



Hawai'i Community
Development
Authority

Community Connection

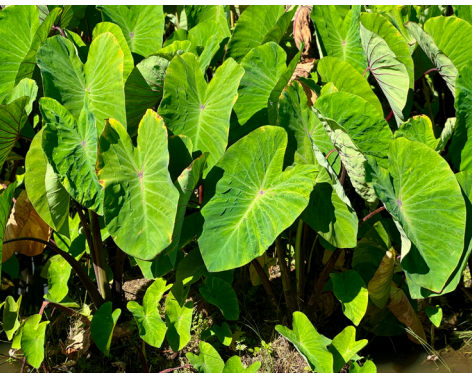
May 2026

Board Calendar

June 4

The next HCDA Board meetings will be held. Agendas are post on the website the Thursday before the scheduled Board Meeting.

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



He'eia: From Development Pressures to a Living Ahupua'a

Nestled along O'ahu's windward coast, the He'eia ahupua'a, a traditional land division stretching from the mountains to the sea, at can be seen clearly intact and restored.

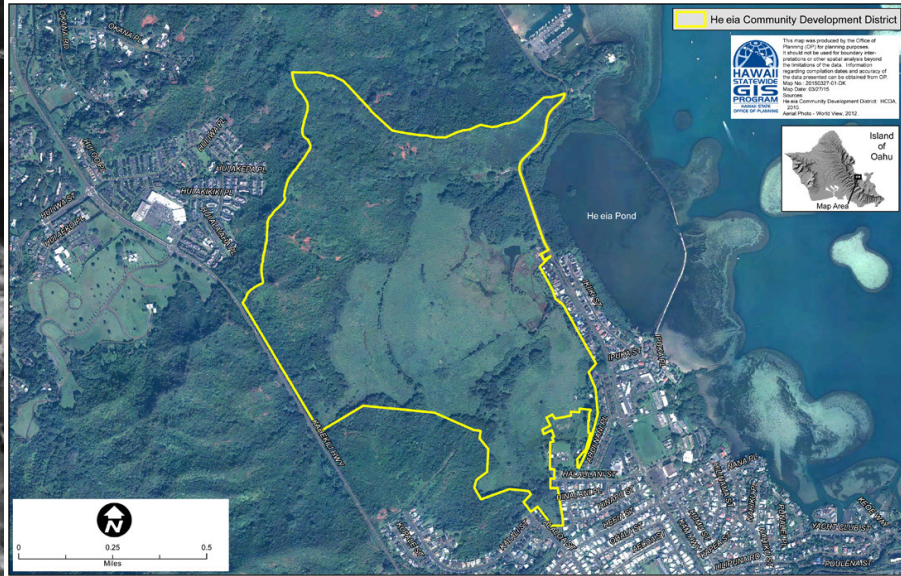
For centuries, the area sustained Native Hawaiian communities through interconnected systems of agriculture, aquaculture and stewardship. Along the shoreline sits Paepae o He'eia, the island's largest ancient fishpond, dating to approximately the 13th century. Built with kuapā (stone walls) and mākāhā (sluice gates) the fishpond cultivated fish within the brackish waters of Kāne'ohe Bay. Mauka lands once flourished with lo'i kalo supported by carefully maintained 'auwai (irrigation systems).

Today, He'eia Mauka is known for productive kalo fields, restored wetlands and educational programs grounded in Native Hawaiian practices. But only a few decades ago, the area faced a very different future.

Beginning in the late 1940s, He'eia became the focus of increasing development interest as Hawai'i underwent rapid political and economic change. By the late 1950s and early 1960s, plans emerged for thousands of homes across the wetlands and surrounding hillsides. Over the following decades, proposals for subdivisions, golf courses, marinas, shopping centers and other large-scale developments repeatedly surfaced.

One of the largest proposals, the 1973 He'eia Landing Project, called for more than 5,000 housing units and helped spur the "Save Heeia" movement, uniting residents, cultural practitioners and environmental advocates in opposition.

Development pressure intensified again during the Japanese investment boom of the late 1980s, when outside investors proposed luxury housing, an artificial marina and an 18-hole golf course across the wet-



He'eia (Continued)

lands. Community members raised concerns about the loss of cultural sites, agricultural lands and potential impacts to the fragile ecosystem connected to Kāne'ohe Bay.

Those efforts helped lead to a landmark 1991 land exchange between the Estate of Bernice Pauahi Bishop, now Kamehameha Schools, and the State of Hawai'i. Through the agreement, the Hawai'i Community Development Authority acquired approximately 400 acres of wetlands, effectively halting large-scale urban development plans for the area.

Protection, however, did not immediately result in restoration. For years, portions of the land remained overgrown with invasive vegetation and impacted by past grazing practices.

A turning point came in 2010, when HCDA entered into a long-term lease agreement with Kāko'o 'Ōiwi, a community-based nonprofit organization dedicated to restoring the wetlands through traditional Hawaiian agriculture and stewardship practices. Through the "Mahuahua 'Ai o Hoi" initiative, invasive species were removed, historic 'auwai

were restored and lo'i kalo returned to the landscape.

The vision for He'eia was further strengthened in 2011, when the Legislature established the He'eia Community Development District and directed HCDA to support culturally appropriate agriculture, education and natural resource restoration in the area.

Today, He'eia stands as an example of how community advocacy, cultural knowledge and public stewardship can work together to restore both land and cultural connection. What was once targeted for large-scale development has become a living landscape rooted in mālama āina, restoration and cultural continuity.

As HCDA marks the 15th anniversary of the district's establishment, there is renewed commitment to the preservation and community-based planning that has guided He'eia's restoration. In the 2026 state budget, the Hawai'i State Legislature appropriated funding to update the He'eia master plan and related rules, reinforcing a continued focus on thoughtful long-term stewardship of the district.

Queen Street, Queen Lane Electrical Upgrade

A major electrical infrastructure upgrade is underway in Kaka'ako as Hawaiian Electric Co. (HECO) works to improve power reliability in the urban core and support future development in the area. The project includes installation of a new 25-kilovolt electrical system along Queen Street and Queen Lane in support of both the Kaka'ako residents and businesses and nearby Honolulu rail infrastructure.

Construction is expected to continue through January 2027. Work will occur in phases and may require intermittent lane, sidewalk and road closures within the project area. Construction activities are limited to weekdays from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., with no planned holiday or weekend work. Residents and businesses with questions about the project may email communityimprovements@wardvillage.com.

