

County of Kaua'i

Agricultural Economic Development Plan

Kauai agriculture is prosperous, resilient,
and a global leader while honoring our
unique culture and past.

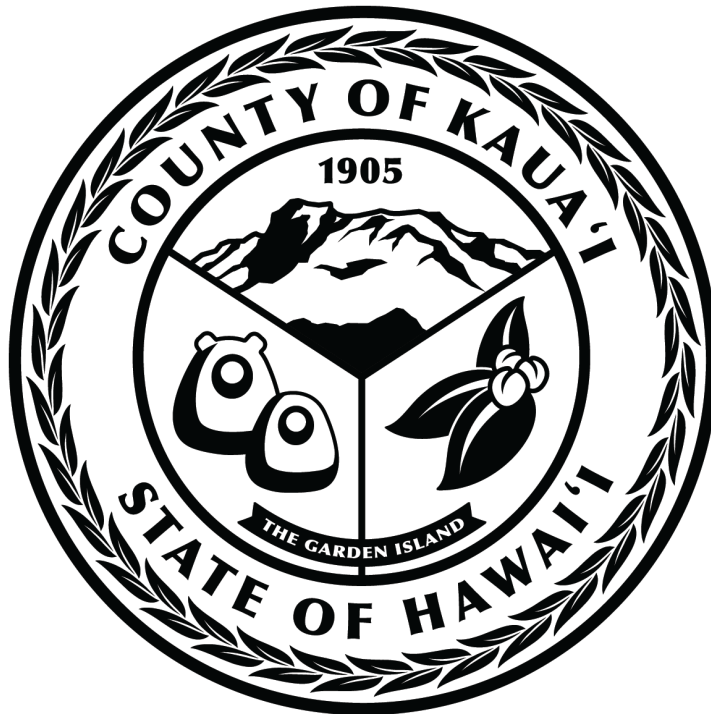


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INTRODUCTION

***Intro to Plan:** The Kaua'i Economic Development Board (KEDB) on behalf of the County of Kaua'i contracted with Guna Solutions to develop an agriculture economic development/strategic plan that provides direction and clarity for the County of Kaua'i on how they can best support and promote agriculture and agricultural economic development on the Island. The Operational Vision Framework (OVF), developed by Guna Solutions, ensures a throughline from the county's vision through the task level items found in this plan. The OVF creates a system of autonomy for stakeholders and minimizes the likelihood that lines of effort are duplicated. The KEDB/County economic/strategic plan consists of a vision, mission, goals, objectives, strategies, and tasks. Vision, mission, goals, and objectives will remain relatively static throughout the duration of the plan. Strategies and tasks may be adjusted at any time in order to best achieve the aligned objective.*

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

The KEDB/County Economic/Strategic Planning Advisory Group and the planning working groups identified a variety of action items that will help the County fulfill its vision. This strategic plan outlines those actions, often in a summarized way. While working through the action steps outlined in this plan, it might be useful to reference the accompanying Addendum to the Economic/Strategic Plan (ASP) document (Appendix II). The ASP contains useful contextual information and more specific ideas that the planning team proposed or considered throughout the process. If the implementation process stalls, it may be useful to find the corresponding information from the ASP document and use it for inspiration. The two documents are structured so contextual information can be found by following the same line of objective → strategy → tasks.

This document uses a hierarchical numbering system with three primary levels: objectives, strategies, and tasks. Additionally, some tasks may have sub-tasks. The structure can be understood as follows:

1 represents an objective.

1.2 indicates the second strategy under the first objective.

1.2.3 designates the third task of the second strategy under the first objective.

1.2.3.4 signifies the fourth sub-task of the third task associated with the second strategy of the first objective.

OVF PHASES

The Operational Vision Framework (OVF) is the bridge that connects an organization's strategic plan to the necessary boots on the ground work required for a company to achieve its vision. Rooted in three of the U.S. Army's principles of mission command – 1) providing clear intent, 2) creating a shared understanding, 3) building a cohesive team through mutual trust, the OVF assists leaders in creating specific visions for the future of their organizations and then breaks that vision down into actionable steps creating a tight alignment between the organization's vision, mission, and goals. Once developed, not only are a vision, mission, and goals in place, but become a comprehensive operational plan that will allow an organization to live its vision and achieve its mission while valuing the time and talents of its employees and various stakeholder groups.

PHASE I

Stakeholder groups met to identify challenges and opportunities as well as outline their understanding of the current state of the agricultural community. This research contributed to the executive summary published at the end of Phase I and informed the advisory group for their work in the subsequent phases.

PHASE II

A strategic planning advisory group was formed to lead the creation of the Ag Economic/Strategic plan. The advisory group worked through targeted exercises to create a vision and mission for the agricultural community.

PHASE III

After approving the final versions of the vision and mission statements, the advisory group continued by creating goals and objectives. The goals are directly correlated with the mission and vision. The objectives consist of themed data generated throughout Phases I and II. When completed, objectives align to one or more goals.

PHASE IV

The objectives determined in Phase III are aligned, so lines of effort are not duplicated. This allows a group of people to own an objective and see it through to completion. Phase IV breaks those objectives into strategies and tasks, making the work more manageable.

