

ASHLEY LANGWORTHY DIRECT TESTIMONY

PRESENTATION HEARING

Land Block 2, Project 4 (Kalae) (KAK 22-024)

Q Please state your name, place of employment, and position.

A Ashley Langworthy, Director, Western Region, Biederman Redevelopment Ventures (BRV).

Q How long have you been in this position?

A I have been with BRV for over six years, and have been involved in urban planning for over 18 years.

Q Please describe your background and experience.

A Please see my resume, which is marked as an exhibit in this proceeding. I am a licensed landscape architect in Hawaii and an AICP Certified Planner. I am also a member of the American Planning Institute, the ULI Sustainable Development Council, and LAI - Land Economics Society. I have a B.A. in economics from Tufts University and a Master of Urban Planning from Harvard University. I am currently based in Seattle as the Director of BRV's Western Region, which includes my home state, Hawaii.

Q Please describe your firm's experience.

A Biederman Redevelopment Ventures is a placemaking consulting firm with over twenty-five years of experience in the art and science of creating, redeveloping and operating parks, public spaces, neighborhood streetscapes, and the public realms of mixed-use developments across the United States. We work with real estate developers, foundations, government agencies, and professional sports teams in revitalizing urban space and creating clean, safe, and active places that add value and stimulate economic development.

BRV has extensive experience in park planning and design, as well as park programming, management, operations, governance, and financing strategies. The public spaces we operate are financially self-sustaining and generally don't rely on government funds for operations.

Among the urban parks and public spaces we have worked on or consulted on include Bryant Park in New York City; Salesforce Park in San Francisco; Klyde Warren Park in Dallas; and Mission Rock in San Francisco among others.

Q What has BRV been retained to do for this Project?

A With respect to Kalae, BRV is advising on streetscape, plaza, and park activation in and around the proposed development. BRV is also a consultant to VWL on activation opportunities throughout Ward Village.

Q Please provide an overview of the Project based on its relationship to public spaces and Victoria Ward Park.

A Kalae, bordered by Auahi Street, Ward Avenue, Ala Moana Boulevard and the makai side of Victoria Ward Park, will be at a major entrance to Ward Village. The development features extensive landscaping and streetscape design throughout, including on the parcel fronting the development at the corner of Ward Avenue and Auahi Street, as well as along Ward Avenue, and at the corner of Ward Avenue and Ala Moana Boulevard. The Diamond Head side of the development will integrate with Victoria Ward Park (makai).

The Auahi Street / Ward Avenue corner of Kalae features ground-level retail space, and VWL also plans to develop an area adjacent to the development in Victoria Ward Park (makai) (and just off of Auahi Street), with retail kiosks to activate this area of Auahi Street and the park.

Q Are the public spaces planned in connection with Kalae consistent with and advance the Ward Master Plan's vision of ground level pedestrian activation and providing appropriate placemaking and opportunities for pedestrian experiences?

A The Ward Master Plan envisioned various flexible approaches to encourage pedestrian interaction / activation, including the use of aesthetically-pleasing facades, active ground floor uses, commercial and retail spaces, the creation of public spaces, shaded sidewalks, landscaping and other architectural features.

Kalae incorporates many of the approaches contemplated by the Ward Master Plan (and currently employed in and around many of the other developments in Ward Village) to encourage pedestrian activation, create an appropriate sense of place, and provide opportunities for pedestrians to have varied experiences within the neighborhood.

The extensive landscaping and hardscapes around Kalae, particularly on the parcel on the Mauka side of the development, and at the corner of Ward Avenue and Ala Moana Boulevard, incorporate good placemaking design solutions, including appropriate plants and trees, shaded seating and curved walking areas, paving textures, public art, flexible spaces and a sense of entry into the neighborhood. These elements also complement the architectural screening of the parking structure, which is another design element contemplated in the Ward Master Plan to improve the pedestrian experience in Ward Village.

Kalae also incorporates appropriate retail and commercial spaces in and around the development. The ground floor retail space on the Ewa side of the building, which will be visible from both Ward Avenue and Auahi Street, will include floor to ceiling windows, which will create visual interest, porosity into the building, and provide an opportunity for pedestrians to engage with the building and other pedestrians at this key corner of Ward Village. Similarly, the retail kiosks at Victoria Ward Park (makai) planned in connection with Kalae will provide appropriate pedestrian activation just off of Auahi Street, and draw in pedestrians for a convenient snack or local merchandise as they proceed to further explore the park.

