

## 7 FINDINGS AND DETERMINATION

To determine whether the renovations to the existing Kupu Green Job Training Center may have a significant impact on the physical and human environment, all phases and expected consequences of the proposed project have been evaluated, including potential primary, secondary, short-range, long-range, and cumulative impacts. Based on this evaluation, the Approving Agency (State of Hawai'i HCDA) has issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The supporting rationale for this finding is presented below.

### 7.1 SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

The discussion below evaluates the significance of the Project's impacts based upon the Significance Criteria set forth in Hawai'i Administrative Rules section 11-200-12.

(1) *Involves an irrevocable commitment to loss or destruction of any natural or cultural resource;*

**Discussion:** The renovations and improvements in the Project Area will not involve an irrevocable commitment to, loss, or destruction of any natural or cultural resource. The renovations and improvements are being done on an existing building and within an existing park that are located on dredged land that did not exist in place until 1955.

The Center will itself represent a source of sustainability, through a facility that will include photovoltaic energy panels, hydroponics for food production, waterfront preservation, and micro-enterprise entrepreneurship. One of Kupu's goals for the renovation of the Center is that it be certified as Platinum under the standards of the LEED for New Schools.

SHPD's determination for the proposed project is "no historic properties affected" as stated in their letter on the draft EA dated July 14, 2015. In the same letter SHPD also stated: "No surface historic properties are present. No subsurface historic properties are likely as Kewalo Basin and Kewalo Basin Park, in which the project is located, were constructed from dredging soils and fill materials."

The Project Area has likely not been used for cultural purposes in recent times except potentially for fishing. However, the Center renovations and park improvements will not restrict the existing public access to the ocean available through the adjacent Kewalo Basin Park. In fact, Kupu has had a positive impact on the cultural heritage of the area as its programs have re-introduced cultural practices such as canoe carving and native plant cultivation.

(2) *Curtails the range of beneficial uses of the environment;*

**Discussion:** The renovations and improvements in the Project Area will not curtail the range of beneficial uses of the environment. The renovations are being done on an existing building and within an existing park that are located on dredged land that did not exist in place until 1955. The Center renovations and park improvements will not restrict the existing public access to the ocean available through the adjacent Kewalo Basin Park. The renovations will allow Kupu to better use the environment, particularly through reduced peak stormwater flow and net zero energy use.

(3) *Conflicts with the State's long term environmental policies or goals and guidelines as expressed in Chapter 344, HRS; and any revisions thereof and amendments thereto, court decisions, or executive orders;*

**Discussion:** The environmental policies enumerated in Chapter 344, HRS promote conservation of natural resources, and an enhanced quality of life for all citizens. The renovations and improvements in the Project Area are not expected to significantly impact any natural resources. The Center will itself represent a source of sustainability, through a facility that will include photovoltaic energy panels, hydroponics for food production, waterfront preservation, and micro-enterprise entrepreneurship. It will be a place for collaboration and discussion about the topics that Hawai'i and other Pacific islands will face in the future, thereby reaching beyond the youth it serves directly to enhance quality of life for all citizens of Hawai'i.

(4) *Substantially affects the economic or social welfare of the community or State;*

**Discussion:** The renovations to the Kupu Green Job Training Center are likely to have a positive impact on the economic and social welfare of the community and state. Construction of the renovations will provide economic benefits in the form of construction jobs, construction spending, and multiplier effects on the local economy. In addition, Kupu's purpose for the Center is to equip youth with the skills needed to facilitate the growth of the green economy and to create leadership in the growing green jobs sector, one of the fastest growing sectors of the Hawai'i economy (DLIR, Research and Statistics Office, 2010). Kupu was developed, in part, in response to the growing needs of Hawai'i's communities to train the next generation in natural resource management, renewable energy, energy conservation, and other green job skill sets. The Center will be the first "green" job training center of its kind in Honolulu and will meet the demands of this growing industry. In this way, the Center will lead Hawai'i toward a more sustainable future and build partnerships that can serve as a global model of responsible stewardship and a thriving community.

The renovated Center also will allow Kupu to better serve its programs, participants, volunteers, and the larger community. In 2013-2014, Kupu provided hundreds of paid internships, engaged over 11,000 volunteers, and provided benefits to Hawai'i valued at nearly \$7 million. Kupu's volunteers provided over

230,000 service hours. Kupu distributed nearly half a million dollars in college and continued education funds to Hawai'i's youth. Since its inception in 2007, Kupu has had a cumulative economic benefit of over \$42 million (Kupu, 2015).

