

**Kauai Economic Recovery Strategy Team  
Initial Recommendations  
5/7/2020**



OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
THE COUNTY OF KAUA'I

DEREK S. K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR  
MICHAEL A. DAHLIG, MANAGING DIRECTOR

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ACTING DIRECTOR

March 31, 2020

I am extending an invitation to you to be a part of the Economic Recovery Strategy Team for COVID-19, comprised of key stakeholders that will develop recommendations of priority strategies for specific business sectors on Kaua'i including Finance, Future: Sustainability and Technology, Agriculture, Construction and Public Works, Public Health, Education, Tourism, Business and Data.

Individual sector committees will meet as needed via online service (eg. zoom) or phone meetings. Each committee will make recommendations on specific strategies to an executive committee who will be providing information to me and my administration. Over the next few months, we will ask you to also assist in the development and implementation of resulting action plans and to provide guidance in monitoring overall progress toward achieving the objectives in the plan.

I urge you to participate in the Economic Recovery Strategy Team for COVID-19, and look forward to your contributions to ensure Kaua'i recovers as quickly as possible.

To confirm your participation, please call or email Nalani Brun at the Office of Economic Development at [nbrun@kauai.gov](mailto:nbrun@kauai.gov) or 652-3304.

Mahalo Nui Loa,

Derek S. K. Kawakami  
Mayor



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## I. Executive Summary

### A. Overview

On April 1, 2020, Mayor Derek Kawakami convened the Kaua'i Economic Recovery Strategy Team (KERST) to develop recommendations for priority strategies for specific business sectors on Kaua'i. The initiative was organized into committees representing these sectors and included Agriculture, Business, Construction and Public Works, Education, Finance, Future: Sustainability and Technology, Public Health, and Tourism. The goals of the task force were: 1) to provide recommendations for actions that can be taken immediately to respond to the COVID-19 crisis and its impact on Kaua'i's economy; and 2) to begin the development of a longer-term vision of our island as part of a post-COVID-19 recovery. It is envisioned that committees will continue their discussions and that this initial report will be followed by a second report focusing more specifically on longer-term priorities.

### B. Current Context and Challenges

The recommendations presented here were formulated during a period of unprecedented upheaval both locally and nationally. As of the writing of this report, stay-at-home orders are in effect with ongoing speculation as to when the health crisis will allow them to be lifted; schools have been closed and are currently in discussions as to when, and in what format, they may be reopened; current restrictions on visitor arrivals and quarantines have created a host of variables and potential scenarios that make planning for a rebound within the visitor industry highly speculative; in fact, there is no aspect of life that has not been profoundly affected by COVID-19 and the ensuing response to it. Committees were therefore faced with the difficult task of suggesting plans in a fast-moving, turbulent, and uncertain environment requiring much creativity, flexibility, and resilience.

### C. Guiding Principles

To guide their efforts, committees agreed:

- To suggest actions that the Mayor/County has the authority to enact, either by providing a direct support or service, or by providing leadership, advocacy, or other support at the County level for actions to be taken by, or with, other entities.
- To focus on both short- and long-term action with a special emphasis on projects that are "shovel-ready";
- To anticipate uncertainties and competing potential scenarios when considering and suggesting recommendations.
- When possible, to indicate whether a course of action is dependent upon another milestone for its implementation.
- To give special consideration to recommendations that support job creation, job preservation, and conditions for maintaining employment on Kaua'i.

#### D. Summary of Task Force Recommendations

As a result of their discussions, the eight committees developed 45 priority recommendations to present for the Mayor's consideration. Highlights of these recommendations include:

- Several themes emerged across multiple sectors, presenting clear opportunities for far-reaching impact. Among these are: 1) Improving broadband access; 2) Facilitating communication with other agencies and the public; and 3) Enacting policies and programs to support local businesses and contractors.
- Recommendations range from those that fall entirely within the Mayor's authority as the County's executive, to those that request his collaboration, leadership, or other support for a multi-entity initiative.
- Recommendations contained in this first report include: 1) actions that can be taken immediately; 2) actions that can be taken as soon as a specific near-term milestone is met (e.g., stay-at-home orders are lifted; federal emergency funding is received); and 3) actions that may have a longer-term focus but that have initial actions that can be taken immediately or in the near term.

An overview of all recommendations can also be found in [Appendix A](#).

## **A. Recommendations in the area of Agriculture**

Recommendation AGR-1: Assist small businesses to navigate through federal and other grant funding applications and processes.

Recommendation AGR-2: Address needs of farmers due to closure of Sunshine Markets.

Recommendation AGR-3: Address communication barriers and lack of an organized communication network.

Recommendation AGR-4: Address shipping restrictions for livestock.

**Recommendation AGR-1: Assist small businesses to navigate through federal and other grant funding applications and processes.**

Overview: This recommendation seeks to support small businesses within the agriculture community by providing a centralized resource team with the knowledge and expertise in various areas related to Covid-19 emergency funding opportunities.

Need that will be addressed: The proposal addresses difficulties that businesses are having navigating the federal and other grant funding applications processes.

County Action: 1) Identify an agency or agencies or develop a program to fill this gap; 2) Convene and coordinate a Covid-19 Resource Team of Volunteers; preferably community members who are familiar with the PPP application/process to volunteer time to assist small business owners with application preparation and submission.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): It is expected that with this assistance, more Kaua'i small businesses – farmers, ranchers, fisheries, etc. – will be able to apply for federal funding opportunities.

Timeframe: Immediately.

Alignment: This recommendation aligns with recommendation [FIN-2](#).

**Recommendation AGR-2: Address needs of farmers due to closure of Sunshine Markets.**

Overview: Support/develop aggregation island-wide.

Need that will be addressed: Farmers lack a market due to Sunshine Market closings.

County Action: This recommendation proposes to:

- 1) Support aggregation in Kilauea via ‘Aina Ho’okupu O Kilauea (AHK); Duplicate AHK’s model to develop/support current efforts out west and central Kaua’i.
- 2) Organize a delivery/distribution system, similar to AHK.
- 3) Re-open Sunshine Markets with social distancing rules, mask requirements, hand sanitizer stations, etc.
- 4) Develop a marketing plan/campaign similar to the “buy local” campaign but updated and refreshed. Hire a consultant to do this work.<sup>1</sup>

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): Income to farmers, alternate market for public to purchase produce. Maintain and support jobs, create income stream for vendors and small farmers.

Timeframe: Immediately.

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<sup>1</sup> NOTE: This proposed action aligns with recommendations [BUS-3](#) and [FUT-3](#).

**Recommendation AGR-3: Address communication barriers and lack of an organized communication network.**

Overview: This recommendations proposes that a centralized team of Kaua'i Agriculture representatives convene monthly to address the needs of "all" agricultural producers island-wide.

Need that will be addressed: Communication barrier between entities; lack of an organized communication network.

County Action: Actions to be taken:

- 1) Create a multi-modal communication/information system so key groups can receive current, important information. The committee has determined that groups concerned with confidential contact information can be contacted through designated key leads, i.e., county OED for Sunshine Market vendors; Farm Bureau for members; CTAHR for farmers and ranchers. A County Agriculture Specialist should take the lead in forming this network in partnership with as many agricultural organizations as possible, including but not limited to Farm Bureau, University of Hawaii CTAHR, USDA, Grove Farm, HDOA, East Kaua'i Water Users' Cooperative, Agriculture Development Corporation, etc.
- 2) The County should fill the OED Ag Specialist IV position as soon as possible.
- 3) Create a comprehensive list of Ag producers.
- 4) Identify an "Observer of Agriculture" – to be front and center.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): Key assistance information will reach agriculture community in a timely manner. For example, federal and state financial and other types of assistance with deadlines will reach farmers and ranchers with enough time for them to make informed decisions. The ability to communicate quickly and effectively will stabilize and strengthen the Agriculture industry, during good and bad times.

Timeframe: Immediately.

## **Recommendation AGR-4: Address shipping restrictions for livestock.**

Overview: The County can support ranchers affected by shipping restrictions and continued low mainland calf prices by facilitating a program which creates a vertically integrated self-sustaining “Water to Feed to Livestock to Table” cattle industry on Kauai.

### Needs that will be addressed:

Due to the limitations of its injection well system the Waimea WWTP must find a reliable environmentally responsible way to consistently shed excess water.

Historically, many Kauai Ranchers have had to sell and ship their calves to mainland feedlots to be finished and processed. Due to current shipping restrictions imposed by Matson and Young Brothers and extremely low mainland calf prices, ranchers are currently unable or unwilling to ship their livestock out for finishing. Ranchers must now choose to hold onto their stock and forage feed in hope that restrictions ease and the calf market rebounds before the cattle are too large to ship. Failing this, ranchers may have to begin finishing their livestock locally or be faced with having to euthanize cattle rather than continuing to invest in them.

Kauai ranchers are faced with limited resources when considering the option of finishing their livestock and taking it to market on Kauai:

- Lack of forage pasture to accommodate the increase in herd size caused by keeping maturing stock on island.
- Lack of backgrounding and finishing feed inventory.
- Only 2 identified operating processing facilities on the island.
- High cost of transporting mature stock to processing and packaging facilities.
- Branding of Kauai finished beef products is limited.
- Market needed to distribute finished products.

### County Action:

- 1) Establish funding source.
- 2) Partner with grower to distribute excess water into viable agricultural operation.
- 3) Support Kekaha Ag Association’s Alfalfa Project and establish backgrounding and finishing feed inventories.
- 4) Identify close-proximity partners to finish, process and package livestock.
- 5) Develop branding program for long term success and expansion.
- 6) Contract/coordinate with local grocery stores to purchase.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation):

- 1) Partner grower will produce and sell bales/barrels of highly nutritive grasses or legumes for livestock feed at a profit while reducing pressure on Waimea WWTP.
- 2) Livestock will be finished, processed and packaged on island revitalizing a once robust Kauai industry. Ranchers will now have a choice to keep their cattle at home or to utilize alternative distribution.
- 3) Ranchers, Farmers & Processors will manage profitable operations with long-term growth and employment models.
- 4) Industry will have established criteria and standards for growing and processing of livestock to be marketed as “Naturally Raised Kauai Beef”.
- 5) A new distribution market will be open providing the local community and visitors with “Naturally Raised Kauai Beef”.
- 6) Potential for globally recognized “Naturally Raised Kauai Beef” brand in-line with Omaha Steaks.

Timeframe: Trials and testing planning in progress.

## **B. Recommendations in the area of Business**

Recommendation BUS-1: Provide Real Property Tax relief to Commercial Real Estate owners and business tenants.

Recommendation BUS-2: Provide assistance with permitting.

Recommendation BUS-3: Organize a "Shop Local" campaign.

Recommendation BUS-4: Host a series of events to bring the community back together.

**Recommendation BUS-1: Provide Real Property Tax relief to Commercial Real Estate owners and business tenants.**

Overview: The County has the ability to provide relief to commercial real estate owners and business tenants to help these businesses sustain themselves during the COVID-19 crisis.

Need that will be addressed: Traditionally with commercial real estate, RPT becomes an obligation of the tenant business. Ultimately, the commercial real estate owner is responsible, but contractually the obligation is shifted to tenants. Either way, a suffering tenant business having difficulty paying rent will face additional difficulty paying the RPT in August, 2020. Similarly, commercial real estate owners who either retain this obligation or are faced to absorb it despite contractual agreements could face hardship paying the RPT in August, 2020.

County Action: This recommendation proposes four actions to be taken by the County:

- 1) Waiving of late fees and interest SWP / Apr. 16, 2020 on RPT paid after August 20th, 2020 but fully paid before February 20th, 2021.
- 2) Multiple payments being accepted, again without penalty or interest, as long as resolved by February, 2021.
- 3) Establishing a revolving fund to provide interest free access to funds to pay RPT on time and as invoiced.
- 4) An incentive model that allows a discount for those who CAN pay fully as invoiced and on time in August, 2020. The latter would help County receive funds as necessary to operate.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): Businesses continue to operate with enough cash to sustain operations throughout the fall.