VISION/MISSION

The vision statement articulates what the organization hopes to become in the fullness of time. The mission statement describes what they will be doing on a regular basis once the vision is achieved.

VISION

Kauai agriculture is prosperous, resilient, and a global leader while honoring our unique culture and past.

MISSION

Sustainably produce and promote world class agricultural products to ensure the health and prosperity for Kauai and the planet.

GOALS

The goals are integral to fulfilling the mission. Goals are typically binary and are easy to determine whether or not they are complete, but not easy to measure while in progress.

ENDURE

Kauai's agriculture sector is sustainable.

FLOURISH

Kauai's agricultural sector cultivates a healthy and prosperous Kauai.

EXCEL

Kauai's agriculture sector produces world-class products.

LEAD

Kauai has world-wide brand recognition.

OBJECTIVES

As the advisory group and the working groups explored the ideas and concepts needed to achieve their goals, several themes emerged. Identified themes were divided into lines of effort known in the OVF as objectives. Each objective stands on its own but may support the achievement of one or more goals.

PLANT

Start and strengthen Co-ops and similar ventures to benefit from shared resources.

GROW

Create a new generation of Kauai farmers through education, innovation, and financial stability.

HARVEST

Build partnerships that increase opportunities and remove barriers.

GOALS/OBJECTIVES

Objectives are made to be lines of effort that can be actioned in the near-term and drive the organization toward completion of their goals. Objectives are designed to be separated from each other, so that working groups can be assigned an objective and work toward it without the concern about duplication of effort across objectives.

The Agricultural Economic Development plan is long term. Most strategic plans are long term, but the scope of this plan requires it to be measured in terms of decades and generations rather than years.

For these reasons, the objectives outlined in this plan begin progress toward achieving the goals, however, they are not comprehensive, they are merely a start. As the plan is implemented, tasks are checked off, strategies are fulfilled, and objectives are completed, it will be important for the advisory group to consider introducing new objectives so that all goals can be targeted.

The objectives selected for the initial implementation of this plan align directly with Goals 1 & 2. Building partnerships, creating a new generation of farmers, and starting and strengthening co-ops will drive a sustainable and prosperous Kaua'i, but likely there will still be work needed to create world class products and gain world-wide brand recognition.

OBJECTIVE 1

PLANT

To share the Work Based Learning (WBL) story and provide transparency through targeted and timely communication.

Strategy 1.1: Develop an agricultural cooperative to meet the specific needs of Kauai's agricultural community.

- Task 1.1.1 Identify and define agricultural needs
- Task 1.1.2 Identify and recruit key stakeholders for the agricultural co-op/
- Task 1.1.3 Develop a business plan to guide the growth and development of the co-op.
- Task 1.1.4 Secure funding.

Strategy 1.2: Develop a marketing and branding strategy defining Kauai's agriculture sector's unique identity:

- Task 1.2.1 Develop a comprehensive marketing plan for Kauai Agriculture
- Task 1.2.2 Kauai produced products.
- Task 1.2.3 Establish and enforce branding criteria to ensure consistent messaging.
- Task 1.2.4 Execute marketing campaigns through social media, webinars, trade shows, TV, and other media outlets.
- Task 1.2.5 Emphasize the sustainability and uniqueness of Kauai products in marketing materials.
- Task 1.2.6 Promote Kauai agriculture through partnerships with the tourism industry.

Strategy 1.3: Encourage networking and collaboration opportunities on Kauai:

- Task 1.3.1 Organize ag conventions, chocolate festivals, and coffee festivals to connect worldwide producers.
- Task 1.3.2 Participate in agricultural and ag product related convention and festivals to connect with buyers across the U.S. and globally.
- Task 1.3.3 Collaborate with the Hawaii Ag Tourism Association to develop an ag tourism operation program.
- Task 1.3.4 Engage with chefs and tour group operators to create unique ag experiences for locals and visitors.

Strategy 1.4: Develop a comprehensive framework of support for Kauai farmers:

- Task 1.4.1 Create an onboarding guide/checklist for new farmers that includes resources for business planning, financial management, and access to capital.
 - Subtask 1.4.1.1 Provide access to shared legal services and grant writers.

Task 1.4.2 Develop a mentorship program for new to Kauai agriculture members.

Task 1.4.3 Work to ensure equitable access to land, equipment, healthcare, housing, and other resources.

Subtask 1.4.3.1 Develop pathways to land ownership for agricultural operations.

Strategy 1.5: Build, enhance, and sustain Kauai's agriculture Infrastructure:

Task 1.5.1 Establish affordable resources for cold storage

Task 1.5.2 Develop food hubs and co-ops for exportation and aggregation.

Subtask 1.5.2.1 Manufacturing, processing, production of value-added products, and packaging.

Task 1.5.3 Advocate for changes in zoning laws to accommodate commercial kitchens and sales.

Task 1.5.4 Improve shipping rates through centralized distribution systems.

Task 1.5.5 Invest in processing, storage, and distribution infrastructure for the ag/food sector.

Task 1.5.6 Invest in and maintain critical water infrastructure to ensure access and growth of farming on the island.