(5) *Substantially affects public health;*

**Discussion:** The renovations and improvements in the Project Area are envisioned to have a substantially positive affect on public health. The renovations are critical in multiplying and expanding the impact of Kupu's programs statewide. From the Center, Kupu will develop the next generation of local talent to take the helm of the new "green" industries moving in Hawai'i. The Center will equip youth with the skills and heart to lead the state toward a more sustainable future. Kupu's vision is to transform not only the existing Center, but also the surrounding waterfront area, into an open and inclusive space to be used for the public benefit and serve as a model of sustainability, environmental restoration, and community and cultural collaboration.

(6) *Involves substantial secondary impacts, such as population changes or effects on public facilities;*

**Discussion:** The renovations and improvements in the Project Area will not have substantial secondary impacts. The renovations will not include residential use and thus will not add any permanent population. Proposed hydrology and drainage patterns for the Center are expected to mimic existing conditions, but peak flows are expected to decrease due to increased landscaped areas and installation of new LID features.

The renovated Center is not expected to have a negative impact on nearby public recreational facilities and may in fact have a positive impact. Kupu's vision is to transform not only the existing Center, but also the nearby waterfront area, into an open and inclusive space to be used for the public benefit. Kupu has strived to be a catalyst in revitalizing the area by providing a positive presence and through responsible stewardship and caring for the land.

The renovations to the Kupu Green Job Training Center will not have a negative impact on nearby public recreational facilities and are expected to have a positive impact on both the Kewalo Basin area and the extended local community. Kupu's vision is to transform not only the existing Center, but also the nearby area, into an open and inclusive space for all. The Kewalo Basin Park area has previously suffered from issues related to crime, drugs, and homelessness. Kupu's work in revitalizing the area over the past five years has helped to alleviate these issues by providing a positive presence and through responsible stewardship and caring for the land. Kupu has restored life back to the area by caring for park gardens, shower areas, and surrounding spaces, as well as providing professional development and educational programs to disadvantaged youth from the greater Honolulu area.

The Kupu Green Job Training Center will further Kupu's efforts to make the Kewalo Basin area a better place. Kupu's programs held at the Center will: 1) equip youth with the skills and heart to lead Hawai'i toward a more sustainable future; 2) generate and strengthen partnerships that can serve as a global model of responsible stewardship and respect of our resources, people, and culture; and 3) benefit the community with educational displays, community workshops, and will become a staging point for service and engaging locals and visitors alike to make Hawai'i better.

The Center will allow Kupu to serve more youth and increase the depth of its award-winning programs which will improve the quality of life for their participants. It will develop and equip Hawai'i's next generation of leaders with specific skills needed to move Hawai'i forward and will create a community space in the growing Kaka'ako area that will engage the hearts, minds, and efforts of the community in areas that are important for Hawai'i's long-term viability. As the first center of its kind in Hawai'i and a state-of-the-art facility, Kupu's Green Job Training Center will allow Kupu to further educate people statewide and beyond about our culture and the important issue of sustainability.

Kupu's long-term lease of the Net Shed Building and surrounding grounds (Lease Area) will not reduce the amount of park space assessable to the public relative to conditions existing since approximately 2006. Kupu has been leasing the majority of the Net Shed Building from HCDA on a month-to-month basis since November 2011. Before that—between 2006 and 2010—HCDA leased the Net Shed Building to Hālau Kū Māna, a public charter school. Thus, Kupu's long term lease of the Lease Area will not result in the reduction of public park facilities in the Makai Area relative to conditions existing since at least 2006. The Net Shed Building was originally constructed in 1989/1990 for use as a fishing net storage and drying area by Honolulu's fishing fleet; however due to changes in the fishing fleet at Kewalo Basin, as well as changes in equipment (nylon nets are now used), the facility is no longer needed as a net drying shed.

Further, Kupu is not seeking to lease or limit access to any shoreline/promenade area. The Lease Area, the Park Improvement Area and the Project Area do not include the: 1) the existing and defined waterfront shoreline/promenade the within Kewalo Basin Park along the open ocean; 2) area of the proposed shoreline/promenade along the Kewalo Basin harbor channel; and 3) park groin area.

(7) *Involves a substantial degradation of environmental quality;*

**Discussion:** The renovations and improvements in the Project Area will not involve a substantial degradation of environmental quality. In many ways, the renovations and improvements will improve the environmental quality of the area. The renovations and improvements are being done on an existing building existing park that are located on dredged land that did not exist in place until 1955. The Center will itself represent a source of sustainability, through a facility that will include photovoltaic energy

panels, hydroponics for food production, waterfront preservation, and micro-enterprise entrepreneurship. One of Kupu’s goals for the renovation of the Center is that it be certified as Platinum under the standards of the LEED for New Schools.

