

**TOM SCHNELL DIRECT TESTIMONY**

**PRESENTATION HEARING**

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

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

A Tom Schnell, PBR HAWAII & Associates, Inc., Principal / Planner

**Q How long have you been in this position?**

A I have been a principal of PBR HAWAII for 10 years. Before becoming a principal, I was a Senior Associate for 7 years, an Associate for 5 years, and a Planner for 2 years. In total, I have over 24 years of experience as a professional planner with PBR HAWAII.

**Q Please describe your educational background and experience.**

A Please see my resume, which is marked as an exhibit in this proceeding. Among other professional affiliations, I am accredited by the American Institute of Certified Planners, and I am a member of the American Planning Association, Hawai'i Chapter, Lambda Alpha International, Aloha Chapter, and the Urban Land Institute.

**Q Please describe your firm's experience.**

A PBR HAWAII & Associates, Inc., based in Hawai'i for over 50 years, is active in all aspects of land planning, environmental studies, landscape architecture, and graphic design. PBR engages in a variety of projects ranging from specific site designs to regional and community plans, urban design studies, environmental assessments and impact statements, and large-scale resource inventory and land management projects. Our multi-disciplined expertise and overall experience allows us to provide clients and end users with successful plans that are functional, sustainable, cost effective, and at the same time, culturally and aesthetically relevant.

**Q What has PBR HAWAII been retained to do for this Project?**

A Victoria Ward, Ltd. ("VWL") retained PBR to prepare and process a planned development permit application for The Launiu, Land Block 5, Project 3 of the Ward Neighborhood Master Plan ("Ward MP"). In the context of the greater Ward Village community, PBR has also prepared planned development permits for 'A'ali'i, Kō'ula, Victoria Place, The Park Ward Village, Ulana Ward Village, and Kalae. In addition, PBR prepared the Ward Village Street Tree Masterplan and provided landscape architectural design services for the Central Plaza (now known as Victoria Ward Park), the 'A'ali'i recreation deck, the Ulana Ward Village grounds and recreation area, and Ka La'i o Kukuluāe'o Park.

**Q Please provide a summary of the Project.**

**A** The Launiu will include approximately 486 homes, and ground floor commercial, open and recreation space, which will integrate with the adjacent, repurposed portion of Auahi Street, and the nearby Ka La'i o Kukuluāe'o Park mauka of The Launiu site.

The development will be on Land Block 5 within the Pauahi neighborhood, Mauka Area of the Kaka'ako Community Development District (KCDD), Honolulu, Hawai'i. The project will be at the Ewa gateway to Ward Village at the corner of Ala Moana Boulevard and Ward Avenue. The Launiu will provide approximately 667,825 square feet of new floor area, and the development is currently planned to include approximately:

- 15,940 square feet of ground-level open space (170 square feet onsite and 15,770 square feet offsite);
- 78,310 square feet of indoor and outdoor recreational areas (nearly three times the recreation space required);
- 646,099 square feet of residential floor area;
- 21,726 square feet of commercial space; and
- A projected maximum height of approximately 400 feet, plus 18 feet for rooftop elements.

The design of The Launiu is consistent with the Vested Rules, which are applicable to the Ward MP, and the proposed development is informed by several principles in the Ward MP:

- Encourage improvements in the street-level experience for residents and visitors;
- Promote the development of exceptional public spaces;
- Provide distinctive retail and public-realm experiences; and
- Optimize ocean views.

The building location and orientation were carefully considered to preserve and enhance mauka-makai views and integrate The Launiu with the pattern of a connected, walkable, and active community at Ward Village.

The street level experience will be enhanced for residents and visitors through a variety of approaches previously approved and employed throughout Ward Village. The over 21,000 square feet of ground floor commercial space will line the podium along Ward Avenue and extend around the corners of Ala Moana Boulevard and Auahi Street to

activate and add visual interest. On the mauka side, the commercial area will transition into nearly 16,000 square feet of open space in the repurposed portion of Auahi Street. This area will be integrated into the overall design of The Launiu with pedestrian-focused landscaped space for pedestrians and bicycles, shade trees, native plantings and other landscaping, seating areas, public art, and movable kiosks. On the makai side of The Launiu facing Ala Moana Boulevard, the ground floor will feature prominent steps leading to an elevated pedestrian pathway that will define this key gateway into Ward Village, extensive landscaping, seating areas, sculptural hardscape elements, and facades that screen the podium and parking garage.