Strategy 1.6: Foster local production and self-reliance:

Task 1.6.1 Increase local food production to reduce dependence on imports.

Task 1.6.2 Grow and produce unique products that can only be found on Kauai.

Task 1.6.3 Reduce reliance on imported fertilizers, seeds, and pest/disease management.

Strategy 1.7: Explore, adopt, and develop technology solutions that fit Kauai's agricultural needs:

Task 1.7.1 Conduct a thorough assessment of current agricultural practices and identify areas where technology can provide enhanced efficiency or solve existing challenges.

Task 1.7.2 Develop partnerships with agricultural technology companies for pilot projects, testing their solutions in Kauai's unique ecosystem.

Task 1.7.3 Involve local farmers and agricultural workers in the technology adoption process to ensure solutions are practical and meet the needs of the end-users. This could include workshops, training programs, and regular feedback sessions.

Task 1.7.4 Invest in necessary infrastructure to support the technology, such as internet connectivity in remote farming areas or equipment necessary for implementing specific tech solutions.

Task 1.7.5 Ensure that all adopted technologies align with sustainable farming practices to maintain the ecological balance of Kauai while increasing agricultural productivity.

OBJECTIVE 2

GROW

Create a new generation of Kauai farmers through education, innovation, and financial stability.

Strategy 2.1: Strengthen the connection between agriculture, culture, and education

- Task 2.1.1 Develop partnerships with schools island-wide to promote agricultural internships and “for credit” programs with the Department of Education (DOE) and/or Kauai Community College (KCC).
- Task 2.1.2 Integrate traditional and modern technology where feasible to perpetuate agricultural traditions and cultural practices.
- Task 2.1.3 Provide training in traditional methods of farming and native Hawaiian values.
- Task 2.1.4 Create social gathering spaces for cultural activities and educational programs.
- Task 2.1.5 Improve exposure to agriculture in K-12 education to enhance interest in farming and related careers.

Strategy 2.2: Increase local consumption and affordability of agricultural products

- Task 2.2.1 Promote local food consumption through marketing campaigns and partnerships with the tourism industry.
- Task 2.2.2 Create pipelines that connect and provide local producers with institutional purchasing.
- Task 2.2.3 Ensure locals can afford local products by leveraging technology to reduce production costs and establish fair market prices.
- Task 2.2.4 Develop diverse revenue streams for agricultural operators.
- Task 2.2.5 Increase ag tech innovations to make Kauai ag production more efficient.

Strategy 2.3: Enhance education and training for farmers and consumers

- Task 2.3.1 Offer farmer training in business management, soil health, pest management, and disease control.
- Task 2.3.2 Educate consumers on the cost of production, use of products, misfit produce, and labor.
- Task 2.3.3 Provide free food safety courses and integrated pest management training.
- Task 2.3.4 Offer for-credit agriculture internships in high schools and colleges on the island.

Strategy 2.4: Improve living conditions and wages for agricultural workers

- Task 2.4.1 Narrow the income gap and promote shared prosperity.
- Task 2.4.2 Advocate for and implement a fair wage policy in the agricultural sector to ensure that all workers are compensated adequately for their labor.

- Task 2.4.3 Launch initiatives to improve the housing conditions of agricultural workers, such as affordable housing projects or housing assistance programs.
- Task 2.4.4 Invest in training and equipment to ensure the safety and health of the workers in the fields, and ensure compliance with all relevant safety regulations.
- Task 2.4.5 Implement a robust healthcare program that provides access to medical services, preventive care, and insurance coverage for agricultural workers and their families.
- Task 2.4.6 Job Security and Benefits: Strive to provide job security with stable, year-round employment opportunities and benefits such as paid time off, retirement plans, and family leave.
- Task 2.4.7 Invest in the development of communities where agricultural workers live, including access to quality education, public transportation, and other essential services.

Strategy 2.5: Expand and support the agricultural community on Kauai

- Task 2.5.1 Increase the number of local/native farmers through programs such as GoFarm.
- Task 2.5.2 Promote farming as a valuable profession and remove barriers to entry.
- Task 2.5.3 Establish incubator farms with long-term leases to encourage new farmers.
- Task 2.5.4 Provide entrepreneurship courses and self-efficacy training for students interested in agriculture.

Strategy 2.6: Identify and Implement best practices for farming to minimize adverse environmental consequences.

- Task 2.6.1 Preserve green/open spaces and maintain the unique historical character of Kauai.
- Task 2.6.2 Incorporate ag waste back into production streams.
- Task 2.6.3 Establish conservation plans and response measures for potential threats to the environment.
- Task 2.6.4 Develop comprehensive training programs for farmers on soil health and conservation, integrated pest management, and disease control.

OBJECTIVE 3

HARVEST

Build partnerships that increase opportunities and remove barriers.

Strategy 3.1: Coordinate with policy makers and regulators to streamline regulations and reduce barriers to farming.

Task 3.1.1 Establish a dedicated lobbying and legislative representation team to advocate for agricultural economic development.

Subtask 3.1.1.1 Re-establish the County of Kauai Agricultural Advisory Group

Task 3.1.2 Work closely with elected officials and grant administrators/writers in Kauai to secure funding for agriculture programs and initiatives.