Timeframe: Begin August 2020. End February 2021.

**Recommendation BUS-2: Provide assistance with permitting.**

Overview: In order to expedite the creation of jobs, streamlining of permitting processes, including those related to historic preservation, should be considered

Need that will be addressed: Some CRE owners may be able to weather this event, and some may also have plans for improvements to property.

County Action: Two recommendations are proposed:

- 1) Similar to post hurricane periods, perhaps permitting could be expedited and supported.
  
- 2) Assistance in requesting temporarily or permanently relaxing the Historic Review for non-historic properties over 50 years of age might help spur renovation of older commercial real estate properties. The Historic Preservation area of DLNR is already overburdened and short staffed. Again, being responsible commercial real estate owners, perhaps an affidavit or form could be completed by a licensed non-government professional or Planning Department designate to help this review for properties that are not historically significant be “waived” thereby expediting the permit process.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): Outcomes include spending capital in a sluggish economy, employing Kaua'i residents, patronizing local suppliers, adding to the tax base, and in some cases adding needed units to the housing sector on Kaua'i.

Timeframe: Ongoing.

Alignment: This recommendation aligns with recommendations [CON-7](#).

**Recommendation BUS-3: Organize a "Shop Local" campaign.**

Overview: The restaurants and shops that would benefit most from social media are often the ones that underutilize the technology. We are proposing to assist those businesses with a social media campaign, organized by Jaxon Communications.

Need that will be addressed: Our small mom and pop stores are the most likely to close during this time, as large national retailers have access to larger reserves and capital.

County Action: Launch a Shop Local social media campaign to encourage Kaua'i residents to visit and spend money at local establishments.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): The target outcome is to get more residents to shop locally, to keep cash flowing on Kaua'i, and to keep people employed.

Timeframe: Immediately.

Alignment: This recommendation aligns with recommendations [AGR-2](#) and [FUT-3](#).

**Recommendation BUS-4: Host a series of events to bring the community back together.**

Overview: Host a series of events around the island (once it is safe) for people to reunite and enjoy each other's company. There will be many happy tears.

Need that will be addressed: Once it is safe to do so, the community will need to come back together after a long period of social isolation.

County Action: OED will oversee this activity.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): Improved community morale. Job creation is unknown

Timeframe: To be determined by health and public safety considerations.

## **C. Recommendations in the area of Construction and Public Works**

Recommendation CON-1: Organize "Development Clinics" where Planning educates people on recent zoning changes and what is possible, especially within infill areas.

Recommendation CON-2: Build Tiny Home villages to address homelessness.

Recommendation CON-3: Institute an ADU and ARU low-to-zero-interest loan guarantee program.

Recommendation CON-4: Institute a twelve-month waiver on all permit fees.

Recommendation CON-5: Request that the Governor waive State procurement code to ensure local contractors get priority.

Recommendation CON-6: Develop a list of larger projects to prioritize permitting for.

Recommendation CON-7: Create a redevelopment program for planners to reach out to stalled projects (i.e., have permits, in permit process, or near permitting) to help determine the barriers and facilitate moving them forward.

**Recommendation CON-1: Organize "Development Clinics" where Planning educates people on recent zoning changes and what is possible, especially within infill areas.**

Overview: The proposed action seeks to educate landowners about the development potential on their parcels. In the past few years, there have been many zoning amendments aimed at encouraging infill development in existing communities. In addition to easing standards for additional dwelling and rental units, some of the standards also allow multi-family and mixed use development in certain areas. Ensuring communication will be key.

Need that will be addressed: The existing lack of affordable housing will be compounded by the COVID-19 crisis. The COVID-19 crisis has halted development, not only in the residential sector, but in the commercial and resort sectors. So in addition to impacting the County's housing inventory, the lack of development will negatively impact economic activity and real property revenue generation. This particular action seeks to stimulate development by educating property owners of the development potential on their land.

County Action: This should be a priority project for the County once construction restrictions are lifted. The Planning Department should lead these clinics, with the support of other agencies involved in the permitting process such as Public Works (Building Division, Wastewater Division), Fire, and State Department of Health.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): It is expected that these clinics will encourage residential and mixed-use development where it is allowed and supported by zoning. Development will maintain and generate jobs in the construction and architecture/engineering fields. Completed construction projects will provide real property tax revenue to the County. A robust and expanding housing inventory will temper high housing costs and allow workers to afford housing/remain on island.

Timeframe: Once construction activity is allowed to resume, the County should begin holding these clinics around the Island. In the interim, County staff should begin preparations on how best to hold these clinics and maintain social distancing protocols as well.

Other ideas to address this need: It is recommended that the County look for ways to take more of a consultant role in the permitting process. Also, designate a Planning Department Consultant to assist with permitting.

## **Recommendation CON-2: Build Tiny Home villages to address homelessness.**

Overview: This project will provide quick and relatively inexpensive supportive shelter to a portion of our homeless population, which includes a level of stability that helps to facilitate the provision of supportive social services that may help move individuals and families out of a state of chronic homelessness.

Need that will be addressed: The 2020 Point in Time survey of homeless individuals and families showed an increase in Kaua'i's homeless population. The financial impacts of the Covid-19 emergency threaten to only increase the numbers of homeless individuals on Kaua'i. The rapid creation of "tiny home" villages will help provide transitional housing opportunities to serve this growing and challenged art of our community.

County Action: The Housing Agency is actively working with the Department of Parks to implement this project, and envisioning the local non-profit community to bring the project to fruition. The Housing Agency has initial funding in place to implement this project. To succeed, in the near term, the project will require the Mayor's political support to overcome expected "not in my back yard" opposition that is expected with site selection.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): The project will support near-term construction jobs, and over the longer-term will support bringing homeless individuals to a place in their lives where they may actively and successfully reenter the full-time workforce thus lessening the cost and expense of social services required to serve the chronically homeless population.

Timeframe: Project planning is underway. With approval in place and political will, construction could likely begin within the month of May.

**Recommendation CON-3: Institute an ADU and ARU low-to-zero-interest loan guarantee program.**

Overview: This proposal is to create a loan guarantee program or a loan fund to help homeowners build additional rental units (ARUs). For various reasons ARUs do not fit into traditional construction loan products and in the current economic climate, lenders are looking to reduce risk in their loan portfolios. Smaller lenders like Kauai Government Employees Federal Credit Union (KGEFCU) have internal funds they can lend under their own risk modeling (called portfolio loans). These products can work for ARU's because the local lender can make community based decisions. If the County can use its own funds or work with the State, maybe HHFDC, to come up with a loan guarantee program it can help reduce risk for the larger lending institutions and maintain or increase cash flowing into the community. A loan guarantee program doesn't require as much funding because it is not lending the funds but just creating a backstop for defaults. This program is important to encourage homeowners to add ARUs to their properties during uncertain economic times. This can add affordable housing stock, put small contractors back to work, maintain our skilled labor workforce and increase real property tax revenues through increased values in multifamily properties.

Need that will be addressed: In a recession, small projects don't go forward because of a lack of available funding. The lack of construction jobs contributes to a downward economic spiral and leads to an exodus of labor from the construction industry. This makes it harder for the economy to recover and when it eventually does pick up and big jobs come back, there is a labor shortage because so many left the industry looking for other work.

County Action: Look into using County funds to create a loan guarantee program or work with State to create a program or help find additional lenders like KGEFCU that have portfolio funds to lead. Help market and promote the program.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): This will get small contractors back to work and keep money flowing through banks to local projects. Increases affordable rental housing inventory. Increases future real property tax revenue. This will maintain finance jobs, small contractors and construction material suppliers.

Timeframe: Begin ASAP, 12-24 month program.

**Recommendation CON-4: Institute a twelve-month waiver on all permit fees.**

Overview: This proposal is to eliminate all building, electrical, plumbing, and zoning fees (including as-built fines) for 12 months. The estimated \$1,550,000 loss to General Fund and Plan Review, Permit Procession and Inspection Revolving Fund can be replaced with funds from the Emergency Reserve.

Need that will be addressed: There is a potential long-term loss of labor as workers find other industries to work in if construction dries up (which occurred during the last recession). This makes recovery more difficult as there isn't enough labor when the jobs pick back up. There is a need to incentivize small jobs to keep industry moving

County Action: Requires an ordinance to be passed by County Council. Needs support of the Finance Department, Planning Department, and Building Division.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): The fee waiver will incentivize small jobs to move forward and provide an amnesty period for people to legalize "illegal" structures. Will maintain construction jobs, infuse money into the local economy, and allow homeowners to provide more housing units. In the long-run, the County will recover the subsidized fees through increasing assessment values and possible rate increases from homes adding on additional bedrooms or rental units.

The fee waiver will also support jobs by maintaining the construction workforce.

Timeframe: June 2020-June 2021.

**Recommendation CON-5: Request that the Governor waive State procurement code to ensure local contractors get priority.**

Overview: Governor Ige has the power to expand the scope of the disaster proclamation to include the economic crisis, which would lift the State procurement laws to ensure that local contractors are prioritized.

Need that will be addressed: Large construction jobs often go to off-island or mainland companies, and so the economic stimulus effects of construction jobs are diluted because much of the economic benefits flow off island.

County Action: The Mayor can request that Governor Ige expand the disaster proclamation and the County Council can support Mayor Kawakami's efforts with a resolution.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): This would help ensure that local labor and local businesses are utilized more often. Local jobs would be maintained and money would stay in the local economy, helping lift up other industries.

This action will help maintain the construction workforce and increase stimulus to other sectors of the local economy.

Timeframe: Immediately.

Other ideas to address this need: Minimize the use of outside consultants, who create a "friction effect" by dragging projects out.

**Recommendation CON-6: Develop a list of larger projects to prioritize permitting for.**

Overview: Develop a list of larger projects to prioritize permitting for. (See [Appendix B](#) for sample list of priority infrastructure and development projects).

Need that will be addressed: Slow permitting is the biggest barrier to construction is time.

County Action: The County will need to create and/or approve the list of projects, then support them. County will need to engage internal and external groups, including: developers, construction firms, Planning Department, and Public Works/ Building Division.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): As with other construction projects, there will be benefits in the area of infrastructure improvement and job creation.

Timeframe: This can begin after the Stay-at-Home order is lifted.

Other ideas to address this need: Expedite permitting for projects. Create an "Office of Emergency Permitting" for one year. Incentivize the Water Department to expedite permitting

**Recommendation CON-7: Create a redevelopment program for planners to reach out to stalled projects (i.e., have permits, in permit process, or near permitting) to help determine the barriers and facilitate moving them forward.**

Overview: Redevelopment is a strategy to revitalize communities and strengthen town centers. Development projects, when aligned with community plans and goals, can spur economic recovery in towns. This program will bring together private and public partners to give projects momentum and assist developers in navigating a complex and risky regulatory environment. The selected projects should be supported by updated community plans and consistent with zoning. This program will guide private developers through the regulatory process and build private/public partnerships. The program can also explore grant funding to support development - such as Brownfield remediation grants.

Need that will be addressed: On Kaua'i, large development projects (Class IV Zoning) typically have a lengthy and circuitous road to construction. Currently, there are several dozen development projects that have stalled during or after the permitting process. Although the County plays an important role in regulating development, it has yet to take on a redevelopment agency role which could help facilitate these projects (or a select subset).

County Action: This program should be overseen by the Planning Director and Mayor's Office. Staffing should be with planners (who are familiar with community plans, zoning and development standards, and various agency requirements). Specific actions include dedicating staff to work in this capacity and developing a priority projects list. Reach out the landowners and determine their needs. The Mayor can mandate cooperation between agencies to facilitate the priority projects.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): This program will target feasible projects and guide them to the construction stage. The outcome will be job creation and economic revitalization. This will also serve as a powerful implementation tool for recently adopted community plans.