Vehicle and bicycle access to The Launiu will be from Auahi Street. The Launiu features a unique pick-up and drop-off area that is thoughtfully integrated into the ground floor of the building, minimizing pedestrian conflict while enabling more active, open space within the repurposed portion of Auahi Street. The Launiu will have approximately 759 off-street parking spaces for resident, guest, and commercial use, and four off-street loading spaces. Approximately 32 commercial parking spaces will be fulfilled off-site within the district parking garage at Ulana Ward Village as part of an area-wide parking strategy.

**Q Please describe how the components of the Project will fulfill the provisions of Hawai'i Revised Statutes ("HRS") 206E-5.6(j).**

A In considering a proposed development, Hawai'i Revised Statutes § 206E-5.6 requires HCDA to determine that the proposed project is reasonable, is consistent with the development rules and policies of the relevant development district, and complies with the criteria listed in HRS § 206E-5.6(j).

Table 5-2 of the Application summarizes The Launiu's conformance with the Vested Rules and the Ward MP. The following exhibits in the Application show plans for The Launiu:

- Exhibit 3A - Detailed civil site plan;
- Exhibit 4 – Detailed site plan;
- Exhibit 5 - Landscape plan;
- Exhibit 6 – Circulation plan;
- Exhibits 7 to 13 – Floor level plans;
- Exhibit 14 – Summary sheet of planned open space, recreation space, off-street parking and loading, residential unit matrix, and floor area;
- Exhibits 15 to 21 – Project elevations and sections;

- Exhibit 22 – Tower and platform massing summary;
- Exhibit 23 – Orientation and tower spacing;
- Exhibits 28A – 28D – Roadway sections; and
- Exhibit 29 – Rendering of ground floor at corner of Ala Moana Boulevard and Ward Avenue.

The Launiu also fulfills the specific criteria of HRS § 206E-5.6(j) as follows:

**HRS § 206E-5.6(j)(1)(A): Advances the goals, policies, and objectives of the applicable district plan:**

The applicable district plan is the Mauka Area Plan adopted by HCDA in June 2005. The Mauka Area Plan provides a framework for public-private sector cooperation to develop the Mauka Area into a vibrant, mixed-use community with a variety of housing types in Honolulu’s urban core.

The Launiu is in the core of Honolulu and Kaka’ako, in close proximity to the central business district, the government center, and commercial, and industrial facilities, along with recreational areas such as Ala Moana Beach Park and Kewalo Basin Harbor. Its central location provides convenient access to the services and amenities throughout Kaka’ako and Ward Village, including through the Auahi Street pedestrian promenade.

A key aspect of the Mauka Area Plan is its open space and recreation plan, which prioritizes the creation of open space systems, as well as on-site recreation and open spaces. This “systems” approach recognizes that residents benefit from community-wide as well as site-specific open space and recreational spaces.

The Launiu will be adjacent to and integrated with nearly 16,000 square feet of new open space created through the realignment of Auahi Street, and this repurposed area will feature pedestrian-oriented landscaped open space for pedestrians and bicycles, sculptural benches and other seating areas, and movable kiosks. Ka La’i o Kukuluāe’o Park, being developed in conjunction with Ulana Ward Village, and the planned open space mauka of the recently approved Kalae development, will also be steps away. The Launiu also features onsite open space, as well as recreation space exceeding requirements.

With the open space associated with The Launiu’s development, and including existing and approved developments, Ward Village will have a total of 377,345 square feet (over eight and a half acres) of open space, which significantly exceeds the 245,638 square feet of open space required under the Ward MP.