Task 3.1.3 Collaborate with state, county, federal, and non-profit coalition of services to align policies and funding with long-term success for agricultural producers.

Task 3.1.4 Leverage relationships with KEDB, Chamber of Commerce, Farm Bureau and Farmers Union to influence legislative action that supports agriculture.

Strategy 3.2: Promote and market Kauai agricultural products.

Task 3.2.1 Develop partnerships with the hospitality and tourism industry to highlight and promote Kauai products.

Task 3.2.2 Create marketing campaigns that emphasize the uniqueness and quality of Kauai agricultural products.

Task 3.2.3 Facilitate the creation of unique agricultural experiences for locals and visitors to promote ag as a means of increasing green space.

Task 3.2.4 Support the production of unique products that can only be produced on Kauai.

Strategy 3.3: Provide education and training for producers and consumers

Task 3.3.1 Develop comprehensive training programs for farmers on entrepreneurship, business management, QuickBooks, and effective technology use. Partner with K-12 schools and the University of Hawaii system to develop ag-related career pathway programs.

Task 3.3.2 Organize public awareness campaigns to educate consumers about the cost of production, the use of products, misfit produce, and labor involved in agriculture.

Task 3.3.3 Improve exposure to agriculture in K-12 education to enhance interest in farming.

Strategy 3.4: Increase community engagement and cooperative efforts

- Task 3.4.1 Create agricultural advocacy groups to support the interests of agricultural producers.
- Task 3.4.2 Develop outreach initiatives to inform and educate the island's population about local agricultural producers and products.
- Task 3.4.3 Foster an environment where ag producers are open and willing to communicate and share information with their peers and the community at large.

Strategy 3.5: Secure governmental support and infrastructure development

- Task 3.5.1 Advocate for change in laws to provide farmers with land they can live on and farm.
- Task 3.5.2 Collaborate with county and state governments to secure financial support for small farmers.
- Task 3.5.3 Work towards eliminating barriers to infrastructure access and reducing red tape.
- Task 3.5.4 Collaborate with government entities to foster an environment conducive to the success of private ag businesses.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I:
PHASE I EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

APPENDIX II:
ADDENDUM TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

APPENDIX I

PHASE I

COUNTY OF KAUA'I

KAUA'I ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD

AGRICULTURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Executive Summary

Phase 1

August 29, 2022

INTRODUCTION

The following report summarizes the exploratory data collection efforts for the Kaua'i Economic Development Board (KEDB) and the County of Kaua'i's agricultural economic development plan. Eight focus groups were carried out. These perspectives are important to help the County, KEDB, and Guna Solutions develop a strategic plan to provide direction and lay the foundation for the future of agricultural economic development on the Island. This report briefly describes the methodology and outcomes for the focus groups.

FOCUS GROUP METHODOLOGY

Jackie Kaina, Executive Director of the KEDB, and Niki Kunioka-Volz, Agricultural Specialist for the County of Kauai, recruited the eight focus groups. In an email to prospective members, they described the project and asked to schedule an in-person meeting with representatives from Guna Solutions. Six in-person focus groups and two virtual focus groups were conducted.

Focus Groups:

- Infrastructure
- Aquaculture
- Kaua'i Community College
- Cattle Producer
- Agricultural Cooperative
- Kekaha Agriculture Association
- Grove Farm
- Value-Add

With each focus group, we aimed to answer the questions below. Meetings were held informally to encourage open conversation and build rapport with the participants. Based on the group dialogue, follow-up and probing questions were added to extract additional insights from participants on these topics.

1. How would you assess the current state of agriculture in Kauai?
2. How can the government help you?
3. What are the greatest strengths of the current ag economy?
4. What are the greatest challenges to the ag economy on Kauai?
5. What is your vision of agriculture on Kauai in the next one, three, five, and twenty years?
6. What else do you think we should know?

Based on the group dialogue, follow-up and probing questions were added in order to extract additional insights from participants on these topics.

FOCUS GROUP OUTCOMES

The thoughts, feelings, and experiences shared by focus group participants provide useful insights for consideration during the development of the KEDB/County of Kaua'i agricultural strategic plan. The results from all focus groups are combined here to protect confidentiality and provide a succinct summary of the insights gained.

QUESTION 1: How would you assess the current state of agriculture in Kauai?

