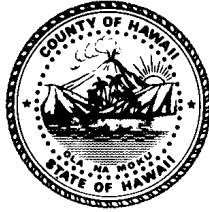


William P. Kenoi
Mayor



William T. Takaba
Managing Director

Walter K.M. Lau
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Team eyes sustainability in downtown Hilo plan

The Envision Downtown Hilo 2025 VisionKeepers and the County of Hawai'i Planning Department have begun preparations for Downtown Hilo's participation in the 2009 Sustainable Design Assessment Team Program. The SDAT Program is a community assistance program that focuses on principles of sustainability – defined by our community's ability to meet the needs of today without reducing the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Downtown Hilo was selected as a host community by the American Institute of Architects in December 2008. In May, the AIA will send a multi-disciplinary team of professionals to Hilo to work with local implementation partners and stakeholders in a 3-day charrette (collaborative planning workshop).

Team Leader Erica Rioux Gees, an architect from Amherst, Massachusetts, and Cooper Martin, Project Manager at the AIA's Center for Communities by Design in Washington D.C., conducted a site visit in March. They spent three days meeting with key stakeholders, community organizations, and government officials, including Downtown Hilo council members Dennis Onishi and Donald Ikeda, and County Managing Director William Takaba, to collect information on critical issues facing Downtown Hilo. The information gathered will be used to assemble the team of multidisciplinary experts who will return to Hilo from May 5 – 7, 2009 to participate in the charrette.

"The goal of this process is not to change Downtown Hilo, but to show residents the tools to implement the Envision Downtown Hilo 2025 Plan that they already created and that they will continue to improve upon," states Cooper Martin. "Success can only come from inspiring the citizens of Hilo. They are the people with roots in its past and a stake in its future."

(more)

Public participation is a key component of the SDAT Program.

There will be two open house community meetings during the SDAT:

- Tuesday May 5, from 5 p.m. – 7:30pm
- Thursday May 7, from 5 p.m. – 7:30pm

(Locations to be announced in an upcoming flyer)

The first community meeting is designed to introduce the public to the SDAT Program and invite feedback on the range of issues to be considered. The second community meeting will feature a joint presentation by the SDAT Team with local implementation partners on the results of the SDAT Program.

EnVision Downtown Hilo 2025 is a grassroots community planning and implementation process in collaboration with the County of Hawai'i Planning Department. The VisionKeepers are a community group of volunteers who shepherd and promote implementation of the Plan.

Additional support for the SDAT Program comes from the State of Hawai'i Department of Health, Healthy Hawai'i Initiative, which contributed \$5,000 toward the required local funding match. The VisionKeepers also received \$2,000 from the Healing Our Island Grant Fund, a State Grant in Aid project administered by the Hawai'i County Resource Center, a program of the County Department of Research and Development. Additionally, the AIA Hawai'i Island and Honolulu Chapter of the AIA are committed partners and will be assisting with fundraising efforts for the events.

For more information, visit the EnVision Downtown Hilo 2025 Website at, www.co.hawaii.hi.us/edh2025 or the AIA SDAT Website, www.aia.org/about/initiatives/AIAS075425.

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