From the housing perspective, The Launiu will add approximately 486 homes in the urban core; the design of The Launiu is supported by current sales trends in surrounding Ward Village communities.

In addition, The Launiu has been coordinated with major existing and contemplated transportation routes, recreational and service areas, and is consistent with HCDA's transit oriented development principles. In short, The Launiu will provide excellent pedestrian and multi-modal connectivity for residents and visitors, and is located near jobs, recreational areas, retail, dining, and transportation services.

The goals of The Launiu include significantly advancing the livable, walkable environment envisioned for Kaka'ako.

**HRS § 206E-5.6(j)(1)(B): Protects, preserves, or enhances desirable neighborhood characteristics through compliance with the standards and guidelines of the applicable district rules:**

The applicable district rules for The Launiu are the Vested Rules, and Table 5-2 of the Application summarizes The Launiu's conformance with the Vested Rules and the Ward MP. VWL is requesting two modifications to the Vested Rules for The Launiu (for the platform height and the Ala Moana Boulevard / Ward Avenue view corridors), which were proposed and considered as part of the approval of the Ward MP.

As with all areas of the Ward MP, on completion, the The Launiu site (and the open area created through the realignment of Auahi Street) will be integrated into VWL's existing operations team that professionally oversees management, maintenance, and security throughout the Ward MP area at no cost to the public.

**HRS 206E-5.6(j)(1)(C): Avoids a substantially adverse effect on surrounding land uses through compatibility with the existing and planned land use character of the surrounding area:**

The surrounding uses and urban areas were taken into careful consideration during the planning of The Launiu. In particular, The Launiu is carefully designed to complement and be compatible with the approved designs for the areas and developments in the vicinity of the project, including Auahi Street, Ka La'i o Kukuluāe'o Park, Ulana, Kalae, and the key intersection of Ward Avenue with Ala Moana Boulevard.

The Launiu integrates with these existing and planned conditions by, among other design strategies, providing ground-floor commercial space and residential units within the podium, thus activating a key gateway into Ward Village; seamlessly transitioning to the ground level open space in the repurposed section of Auahi Street; providing landscaping, seating areas, art, and other pedestrian activation in and near the development; and providing a convenient, shaded, and varied pedestrian experience along Ala Moana Boulevard.

The Launiu is also highly compatible with surrounding areas in, Kaka'ako the Ala Moana area, and downtown Honolulu. The addition of residences from The Launiu and other existing nearby projects, within a close proximity to the central business district and existing transportation options, creates the opportunity to significantly shorten one's daily commute (by car, transit, biking, or walking), alleviating traffic in urban Honolulu.

**HRS 206E-5.6(j)(1)(D): Provides housing opportunities for all income groups, particularly low, moderate, and other qualified:**

The Launiu will help to fulfill a continued market demand for residential housing in urban Honolulu close to employment centers, commercial services, entertainment options, and open spaces as envisioned by both the Mauka Area Plan and the Ward MP.

The Ward MP establishes a reserved housing requirement of 20 percent of the total number of residential units within the Ward MP area. The Vested Rules permit the construction of reserved housing incrementally with new developments. With Ulana Ward Village, however, VWL has already committed to satisfy all remaining reserved housing requirements for Ward Village well in advance of the completion of future projects, including The Launiu.

In total, and including The Launiu, 1,023 reserved housing units will be required in Ward Village, and VWL, pursuant to the Development Agreement with HCDA, will have the right, at its option, to use as credits 199 reserved housing units to fully satisfy the requirements of future projects. See Section 4.11 and Table 4-2 of the Application. Upon completion of Ulana Ward Village, VWL will provide nearly 35 percent more reserved housing units in Ward Village for local families than originally envisioned in the Ward MP.

VWL's commitment to prioritize the construction of reserved housing homes in Ward Village prior to the construction of future developments helps to meet a present, critical need to provide timely housing opportunities for local reserved housing purchasers in urban Honolulu.

**HRS 206E-5.6(j)(2)(A): Positively impacts pedestrian oriented development, including complete streets design:**

The Launiu's location, orientation, and design were carefully chosen to advance the pattern of a connected, active and walkable community at Ward Village.