In the near term, this action will stimulate development that will generate jobs in the construction industry. The economic impact of completed projects will likely have a multiplier effect, as area are renewed and become more attractive to economic activity and private investment.

Timeframe: ASAP.

Other ideas to address this need: Exempt construction from Rule 5. Allow exceptions project by project to allow more than 3 people per project.

Alignment: This recommendation aligns with recommendations [BUS-2](#).

## **Other recommendations/ideas to support this sector**

- To address lack of information regarding construction requirements:
  - Ensure clear and consistent communication from County to contractors
  - Designate a specific point of contact for interpreting changing restrictions
  
- To address lack of sewer or other wastewater capacity limits:
  - Develop a financing method for expanding sewer into residential neighborhoods (Tax increment financing, business improvement district, etc)
  - Develop a plan for long-term sewer expansion including a criteria for how to prioritize expansion.

## **D. Recommendations in the area of Education**

Recommendation EDU-1: Improve communication with other key educational organizations by hiring or designating an Educational Liaison.

Recommendation EDU-2: Leverage County facilities to support education and student learning by creating "Neighborhood Hubs" for student use.

Recommendation EDU-3: Provide access to more devices and hotspots to families who need them.

Recommendation EDU-4: Create a COVID-19 directory of services provided across different agencies and organizations.

Recommendation EDU-5: Focus on supporting new and existing educational programs.

Recommendation EDU-6: Co-host a Roundtable of Kaua'i leadership figures to discuss future plans for Kaua'i in the post-COVID world.

**Recommendation EDU-1: Improve communication with other key educational organizations by hiring or designating an Educational Liaison.**

Overview: The proposal is to hire or designate a person who would act as the point person for the County's educational interests and initiatives. This would include developing partnerships, representing county collaborations, and seeking opportunities that would improve the County's ability to offer current and new programs and strengthen its capacity for collaborations with other entities.

Need that will be addressed: The committee identified communication, especially at the strategic level, as an area of opportunity. It was also noted that potential partners do not always know who to contact with ideas for potential collaborations. The current proposal can help with efficiency of decision-making and information-sharing between the key educational organizations, and developing shared outcomes across sectors on Kaua'i.

County Action: Recommended actions are:

*1a. Hire or designate an Educational Liaison to serve as point person for the County's educational projects and partnerships.*

*1b. Seek opportunities for this position to participate in working groups (ex: KELA, KCC Roundtable) with key partners: DOE, KCC, charter schools, etc.*

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): Expected outcomes include increased communication and more efficient collaboration with other education-providing organizations. Direct job creation would be achieved if a new position is created; preservation would be achieved if a current position that would otherwise be lost is reassigned to this purpose.

Timeframe: Can be implemented immediately upon availability of funding.

**Recommendation EDU-2: Leverage County facilities to support education and student learning by creating "Neighborhood Hubs" for student use.**

Overview: There is a strong likelihood that our schools will experience increased closures and staggered schedules in the near future. Community hubs could be a safe way to break up the school population into more manageable sizes. There would be increased connectivity, accountability and opportunity to better support students, teachers and parents. Ideally, these hubs would be within walking distance of the students and parents. Within these communities there will be teachers that live there and other community members that can help to fill gaps and better support that students, parents and teachers need right their own community. Even though social distancing limits contact, being able to walk to a location and see a teacher, have the opportunity to ask questions and get support would provide technical and emotional support in a more effective and personal way.

Need that will be addressed: Connectivity – technical, physical and emotional – has been a challenge for teachers, students and parents navigating online school/distance learning. There are technical and access issues with hardware, software and WIFI. It has been difficult for teachers to reach every student and parent. Students in particular do not have access to other types of emotional support from teachers, counselors and their peers. If the school populations could be reduced to smaller groups, it could facilitate better connectivity and community building at the same time.

County Action: Recommended actions are:

- 1) Continue and expand current use of County facilities to support public and other school initiatives.
- 2) Use County properties and/or facilities to create Neighborhood "Hubs."

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): Benefits of establishing Community Hubs on County facilities would be a smaller groups of students, teachers and parents to work with and manage. Better capacity to ensure that all students are accounted for and needs are being addressed. By including students, teachers, parents and community members in the local community in the development process that will build relationships and also provide the students with a learning opportunity. The vision would be to have high school students leading or at least a major component of running these hubs.

In the near term we do not foresee any new job creation. If these hubs are effective and develop into a robust network, they could also support community needs in times of a natural disaster for example. The hubs could also develop into ways to disseminate information, resources and services in a more direct and effect way.

Timeframe: Prior to beginning of new school year. We could work on establishing a pilot community hub over the next few months with the goal of at least one hub in place when the school year starts.

**Recommendation EDU-3: Provide access to more devices and hotspots to families who need them.**

Overview: The inequities caused by our inability to provide sufficient internet access and enough technological devices is increasing the divide among many households with limited access and/or multiple children, causing a huge barrier to education. The committee identified access issues for students necessary to effectively participate in school and to access important resources imperative to their overall well-being. This priority cuts across sectors and needs to be addressed.

Need that will be addressed: The committee identified access issues for students needing to access school and other resources at home. There is also a need to fulfill our government mandate to provide equal opportunity and access to education by identifying immediate tasks and establishing a long-term trajectory towards securing island-wide internet access.

County Action:

We propose that the County do the following:

- a. Ensure that all County facilities are internet-accessible.
- b. Secure infrastructure for expansion.
- c. Reach out to private funders for financial assistance.
- d. Create partnerships with Hawaiian Tel, Spectrum re: internet service.
- e. Distribute information to families.
- f. Strategize and identify key locations similar or the same as the neighborhood hub locations to serve as hotspots.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): These actions will: 1) Provide support, equity, and access to families who are currently not participating in the public schools' enrichment program; and 2) Provide additional support to public schools/counselors.

Timeframe: Upon start of the upcoming 2020-2021 school year.

Alignment: This recommendation aligns with recommendations [HEA-3](#) and [FUT-1](#).

**Recommendation EDU-4: Create a COVID-19 directory of services provided across different agencies and organizations.**

Overview: A Directory of COVID-19 services can be created which curates information provided by other education providers (DOE, KS, etc.) and helps present it to families in a streamlined and easily understood way. The directory would include informational resources but also health and other relevant information pertaining to students and their families. The directory can be created and disseminated quickly (for example, on the County's website), but can also be updated regularly to include other services and new services going forward.

Need that will be addressed: There are two conflicting issues creating confusion and hindering families taking advantages of services. On the one hand, information is sparse and hard to find; on the other hand, there is so much of it that it can be overwhelming.

County Action: The County would collect information, parse and organize it, then make it available on its website. The goal would be to create a comprehensive list of resources that could be used by families as well as other social services agencies and individuals who can refer specific people to these services.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): Improved communication and access to resources would be a benefit. There would be no direct job creation, though some resources might support employment indirectly.

Timeframe: Immediately.

**Recommendation EDU-5: Focus on supporting new and existing educational programs.**

Overview: Once COVID-19 funding comes in, there is an opportunity to purpose that funding to support educational initiatives at the County level. These could include continuing support of existing programs as well as creating new programs (for example, internships in agriculture) that would serve both an educational and economic purpose.

Need that will be addressed: A challenge was identified with lack of educational options for students both in the short-term as many summer programs are either canceled or made to go online, and longer-term as options may dwindle due to economic factors.

County Action: Under this recommendation, several recommendations were proposed:

- 1) Ramp up current programs (Summer Program, agriculture internships, etc.)
- 2) Increase County's capacity to host career pathway internships (engineering, etc.)
- 3) Expand place- and project-based career opportunities
- 4) Expand access to online High School and Early College

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): An important outcome would be the County's ability to directly connect county objectives such as housing or planning (general plan) and many other pertinent county goals to the community so the public can connect the line between immediate services and resources to the long term plan for Kaua'i. This would serve to increase community engagement and connectivity.

Near-term job creation can happen at the level of those providing the services. Longer-term, this supports job creation by training youth to be ready to take on careers in the future.

Timeframe: Beginning Summer 2020.

**Recommendation EDU-6: Co-host a Roundtable of Kaua'i leadership figures to discuss future plans for Kaua'i in the post-COVID world.**

Overview: The committee is proposing a 1.5- to 2-hour webinar (assuming that social distancing requirements are still in place) involving 15-20 Kaua'i leadership figures. In partnership with the County, Kaua'i Community College would host the Roundtable to discuss lessons Learned from the COVID-19 crisis and their application to forging an intentional "New Normal" for Kaua'i.

Need that will be addressed: COVID-19 has disrupted island life – employment, social interaction, pace of life, tourism, education, safety nets, etc. The disruption provides us with the opportunity to reflect on lessons learned from the COVID-19 experience. It is a chance to reflect on this moment and respond to the feeling that more and more of our community on Kaua'i has been having that we do not want to return to the old normal.

County Action: The two key partners in the proposed endeavor would be Kaua'i County leadership and Kaua'i Community College (KCC). KCC is prepared to host the roundtable providing the infrastructure for the on-line event. Kaua'i County leadership would provide support and backing for the project.

Note that the roundtable will build on results from the County's sector meetings and KERST recommendations.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation):

The objectives are:

- Inventory lessons learned from the coronavirus experience
- Imagine what a more resilient and sustainable future would look like.
- Identify key change elements to carry over into the "new normal"
- Identify next steps, e.g., concrete projects, additional roundtables.

In and of itself, the roundtable will not directly create, maintain and support employment. However, the event will likely identify projects that deal with unemployment and which direct resources towards training needed and new employment opportunities.

Timeframe: We anticipate that the roundtable will be convened between mid-May or early June.

## **Other recommendations/ideas to support the Education sector**

Other recommendations that were discussed by this committee were:

- 1) Assist with offering training and professional development for teachers to provide effective online instruction.
- 2) Begin sourcing personal protective equipment (PPE) from federal, state and local resources.

## **E. Recommendations in the area of Finance**

Recommendation FIN-1: Create a KERST finance plan via KGEFCU.

Recommendation FIN-2: Organize a webinar for all businesses/individuals interested in Federal stimulus.

Recommendation FIN-3: Conduct outreach for a "How to Financially Weather COVID19" class.

**Recommendation FIN-1: Create a KERST finance plan via KGEFCU.**

Overview: We are proposing a COVID-19 emergency loan that would allow people to quickly access cash while waiting for other supports. Kaua'i Government Employees Federal Credit Union (KGEFCU) has an emergency loan product already available that could be easily altered to provide enhanced benefits if there was financial support from the County. Currently, the interest rate on these loans is 5%, but with County support the interest could be lowered or eliminated and they could begin issuing cash payments of up to \$10k for people waiting for their federal funds and support. Alternatively, KGEFCU could administer a direct loan with county funds.

Need that will be addressed: While the federal government has provided loan options for small businesses and offered additional unemployment insurance benefits during COVID-19, there are substantial delays in these payments getting out. For people who live paycheck to paycheck, which is a large portion of our community, this creates a significant financial hardship.

County Action: The County would be asked to provide funding. KGEFCU would administer the loan while County of Kaua'i would help fund the additional benefits and/or directly fund the loans.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): Outcomes would be: 1) it will provide immediate relief to those waiting for unemployment benefits or other federal funds; and 2) it will help people avoid high interest loans or maxing out their credit cards.

Timeframe: This is an immediate request to the Mayor.

## **Recommendation FIN-2: Organize a webinar for all businesses/individuals interested in Federal stimulus.<sup>2</sup>**

Overview: We plan to organize and host a webinar to educate businesses and residents about their financial options. The panel for the webinar will include local financial institutions, the Kaua'i Chamber of Commerce, Congresswoman Gabbard, Jane Sawyer of the SBA, Mayor Kawakami, and County representatives from OED and Finance.

Responsible parties will be:

- Monica Belz of KGEFCU is obtaining guest speakers and organizing agenda/webinar.
- All local financial institutions will attend.
- OED will help get the word out through social media, radio and TGI.
- The County will participate in the webinar as panelists and facilitating the Q&A.

