



On the calendar

Nov 1 at 9:00 a.m.

A Public Decision-Making Hearing will be held on development permit for Kali'u (Block G), by Coral Acquisition LLC, which is proposing to build a single tower, 294-unit residential, mixed-use condominium, located on a lot bound by Ala Moana Boulevard, Cooke Street, Auahi Street, and Coral Street.

Nov 1 at 9:45 a.m.

A Public Presentation Hearing will be held on the proposed amendments and compilation of the Kakaako Makai Area Rules, HRS Chapter 15-23. The Decision-Making Hearing will be held on Dec. 6 at 9 a.m.

For more information about HCDA, the public hearings or board meetings visit <https://dbedt.hawaii.gov/hcda/>.

What does redevelopment mean in a rural district like He'eia?

A part of it is wetland restoration

"Conservation International says that mangroves are a protective feature in other parts of the world," said Mary Alice Evans, Office of Planning and Sustainable Development Interim Director, at the October He'eia Board Meeting. "And so, I was wondering, you've made a decision to clear them here. Can you kind of share what you're thinking was on that approach to reducing the risk from storm surge and other dangers?"

"Mangrove is absolutely one of the most important species in the coastal communities of where it's native," replied Kanekoa Shultz, Executive Director of Kāko'o Ōiwi. "Obviously, mangrove is a non-native species in Hawai'i. "When we did our initial Federal surveys long ago, we had a native species list of only seven. And the reason for that was the canopy that was created. It might have been how the mangrove was planted so long ago, so tight, that instead of growing you know, these beautiful buttress systems like cathedrals, they basically went straight up."

When Kāko'o Ōiwi brought their colleagues, they were surprised at how the Florida mangrove, had grown. "Usually, you see, a 80-year-old tree that might be 50 feet high and 60 feet wide," said Shultz. "Here in Hawai'i, you're seeing these 80-year-old trees, maybe 70 feet high and 6 feet wide. And so, what that created was this really high canopy that went straight up and down. The amount of leaf litter that was being deposited was really condensed to just a 6 foot section versus being spread out over 10 feet, or over 40 feet. So, we had some of the highest density of sediment, of leaf litter."

As the mangrove was cleared in the He'eia Community Development District, mauka of Kamehameha Highway, conditions makai improved. "The sand returned to the fish pond and in front of the Bay," said Shultz. "The native species, on the species list in He'eia actually went up to about 37. We were seeing again ma'o hau hele, which is the purple hibiscus returning."



As the native plants began to return, they were soon followed by endangered native birds. "We have about 30 'Alae 'Ula (Hawaiian Gallinule or Hawaiian Moorhen), and another 16 Ae'o (Hawaiian Stilt)," said Shultz. "There are only 400 'Alae 'Ula left in the world, so it is a sizable number." These endangered wetland birds typically have very limited habitats due to the scarce wetlands that remain in the state.

"I will never doubt that in a native system mangrove is ideally what it should be," said Shultz. "But in a Hawai'i system that never evolved at all with mangrove I would rely heavily on the native systems. That was the reason for the clearing of the mangrove."

In total, Kāko'o Ōiwi has restored fifty-one acres of wetland habitat in He'eia for Hawaiian native species, and as you walk along the bridge between the fishpond and mauka lands you will immediately notice the dark towering wall of mangrove is gone, replaced by a thriving native ecosystem of vibrant purple hibiscus and wildlife.



2013 above with mangrove.
2023 below, Kamehameha Highway is now visible and wildlife has returned.



Remembering the past

And making memories today

On Saturday, October 7, the Friends of Kewalos held a time capsule activity. To record the moment in time, people were asked to bring handwritten letters, photos, or other small items to insert into the time capsule that will be hidden in the Kewalo Basin Park area.

"We plan to have an opening event of all three time capsules in 2038 – 15 years from now," said Ron Iwami, president of Friends of Kewalos. "I will be 83 years young." The first time capsule was buried in the Kewalo Basin Park, the second in October 2018, when the Net Shed was under construction, and the third, back by popular demand, is to be hidden this month.

Here is what HCDA added to the time capsule:

Dear Future Kewalo Basin Park Patrons,

We were honored to be asked to include something in this time capsule.

Kaka'ako Makai, historically called Kukuluāe'o, was plentiful with wildlife, and seafood. The wetland was comprised of marshes and small fish ponds, but became renowned for its salt ponds. The harbor in Kukuluāe'o (Kewalo Harbor) was a shallow reef that enclosed a deep section of water, naturally forming a safe place for large canoes to land. For centuries the harbor continued to serve as a safe place for the community to fish and for ships to anchor.

In the early 1900s, the Territory of Hawai'i acquired the harbor, then dredged and modernized it to expand its capacity and increase economic development.

The Kewalo Basin Park was HCDA's first large development project makai of Ala Moana Boulevard. In February 1990, former Governor John Waihee and members of HCDA's board broke ground for the Kewalo Basin Park.

The Park opened in September 1990 with a scenic pedestrian promenade along the existing seawall, bollards, trellises, observation and picnic areas, a public comfort station with shower facilities, landscaping, over 100 parking stalls and an 8,400 square foot net shed for fishermen.

Some highlights from the 2023 news headlines for the area include:

1. The OHA Plan To Build High-Rises At Kaka'ako Makai Stalls In The State Senate - The Senate Ways and Means Committee shelved the Office of Hawaiian Affairs' (OHA) proposal to build three residential towers up to 400 feet tall on oceanside land OHA owns at Kaka'ako Makai, after the public voiced numerous concerns, including possible disturbance of toxins on what was once an industrial waste and garbage dump in close proximity to public recreational areas.

2. Marking a 'historic' milestone - In June 2023, after years of costly delays, the long-awaited Honolulu rail system, officially opened its first phase. Nearly 9,000 members of the public rode the Skyline on its first day. A cash surplus

of over a half-billion dollars will likely be available once the city's Skyline rail system ends at the Civic Center in Kaka'ako early within the next decade, according to the Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation.

3. Ala Moana Pedestrian Bridge underway - The elevated walkway will provide a critical mauka-makai connection over a major six-lane boulevard, ensuring a safe pedestrian experience to the waterfront promenade, including Kewalo Basin Park and Ala Moana Beach Park.

The HCDA's participation in the pedestrian bridge is limited to its capacity as the landowner of the Makai landing site for the bridge. The bridge is being built by the State of Hawai'i Department of Transportation Highways Division, using a federal grant of \$20 million, secured with assistance from Victoria Ward Limited.

We at HCDA aloha and mahalo you who continue to care for Kewalo Basin Park, the ocean, Kaka'ako and all of Hawai'i. We know change is inevitable, but hope that Kewalo Basin Park has been well maintained and is preserved in prosperity for all to appreciate.