The Launiu, located at the Ewa gateway to Ward Village, will provide a welcoming pedestrian environment through extensive retail space along Ward Avenue, along with generous shaded outdoor spaces with landscaping, walkways, public art, and architectural elements. The vacated area of Auahi Street mauka of The Launiu is integrated into overall the design and will provide convenient, welcoming, and active

pedestrian access to the Auahi Street promenade, Ka La'i o Kukuluāe'o Park, and areas in Kaka'ako Ewa of Ward Village.

The Launiu also facilitates the complete streets design features of Ward Village by accommodating bicycle parking in both public areas and within the parking structure. Public short-term bicycle parking will be provided at street level along both Ala Moana Boulevard and Auahi Street, and resident long-term bicycle parking will be provided within the parking structure. Exhibit 6 of the Application illustrates the short- and long-term bicycle parking areas, as well as the pedestrian and vehicle access points and circulation plan. Bikeshare stations are also situated at various convenient locations throughout Ward Village. In addition, The Launiu's ground floor design prioritizes pedestrian access, and minimizes potential conflicts, by providing a pickup / drop-off area that is integrated into the Mauka side of the podium.

**HRS 206E-5.6(j)(2)(B): Positively impacts transit oriented development, including rail, bus, and other modes of rapid transit:**

The Launiu is designed in consideration of major existing and contemplated transportation routes, recreational and service areas. Consistent with HCDA's transit-oriented development principles, The Launiu is located within walking distance of proposed rail stations and adjacent to bus and trolley routes.

**HRS 206E-5.6(j)(2)(C): Positively impacts community amenities such as gathering places, community centers, culture and arts facilities, and the full array of public facilities normally provided by the public sector:**

The Launiu offers easily-accessible amenities and social gathering spaces to encourage interaction within its community of residents and visitors, and with the greater communities of Ward Village, Kaka'ako, and urban Honolulu.

As noted, The Launiu will be integrated with the adjacent repurposed area of Auahi Street (created through the realignment of Auahi Street to connect with Pohukaina Street), which will feature nearly 16,000 square feet of open space with pedestrian-focused landscaping, pedestrian and bicycle throughways, sculptural benches, seating areas, and space for movable retail kiosks. This community amenity will also provide convenient access to the Auahi Street promenade, Ka La'i o Kukuluāe'o Park adjacent to Ulana Ward Village, and areas of Kaka'ako Ewa of Ward Village and beyond.

The Launiu is also designed as a visual gateway to the Ewa end of Ward Village and will complement Kalae across Ward Avenue, including Kalae's commercial space along Ward Avenue and Kalae's open, landscaped area mauka of the development. All these areas will be visually and thematically connected through the Auahi Street promenade.

These improvements, among others, realize the vision of the Mauka Area Plan to encourage public-private sector cooperation to develop the Mauka Area into an active,

mixed-use community with a full array of public and community amenities in Honolulu's urban core, all without cost to the community.

**HRS 206E-5.6(j)(3)(A): Positively impacts preservation of important natural systems or habitats:**

Consistent with the Sustainability Framework set out in the Ward MP, Ward Village holds Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design-Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND) Platinum certification, the highest rating provided. Ward Village is the largest community in the United States (and the only community in Hawai'i) with this designation.

According to the U.S. Green Building Council, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) developments are designed to deliver the following benefits:

- Lower operating costs and increased value;
- Reduced waste;
- Energy and water conservation;
- More healthful and productive environments; and
- Reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

The project team for The Launiu is using an integrative design process to identify and use opportunities to employ sustainable strategies across disciplines and building systems. VWL plans to employ the following sustainable practices at The Launiu:

**Location and Transportation:** There are community services within walking distance of the property, and multiple opportunities for public transit. Bike facilities will be provided on site. The Launiu is near the realigned Auahi Street and will contribute to the pedestrian network of Ward Village.