(8) *Is individually limited but cumulatively has considerable effect on the environment, or involves a commitment for larger actions;*

**Discussion:** The renovated Center is envisioned to contribute toward a considerable positive effect on the environment by allowing Kupu to better train the next generation in natural resource management, renewable energy, energy conservation, and other green job skill sets. The Center will be the first “green” job training center of its kind in Honolulu and will meet the demands of the growing green jobs industry. In this way, the Center will lead Hawai‘i toward a more sustainable future and build partnerships that can serve as a global model of responsible stewardship and a thriving community.

(9) *Substantially affects a rare, threatened or endangered species or its habitat;*

**Discussion:** No rare, threatened, or endangered plants or animals are known to exist in the Project Area. As such, no mitigation measures are warranted or planned. The renovations and improvements in the Park Project Area are not anticipated to have any significant impact to existing flora onsite as the plants do not naturally occur in the area (given the man-made nature of the land), and the fauna is likely exclusively non-native. Following the USFWS’s recommendations to protect Hawaiian seabirds and specifically White fairy Terns, the contractor for the Center renovations will examine all trees slated to be cut for signs that White fairy Terns are present. Signs include an accumulation of white feathers or white droppings underneath the tree or structure.

(10) *Detrimentially affects air or water quality or ambient noise levels;*

**Discussion:** No state or federal air quality standards will be violated during or after the renovations and improvements in the Project Area. The only anticipated issues related to air quality may be during construction; however, construction activities would be temporary. Long-term negative impacts related to air quality are not expected.

No state or federal water quality standards will be violated during or after the Center renovation or park improvements. Proposed hydrology and drainage patterns for the Center are expected to mimic existing conditions, but peak flows are expected to decrease due to increased landscaped areas and installation of new LID features.

Construction activities will inevitably create temporary noise impacts. If necessary, contractors will employ mitigation measures to minimize those temporary noise impacts including the use of mufflers and

implementing construction curfew periods. Pursuant to Chapter 11-46, HAR, all construction activities must comply with all community noise controls. Long-term noise impacts are expected to return to preconstruction levels.

(11) *Affects or is likely to suffer damage by being located in an environmentally sensitive area, such as a flood plain, tsunami zone, beach, erosion-prone area, geologically hazardous land, estuary, fresh water, or coastal waters;*

**Discussion:** The renovations and improvements in the Project Area are not likely to affect an environmentally sensitive area. According to the FIRM prepared by FEMA, National Flood Insurance Program, the Project Area is designated as Zone AE, inundation by the one-percent-annual-chance flood. To mitigate against increased flood damage, in accord with Chapter \_\_, Section 1.8 “Flood fringe areas,” ROH<sup>5</sup>, renovations to the existing Net Shed Building will include three-foot high (minimum) waterproofed concrete masonry unit or concrete sill walls around the building along with removable flood barriers at door openings. The walls will either be newly constructed or part of the existing concrete masonry unit walls. The walls will be certified by licensed surveyor that they reach or exceed the height of the base flood elevation.

(12) *Substantially affects scenic vistas and view planes identified in County or State plans or studies; or,*

**Discussion:** The renovations and improvements in the Project Area will not substantially affect scenic vistas and view planes identified in county or state plans or studies. Specifically, the renovations and improvements will not alter the panoramic views identified in the Primary Urban Center Development Plan that are currently visible from the Project Area. The renovations also will not alter the existing quality of any significant stationary or roadway views defined in the City and County of Honolulu’s 1987 *Coastal View Study*. The renovations will be done on an existing building and will not include any height or bulk change in the building. Existing trees in the Project Area will remain, and no additional trees that could potentially block views are proposed.

(13) *Requires substantial energy consumption.*

**Discussion:** The renovations to the Center and improvements in the Park Improvement Area will not require substantial energy consumption. In fact, the renovations will significantly decrease the electrical demand from existing conditions as the Center will become a net zero energy facility. The renovations will include the installation of photovoltaic panels that will meet all of the energy needs of the Center.

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<sup>5 5</sup> As established by Ordinance 14-9, adopted May 7, 2014 by the Honolulu City Council.

## **7.2 DETERMINATION**

Pursuant to Chapter 343, HRS, the State of Hawai'i HCDA has issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) based on this Environmental Assessment. This finding is founded on the basis of impacts and mitigation measures examined in this document, public comments received during the pre-consultation and public review phases, and analyzed under the above criteria.