Need that will be addressed: There is an Information Gap related to the Federal Stimulus packages. Many businesses are confused about federal financial resources such as PPP and EIDL loans. And individual residents who need financial support need to know what their options are.

County Action: The Mayor and several County employees will be participating on this webinar and will help promote the event. No additional action is required by the County.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): Anticipated outcomes are: 1) provide information about the various financial resources; 2) by having local financial institutions participate on the call, Kaua'i residents will see the faces of our local lenders and make the connection that these federal benefits can actually help them; 3) helping Kaua'i residents make better financial choices during this uncertain time.

By educating businesses on the PPP and EIDL loans, employers can hopefully bring their employees back on payroll.

Timeframe: This proposed action represents an immediate response, which has been discussed with the Mayor. The webinar was successfully held on 4/28/20 with over 200 people attending.

Alignment: This recommendation aligns with recommendations [AGR-1](#).

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<sup>2</sup> *NOTE: As a result of this process, the Finance committee identified several actions that were quick and could be implemented in very short time. Because these have already received approval and are either completed or in progress, they do not require further consideration by the County. They are included in this report as examples of ultra-timely outcomes that were successfully implemented as a direct result of the process.*

**Recommendation FIN-3: Conduct outreach for a "How to Financially Weather COVID19" class.<sup>3</sup>**

Overview: Kaua'i Government Employees' Federal Credit Union (KGEFCU) is working with Impact Wealth Solutions (Troy Wada) to create a class on "How to Financially Weather COVID19". This series will be free and available to Kaua'i residents, even if they are not currently KGEFCU members.

Need that will be addressed: Budgeting can be a challenge for Kaua'i residents, particularly given the high cost of living on Kaua'i. During this time of high unemployment, it is even more imperative for people to understand how to manage their finances. However, many people do not have some of these basic budgeting skills. Additionally, many people do not have access to free financial coaching.

County Action: County and fiscal institutions will help spread the word about this activity.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): The class will provide further education to community in order to build resiliency. There is no job creation as a result of this recommendation.

Timeframe: Materials will be sent out once completed (expected week of 4/27).

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<sup>3</sup> *NOTE: As a result of this process, the Finance committee identified several actions that were quick and could be implemented in very short time. Because these have already received approval and are either completed or in progress, they do not require further consideration by the County. They are included in this report as examples of ultra-timely outcomes that were successfully implemented as a direct result of the process.*

### **Other recommendations/ideas to support the Finance sector**

- Get measurable data from financial institutions. Financial institutions to provide data on number of applications received, number of approvals granted, and dollar amount to OED every Friday. (NOTE: This began April 17.)
- Create or find a 10-15 second video illustrating economic growth if we spend money locally. This effort would support local businesses and stimulate job growth on Kaua'i.
- Request that the Mayor use his authority to inquire with insurance commissioner to review business interruption coverage and find a way for carriers to cover in the pandemic.

## **F. Recommendations in the area of Public Health**

Recommendation HEA-1: Establish a multi-purpose “Resilience Center”

Recommendation HEA-2: Improve and increase communication about health resources and responses.

Recommendation HEA-3: Obtain and install high-speed broadband.

Recommendation HEA-4: Address health access Issues.

Recommendation HEA-5: Identify and secure CARES Act and other funding for non-profit agencies.

Recommendation HEA-6: Develop guidelines for small businesses to reopen.

## **Recommendation HEA-1: Establish a multi-purpose “Resilience Center”**

Overview: The current emergency has challenged previous assumptions of assistance from the federal or state agencies or from neighboring counties and emphasized the need for Kaua'i to increase its self-sufficiency and resilience. Thus, the recommendation to create a Resilience Center that houses a stockpile for multipurpose emergency use that is under KEMA. Ideally, the Center would be a combo emergency shelter and a room to house the stockpile due to the lack of emergency shelters on Kaua'i.

Stockpile inventory would include medical supplies, PPE, ventilators, as well as other “disaster-related” supplies like MREs (food supplies), tarps, batteries and generators. Supplies should be managed so that supplies are useable when the stockpile is accessed.

Need that will be addressed: Members of the sector stated on 4/16/2020 that they have enough PPE for the immediate future (1-2 weeks, some longer) however some were concerned for beyond that. Concerns were also expressed about the supply of the reagent needed for widespread testing. Organizations expressed a serious concern regarding their ability to continue services should a single doctor or other staff members become infected. Secondly, supplies are needed for a broader range of health care professionals, including long-term care, non-profits, human service agencies, foodbank etc. For example, on 4/7/2020, Hawaii Foodbank reporting need for \$1k funding a week to sustain current distribution.

County Action: Work on this project would be a collaborative effort between KEMA, KEDB, and the County of Kaua'i OED. This project should also consider Healthcare Association of Hawaii as the current leader in this issue and also other disasters (hurricane etc.).

1. Initial goal is to simply establish of a stockpile of medical supplies – perhaps for a 1-2 week period as quickly as possible with an established distribution process.
2. Identify a place to house supplies.
3. Identifying funding for the supplies and support including government and private funding sources and trusts and foundations.
4. Research the potential to use federal funds to subsidize the cost as a critical need to ensure self-sufficiency during this period and during other emergencies to come.
5. Explore possibilities of procurement partnerships and bulk purchasing.
6. Reach out to the community for donations of masks to meet some immediate needs.
7. Secondary goal of a more permanent facility, identify and secure funding for planning, construction and implementation.
8. Explore the potential of a government/private partnership with healthcare organizations contributing to a “medical supply pool” as emergency insurance.
9. Explore potential of rotating out supplies before expiration to “reimburse” healthcare organization for their funding contribution to the stockpile to minimize cost/investment.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): This will support current personnel in healthcare and a broader range of health care professional operations. It will allow our front line workers to work safely with proper gear. Having a stockpile will increase Kauai’s self-sufficiency and resilience.

Timeframe: This is a near-term priority and should begin immediately.

## **Recommendation HEA-2: Improve and increase communication about health resources and responses.**

Overview: Increase communication in media to reach a broader cross section of the population. This could include marketing campaigns and coordinated messaging.

Need that will be addressed: At KEMA, the team does not have the luxury of time to focus and create a comprehensive communication plan. Yet now more than ever there is a need for constant and repetitive messaging to communicate accurate information, alleviate anxieties/fear, answer questions, provide justifications for actions taken or proposed actions, create unity and instill confidence in the healthcare systems, government, and private sector leadership.

County Action: This work would be a partnership between County OED and KEDB in partnership with DOH, KVMH, and HPH etc.

1. Identify and secure funding.
2. Hire consulting firm to develop a marketing campaign/Plan for Kaua'i's Public Health sector that includes broad range of media outlets i.e. Ho`ike or T.V., radio, print, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and targeted digital marketing.
3. Messaging should include information prevention i.e. on social distancing, proper hand washing, correct way to put on and take off a mask (colored side out or in for the typical blue/white hospital masks.)
4. Updates on County/state rules, especially with the "re-opening".
5. Testing – many people unaware of testing sites on Kaua'i, procedure for testing, how to get a test, when do they get results.
6. Monitoring of quarantine
7. Tons of questions – could do a several panels (Dr. Berreman, Jen Chahanovich, Lance Segawa, and David Peters or Police Chief Raybuck and Mayor etc. or with Kurt Akamine on long-term care and run it on Ho`ike and post on YouTube etc.)

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation):

1. Spread information vs. fear
2. Will assist in addressing anxiety
3. Will create more unity
4. Will create broader knowledge base

Timeframe: This is a short term priority and could begin immediately

### **Recommendation HEA-3: Obtain and install high-speed broadband.**

Overview: Obtain and install high-speed broadband for Kaua'i.

Need that will be addressed: Computers and technology is a necessity in the health sector, without it, they would be unable to perform even the most basic functions related to health records, accounting or billing. Since COVID – 19, all sectors including health has taken tremendous steps using digital/electronic means to conduct business including telehealth. Of primary importance is the internet connection and capacity. Kaua'i is in need of a more robust broadband infrastructure. Aging cables must be replaced with high speed broadband before it's too late.

County Action:

1. Hire consultants to ensure the required focus to develop the plan, secure funding, and implement.
2. Research the potential use of federal funds to subsidize the cost as a critical need to ensure connectivity during this period and during other emergencies to come.
3. Engage Congressional leaders and lobbyists for support.
4. Engage Senate President and State Reps for support and funding.
5. Connect with Economic Development Alliance of Hawaii (EDAH) board.
6. As part of the planning process, include the goal of providing free internet access island-wide or initially in Lihue to spur “urban” core growth and development and as an equal access for social justice issue.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation):

1. Will secure and support current healthcare operations.
2. Will support and expand the movement toward telehealth.
3. Will assist and address the lack of access to healthcare i.e. specialists, consultation etc.
4. Will spur economic entrepreneurship.
5. Will spur all sector growth education, creative arts, STEAM etc.
6. See link on ROI in broadband:

<https://www.camoinassociates.com/broadband%E2%80%99s-economic-impacts-public-roi-investment-broadband-deployment>

Timeframe: Immediately, especially given the availability to use COVID related funds, but this must be a sustained long term effort to succeed.

Alignment: This recommendation aligns with recommendation [FUT-1](#) and [EDU-3](#).

## **Recommendation HEA-4: Address health access Issues.**

Overview: Address health access issues specifically addressing medical insurance and regulations restricting telehealth services and prior authorization for services.

Need that will be addressed: Since COVID – 19, all sectors including health have taken tremendous steps using digital/electronic means to conduct business including telehealth. These strides have been made in all areas of the health care sector including broader range of health care professionals' i.e. long-term care, non-profits and human service agencies. These gains are tied to the current easing or lifting of medical insurance and health care regulations restricting or impeding telehealth services and the payment for those services.

### County Action:

1. Identify funding and the possibility of using COVID related funding for health access for rural areas.
2. Hire a consultant to develop a strategic plan to address these issues
3. Engage Congressional leaders and lobbyists for support
4. Engage Senate President and State Reps for support and funding

### Expected outcomes (incl. job creation):

1. Will improve access to health services
2. Will secure the gains in the healthcare sector toward telehealth
3. Will spur the growth of telehealth
4. Will address long-standing obstacle to timely access services

Timeframe: Immediately but must be a sustained long-term effort to succeed. (Especially the availability to use COVID related funds)

**Recommendation HEA-5: Identify and secure CARES Act and other funding for non-profit agencies.**

Overview: Non-profit agencies create a safety net for the island however they are always under-funded by the State and they are the first to experience cuts in funding. Depending on the level of anticipated cuts for the next fiscal year, these safety net organizations may not be able to survive.

Need that will be addressed: Non-profit agencies create a safety net for the island however they are always under-funded by the State and they are the first to experience cuts in funding. Depending on the level of anticipated cuts for the next fiscal year, these safety net organizations may not be able to survive.

County Action:

1. Identify funding and the possibility of using COVID related funding for health access for rural areas.
2. Review County funded programs/grants to explore opportunities for reprogramming or partnership.
3. Identify additional funding sources to help support the healthcare facilities and broader community of health and human service providers.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): The proposed action will secure and support current healthcare and broader range of health care professional operations. Non-profit organizations comprise 11.4% of Hawaii's workforce. According to the Office of the Atty. General's Charitable Registration there are 177 non-profit organizations on Kaua'i. This does not include organizations who have branches on Kaua'i like the Salvation Army, Child and Family Services etc.

Timeframe: Immediately but must be a sustained long-term effort to succeed. (Especially the availability to use COVID related funds.)

## **Recommendation HEA-6: Develop guidelines for small businesses to reopen.**

Overview: The County can take the lead on providing guidance to small businesses to help them understand best practices upon reopening after COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted.

Need that will be addressed: Although many small businesses are looking forward to reopening, many are wondering what the best practices are and what the best measures to take to reopen are. This need is especially acute small businesses that do not have the benefit of business associations like HLTA (Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Assoc.) or the Restaurant Association that could help come up with guidelines.