**Sustainable Sites:** To foster a healthy outdoor environment, VWL is committed to minimizing erosion and sedimentation during construction. Landscaping will encourage time spent outdoors and cool outdoor spaces. The Launiu will feature indigenous and/or ethnic plantings to embrace Hawaiian ecosystems and avoid contributing to invasive plant populations.

**Water Efficiency:** A number of water-conserving measures will be employed at The Launiu, with the goal of at least a 50 percent reduction in potable water use for landscaping irrigation and a 20 percent savings in indoor water through the use of low-flow fixtures.



**Energy and Atmosphere, Indoor Environmental Quality:** The Launiu will optimize energy performance and air filtration equipment will exceed performance standards. Outdoor airflow will be monitored, and mechanical systems will be kept clean.

**Materials and Resources:** The Launiu will responsibly manage construction waste, recycling at least as much waste as possible at the construction site. The building itself will have recycling facilities and recycling will be encouraged.

**Indoor Environmental Quality:** The Launiu will create sensitive indoor environments with adjustable lighting and cooling systems and will provide substantial outdoor views. The building will use materials that meet requirements for indoor environmental air quality and will be designed for acoustic performance.

**Innovation:** The Launiu is considering a range of sustainability measures that fit the LEED Innovation criteria, which are intended to support creative approaches to green building.

**Regional Priority:** The Launiu will pursue sustainability opportunities that specifically address local priorities with regard to environment, social equity, and/or public health. The Launiu will address LEED-designated Regional Priority issues, including responsible waste management and strategies for energy performance.

The Application at Appendix A contains the LEED-NCv4 checklist.

**HRS 206E-5.6(j)(3)(B): Positively impacts maintenance of valued cultural, historical, or natural resources:**

The Launiu will avoid a substantially adverse effect on the area's archeological and cultural resources. The letter from the State Historic Preservation Division dated November 10, 2022 confirming the project's compliance with HRS Chapter 6E, is attached as Appendix D to the Application.

**HRS 206E-5.6(j)(3)(C): Positively impacts maintenance of other resources relevant to the State's economy:**

The design of The Launiu facilitates access for residents, locals, and visitors alike, by providing connection to critical centers of commerce, industry, employment, and tourism.

The Launiu is in the core of Honolulu, in close proximity to the central business district, the government center, and commercial, and industrial facilities, and recreational areas.

The design of The Launiu recognizes the strong potential for increased growth and development in this area. There is convenient access to mass transit throughout Ward Village, and The Launiu has been coordinated with major existing and contemplated transportation routes, recreational and service areas, and is consistent with transit-

oriented development principles. In short, The Launiu is located near jobs, recreational areas, retail, dining, and transportation services, which are all critical to the State's economy.

**HRS 206E-5.6(j)(3)(D): Positively impacts commitment of state funds and resources:**

The Launiu does not require State funds, and the substantial public facilities developed in conjunction with the project, including the repurposed area created through the realignment of Auahi Street, will be constructed, maintained, and secured without government funding and at no cost to the public. Existing and planned infrastructure is adequate to support the project, and The Launiu will not consume additional State resources.

Wilson Okamoto Corporation (WOC) prepared a Traffic Impact Report (TIR) for The Launiu dated October 2022. Appendix E of the Application contains: (1) the TIR; and (2) an email from the City and County of Honolulu Department of Planning and Permitting Traffic Review Branch noting that the branch has no comments regarding the project TIR, subject to an analysis of two additional intersections.

WOC also prepared an Infrastructure Availability Report (IAR) for The Launiu dated December 2022. WOC anticipates that available or planned infrastructure will be adequate to accommodate The Launiu and has taken steps well ahead of the PDP application to confirm availability of utilities. Section 6.3 and Table 6-1 of the Application shows a list of utility providers that WOC contacted to confirm infrastructure availability. Appendix F of the Application contains the IAR.

**HRS 206E-5.6(j)(3)(E): Positively impacts employment opportunities and economic development:**

Beyond enhancing the lives of its residents and the Ward Village community, The Launiu will have a direct, positive impact on the state economy at a time when private investment is needed to help sustain Hawai'i's economy following the Covid-19 pandemic.