The retail spaces in and around Kalae are scaled appropriately to encourage outdoor pedestrian activation while also being consistent with the strategy to primarily focus commercial and active uses on the mauka side of Auahi Street, particularly in and around the mauka side of Victoria Ward Park.

Q Please comment on the strategy to primarily focus commercial and active uses on the mauka side of Auahi Street in Ward Village.

A The developments approved and constructed to date in Ward Village feature a variety of approaches to create a sense of place within the community and encourage pedestrian activation. As noted, these include retail and commercial spaces, but just as importantly, the other approaches include landscaping, shaded areas, paving treatments, flexible spaces, wide curving sidewalks, public art, architectural screening, and areas to encourage community interaction and gathering for short- or long-term events, exhibitions or other programming.

The flexibility to provide a variety of pedestrian experiences creates interest and encourages pedestrians to further explore and experience the neighborhood. The decision to use multiple approaches and techniques to encourage pedestrian activation along Auahi Street, for example, is aligned with established urban planning principles and ultimately creates a more vibrant, interesting community.

My understanding is that HCDA has recognized and validated this approach through its approval of the various developments in Ward Village to date, as well as through its specific finding in connection with the Victoria Place development that the Ward Master Plan does not limit Auahi Street to only retail and commercial activities. This finding appropriately recognizes that Ward Village benefits from a variety of pedestrian experiences, and the approaches and experiences provided to date (and planned in connection with Kalae and other spaces and developments in Ward Village) is consistent with the Ward Master Plan design strategies to redevelop Auahi Street as a pedestrian promenade and enhance streetscape design.

For similar reasons, HCDA's finding, in connection with Victoria Place, that the area makai of Auahi Street is intended to be more of a tranquil and relaxing area than its more active counterpart on the mauka side (and that the master plan also envisions

areas of Auahi Street leading to spaces that provide opportunities for respite and contemplation), recognizes and confirms the benefits of the approach to concentrate active and retail uses for Ward Village on the mauka side of Auahi Street, while preserving the makai area for more passive, relaxing uses and smaller-scale retail that encourages outdoor activity. This distinction between the mauka and makai sides of Auahi Street and the mauka and makai sides of Victoria Ward Park is also consistent with providing flexible and varied pedestrian experiences that are well-supported by established urban design principles.

Based on my experience and focus on urban placemaking, and specifically on public space and park development and design, I'll note that the current design of Victoria Ward Park improves upon the original conceptual illustration of the park depicted in the 2009 Ward Neighborhood Master Plan. While the 2009 illustration, which included vehicular access, extensive pavement and hardscapes, and a general, uniform design, may have been appropriate for its times, the evolution of Victoria Ward Park to its current form, which I understand has been guided and supported by HCDA, effectively incorporates current design approaches in providing a variety of public space activation, attractive landscape architecture and other placemaking elements to create spaces that are compatible with, and uniquely suited to, our urban Honolulu environment.

Importantly, areas intentionally designed and designated for more passive, relaxing activities should not be viewed as areas that necessarily lack pedestrian activation or are of any less value to the neighborhood. Many residents and visitors to Ward Village will be drawn to more active activities, formal programming, and retail. Many others will be attracted to outdoor areas that provide opportunities for respite, relaxation or unstructured play or exploration. As HCDA has recognized, Ward Village greatly benefits from providing both experiences within the same neighborhood.

Finally, while the focus of activity and retail experiences may differ as between the mauka and makai sides of Auahi Street and Victoria Ward Park, each side has elements of the other, thus unifying these focal points of the neighborhood. Kalae is a perfect example of how appropriately-scaled retail on the makai side of Auahi Street can complement the mauka retail focus. Similarly, while the types of activities in the mauka and makai sides of Victoria Ward Park may differ, having a large, maintained, secure and green open space spanning both sides of Auahi Street in the heart of urban Honolulu provides a substantial benefit to residents and visitors to the community.

#