### County Action:

1. Work with DOH to come up with some generalized guidelines i.e. masks for customers and staff, marking the floor with 6 ft. spacing, hand sanitizer at the door, using credit card vs. cash, “shield” at any customer service desk and any other recommendations.
2. Contact business associations to confirm whether they are working on this so as not to reinvent the wheel. If they are not, determine opportunity to collaborate.
3. Convene a small business groups to formulate more specific guidelines for each specific sector starting with any CDC guidelines as a basis and to build on that as a foundation.
4. Have DOH review the guidelines and provide copies to the Mayor to be used in to assist in policy changes on the reopening of businesses and in conjunction for the announcement of reopening that business sector.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): The action will provide businesses a focus on how best to prepare for reopening and build customer confidence to patronize local businesses. It will also provide consumer education on what prevention measures to look when patronizing businesses.

This recommendation will help maintain and support jobs.

Timeframe: Immediately.

## **G. Recommendations in the area of Future: Sustainability and Technology**

Recommendation FUT-1: Support stable, fast, and secure broadband infrastructure throughout Kaua'i.

Recommendation FUT-2: Accelerate the conversion of cesspools.

Recommendation FUT-3: Establish Kaua'i Works program to support local business.

Recommendation FUT-4: Leverage innovation to solve local problems.

Recommendation FUT-5: Implement a new paradigm for visitor travel.

Recommendation FUT-6: Support an economically viable solution to clean up the Great Pacific Garbage Patch.

Recommendation FUT-7: Support Entrepreneurship & Higher Paying Jobs on Kauai.

Recommendation FUT-8: Kaua'i Tourism Strategic Plan - "Refocusing Tourism to Find Balance".

## **Recommendation FUT-1: Support stable, fast, and secure broadband infrastructure throughout Kaua'i.**

Overview: The County of Kaua'i must foster and encourage a more consolidated, committed and focused effort by county agencies, service providers, and other stakeholders in order to ensure ubiquitous high-speed broadband and cell service availability to best position Kaua'i for economic competitiveness.

Need that will be addressed: This recommendation seeks to address these questions: 1) Does Kaua'i's current state of broadband & cellular service ensure reliability, redundancy & resiliency (Note: 10/28/19 internet shutdown)? Can expanded broadband capacity on Kaua'i improve connectivity and opportunities for small businesses and community members? 2) Is there adequate coverage throughout Kaua'i? and 3) How do we ensure competition among service providers to offer fair/affordable pricing and quality customer service?

County Action: The County of Kaua'i should be the responsible party to convene the service providers and key partners to ensure that the necessary planning and infrastructure is on-going for the availability and quality of service to meet and/or exceeds stated goals and targets to ensure ubiquitous high-speed broadband and cellular service throughout Kaua'i. County of Kaua'i leadership is needed to guide stated public interest goals to align private sector development of these services and governmental facilitation to achieve affordable and ubiquitous service and expanded capacity.

The County's role would be to: (a) Fund a current state assessment of our internet infrastructure; and (b) Convene a Kaua'i task force for the purposes of evaluating and aligning Kaua'i's progress in the context of County policy and/or Hawaii's Broadband Strategic Plan or other statewide policy.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): Strategic planning and investments to improve the accessibility and quality of service for ubiquitous broadband and cellular services on Kaua'i to improve current services and create future opportunities. As communication is the backbone of our economy, even a short shutdown (such as on October 28, 2019) can cause commerce to come to a standstill. Attention in this area is not only vital to preserving our economy (and therefore jobs), but it can create hundreds of new jobs.

Timeframe: This is a long-term project that can begin immediately by: 1) gathering Kaua'i-specific information on the current state of telecommunications infrastructure; and 2) in the near-term, appointing & convening a Broadband & Cellular Service Task Force connected to/coordinated with the State Task Force and intended for direct, Kaua'i-specific recommendations and implementation.

Alignment: This recommendation aligns with recommendation [HEA-3](#) and [EDU-3](#).

## **Recommendation FUT-2: Accelerate the conversion of cesspools.**

Overview: By incorporating a variety of mechanisms, including everything from Public-Private Partnerships to unique funding mechanisms that support economically-disadvantaged homeowners and build community goodwill and economic strength, we can significantly increase the rate of actual conversions. The committee believes that it is possible to address and convert 80% of the 6,700 high-priority cesspools within the next 4 years - well in advance of the 2050 mandate.

Need that will be addressed: Hawaii has nearly 88,000 cesspools that put 53 million gallons of raw sewage into the State's groundwater and surface waters every day. Almost half of Kaua'i homes operate on cesspool.

County Action: Committee members feel the non-profit community is best positioned to oversee this process, and that the project will be "community-led, government-supported." The Mayor would be asked to reaffirm the County's commitment to converting as many cesspools in this administration as possible. The Mayor would also be asked to direct a point person from the County to work with the planning group.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): The committee is eager to help sort out these complex details to develop a clear and accelerated conversion path forward. We need to bring together partners in all sectors and facilitate an update of technical, economical, and political paths forward while building on the great work already done.

There are over 6,700 cesspools in Po'ipu, Kapa'a and Hanalei. Replacing these with aerobic treatment system (ATS) we would employ dozens of machine operators, engineers and plumbing contractors along with laborers.

Timeframe: Planning can be started immediately. We anticipate piloting these processes and plans in the relatively small-scale area of Hanalei first and incorporating lessons learned into the bigger implementations at Kapa'a and Po'ipu. Construction can start in 3 months from initiation.

### **Recommendation FUT-3: Establish Kaua'i Works program to support local business.**

Overview: Kaua'i Works will serve as a comprehensive Business Development and Support Center. It will be the infrastructure support for Kaua'i Made and Kaua'i Grown. Buy-in for this program from Administration and OED is key. The program can be initially launched online, with support within OED. Satellite offices in key locations across the islands will help to support community-specific efforts.

Need that will be addressed: The County's Economic Recovery initiative is missing a coordinated platform where economic development resources and programs are streamlined and organized. The initiative also needs a brand that industry leaders will buy into and that the community can start to rally around now.

County Action: It is envisioned that this would involve the Office of the Mayor and OED in partnership with SBDC, Kaua'i Entrepreneur Center, Work Hawaii, HTA, etc. The County's role would be:

- (1) Provide buy-in for Kaua'i Works;
- (2) Provide the opportunity to develop the details of the website and program;
- (3) Provide resource to launch website and other digital platforms;
- (4) Support coordination of partners that will be a part of effort;
- (5) Support a feasibility study for satellite offices around the island.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): The purpose of Kaua'i Works is to strengthen our community's ability to grow existing businesses and create new businesses which service the needs of the people of Kaua'i, our island home, and our guests. The program will particularly focus on support and creation of businesses that "build local basics" (food & resources, a steady-and-ready workforce, etc)) and promote the health and wellness of people and places (careers in health, sports and nutrition, addressing environmental and infrastructure challenges, etc).

A new position may be needed at OED. Ultimately creating and maintaining business and employment on Kaua'i is the purpose of Kaua'i Works. Kaua'i Works also identifies and promotes businesses and careers that fill our own needs.

Timeframe: This project can start immediately.

Alignment: This recommendation aligns with recommendations [AGR-2](#) and [BUS-3](#).

#### **Recommendation FUT-4: Leverage innovation to solve local problems.**

Overview: We propose the first phase of a partnership that will enable us to connect with innovators around a limited number of specific problems we need solved on Kaua'i. We will take the time to articulate some of these challenging problems and shape a collaborative process within which innovators and entrepreneurs can come forward to propose business models and innovations that may be able to solve them.

Need that will be addressed: We do not currently have a program to foster innovation as a key economic development strategy on Kaua'i. There is a shared sense in many of our economic development discussions that technology and innovation are important components of economic recovery, sustainability, and diversification. We often site remote employment opportunities and high paying tech jobs that residents can qualify for if only they go through this or that training programs or learn this or that skill. However, we rarely think of how innovation might be deployed in our own backyard to help solve challenging local problems like waste and transportation. By committing ourselves to use innovation in our own context, we can create a 'culture of innovation' that helps our whole community apply these tools.

County Action: Kaua'i County Office of Economic Development will partner with the Elemental Excelsior to develop the first phase of this project. The County would be specifically asked to:

- 1) Continue to provide leadership on the importance of innovation as a tool and process to solve our most challenging problems;
- 2) Support the development of an innovation partnership that enables informed risk taking and flexibility outside of the bounds of conventional government procurement;
- 3) Review and support the identification of the initial round of challenges to be taken up by the innovation partnership, and broker partnerships with key community allies.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): This action will help us better define how Kaua'i County and local partners can support innovation not just as a jobs creator, but as a critical tool for economic development and problem-solving on Kaua'i. The outcome will be the development of specific programs and policies within OED and with County partners to leverage innovation as a local problem solving tool.

A remote island that broadly and deliberately deploys innovation to solve problems could become a testbed for such ideas, attracting investment from outside and stimulating the creation of high value jobs.

Timeframe: Phase one is proposed to begin immediately and occur over the next 18 months.

## **Recommendation FUT-5: Implement a new paradigm for visitor travel.**

Overview: The vision of a new paradigm for visitor travel is articulated in the [Short Range Transit Plan](#) and in the Kaua'i County General Plan Update (page 132). There are many proposed inter-related components that need to occur for this transportation model to be fully operational:

- Shuttles from the airport to resort areas
- Shuttles within resort areas (between resorts, shopping centers, beaches, etc.)
- Improved bike/pedestrian infrastructure in resort areas
- Bike share for first mile/last mile connections (including e-bikes, e-scooters, etc.)
- Car share/short term car rental in resort areas, so visitors can rent a car for a day instead of for a week
- A website that explains all of this, and is a "one stop shop" to book transportation without having to go to multiple websites, and possibly a "green pass" transportation package that includes all of your transportation needs for a visit ( for example, round trip shuttle to/from airport, unlimited transit during stay, bike share, a couple of Uber/Lyft/taxi rides, and a one day car rental
- Links and coordination between the resort area shuttles and The Kaua'i Bus so that employees can use this system with convenient transfers and times coordinated with shift hours.
- Charges for parking at resorts and destinations such as county beach parks to discourage use of rental cars and incentivize shuttle use.
- A comprehensive marketing and information effort.

Need that will be addressed: While we all want the economy to reopen, no one wants the same level of traffic congestion we experienced before COVID-19. The goal of this recommendation is therefore to reduce the visitor industry's impact on traffic and greenhouse gas emissions, reduce vehicle crashes, and support those working in the visitor industry who have suffered economically by providing more affordable options to get to work other than driving a personal vehicle.

County Action: Much like the North Shore Transportation Committee that was convened by Representative Nakamura to address traffic impacts on the North Shore, a similar approach will be necessary, bringing together the County, Visitor Industry, HDOT, community groups, and other stakeholders.

The County's role will be:

- Leadership and advocacy in communicating and supporting this transportation model, coordinating with the visitor industry and other stakeholders.
- Leadership in collaborating with HDOT Airports to change the model at the Lihue Airport from an expensive proposed rental car center to use of the rental car surcharge for operations of shuttles between the airport and resort areas. This is the most critical need for coordination between the State and County.
- Support, such as priority permit processing, for private entrepreneurs who may want to implement private portions of this model.
- Code changes as needed to support this model through parking changes, such as paid parking at County beach parks and other visitor destinations.

- Code changes as needed to support micro mobility sharing for first mile/last mile connections in resort areas.
- Encouragement of private parking changes, such as debundling of parking fees from resort fees. In other words, there should be an itemized fee for parking at resorts.
- Support of incentives to encourage the use of this system by visitor industry employees.
- Financial support to improve the bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in resort areas on county roads and properties.
- Potential grants or other support to pilot private transportation providers to participate in this system
- Potential financial support to implement a “green pass” system and website
- Potential financial support of marketing Kaua'i as the “green island,” a place you can visit and enjoy without having to rent a car

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): The expected outcomes are reduced traffic congestion, improved traffic safety, and more affordable transportation choices for visitor industry employees.