- › **Based on focus group input, the current state of agriculture in Kauai can best be described as having a general air of uneasiness.**
 - » *Uneasiness cannot and should not be confused with a lack of passion, spirit, and an exuding love of Kauai and agriculture. However, passion, spirit, and love do not hide the bleak sentiment on the Island concerning agriculture. Big agriculture, specifically, was repeatedly described as an improbability moving forward. Supporting this statement was the realization that those who have recently chosen to enter agriculture have done so on a very small scale.*
 - » *Also, even the larger agricultural companies on the island profit through research and genetics, while the by-product of those activities only cover the cost of operations.*
 - » *Additionally, the focus groups regularly agreed that small-scale farmers often enter the vertical with a romanticized view of farming and an idealist view of agriculture. The exception to this perception is most of the farmers at Grove Farm, who were consistently identified as having an exceptional work ethic.*
- › **What's working must be duplicated.**
 - » *Three agricultural sub-verticals were repeatedly mentioned as working well and seen as a driver for economic growth. Farming cooperatives, value-add, and agricultural science - including breeding, animal genetics, and seed genetics - are all working well on Kaua'i.*
 - » *Agriculture science-related fields are viewed as areas of strength. The consistent climate allows for multiple generations of a product in a shorter period of time. It was noted throughout the interviews that the byproducts of science, breeding, genetics, and seed production pay the bills but it is the brood stock that generates the profit.*
 - » *Co-ops were also identified as working, however, there are a limited number of active cooperatives. Co-ops focused on production and value-added services are seen as promising to facilitate positive economic growth for both large and small-scale ag sectors.*

QUESTION 2: How can the government help you?

- › **Infrastructure is at the core of agriculture in Kaua'i. Infrastructure will either cause agriculture to prosper or fail.**
 - » *When asked how the government can help local farmers, water security and infrastructure maintenance were at the top of mind. A majority of water infrastructure development dates back to sugar plantations. The water systems on the island's west side are incredibly effective but expensive to maintain. On the island's east side, rainfall is greater. However, irrigation systems are less reliable. Farmers on the east side operate more independently of one another, and past attempts by organizations to maintain and manage water resources were not adequately supported and subsequently forced to resign their efforts. The independent, smaller farmers simply do not have the capital or revenue to support their farms and maintain current infrastructure. Government at all levels (local, state, and federal), working collaboratively to develop co-op like agreements for water management, infrastructure, and distribution would significantly lessen the burden on the farmers and ranchers of Kaua'i. Emphasis was placed on the Island's east side for establishing co-ops focused on water infrastructure.*
- › **Government must become easier to use.**
 - » *For those who work in or deal with government entities regularly, navigating the intricacies of the bureaucracy can be challenging. The barriers of government perceived by local farmers affect everything from grant funding and application to long-term land acquisition. Navigating government processes was identified as a barrier. While there may be numerous programs and grants available for local ag producers, the system of locating and applying for such programs is burdensome. The inability to take advantage of these programs has the potential to disrupt the sustainability of local farming in Kaua'i. Focus group members described their desire for all government entities to better understand what is happening on the ground. Policies affect every scale of agricultural operation. More direct government interaction would give legislators a better idea of how to support local farmers.*
- › **Cooperation is key.**
 - » *Independent of the question being asked or the direction of the conversation, agricultural cooperatives were discussed repeatedly. Focus group members believe government assistance at all levels is needed to build, launch, and sustain co-ops. Many focus group members believed that if all levels of government were committed to building and sustaining co-ops, the island's agriculture would have a greater chance of thriving.*

QUESTION 3: What are the greatest strengths of the current ag economy?

- › **We can grow anything, but should we be growing everything?**
 - » *The Kaua'i environment makes it possible to grow anything. This ability allows for great crop diversification and is suitable for agriculture science advancements. Crop diversification is seen as a strength.*
 - » *"Made in Hawaii" was discussed at length by various groups. The label carries significant meaning in the state and across the country. Taking advantage of not only the slogan but the pride and quality found in Hawaiian-made products would be advantageous. "Made in Hawaii" already exists. There is an emotional connection to the phrase that can be used to drive value-added products and various other items produced by both large and small-scale farmers.*

QUESTION 4: What are the greatest challenges to the ag economy on Kauai?

- › **Profitability is the greatest challenge for small-scale farmers.**
 - » *It is incredibly difficult for small-scale farmers to make their crops profitable. New opportunities, including farmer's markets, have become available in the last 24-36 months. However, profitability is still a challenge. Farming on a small scale prohibits farmers from producing enough crops to consistently fulfill larger contracts. Also, the lack of production facilities on the island makes it difficult to create value-add products that could increase profit margins.*

- › **Production and opportunities to create value-added products are a challenge for all.**
 - » *Regardless of the agriculture sector, the lack of production facilities and opportunities was a strong recurring theme. Value-added products were mentioned as a likely favorite for economic development. However, the post-production facilities needed to add value to finished products do not exist on the island. Co-ops for production and value-added post-production must be strongly considered to sustain agriculture in Kaua'i.*
- › **Infrastructure, Infrastructure, Infrastructure**
 - » *This document discusses infrastructure as a linchpin to the agricultural economy. Of all the infrastructure challenges discussed, water was the most prominent theme. It was said over and over that without water, there would be no agriculture, and the farmers are genuinely concerned about the future of the water supply on the island.*
- › **Kaua'i representation with state and federal level government is not adequate.**
 - » *Government at all levels (local, state, and federal) was frequently highlighted as a roadblock to success. Local government is accessible. Some relationships have been built that are mutually beneficial. The same is not true at the state and federal levels. With little to no formal representation (lobbyists, strong associations, etc.), moving agriculture forward will continue to be a challenge.*

QUESTION 5: *What is your vision of agriculture on Kauai in 1 or 3 or 5 or 20 years?*

