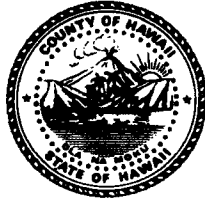


Mitchell D. Roth
Mayor



Douglass S. Adams
Director

Frecia Cevallos
Deputy Director

County of Hawai'i

DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

25 Aupuni Street, Room 1301 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720-4252
(808) 961-8366 • Fax (808) 935-1205
E-mail: chresdev@co.hawaii.hi.us

July 13, 2023

Board of Land and Natural Resources
Chairperson Dawn N.S. Chang
P.O. Box 621
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96809

Re: Memorandum of Agreement between the Department of Land and Natural Resources and the Hawai'i Community Development Authority Regarding the Funding of a Strategic Assessment for the Banyan Drive on the Island of Hawai'i

Dear Chairperson Chang and Members of the Board:

Thank you for the opportunity to support testimony on this matter. The Department of Research and Development of the County of Hawai'i strongly supports the Memorandum of Agreement between the Department of Land and Natural Resources and the Hawai'i County Development Authority regarding the funding of a strategic assessment for Banyan Drive on the Island of Hawai'i. A brief review of the recent economic history of Hilo, where Banyan Drive is located, and the East Hawai'i Island districts indicates that the current land structure and processes that support businesses on state-owned and managed land, such as the Banyan Drive area and other industrial properties, severely limit the economic revitalization and diversification necessary for a sustainable, equitable and thriving island economy.

For example, although the Banyan Drive area contains approximately eighty-five per cent of the overnight accommodations in East Hawai'i, there is currently little incentive for lessees of the properties in the area to make major investments in improvements to their infrastructure, resulting in the continual deterioration of the area's infrastructure and facilities. This continues to generate a harmful impact on the economy of our East Hawai'i community. Hilo and East Hawai'i once served as the primary economic engine of the Island of Hawai'i. With advantages such as the island's only university, its premier hospital, and the island's primary maritime and aviation ports, Hilo and East Hawai'i are poised to substantially contribute to the island's economy once again. To do so effectively, we need a functional and highly performing Banyan Drive area. To achieve this, we support this initial step of conducting a strategic assessment, anticipating further steps that are intentional in enhancing and strengthening this area for economic, social and cultural sustainability and resilience purposes.

We strongly encourage the Board of Land and Natural Resources to authorize the Chairperson to negotiate, approve and execute a Memorandum of Agreement between the Department of Land and Natural Resources and the Hawai'i County Development Authority regarding the funding of a strategic assessment for Banyan Drive on the Island of Hawai'i during the Board's regular meeting on July 14, 2023. If you have any questions or concerns please contact the undersigned at 808-961-8368 or douglass.adams@hawaiiicounty.gov.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Douglass S. Adams".

Douglass S. Adams
Director



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATE OF HAWAII
STATE CAPITOL
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813



Mark M. Nakashima

July 14, 2023

Testimony for Hawaii State Board of Land and Natural Resources

Testimony of Representative Mark Nakashima
State House District 1
Hāmākua • North Hilo • Portion of South Hilo

Dear Members of Board of Land and Natural Resources:

I am State Representative Mark Nakashima. While my district does not include Banyan Drive, I have had a keen interest in the improvement and revitalization of Banyan Drive since my election in 2008. I am disheartened by the fact that the legislature has been unable to agree on a plan for the redevelopment and revitalization of the Banyan Drive Peninsula and trust that working together with the County, we will be able to redevelop this important area and once again return it to a vibrant hub of commerce and tourism that it once was.

The deterioration of the former Uncle Billy's Hilo Bay Hotel is symbolic of the declining appeal of this once popular destination for both visitors and kama'āina alike. It is also the reason that NOW is the time for the state landlord to revitalize the economic potential of this once thriving economic hub not only to improve the economy of the East Side of Hawai'i Island but also increase the lease income to the State of Hawaii by returning this area to a thriving economic center. The vision of a county working group that had studied this area and received public input envisioned a plan that allowed for the repurposing of the Banyan Drive Golf Course into a more beneficial and productive purpose. I have been working with the Department of Land and Natural Resources and Hawaii Community development Authority to put forward a redevelopment plan for the Bayan Drive Peninsula which considers much of the groundwork that has already been invested into the plans for the revitalization of the Banyan Drive area.

I urge the members of the Board to lead the way toward this effort by supporting Agenda Item D2 Allowing the Chairperson to Execute a Memorandum of Agreement between the Department of Land and Natural Resources and the Hawaii Community Development Authority Regarding the Funding of a Strategic Assessment for the Banyan Drive on the Island of Hawaii..