**New jobs** will be shuttle operations, management and maintenance; website creation and management; financial systems management; possible increase in visitor jobs due to potential increase in eco-tourism; jobs created through private transportation systems, including micro mobility sharing, potential increased use of Transportation Network Companies such as Uber and Lyft; transportation entrepreneurs who fill niches (for example, private van service from Po'ipu to Port Allen or Po'ipu to Koke'e); increase in satellite car rental jobs at resorts;

**Support of existing jobs** will be the potential reduction in personal transportation costs of resort users who use this system to get to and from work.

There may also be a potential loss of rental car jobs at the airport.

Timeframe: Now is the time to implement this system before tourism reopens and we go back to the status quo. This model could begin to be implemented even if all the pieces are not in place and as a means to open up a portion of the visitor industry sooner while protecting island residents from COVID-19.

## **Recommendation FUT-6: Support an economically viable solution to clean up the Great Pacific Garbage Patch.**

Overview: A demonstration project is envisioned that is of a scale that will address the needs of Kaua'i, and that can be replicated or scaled to a larger capacity on other islands. Key to its implementation is the formation of a public-private-partnership (P3) to identify and secure the land, technologies, and contractual arrangements for designing, permitting, constructing and operating the demonstration project on Kaua'i.

Need that will be addressed: Plastic waste collected from the ocean and Kaua'i's existing waste stream would be converted to "renewable" liquid fuels and/or plastic feedstock. The fuels could be used by KIUC to generate electric power and count towards KIUC's renewable portfolio standards. Recycled plastic feedstock would be sold to other firms for making new plastic products that fit niche local markets (e.g., septic tanks with high shipping costs, high volume low cost products such as road base/drainage mats, retaining wall blocks, etc).

County Action: Ideally, a public-private-partnership (P3) may be formed to execute the project, and operate the demonstration facility once it becomes commercial. Contractual relationships for delivery of plastic waste (collected by others) to the demonstration facility on Kaua'i, and for delivery of renewable fuel to industrial consumers (e.g., KIUC). Inclusion of key NGO partners such as Surfrider Foundation to help champion the project within the community.

The County's role specifically would be:

- 1) Provide leadership to champion the demonstration project ("Kaua'i Demonstrates Technology to Convert Ocean Plastic Waste to Renewable Fuel While Improving Local Waste Management"); and
- 2) Participate in P3 organization; develop a project proposal for securing approximately \$3.75M for project and process design, identification of technologies, land, preliminary engineering design, permitting, and financing.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): Plastic waste collected from the ocean would be converted to "renewable" liquid fuels and/or plastic feedstock. The fuels could be used by KIUC to generate electric power and count towards KIUC's renewable portfolio standards. Recycled plastic feedstock would be sold to other firms for making new plastic products (e.g., septic tanks).

Jobs would be created for:

- 1) Project Development
- 2) Engineering, Permitting, and Construction
- 3) Project Operation & Maintenance
- 4) Marketing and Contracting for Sale of products

Timeframe: The demonstration project can be developed within 18 months, and constructed and achieve commercial operation within an additional 18 months.

## Recommendation FUT-7: Support Entrepreneurship & Higher Paying Jobs on Kaua'i.

Overview & Immediate Relevance: Restore hope and confidence in the economic future for our island community. A large percentage of local families are unemployed and receiving UI benefits that will continue, but what's next? Will their job come back, will tourism snap back, or do they have to look for another job -- if so, where are the jobs in the future? Entrepreneurship (i.e., the ability to create your own destiny) has always been at the center of a recovery effort (ref: *Why Entrepreneurship Is Important to the Economy*, by S. Seth. Entrepreneurs improve standards of living, and in addition to creating wealth with entrepreneurial ventures, they also create jobs and contribute to a growing economy. New products and services created by entrepreneurs can produce a cascading effect, where it stimulates related businesses or sectors that need to support the new venture, furthering economic development. An investment of \$249,000 would determine the feasibility, create designs, recruit and attract new jobs, and support a vibrant future for Rice Street.

### Needs that will be addressed:

1. Growing discrepancy between local wages and the cost of living on Kaua'i including:
  - Lack of jobs with livable wages
  - Need to reduce the "Brain Drain" by creating real opportunities at home
  - Need for modern live/work environment; shortage of housing and innovative space
  - Economic insecurity is causing stress on families (e.g., teen suicide & lack of hope)
1. Diversification of employer base; focus on higher paying industries & future growth:
  - Educating & retraining our community is critical in order to break tourism dependency
  - Kaua'i Tech Park to attract satellite offices, innovation, and community
  - Commercial space with infrastructure to support new federal contracts on Kaua'i
  - Tier 5 Data Center to become an engine of job growth and efficiency

### County Action

Milestones 1=immediate, 2=immediate, 3=go/no based on #1 & #2, 4=go/no based on #3

**(1)** Conduct a feasibility plan to convert old Times Supermarket on Rice Street into a Data Center to support high functioning networks, which is an essential element to attract higher paying jobs & entrepreneurship (e.g. [Urban Sustainability Network](#), [Switch](#)). = **\$12,000**

**(2)** Engage [local research & design](#) to plan an entrepreneur center for job growth = **\$12,000**

**(3)** Recruit & attract anchor tenants, hire architects, determine requirements, sign commitments. Targets include: a Google satellite office, Facebook satellite office, Cybersecurity company (Last wall Networks), Clean-Energy company ([Intersect Power](#)), Data & Science company ([Signal](#)). County Planning, Engagement with Grove Farm (land) = \$100,000. Only if milestone 1 & 2 is achieved with a compelling go decision; otherwise, money is not spent.

**(4)** Phase 1 ground break plan = \$125,000. Only if milestone 3 is accomplished, and we have a private investments along with anchor tenants committed; otherwise, money is not spent.

**Why it deserves attention of the Mayor's Office & the County of Kaua'i:** Several successful mayors have taken a direct role in economic development projects of this sort. ([Austin 20k Jobs in 10yrs](#), [Austin Incubator](#), [Vancouver Mayor, Record](#)). The investment in time pays off significantly: new jobs created, more taxable revenue, a financially sustainable community.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation):

- New businesses (increase GET base) + new employees + supporting jobs. 4 anchor tenants = **\$200,000 in annual General Excise Tax revenue**, which will attract additional business = additional \$100,000 in annual General Excise Tax revenue,
- Incubate a community of local entrepreneurs who will create new economic opportunities on Kaua'i. 25-30 each year. \$50,000 in General Excise Tax revenue year 1 with a 4-5% growth rate.
- **50 high paying jobs** ~ 150 family members with financial stability

Timeframe: Immediate (Now until the end of 2020): understand requirements & secure interest from anchor tenants to create immediate activity, which will lay the groundwork for a sustainable economic engine to develop and incubate new businesses on Kaua'i.

**(1)** Conduct a feasibility plan to convert old Times Supermarket on Rice Street into a Data Center to support high functioning networks (e.g. [Urban Sustainability Network](#), [Switch](#)) = **5/2020 to 8/2020**

**(2)** Engage [local research & design](#) to plan a center for job growth = **5/2020 to 7/2020**

**(3)** Recruit & attract anchor tenants, hire architects, determine requirements, sign commitments. Targets include: a Google satellite office, Facebook satellite office, Cybersecurity company (Last wall Networks), Clean-Energy company ([Intersect Power](#)), Data & Science company ([Signal](#)). County Planning, Engagement with Grove Farm (land) = **8/2020 to 12/2020**

## **Recommendation FUT-8: Kaua'i Tourism Strategic Plan - "Refocusing Tourism to Find Balance".**

### Overview:

We propose to change the visitor model from visitor focused to host managed by helping the existing Kauai Tourism Strategic Plan 2019-2021 gain some ground. Times have changed. We are at a tipping point and the risk of unbalanced tourism threatens the environment, quality of life and the visitor experience. While the economic metrics of tourism are still vital, "quality of life" metrics are now essential: quality of the visitor experience, impact of the visitor industry on local residents and the environment. Kaua'i residents, are more comfortable sharing their island home with an appropriate number of visitors who appreciate the opportunity to visit Kaua'i as respectful guests. This will ensure the sustainability of the visitor industry while protecting our quality of life that includes a rural lifestyle, long history and storied culture, and pristine natural environment. We also believe that we need to maximize local economic impact for Kaua'i Made smaller businesses to benefit more regularly from the purchasing power of visitors.

The project would encompass:

1. Creation of a Task Force made up of the visitor industry and the Futures/Sustainability team to review the current Tourism Strategic Plan and brainstorm new ways to move the needle on recommendations to manage the visitor industry to see balance.
2. Project Development from the Task Force & Funding
3. Project Execution

### Need that will be addressed:

The present model that has no limitations on numbers of visitors or how many can be in one place at one time has historically fostered a resentful and often challenging relationship between Kauai's residents and visitors, notwithstanding the fact that tourism is Kauai's primary economic driver.

### County Action:

1. Mayor convenes a Task Force that includes our Tourism Strategic Plan members from the visitor industry and the Futures/Sustainability team members and other out of the box thinkers to review the "Kaua'i Tourism Strategic Plan-Refocusing Tourism to Find Balance" The task force would come up with solutions to long standing issues related to in the plan. The deliverables for their work would look at visitor management by areas visited and be similar to the Hana State Park Master plan, but the scope would be much larger, encompassing all areas of the island except Hana. The taskforce would honor and complement already existing area plans and would also consider the appropriate level of tourism for Kaua'i as a whole for each area. Those findings will provide guidance to the County of Kaua'i to implement strategies to manage frequently visited visitor areas. Estimated cost for a facilitator for this group \$50,000. Estimated costs for data collection programs to look at managing numbers: \$250,000-\$500,000.

2. We also propose that the County develop a strategic plan for the Kaua'i Made program to build on the early success of the program and plan for full development of opportunities across the broad spectrum of businesses that are part of the program. This will allow local residents to see benefits from visitor purchasing power. \$25,000 to contract this work.

3. Pursuant to managing the overall volume of tourism by limiting the number of visitor units, the Planning Department would create a strategic plan to address effective enforcement against illegal units, and to create a mechanism to limit the addition of new visitor accommodation units in the future including camper vans. \$25,000 to contract this work.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): Through better management of our visitor industry infrastructure, our public spaces and natural environment, we will cultivate a better relationship between visitors and residents. The action will create jobs in the following ways: creation of new visitor data tracking professionals; expansion of the Kaua'i Made program will create new small businesses along with the raw material sourcing and manufacturing that will be needed and new enforcement positions will be hired.

Timeframe: Task Force convening can be immediate. Creation of a Kaua'i Made strategic plan is immediate. Creation of a strategic Plan for enforcement is immediate.

## **H. Recommendations in the area of Tourism**

Recommendation TOU-1: Improve screening at Lihue Airport.

Recommendation TOU-2: Keep residents informed about re-opening and KERST plans.

Recommendation TOU-3: Introduce adjusted work schedules to lessen traffic.

Recommendation TOU-4: Slowly reopen activities to Kaua'i Kama'aina with significantly discounted rates.

Recommendation TOU-5: Conduct road and infrastructure improvements during times of decreased traffic.

Recommendation TOU-6: Introduce a paid permit system for County Parks.

Recommendation TOU-7: Clarify and create childcare options for people getting back to work.

## **Recommendation TOU-1: Improve screening at Lihue Airport.**

Overview: This recommendation is to tighten screening at Lihue Airport immediately. Have visitors sign the 14-day quarantine form BEFORE they depart their destination to Kaua'i. The forms MUST be filled out correctly and legibly, phone number must be correct (test to be sure), address where they are staying must be a hotel or condo/hotel with oversight, (front desk and security), no TVR's or B&B's. Screening is done as you exit the aircraft in a holding area. This should be run as seriously as Customs is in other countries. Look at other countries like ours, New Zealand, to see how they are handling the reopening. Determine the cost of screening medically, as well as information (customs approach). Consider funding from HTA for the new arrival experience that will protect our island. This would be a good time to use the Kuleana videos as a prelude to their visit, similar to what Palau did with the Palau Pledge (we don't want a pledge though).