- › **As mentioned earlier in this summary, without water, there is no agriculture. Water infrastructure sustainability is key to whatever the future of agriculture holds in Kauai. Water sustainability was such a profound theme, it is certainly worth mentioning again in this section.**
- › **Focus groups did not see any significant changes in the agricultural sector in the next year when discussing the future. However, moving forward, three themes emerged. 1) Profitability has to become a focus if small-scale farmers are going to remain in the industry. It was expressed that agriculture could become profitable by securing larger contracts, for example, with the school system. Small-scale farming does not allow for the production volume necessary to fulfill larger contracts. 2) Agriculture cooperatives and a focus on agri-science is the future for ag in Kauai. Directly related to number one, cooperatives are essential if small-scale farms will be sustainable and profitable. Cooperatives would allow for the pooling of resources allowing multiple farmers to fulfill larger contracts and providing the opportunity for producers to value-add. 3) A shift in farming techniques is essential. Focus groups mentioned the need to value past farming practices but also look to more economic, efficient, and sustainable farming techniques.**

QUESTION 6: **What else do you think we should know?**

- › **The trades are important to the agriculture industry.**
 - » *Multiple focus groups voiced concern about the lack of the trades being taught at Kauai Community College. Agricultural equipment is difficult to secure. Bringing rental companies to make heavy farming equipment available to small-scale agricultural producers requires mechanics, welders, and diesel technicians. Providing opportunities to "grow your own" tradesmen is essential to agriculture sustainability. Agriculture technology is the future. However, ag-tech, along with traditional agriculture, requires the trades.*

IN CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

You will find useful information in this report when designing an economic/ strategic plan to enhance the County of Kaua'i. These findings highlight areas of strength that can be further leveraged as well as topics to explore for improvement and growth.

Moving forward, the County of Kauai, KEDB, and Guna Solutions will move into phase II of the project. This phase includes a deeper dive into the raw data and creating a vision and mission statement. The immediate priority for the County and KEDB is to distribute this summary to the planning advisory group. This group will meet on September 6th to begin phase II.

APPENDIX II

ADDENDUM TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN

PURPOSE

The strategic plan represents a detailed summary of steps to take to achieve the vision, mission, goals, and objectives of the island.

The purpose of this addendum is to give context and potential ideas for how to implement the objectives as the plan progresses. During the creation of the strategic plan, a large amount of raw data was gathered from 13 different stakeholder groups. In some cases, that raw data was simply comments people left during brainstorming. In creating the strategies and tasks during Phase IV, all of the raw data was considered for inclusion in the strategic plan. Many times, similar data points were captured and consolidated into single strategies or tasks.

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

This document primarily gives context and narrates some of the nuance and finer points of the strategic plan. If there is any confusion with the plan, we hope this document will provide clarity.

OVERALL PLAN

SOME NOTES ABOUT THE OVERALL PLAN

Kauai was twice an agricultural global powerhouse through sugarcane and pineapple. The team that helped create this plan visualizes the potential for a third turn.

Agriculture on the island declined economically on the island due to the rise of globalization. Technology advances in production and transportation allowed other countries to grow competing products with less cost. Subsequently, exports were greatly reduced. Creating a new, thriving agricultural culture will require determination, partnerships, and innovation. It will likely take not years, but decades to rekindle, much as it took decades to fade in influence. This is a generational plan.

The Operational Vision Framework used by Guna Solutions attempts to separate tasks into objectives. This separation of responsibilities allows objectives to be pursued by individuals or groups without concern for duplication of effort. The vision, mission and goals outlined in the strategic plan are meant to be "north stars" - immovable targets that provide stability to the plan. Objectives, strategies, and tasks are more pliable, changing as the plan progresses to accommodate for shifts in priority and environmental factors.

Many strategic plans are created for projects or organizations that want to plan for 3-10 years in the future. Even in the case of organizational strategic plans, the scope is manageable; leaders can visualize the end state they desire and create a series of actions and objectives that will take them there in under a decade, many times far less. The objectives defined in most plans complete the vision, meaning that if the objectives are achieved, the goals are met and the vision becomes reality.

The scope and duration of this strategic plan make it unique in two ways.

First, the objectives in this plan only achieve part of the vision. Specifically, as mentioned earlier in the document, the objectives selected for the initial implementation of this plan align directly with Goals 1 & 2. Building partnerships, creating a new generation of farmers, and starting and strengthening co-ops will drive a sustainable and prosperous Kaua'i, but likely there will still be work needed to create world class products and gain world-wide brand recognition.

Second, there is seeming overlap between the objectives. For example, creating a marketing campaign for Kaua'i's agriculture is Strategy 1.2. Marketing, however, is needed for other purposes that fall outside the first objective. Marketing the cultural value of buying locally grown foods in the local community is important, as is marketing local foods to tourists on the island. Education is also highlighted in multiple objectives, but pertaining to different audiences or trying to accomplish different purposes. While farmers need to be educated on new technologies and best business practices, tourists need to be educated on the agriculture industry, and locals need to be educated on the importance of buying local produce.

These features have been identified and considered in preparation of publishing the completed plan. The advisory group acknowledged that objectives will need to be completed, updated, and added to for the vision to be achieved.

