

KA'IULANI SODARO DIRECT TESTIMONY

MODIFICATION HEARING

Land Block 5, Project 3 (The Launiu) (KAK 23-001)

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

A Ka'iulani Sodaro, Senior Vice President, Planning and Development, Victoria Ward, Limited ("VWL").

Q Please briefly summarize the modifications requested for The Launiu.

A Consistent with the Mauka Area Plan, the Ward Neighborhood Master Plan ("Ward MP") and previously-approved developments both in Ward Village and in the Kaka'ako Mauka Area, VWL is requesting two modifications to the Vested Rules for The Launiu's podium:

1) Increase the The Launiu platform height from forty-five (45) feet to sixty-five (65) feet; and

2) Accommodate a continuous building façade on the platform above twenty (20) feet (instead of the 1:1 setback) along the Ala Mona Boulevard and Ward Avenue view corridor setbacks.

Both modifications, among other benefits, facilitate the provision of ground floor pedestrian activation; additional commercial, public and green space in and around The Launiu; and podium-level studio homes that increase buyer options and diversification. In addition, permitting the view corridor setback modification better defines the edge of the street, and allows a more interesting articulation of the building façade, including at the corners and mid-block along both Ala Moana Boulevard and Ward Avenue.

Both modifications are contemplated by the Mauka Area Plan, the Ward MP, and/or the Vested Rules, and are also consistent with other developments in Ward Village and Kaka'ako.

There are no requested modifications to the required platform yard setbacks, and no requested modifications to The Launiu's tower, including to the tower height and view corridor setbacks.

Q What are the public benefits from the requested modifications?

A The modifications are essential to implementing the mixed-use live, work, play vision of the Mauka Area Plan. Both modifications to the platform allow additional volume, and allow the bulk of the parking structure to be pulled up and away from the street, therefore facilitating the vertical mixing of uses throughout the building, including

residential studio units in the podium, nearly 22,000 square feet of commercial space on the ground floor of the platform, and nearly 16,000 square feet of new publicly-accessible green space in and near The Launiu.

A helpful illustration of how the modifications facilitate the transfer of volume within the platform to facilitate commercial uses and increase publicly-accessible space at ground level is shown on Exhibit 22 of the application (Exhibit 1 in this proceeding). The left illustration on Exhibit 22 depicts The Launiu without the modifications (and as permitted by right under the Vested Rules). The middle illustration shows the massing based on commitments in the Ward MP, and the right illustration shows The Launiu's proposed design with the modifications. The modifications permit the additional residential and commercial space within the podium, as well as the dramatically-increased space at ground level.

Exhibits 24 through 27 of the application provide street-level depictions of The Launiu comparing the platform as permitted by the Vested Rules and as proposed with the modifications. As these depictions illustrate, the modifications result in substantially more green space and pedestrian activation at ground level as contemplated by the Mauka Area Plan and the Ward MP. Another benefit of increasing the volume within the platform is that space becomes available for studio units within the platform, providing additional buyer options and diversity within the project. Finally, increasing the platform height avoids the need for subsurface excavation associated with underground parking structures in an area with known subsurface sensitivities, including proximity to the water table.

The second requested modification to eliminate the 1:1 setback along Ala Moana Boulevard and Ward Avenue (in addition to increasing the volume in the platform), also creates a continuous platform façade that permits a stronger definition of the streetscape along Ala Moana Boulevard and Ward Avenue. This modification, which was proposed in the Ward MP, and is consistent with other projects in Ward Village (and within Kaka'ako), in turn, permits much more flexibility in the design of the platform.

Exhibits 24 through 27 of the application, for example, illustrate the additional architectural elements and designs that will be applied to the continuous façade of The Launiu's platform, creating a much more varied and interesting streetscape at this important gateway to Ward Village.

Importantly, VWL is not requesting any modifications to The Launiu's tower, including the tower height, or the seventy-five (75) foot tower setback required on view corridor streets, and The Launiu platform will comply with the fifteen (15) foot front yard setback required by the Vested Rules. The tower and yard setbacks (along with the mauka-makai orientation of the long side of the building tower) will maintain the expansive view corridor along Ward Avenue as the Mauka Area Plan and the Ward MP both envisioned.

As such, these design modifications provide significant community and public benefits, including facilitating ground floor pedestrian activation, commercial and residential uses within the podium, substantial publicly-accessible space in and around the development, and a strong and interesting streetscape that preserves important view planes at this key gateway to Ward Village.

Q HCDA received public testimony opposing the modifications for The Launiu because the rules applicable to the Makai Area in the Kaka’ako Community Development District limit building heights to a maximum of 200 feet. What is VWL’s response to this testimony?

A My understanding is that testimony opposes the requested modifications for The Launiu podium because of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs’ request to raise the building height limit on its Makai Area parcels to a maximum of 400 feet. VWL has not reviewed OHA’s development plans in detail and has no position on OHA’s request to increase the height limit on its parcels, or its request to lift the Legislature’s restriction on residential development on the Makai Area parcels.

HCDA’s consideration of the proposed modifications for The Launiu podium is governed by the 2005 Mauka Area Rules, which became effective for Ward Village prior to the Legislature’s 2006 decision to limit residential development in the Makai Area, and prior to OHA’s acquisition of its parcels in 2012.

The Mauka Area Rules contemplate the proposed modifications for The Launiu. In addition, the Ward Master Plan, which HCDA considered and approved in 2009, also proposed these modifications for projects along Ala Moana Boulevard and Ward Avenue. HCDA has considered and approved these modifications for numerous projects in Ward Village and throughout the Mauka Area, including Ulana Ward Village, Ke Kilohana and ‘A’ali’i, which collectively provide 1,225 reserved housing homes in Kaka’ako. HCDA also recently approved the same modifications for the adjacent Alia project in the neighboring Kamehameha Schools’ master plan, which will also have a 400 foot tower as permitted by the Mauka Area Rules.

OHA’s concerns regarding the entitlements on its Makai Area parcels, including the height limit and restriction on residential development, cannot be addressed or remedied through this proceeding, which involves a project in the Mauka Area and is governed by the 2005 Mauka Area Rules and the Ward Master Plan.

Therefore, while this proceeding is not the proper forum for OHA to raise or resolve its concerns regarding its Makai Area parcels, VWL believes that OHA’s concerns may be addressed through the Legislature and/or HCDA in a separate proceeding specifically relating to OHA’s Makai Area parcels.

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