Need that will be addressed: Screening at Lihue Airport needs improvement to ensure visitors and resident follow the 14-day quarantine. Many people do not understand exactly what the quarantine means (stay in your room/unit, no stopping to shop for groceries, food needs to be delivered to the room/unit, no pool, no beach, no activities, etc.). There are questions about how to safely screen visitors. When visitors will be allowed back to Kaua'i, what will the screening be to allow them to come to Kaua'i without infecting our island community? We know that face masks/covers and social distancing will be required until the end of CY 2020. Will we be able to use antibody tests to show who is healthy? Will we be taking temperatures? Can we use a strict "customs" approach to ensure those that are arriving, we know who they are, where they are staying and how to reach them? To decide what the best option is, we should research what screening policies other places are doing?

County Action: The County should work with DOT/Airports to ensure there is a reliable system to track arriving visitors and ensure they are following the 14 day quarantine.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): The safe arrival of visitors who will hopefully not infect our island community. Better management of our visitors and accountability to our island community. (Previously, many residents felt the island was run only for tourism, with no consideration to those born and raised here.) People coming to the island would hopefully understand how special they are to enjoy the beauty of Kaua'i.

Timeframe: This should begin immediately.

**Recommendation TOU-2: Keep residents informed about re-opening and KERST plans.**

Overview: Create a video and/or hold a Facebook Live or Webinar on the top line plans from each sector so the residents know we are working on.

Need that will be addressed: Residents are looking to hear the plans on how we reopen, timelines, milestones. They want to know highlights on each sector.

County Action: 1. The County should coordinate a webinar to share re-opening plans and discuss recommendations from the sector teams.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): Transparency is paramount to keeping the residents informed and calm about our economic future.

Timeframe: This should begin as soon as re-opening plans are ready. Discussion on sector team plans should happen after recommendations have been reviewed by Mayor's office.

**Recommendation TOU-3: Introduce adjusted work schedules to lessen traffic.<sup>4</sup>**

Overview: Tourism may not be the ideal industry to lead this but with so many companies “forced” to try this and realizing it can work well, we should look for a way to incentivize them to continue. Also consider 4 day a week, 10 hours a day vs. 5 days a week 8 hours. Also consider starting some employees on staggered schedules vs. everyone reporting to work at 8:00 am.

Need that will be addressed: Traffic is a huge problem for residents and visitors. It is the number one complaint from everyone prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic. A big opportunity for the island now is to promote companies to continue to work from home and stagger work hours.

County Action: The county and other employers can consider a 4 days a week, 10 hour work day. Or, consider starting some employees on a staggered schedule rather than all employees starting work at the same time.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): Less traffic congestion, happier residents, which will lead to happier visitors too when they come back.

Timeframe: This could begin as soon as possible.

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<sup>4</sup> NOTE: This recommendation is already happening but could be institutionalized and/or continued up post-COVID.

**Recommendation TOU-4: Slowly reopen activities to Kaua’i Kama’aina with significantly discounted rates.**

Overview:

Once it is deemed safe to open up certain activities on island, we suggest we take a month to do a “soft” opening amongst our residents. Since all activities will need to change their standard operating procedures due to COVID-19, this will give them a chance to try out the new operations and also give Kaua’i residents an opportunity to get out and enjoy some activities, they may not have had the chance to try in the past. Some businesses received PPP funding and this will help staff to get back to work and break-in the new way of business.

Need that will be addressed:

The need that will be addressed is getting staff of various activities back to work and give them a chance to try the new approach being required by the CDC for safety reasons. Another need will be to give our local residents new experiences, some never done before.

County Action:

The KEMA Team, with Dr. Berreman from the Dept. of Health will review the proposed activities, along with their list of standard operating procedures to determine that this activity can now open with COVID-19 sensitivities.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): Many of the local companies received PPP funding, which requires them to hire back their staff and start to reopen. Opening to ourselves helps get the wheels turning toward the new operations required in a COVID-19 world.

Timeframe: June 2020 if the Dept. of Health agrees that we are safe enough to open to ourselves.

**Recommendation TOU-5: Conduct road and infrastructure improvements during times of decreased traffic.**

Overview: Work on filling potholes while the traffic is low. Get a fourth lane put in as it is an emergency to alleviate traffic from Kapa'a through Wailua. Can we expedite getting cane haul roads cleared and maintained?

Need that will be addressed: While we're down from a large visitor count, take plans off the shelf to do infrastructure improvements, especially potholes. Four lanes of traffic from bypass to Wailua River Bridge. Consider clearing some cane haul roads that give our residents/visitors options to move during serious car accidents vs. having the highway shut down in both directions for 5-7 hours leaving people stranded, missed flights and missed doctor's appointments.

County Action: Explore options to make this part of the County bus system or private-public partnerships.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): Happier residents and visitors who are not stuck in traffic.

Timeframe: Some of this work could begin as soon as possible.

## **Recommendation TOU-6: Introduce a paid permit system for County Parks.**

Overview: Limit the number of non-residents allowed in park areas using a paid permit system. Charge for use of the parks to non-residents and have residents present their driver's license for access to parks. Look into added staff for maintenance of parks and bathrooms, private sector could support (if allowed) to help with the upkeep.

Need that will be addressed: Our State and County Parks have been inundated with visitors and residents and are unable to keep up with the volume and maintenance, including parking. Bathrooms in parks are especially bad and has been a number one complaint from residents. Visitors dominate parks and give little room for residents. Homeless have taken over areas like Salt Pond Beach Park and residents don't want to go there any longer.

### County Action:

- 1) Implement a paid permit system non-residents at County Parks.
- 2) Look into added staff for maintenance of parks and bathrooms, private sector could support (if allowed) to help with the upkeep.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): Better management of our parks, less crowding, better balance between residents and visitors.

Timeframe: This could begin as soon as possible.

**Recommendation TOU-7: Clarify and create childcare options for people getting back to work.**

Overview: Clarify what childcare options are allowed during each phase of re-opening. Create childcare options for those who are getting back to work.

Need that will be addressed: How do parents go back to work with no child care, no school, no summer fun, etc? With school closed, what other childcare options are available for school age children when it is time for people to get back to work?

County Action: 1) Work with DOE and other childcare providers to understand what childcare options will be available and when.  
2) Share with residents what options are available and what is allowed during each phase of re-opening.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): People will be able to get back to work and off of unemployment more quickly if they have someone to watch their children.

Timeframe: This should begin as soon as possible.

## Other recommendations/ideas to support the Tourism sector:

In addition to its highest-priority recommendations listed above, this committee also discussed the following recommendations/ideas to support its sector:

### 1. *Ease up on some restrictions to get people back to work.*

Overview: Ease up on restrictions to give some circulation of commerce (construction, restaurants, some activities, golf courses, etc.), get some people back to work, with the understanding that face masks and social distancing will be required. Monitor week by week on the cases of COVID-19. If we see any large spikes or clusters, we will have to reconsider the plan.

Need that will be addressed: People are eager to get back to work and begin making money again.

County Action: 1. Determine when it is safe to ease up on restrictions and determine which industries can get back to work.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): Lower the unemployment rate, get people back to work (depending on which areas are loosened) and generate revenue for the County.

Timeframe: This should begin as soon as the Mayor and his team deem it to be safe.

### 2. *Organize a Zoom meeting for Kaua'i Travel Industry.*

Overview: Create a zoom meeting for businesses in the travel industry on Kaua'i so they are informed. Share information on the probability of the return of tourism that includes timing, possible numbers of visitors and the new way of doing business while continuing to be in health crisis mode. The first meeting would be to inform that there is a committee working on the return of tourists to the island and inform on the issues that we are currently working on regarding the reopening of tourism to Kaua'i. Open up to send in questions and comments to an email address for someone to send out to all committee members. Use this information at subsequent committee meetings. A week or two after that, hold another meeting with tourism related businesses to follow up on the first meeting.

Need that will be addressed: Keeping all businesses in the travel industry informed. It would help them to know the timeline and what safety precautions need to be made as they do begin re-opening.

County Action: Mayor to participate in the zoom meeting and share relevant County plans and updates that affect the travel industry.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): Business buy in to the new way of tourism on Kaua'i and the understanding of possible new rules of business once tourism starts to return. (Social distancing, masks for employees, small capacities on activities and restaurants??)

Timeframe: The first meeting should be organized as soon as possible. A follow up meeting could happen two weeks later.

### *3. Organize a Tourist Shuttle to reduce traffic congestion.*

Overview: The idea of a tourist shuttle to the 3 main resort areas that ties to a car by the day rental program and local shuttles to shops and restaurants in the immediate area. Suggest making this part of the Kaua'i bus using upgraded vehicles that our guests will use i.e. Mercedes Sprinter vans. Tap the County bus systems expertise in schedules and routes. [Support for a shuttle system or transportation services that might be a little more affordable than what was being offered prior to shut down. If there could be an Uber or similar that was more in the \$60 range than the \$80 - \$100 range, I think more North Shore visitors would take it – with one other dilemma which is there are no longer rental car companies on the North Shore. Avis shut down last year and Enterprise also pulled out of Princeville Resort (previous St Regis) last year as well.]

Need that will be addressed: Traffic is a huge problem for residents and visitors. It is the number one complaint from everyone prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

County Action: Explore options to make this part of the County bus system or private-public partnerships.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): Less traffic congestion, happier residents, which will lead to happier visitors too when they come back.

Timeframe: Research on this option could begin as soon as possible.

### *4. Increase Expectations for Transient Vacation Rental Managers.*

Overview: Create a Standard Operating Procedure that is required of transient vacation rentals to communicate to their clients at check in (or even before check-in). Hotels/Resorts have staff that continue to communicate the different aspects of being a visitor on the island and the same should be expected of the TVRs.

Need that will be addressed: We have too many TVR's that are allowing the capacity of the island to grow beyond its means. Kaua'i used to be able to regulate itself based on the availability of flights, rooms and rental cars, that all changed with TVR's, Airbnb, Turo and an underground market, Also, most would agree that perhaps the TVRs need better accountability on the marketing and messages they give to all of their customers, especially in crisis and emergencies. Keep TVR's in resort areas and not in neighborhoods.

County Action: Establish a strong enforcement department under the Planning Department that can be the "source" for managing the TVR issues. Those that don't comply could lose their permit to operate.

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): Accountability to our island, especially in emergencies. We often have TVR renters call the EOC or Kaua'i Visitors Bureau on what to do in an emergency or that they are unaware of the new rules at Ha'ena State Park, etc., etc. The TVR's are responsible for the people they rent to each day.

Timeframe: This could begin as soon as possible.

*5. Create a long-term plan for a multi-use venue.*

Overview: Create a long-term plan for a multi-use venue. This is definitely a large project but would pay huge dividends for our island. Imagine a beautiful indoor/outdoor park like setting that could be the home of our county fair, health and wellness seminars, hula competitions, concerts, sports tournaments, and many other useful tools as we begin to rebrand.

Need that will be addressed: We do not currently have an indoor/outdoor park like setting that could be the home of our county fair, health and wellness seminars, hula competitions, concerts, sports tournaments, etc.

County Action: 1) Assess the need for a multi-use venue and possible locations

Expected outcomes (incl. job creation): This venue could bring in revenue, create jobs, and bring in new experiences for residents.

Timeframe: This is a long-term plan that would begin with researching options.

### **III. Conclusion**

The committees and their chairs acknowledge the Mayor's foresight and proactive approach in creating this Task Force. While the challenges ahead are daunting, we know that Kaua'i residents will continue to draw upon our shared history of resilience and sense of community to move past the current situation. We look forward to continuing this work to implement these recommendations to benefit our community, and to putting in place similar longer-term plans to help shape the future of our island.