Aloha and Mahalo!

Mark M Nakashima
State Representative District 1

Mark M. Nakashima
First District
repnakashima@capitol.hawaii.gov



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Hale o nā Luna Maka'āinana

Thirty-Second Legislature
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Telephone (808)586-6680
Facsimile (808)586-8884

**Chair, Committee on Consumer Protection
and Commerce**

Mitchell D. Roth
Mayor



Lee E. Lord
Managing Director

Robert H. Command
Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawai'i
Office of the Mayor

25 Aupuni Street, Suite 2603 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720 • (808) 961-8211 • Fax (808) 961-6553
KONA: 74-5044 Ane Keohokalole Hwy., Bldg C • Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740
(808) 323-4444 • Fax (808) 323-4440

July 14, 2023

Board of Land and Natural Resources
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i

Authorize the Chairperson to Negotiate, Approve and Execute a Memorandum of Agreement between the Department of Land and natural Resources and the Hawaii Community Development Authority Regarding the Funding of a Strategic Assessment for the Banyan Drive on the Island of Hawai'i

Aloha Chairperson Chang and members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources,

The County of Hawai'i strongly supports the approval of Chairperson Chang to authorize a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the State Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and the Hawai'i Community Development Authority (HCDA) in order to facilitate an expanded updated strategic assessment for the Banyan Drive area, on the Island of Hawai'i. Even better would be to include the entire Kanoelehua Industrial area.

DLNR owns 79 acres of land in the Banyan Drive region that is being leased for various hotel and residential-related uses on the Waiākea Peninsula of the Island of Hawai'i. In 2014 the Department procured a consultant to prepare a study for this area that suggested infrastructure improvements may be necessary to support the redevelopment of the Banyan Drive area. The proposed MOA would serve to provide funding for an updated strategic assessment for the area.

For decades Banyan Drive had been known as the "Hilo Walk of Fame" for the majestic trees planted by celebrities, but over the years has become a haven for crime, squatters, drug activity, numerous fires, and even suicide, leading to hundreds of responses by police and fire personnel during the past six years.

I strongly support Chairperson Chang to authorize the MOA between the DLNR and HCDA for the purpose of funding a strategic assessment of the Banyan Drive area in Hawai'i County.

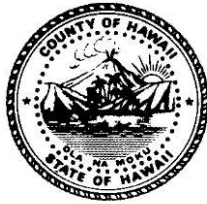
Sincerely,

Mitchell D. Roth
Mayor / County of Hawai'i

Mitchell D. Roth
Mayor

Lee E. Lord
Managing Director

West Hawai'i Office
74-5044 Ane Keohokālole Hwy
Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740
Phone (808) 323-4770
Fax (808) 327-3563



County of Hawai'i

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Zendo Kern
Director

Jeffrey W. Darrow
Deputy Director

East Hawai'i Office
101 Pauahi Street, Suite 3
Hilo, Hawai'i 96720
Phone (808) 961-8288
Fax (808) 961-8742

July 13, 2023

Ms. Dawn Chang, Chairperson
Department of Land and Natural Resources
Board of Land and Natural Resources
1151 Punchbowl Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Subject: Support for MOA between DLNR & HCDA for the Strategic Assessment of Banyan Drive

Dear Chairperson Chang and Members of the Board of Land and Natural Resources:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and the Hawai'i Community Development Authority (HCDA) regarding the funding of a Strategic Assessment for Banyan Drive on the Island of Hawai'i.

Banyan Drive, once a vibrant economic and tourism hub of Hilo, has unfortunately fallen into disrepair over the years. The presence of dilapidated buildings, a rising homeless population, and an increase in drug and other criminal activities have marred the area's potential for growth and development. I believe that the Strategic Assessment proposed in the MOA is a crucial step towards revitalizing Banyan Drive.

By undertaking a Strategic Assessment, DLNR demonstrates their commitment to addressing the challenges faced by Banyan Drive. This assessment will provide valuable insights into the best course of action for revitalization. I encourage the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR) to recommend approval of the authorization of the Chairperson to negotiate, approve and execute the MOA.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Your dedication to the well-being and development of our beloved island is deeply appreciated. Together, we can make a lasting and positive impact on Banyan Drive, reestablishing it as a vibrant symbol of the beauty and potential of Hilo.

Sincerely,

Zendo Kern
Zendo Kern (Jul 13, 2023 08:59 HST)

ZENDO KERN
Planning Director