The estimated project economic stimulus includes \$691 million in economic output; \$233.4 million in workers' earnings; and \$42.4 million in state tax revenue. In addition, VWL plans to use local construction labor, and The Launiu will create approximately 781 jobs in year one of construction, and approximately 967, 920, and 636 jobs in years two, three, and four of construction.

Over a 30-year period, in present value of constant 2022 dollars, The Launiu is projected to generate approximately \$189.2 million in future output; \$62.7 million in workers' earnings; \$11.4 million in state tax revenue; 22 permanent jobs; and \$123.4 million in real property tax revenue.

**HRS 206E-5.6(j)(3)(F): Positively impacts maintenance and improvement of the quality of educational programs and services provided by schools:**

HRS §§ 302A-1601 to 320A-1612, regarding School Impact Fees, establish a structure for assessing school impact fees for residential development. Pursuant to this law, the State of Hawai'i Department of Education is administering a school impact fee district from Kalihi to Ala Moana, an area that includes The Launiu site. VWL will comply with all applicable laws regarding school impact fees.

**Q Please describe the Shadow and Wind Studies for this Project.**

A In compliance with the Vested Rules and the Ward MP, The Launiu was designed and sited to preserve Mauka-Makai views and minimize shadow effects on neighboring buildings.

A shadow study is included in the Application as Appendix G. The shadow study indicates that there will be no substantially adverse impacts upon adjacent buildings from The Launiu.

Rowan Williams Davies & Irwin Inc. ("RWDI") will prepare a detailed wind analysis study for The Launiu. The wind study will focus on frequently used pedestrian areas such as main entrances, sidewalks, and outdoor amenity areas at both street and podium level. Wind tunnel measurements for 36 wind directions will be combined with long-term weather data to predict wind speeds and frequencies. These data will then be compared with wind comfort and safety criteria to evaluate the intended use of the pedestrian areas in and around The Launiu. Following RWDI's study and analyses, RWDI will recommend any necessary wind control strategies for areas where higher-than-desired wind speeds are predicted. VWL plans to incorporate RWDI's recommendations into the design of The Launiu as appropriate.

**Q Please describe the environmental noise study for this Project.**

A Salter, Inc. prepared a noise impact summary for The Launiu. As noted in Salter's letter dated November 29, 2022 (included in the Application as Appendix I), the study identified various potential noise sources for environmental noise (including transit noise), amenity spaces, and project-related noise. Salter recommended potential mitigation measures for certain noises and will be recommending additional mitigation measures throughout the design and construction phases of The Launiu. VWL plans to incorporate noise mitigation measures into the project and will comply with HAR § 15-22-77 on project performance standards, including noise control.

**Q Does the development comply with the tower spacing guidelines of the Vested Rules?**

A The Launiu complies with HAR § 15-22-143(b), which provides that, to the extent practicable, developments should be at least 300 feet between the long parallel sides of

neighboring towers, and at least 200 feet between the short sides of the towers. As shown in Exhibit 23 of the Application, there are no towers within 200 feet of the short sides of The Launiu. To the east, the nearest Ward Village tower, Kalae, is planned to be at least 300 feet from the long side of The Launiu. To the west, the long side of The Launiu is, to the extent practicable (given the shape of the project lot and the abutting boundary of a separate master plan), separated from the nearest planned tower by 300 feet, except for a portion of the mauka corner of that planned tower.

**Q In accordance with HRS §206E-5.5, was notification by mail of this hearing provided to owners and lessees of record within a 300-foot radius of the proposed project?**

A Yes. VWL complied with the notification requirements for all owners and lessees of record within a 300-foot radius of the perimeter of the proposed project. The certification of the required notice is included as an exhibit in this proceeding.

**Q Have you reviewed the comment letter from the State Department of Transportation dated March 23, 2023 regarding The Launiu?**

A Yes. VWL acknowledges receipt of the comment letter, and my understanding is that VWL is planning to comply with HDOT's comments as applicable.

# # #