# IV. Appendices

Appendix A. All Recommendations by Committee

<p align="center"><b>AGRICULTURE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AGR-1: Assist small businesses to navigate through federal and other grant funding applications and processes.</li> <li>• AGR-2: Address needs of farmers due to closure of Sunshine Markets.</li> <li>• AGR-3: Address communication barriers and lack of an organized communication network.</li> <li>• AGR-4: Address shipping restrictions for livestock.</li> </ul>	<p align="center"><b>BUSINESS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BUS-1: Provide Real Property Tax relief to Commercial Real Estate owners and business tenants.</li> <li>• BUS-2: Provide assistance with permitting.</li> <li>• BUS-3: Organize a "Shop Local" campaign.</li> <li>• BUS-4: Host a series of events to bring the community back together.</li> </ul>
<p align="center"><b>CONSTRUCTION &amp; PUBLIC WORKS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CON-1: Organize "Development Clinics" where Planning educates people on recent zoning changes and what is possible, especially within infill areas.</li> <li>• CON-2: Build Tiny Home villages to address homelessness.</li> <li>• CON-3: Institute an ADU and ARU low-to-zero-interest loan guarantee program.</li> <li>• CON-4: Institute a twelve-month waiver on permit fees.</li> <li>• CON-5: Request that the Governor waive State procurement code to ensure local contractors get priority.</li> <li>• CON-6: Develop a list of larger projects to prioritize permitting for.</li> <li>• CON-7: Create a redevelopment program for planners to reach out to stalled projects; help determine the barriers; and facilitate moving them forward.</li> </ul>	<p align="center"><b>EDUCATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDU-1: Improve communication with other key educational organizations by hiring or designating an Educational Liaison.</li> <li>• EDU-2: Leverage County facilities to support education and student learning by creating "Neighborhood Hubs" for student use.</li> <li>• EDU-3: Provide access to more devices and hotspots to families who need them.</li> <li>• EDU-4: Create a COVID-19 directory of services provided across different agencies and organizations.</li> <li>• EDU-5: Focus on supporting new and existing educational programs.</li> <li>• EDU-6: Co-host a Roundtable of Kaua'i leadership figures to discuss future plans for Kaua'i in the post-COVID world.</li> </ul>
<p align="center"><b>FINANCE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FIN-1: Create a KERST Finance plan via KGEFCU.</li> <li>• FIN-2: Organize a webinar for all businesses/individuals interested in Federal stimulus.</li> <li>• FIN-3: Conduct outreach for a "How to Financially Weather COVID19" class.</li> </ul>	<p align="center"><b>PUBLIC HEALTH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HEA-1: Establish a multi-purpose "Resilience Center"</li> <li>• HEA-2: Improve and increase communication about health resources and responses</li> <li>• HEA-3: Obtain and install high-speed broadband</li> <li>• HEA-4: Address health access Issues</li> <li>• HEA-5: Identify and secure CARES Act and other funding for non-profit agencies</li> <li>• HEA-6: Develop guidelines for small businesses to reopen.</li> </ul>
<p align="center"><b>FUTURE: SUSTAINABILITY &amp; TECHNOLOGY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FUT-1: Support stable, fast, and secure broadband infrastructure throughout Kaua'i.</li> <li>• FUT-2: Accelerate the conversion of cesspools.</li> <li>• FUT-3: Establish Kaua'i Works to support local business.</li> <li>• FUT-4: Leverage innovation to solve local problems.</li> <li>• FUT-5: Implement a New Paradigm for Visitor Travel.</li> <li>• FUT-6: Support an economically viable solution to clean up the Great Pacific Garbage Patch.</li> <li>• FUT-7: Support Entrepreneurship &amp; Higher Paying Jobs on Kaua'i.</li> <li>• FUT-8: Refocusing Tourism to Find Balance.</li> </ul>	<p align="center"><b>TOURISM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TOU-1: Improve screening at Lihue Airport.</li> <li>• TOU-2: Keep residents informed about re-opening and KERST plans.</li> <li>• TOU-3: Institute adjusted work schedules to lessen traffic.</li> <li>• TOU-4: Slowly reopen activities to Kaua'i Kama'aina with significantly discounted rates.</li> <li>• TOU-5: Conduct road and infrastructure Improvements during times of decreased traffic.</li> <li>• TOU-6: Institute a paid permit system for County Parks.</li> <li>• TOU-7: Clarify and create childcare options for people getting back to work.</li> </ul>

## Appendix B. Links and Other Documents

### **Kaua'i Tourism Strategic Plan 2019-2021**

<https://www.kauai.gov/Portals/0/OED/Kauai%20TSP-FINAL.pdf?ver=2018-08-28-104652-603>

### **Kaua'i Tourism Strategic Plan 2019-2021: Year 1 Progress Report**

<https://www.kauai.gov/Portals/0/Users/196/96/196/Kauai%20TSP-Yr%201%20Rpt-Final.pdf?ver=2019-07-01-105913-020>

### **Kaua'i Short-Range Transit Plan**

<https://www.kauai.gov/Portals/0/Transportation/Kaua'i%20SRTP%20Final%20Report%202018.pdf?ver=2019-09-11-143326-030>

Appendix C. KERST committee members

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Nalani Brun	Office of Economic Development
Diana Singh	Office of Economic Development
Keith Perry	Office of the Mayor
Mark Periello	Kaua'i Chamber of Commerce
Jackie Kaina	Kaua'i Economic Development Board
Sue Kanoho	Kaua'i Visitors Bureau
Warren Doi	Office of Economic Development- Consultant
Kimo Perry	Volunteer Support Consultant

**AGRICULTURE**

Larry Feinstein	Marketing Manager, Kaua'i Beer Co.
Theri Martin Haumea	Econ. Development Specialist III, Office of Economic Development
Stacy Sproat-Beck	Executive Director, Waipa Foundation
Felicia Cowden	Council Member, County of Kaua'i
Fred Cowell	General Manager, Kauai Coffee
Josh Uyehara	General Manager, Hawai'i Division-Hartung Brothers Inc.
Yoshi L'Hote	Director, Aina Ho'okupu o Kilauea
Jackie Kaina	Acting Director, Kaua'i Economic Development Board
Will Lydgate	Owner, Lydgate Farms
Brad Seymour	Owner, Seymour Resources Hawai'i
Savannah Katulski	Jr. Extension Agent, CTAHR
Martin Amaro	Agricultural Specialist, Office of Economic Development
Johnny Gordines	President, Kaua'i County Farm Bureau
Glenn Sato	Former Office of Economic Development Director
Marlene Duarte	NOTE TAKER, Kaua'i Economic Development Board

**BUSINESS**

Tad Miura	CEO, déjà vu Surf Co.
Sam Pratt	President, Niu Pia Land Company
Ann Hashisaka	CEO, Kauai Kookie LLC
Donna Apisa	President & Principal Broker at Oceanfront Realty Int'l, Inc.
Melissia Mae Sugai	Economic Development Specialist III-Kaua'i Made
Lesah Merritt	Store Manager, Safeway
Mark Oyama	President, Contemporary Flavors
Eric Nordmeier	President, West Kaua'i Business & Prof. Assn.
Mark Pereillo	President & CEO, Chamber of Commerce
Stacie Chiba-Miguel	Senior Property Manager at A&B
Carol Texeira	NOTE TAKER

## **CONSTRUCTION AND PUBLIC WORKS**

Luke Evslin	Council Member, County of Kaua'i
Keith Perry	Project Manager, County of Kaua'i
Scott Pingrey	Owner, Kaua'i Concrete & Rock
Gary Mackler	Former Housing Director, County of Kaua'i
Jeff Fisher	Owner, Earthworks Pacific Inc.
Brett Schumauch	Vice President, Unlimited Construction Inc.
Sandy Kaauwai	NOTE TAKER, Office of Economic Development
Marie Williams	Long Term Planner, County of Kaua'i
Milo Spindt	Executive Director, Kaua'i Housing Dev Corp
Adam Roversi	Housing Director, County of Kauai

## **EDUCATION**

Bill Arakaki	Superintendent, Department of Education-Kaua'i
Mason Chock	Council Member, Kaua'i County Council
Mahina Anguay	Principal, Waimea High School
Helen Cox	Former Kaua'i Community College Chancellor
Joseph Daisy	Kaua'i Community College Chancellor
Kimo Perry	University of Hawai'i
Buffy Trujillo	Regional Director, Kaua'i and Ni'ihau - Kamehameha Schools
Sabra Kauka	Native Hawaiian Leader
Rose Ramos-Benzel	Director of Development, UH Foundation
Paul Zina	Deputy Superintendent, Department of Education - Kaua'i
Lisa Mireles	Kaua'i Pacific School/Dream Tech Learning
Alice Luck	Kaua'i Planning and Action Alliance
Lisa Watanabe	Council Services, County of Kaua'i
Jackie Kaina	NOTE TAKER, Kaua'i Economic Development Board
Sarah Styran	President and CEO, Kaua'i Community Science Center

## **FINANCE**

Leland Kahawai	Senior Vice President and Kaua'i Region Manager, First Hawaiian bank
Monica Belz	CEO, Kauai Government Employees Federal Credit Union
Sonia Topenio	Bank of Hawaii
Reiko Matsuyama	Finance Director-County of Kaua'i
Dean Toyofuku	President, Mokihana Insurance Agency
Mark Tanaka	Executive Vice President, Kaua'i Realty
Dan Fort	Executive Director, Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act-County of Kaua'i
Nalani Brun	NOTE TAKER, Office of Economic Development
Tess Shimabukuro	President and CEO, Gather FCU

### **FUTURE: SUSTAINABILITY AND TECHNOLOGY**

Warren Doi	Business Mentor, Office of Economic Development
Ben Sullivan	NOTE TAKER, Sustainability Specialist, OED
Tom Shigemoto	Vice President, A&B properties
Joel Guy	Executive Director, The Hanalei Initiative
David Bissell	President/CEO Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative
Dan Giovanni	Senior Vice President, Hawai'ian Electric Co. (former)
Leanora Kaiaokamalie	Long Term Planner, Planning Dept. COK
Mina Morita	Former Chair, Hawai'i Public Utilities Commission
Howard Greene	Environmental Manager Gay and Robinson
Beth Tokioka	Communications Manager, KIUC

### **PUBLIC HEALTH**

Dr. Janet Berreman	District Health Officer for Kaua'i
Lauren Guest	Public Health Preparedness Planner, Dept. of Health-Kaua'i
Ellen Ching	Administrator, Kaua'i County Boards and Commissions
Lance Segawa; Paige Moura	Regional CEO Hawai'i Health Systems Corp and Ex. Secretary of KVMH
Kurt Akamine	Garden Island Rehab and Health Care
David Peters	CEO, Ho'ola Lahui Hawai'i
Jan Tenbruggengate	Communications Consulting, Island Strategy LLC
Kipukai Kualii	Council Member, County of Kaua'i
Jackie Kaina	NOTE TAKER, Kaua'i Economic Development Board
Jen Chahanovich	President and CEO of Wilcox Hospital and Kaua'i Medical Clinic

### **TOURISM**

Sue Kanoho	Executive Director, Kauai Visitors Bureau
Gini Kapali	Former OED Director
Fred Atkins	Managing Partner, Kilohana Kaua'i
Rob Silverman	President, Rob's Good Time Grille
Leinaala Pavao Jardin	Kumu Hula, Native Hawaiian Leader
Leesha Kawamura	Regional Manager, Hawaiian Airlines
Jim Braman	General Manager, Cliffs at Princeville
Denise Wardlow	General Manager, The Westin Princeville
Paul Toner	General Manager at Marriott International
Anna Boudouin	NOTE TAKER, Chamber of Commerce
Kamika Smith	General Manager, Smiths Motor Boat Svcs and Luau

### **DATA**

Diana Singh	Business Innovation Coordinator, Office of Economic Development
Sandy Kaauwai	Economic Development Specialist, OED
Anna Boudouin	Kauai Chamber of Commerce