OBJECTIVE 1

PLANT

Co-ops were a recurring theme throughout the planning process. The success of several co-ops around the island provided inspiration for a larger vision of shared agricultural resources as a foundation for success. The Kekaha Agricultural Association (KAA) serves as a prime example of a mature co-op capable of managing water resources and land to support projects and small farmers.

Co-ops were highlighted for their many potential benefits to farmers. Just as the KAA does more than just managing land and water, coops have the benefits of pooling resources for the greater good of many stakeholders.

To be sure, creating a co-op or even a number of co-ops across the island could use its own strategic plan. Private industry, non-profits, and government are all potential funding sources to begin the implementation of a new co-op on the island.

Building a co-op on the east side of the island was a particularly popular theme. Political threats to reservoirs and water management on the east side brought immediate concerns of the need for an organization that could help manage those resources. Another potential option presented was to expand the reach of KAA to benefit the whole island.

The benefits of co-ops were widely discussed and equally wide in scope. Here is a list of items that were mentioned throughout the planning process as potential shared resources:

- › **Marketing**
 - » *An overall marketing plan*
 - » *Social media*
 - » *Internet (digital presence such as websites)*
 - » *Movies*
 - » *Webinars*
 - » *Trade shows*
 - » *TV*
 - » *Emphasizing sustainability*
 - » *Establishing and enforcing a branding criteria*
 - » *Partnering with the tourism industry*

- › **Business**
 - » *Onboarding guide / checklists for new farmers*
 - » *Basic understanding of business financials*
 - » *Business plans*
 - » *Credit and access to capital*
 - » *A mentorship program for new members*
 - » *A shared attorney*
 - » *Access to grant writers*
- › **Ag Tourism**
 - » *Promote as increasing green space*
 - » *Create unique experiences for locals and visitors*
 - » *Ag celebrated / seen as a key contributor to the visitor's Kauai experience*
 - » *Emphasize the uniqueness of Kauai Ag Products*
 - » *Partnering with restaurants and chefs to highlight Kauai products*
 - » *Connect with tour group operators*
- › **Distribution**
 - » *Resources for packing and marketing*
 - » *Consolidated processing facility*
 - » *Optimize food aggregation and distribution systems*
 - » *Change laws for zoning of commercial kitchens / commercial sale*
 - » *Bulk purchasing*
 - » *Access to cold storage*
 - » *Leverage volume to reduce shipping costs*
- › **Infrastructure**
 - » *Dependable irrigation and water sources*
 - » *Large tracts of open land farmed in rotation*
 - » *Long term land leases*
 - » *Technology is explored and adopted at the co-op level to benefit members*

OBJECTIVE 2

GROW

Throughout the planning process, we were fortunate enough to have several young farmers and members of the agricultural community participate. They exuded a passion for the work that was evidence of the island's commitment to agriculture. A couple of important themes emerged when considering how to cultivate a new generation of farmers.

First, there needs to be a connection to the heritage, the culture, and the community. Young people expressed a connection to the island and people and how the history of Kauai is important to them. Those that will become farmers are likely the ones that feel a deep connection with their culture.

Second, the next generation must be shown that financial success is possible through agriculture. Physically intense, constant labor might be pursued, but only if the financial rewards are visible. This can be achieved through telling stories of success - who are the local farmers doing well right now, and how does their story get told to the next generation?

Lastly, new technologies must be leveraged to attract new farmers. Innovative approaches can help the younger generation visualize themselves in agriculture. Technology has an opportunity to make farming exciting, and teaching ag tech at high school, community college, and at community education events could help inspire the next generation of farmers.

Here are some of the raw comments from the brainstorming sessions during plan development:

- › **Home Grown Cultivation**
 - » *Keep Kama'aina home!*
 - » *"Local food for local people"*
 - » *Make locally grown food affordable*
 - » *Set up a working group to include Malama Kauai and AHK*
 - » *Partner with schools island-wide to provide work based learning opportunities*
- › **Hawaiian Culture**
 - » *Honor our ancestors*
 - » *Help native Hawaiians find their strength and identity again, Kuleana*
 - » *Provide education on agriculture history on the island*
 - » *"Can't have agriculture without culture."*

- » *Integrate traditional and modern technology where feasible to perpetuate ag traditions and cultural practices*
- » *Keep Kauai rural - reduce development on the island*
- » *Celebrate agriculture history through events and media*
- » *Train people in traditional methods of farming Loi and other traditional crops*
- » *Create gathering spaces to practice cultural activities*
- » *Create a working group to include: KIKA, Malama Huleia, Iwikua*
- › **Technology**
 - » *Research potential ag products from around the world*
 - » *Increase tech innovations to make Kauai ag production more efficient*
 - » *Create a working group to include: AHK - Yosh, Fred Cowell, Mark Stoutemyer, Jerry Ornellas, CTAHR, Schools*
 - » *Incentivize research on ag product innovation*
 - » *Use drones, water monitoring, GPS, etc*
 - » *Add technical ag positions*
 - » *Promote research on plant medicine*
- › **Profitability, financial feasibility**
 - » *Create a path to financial literacy for new farmers*
 - » *Help farmers diversify their revenue streams*
 - » *Ensure that operations of all sizes have a business plan*
 - » *Create a working group that includes: USDA (AMS, NRCS, etc.), SBA - Robbie Melton, OED - Nate Prescott, Warren Doi*
 - » *Reduce cost of production*
 - » *Farmers come together to create healthcare for themselves instead of waiting for the state*
 - » *Reduce barriers to providing worker housing*
- › **Education**
 - » *Educate farmers: business management, finance management, soil health, pest management and disease control, value add, ways to improve quality*
 - » *Create a working group including: GoFarm, CTAHR, NSEVP, Dept. of Health*
 - » *Utilize the K-12 schools and University of Hawaii system*
 - » *Educate consumers: cost of production, use of products, labor, misfit produce*
 - » *IPM training*
 - » *Free food and safety courses*

