the addition of infrastructure and technology adaptation, including adaptation to artificial intelligence, to the Plan.

Dina Wong suggested adding Objectives and Policies related to age-friendly communities and neighborhoods, multimodal transportation neighborhoods, and One Water.

Jeff Darrow acknowledged that Section 226-18 of the State Plan addressed energy and affirmed his agreement with Blystone on climate adaptation and AI.

Marie Williams recommended that updates be made to the Plan's health-related Objectives and Policies. She agreed with comments on leisure and artificial intelligence and suggested the addition of a youth-focused section.

Cat Awakuni Colón added that certain topics and phrasing used in the CEDS could be helpful for the Plan.

Jackie Kaina listed cyber resilience, digital infrastructure, and data governance as topics of interest for the Plan.

Dawn Chang pointed out that overarching principles are missing from the Plan and highlighted the importance of a greater integration of principles and goals. She posed questions to the Task Force that addressed how principles should guide their work in changing times, how the Goals be bridged with the Objectives and Policies, and how the community's needs should be reflected. Chang added that the Plan should reflect our point in time in society but also acknowledge changing interests.

Josh Wisch added that while current technology issues can be included in the Plan, technologies and other issues will evolve. He also recommended revisiting the Definitions section in Part I and to consider incorporating common definitions such as "a healthy economy."

Bond-Smith raised concerns about measuring the Objectives and Policies and pointed out that measures of success require constant monitoring and adapting.

Blystone also added that she does not typically use the State Plan, so it is important that it is updated to be more usable.

Matt Prellberg emphasized the importance of buy-in from the legislature and suggested making the updated Plan easy-to-follow for elected officials.

The second question posed to the Task Force in relation to Task 1 was, “to what extent should we consider reframing the objectives and policies and policy guidelines?” To provide context for this question, the Task Force was presented with the current framing of the Objectives and Policies in the State Planning Act (population, economy, physical environment, facility systems, and socio-cultural) and an alternative framing for discussion purposes (resident well-being, digital, future, regenerative systems, equity and justice, climate adaptation, regional connectivity, and governance innovation).

Chang stated that she liked the alternative framing and that it allowed for greater integration between the private sector and government agencies. Chang also described a lack of private-government integration at the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and at the Commission on Water Resource Management (CWRM).

Bond-Smith suggested that some of the alternative framings were too specific and also raised concerns related to managing growth and population control.

The next question presented to the Task Force was in relation to Task 2. The question stated, “what policy areas benefit most from a statewide framing, and which are better addressed locally?”

Blystone commented that housing and transportation may be addressed by the State, but in terms of growth management, the counties are better suited to decide where growth should go. She added that the State should be responsible for deciding how growth is understood and that it should play a role in addressing cross-jurisdictional issues.

Wong added that mandates for affordable housing and planning related to zoning should be left to the counties.

Darrow described challenges related to zoning and changing jurisdictional lines. He suggested that the counties’ ability to change jurisdictional lines would help them to follow their plans. He also acknowledged that Transit Oriented Development (TOD) around the island has been beneficial.

Williams added that the State and County both play a role in policy areas.

Wilkins followed up on Blystone’s initial response and asked why housing would be included in a statewide framework. Blystone clarified that she was not personally opposed to certain housing efforts being handled by the State but wanted to think about how the State could coordinate with the counties on housing issues.

Bond-Smith pointed to New Zealand's short and long-term policies and plans and how they could be helpful for the update.

Liu highlighted the importance of state-county coordination and support (e.g., financial support), noting that some state policies seem like they come from downtown Honolulu.

Kakesako explained that education should be handled by the State but did not have a good answer for agriculture. He suggested for agriculture to be represented in the discussions and that agriculture may be driven from an economic standpoint.

Hoover explained that she wanted the State to provide an environment and culture for the counties and communities to do their work. She highlighted that there should be better opportunities for collaboration in order to leverage and maximize resources and assets.

Jackie Kaina stated that she had no additional comments.

Awakuni Colón agreed with the comments made for this discussion question.

Wisch noted that with many areas of government tend to be set up that stop progress and resources. Wisch also expressed interest in providing community input and analysis at the right time and in a way that is considerate.

Chang suggested that if resources (such as water, endangered species, historic properties) are valued, then the State should be providing information on where those resources are and where development is appropriate. Chang also clarified that she was comfortable with county implementation and was interested in resource-driven plans and obtaining community input ahead of time.

The next questions posed in relation to Task 2 stated, "What does success look like and what are its keys? How should the State Planning Act facilitate that coordination piece?"

Darrow commented that Hawai'i Island has been dealing with issues related to water. In relation to these issues, Darrow suggested that it would be beneficial for the furtherance of goals if there was more flexibility in terms of county decision-making.

Wong added that the counties could use more help with obtaining state funding for backbone infrastructure.

Williams suggested the inclusion of goals-related work for the county plans and the inclusion of a document in the State Plan to help guide the content of the County General Plans. Williams referred to the California State Planning Act as an example. Williams

also noted a lack of coordination with the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development during their update of the Kaua‘i General Plan. Blystone agreed with Williams and added that having the legal backing to say no could be helpful.

Chang noted that the current state of planning is reactionary, not proactive. Chang also emphasized that robust community engagement is important for statewide planning in order to identify resources at the front and back ends.

Bond-Smith stated that having a good set of rules that reduces the amount of work for applications would be beneficial.

The next question presented in relation to Task 3 was, “What sorts of community organizations should we be engaging to ensure equitable participation?”

Chang replied that the Department of Hawaiian Homelands was not represented. She also suggested reaching out to homestead associations.

Blystone recommended starting with non-profits that work with community groups including Maui United Way, Aloha United Way, and the Hawai‘i Community Foundation.

Bond-Smith commented that future generations are not represented.

Chang also suggested the inclusion of litigants for community engagement.

Wilkins recommended utilizing small group dynamics and going to homestead communities and places where participants feel comfortable speaking for community engagement.

Awakuni Colón raised concerns about the Compact of Free Association (COFA) and houseless populations. She also noted that philanthropic groups might have insights for these communities.

Wong suggested the use of established networks, including neighborhood boards and council members, to reach these communities.

Pane Meatoga added that unions should be included for community engagement.

Darrow suggested the inclusion of Community Development Action Committees for community engagement.

Bond-Smith noted kama‘āina that have left the island as a potential stakeholder group.

Chang suggested utilizing the Hawai‘i Council’s network.

The final question presented to the Task Force was in relation to Task 4. The question stated, “What, if any, metrics and benchmarks, should be considered besides the State statutory targets, and why?”

In response, Bond-Smith pointed out that understanding how to respond to metrics is more important than the metrics themselves.

Following the presentation of Tasks and discussion questions, McCreery shared a summary of the work plan. The summary included a sub-projects flowchart that detailed how each sub-project would inform the update. McCreery noted that the community workshops and issue papers may not be fully carried out as envisioned if FY27 funds were not obtained. In response to this, Chang stated that she would prefer to not give up the community workshops for the update.

4. Q&A and Discussion on the Work Plan

Please see above for the discussion on the work plan.

5. Discussion on the Stakeholder Strategy

Primiano shared a presentation slide on how the stakeholder interviews will proceed and acknowledged the completion of the stakeholder interviews with the county planning departments.

6. Announcements

As noted on the agenda and presentation slides, tentative agenda items for the next meeting in December 2025 include an update on stakeholder interviews conducted to date and the approval of Draft Legislative Report 1. Pursuant to Act 36, the report will be submitted to the Legislature by December 15, 2025. Evans also stated that the Task Force would have 30 days to provide comments on the work plan.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:04 PM.