This mindmap / Jamboard slide was too good not to include:



OBJECTIVE 3

HARVEST

Much of the discussion around objective three related to government support at the local, county, state, and federal levels. The overall sentiment is that the government has good talking points, but the financial backing does not follow and there is too much red tape for farmers to be successful.

Access to land and housing for farmers were two key challenges highlighted in the planning process, as was the lack of funding to help maintain shared infrastructure. Partnering with government for seed funding to jumpstart co-ops, processing centers, or infrastructure projects would unlock ag potential across the island.

An additional highlight was the lack of strong representation and associations to lobby for the needs of farmers on Kauai. Some of the other islands have shown more progress in creating these types of organizations, but Kauai's interests aren't represented by associations from other islands. The water infrastructure on the east side of the island is a prime example of not having a unified voice to sway the opinions of legislators or taxpayers.

Here were some of the notes from the planning process:

- › **Food processing centers funded by a passionate government**
- › **Lobbying / leg representation**
- › **State / county support**
- › **Government regulation cannot be unnecessarily burdensome, unrealistic, and get in the way.**
- › **Policies and funding aligned with long-term success and profitability of producers**
- › **Partner with government organizations to apply for grant funds**
- › **Elect officials who are passionate and educated about agriculture on the island**
- › **Private sector driven with government providing environment for successful private agriculture**
- › **Simplify and reduce barriers to access land and infrastructure**

GOING FORWARD

NOTES FOR FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION

In the fullness of time, the planning team involved in this document believe that Kauai can once again be a world-class agricultural economy. The scope of the vision requires a narrower focus on objectives that can be accomplished in the next five to ten years and will set the foundation for a more robust agriculture economy in the more distant future.

For this reason, the objectives outlined in this plan only cover part of the vision. During the planning process, however, the participants dreamt big. Many of their ideas will be important for future phases of implementation but don't fit into the current objectives.

We recommend this section be revisited annually to see if new objectives can be created to move the island further along the path to agricultural global excellence.

Longer Term Ideas:

- › **Create opportunities for worldwide producers to connect! Example: Ag convention, chocolate festival, coffee festival**
- › **Grow products that are unique to Kauai. Specific products weren't discussed during the planning process (or at least not captured in detail), but one of the advisory board members expressed the desire to "grow and produce products that can only be produced on Kauai."**
- › **Advertising internationally and outside Kaua'i will eventually be important to create world-wide brand recognition. Some advertising mediums considered were travel websites and magazines.**
- › **"Ag sector celebrated as a key contributor to visitors' Kauai experience."**
- › **Emphasis was placed on previous technical innovations that Kaua'i farmers introduced to the world with both pineapple and sugar production. Several times, it was suggested that the community college and the University of Hawaii system could be leveraged to reinvigorate research on the island and bring new innovations to market.**



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Dr. Joshua McDowell is currently serving as the Superintendent for Crete Public Schools in Crete, NE. In his career, he has served many roles, from classroom teacher to district administrator, all with a focus on helping all kids succeed. Before serving in Crete, he was the Chief Academic Officer and Chief Transformation Officer for Grand Island Public Schools. Along with his responsibilities for Crete, he works with school districts and other organizations across the country to expand their impact and help more students and communities achieve their goals. A husband to an educator and a father to two school-age kids, he considers it his calling to lead public education to be more relevant, intentional, and impactful for all kids, families, and communities. A lifelong learner, McDowell earned his Bachelor of Arts Degree from Doane College in 1999, his Master's Degree in Educational Administration from Doane College in 2008, and his Doctorate of Education Degree in Interdisciplinary Leadership from Creighton University in 2017.



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Mikael has been a software developer for over five years. He has developed software for school districts, the Department of Defense, and private industry. Mikael has developed websites, Android applications, and servers. Mikael is also an officer in the Army National Guard and has over 14 years of experience in executive leadership, strategic planning, and operations. His wife is an educator and his mother was a teacher for nearly 30 years. In all endeavors, Mikael strives to help maximize efficiency, productivity, and performance of systems, processes, and leaders. Providing software solutions to help plan, create goals, and show leaders organizational progress is Mikael's objective with every engagement. Mikael graduated Colorado State University with a degree in Psychology in 2004 and Oregon State University with a degree in Computer Science in 2014. He is currently studying Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence at Georgia Tech University.

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