

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 1, 2012
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A Plan for Pahoia: Pahoia Regional Town Center Planning to Begin in March

The Event

EVERYONE INTERESTED IN THE FUTURE OF PAHOIA is invited to attend the first Pahoia Plan Community Event on Saturday, March 24, 2012, 3-6 p.m. at the Pahoia Community Center.

The undertaking of the Pahoia Regional Town Center Plan (known as the "Pahoia Plan") will launch with Saturday's gathering and offer an opportunity for members of the greater Pahoia community to get informed and get involved.

The first half of the event, 3:00-4:30, will provide information about the Pahoia Plan, ask for feedback from the audience, and make the Community Input Survey available to complete and return. This event will also provide interested persons the opportunity to join working committees to guide the development of the Pahoia Plan, or to help with outreach for community input via the survey. **The second half of the program, 4:30-6:00**, will offer musical entertainment, refreshments and an opportunity to get acquainted with Pahoia neighbors.

Why A Plan?

Pahoia, described as a Regional Town Center in the Puna Community Development Plan (the PCDP), is tasked with providing a number of services and resources to those living in and around the 96778 ZIP code area. There is no denying that the neighborhoods in 96778 are growing fast, as evidenced by the 2010 Census which indicates a 35% population increase since 2000. As the region continues to grow, what impact will this have on Pahoia? What will Pahoia look like in fifty years' time?

The truth is, whether we want Pahoia to stay small-town cozy, grow to incorporate new services and facilities, become the next big city in Hawaii, or some creative combination of these, we as a community need to lay out a plan for how we want development (or lack thereof) to happen and where (or where not). If we do nothing, development will continue along its own course. But without guidance, it will proceed in an aimless manner that, in the long run, may or may not make environmental, social, or economic sense.

Who?

To address this need, a team of four individuals formed as a steering committee to lead the community-based process of developing a comprehensive Pahoia Regional Town Center Plan. Current Steering Committee members are Madie Green, Jon Olson, Robin Stetson and Rob Tucker, whose efforts follow guidelines set forth by the PCDP, adopted by ordinance in 2008 by the Hawaii County Council

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The Steering Committee first presented to the PCDP Committee at its November 8, 2011 meeting and was subsequently given the green light by the Action Committee on February 14, 2012. The formation of the Action Committee's Pahoia Plan Sub-Committee incorporates the original steering committee and acknowledges the Pahoia Plan as an extension of the PCDP.

"We will not be creating the Pahoia Plan by ourselves," states steering committee member, Robin Stetson. "Our top priority is that Pahoia's community is the source of ideas for services and facilities which are needed in Pahoia, as well as which elements of the culture, history and resources of the region need to be supported and emphasized within the town itself. The more minds and hearts involved in this process, the better the outcome will be."

The Goal

The steering committee's goal is to have a final draft of the Pahoia Regional Town Center Plan ready to present to the County Council for approval and adoption by year end 2012.

Pahoia Main Street Design District

The Pahoia Plan will utilize working committees assigned to focus topics, which may include the designated Design District of Pahoia Main Street, economic development, land use, housing, social services, transportation, parking, public safety & sanitation, shops, restaurants, parks, recreation, preservation of historic/cultural/scenic elements, and more.

The Pahoia Plan Survey

To generate widespread public input the Steering Committee will host several survey locations at gathering places including farmers' markets, shopping centers, schools and other key locations in and around Pahoia Town. During the 2-3 weeks period beginning March 24th, residents may share their ideas for Pahoia at these locations by either talk story or written survey. In addition, participating Pahoia businesses will have the written survey available to take on a walk-in basis during business hours. An online survey will also be available 24-7 and will go live on March 24th at <http://tinyurl.com/7dw9vkc>.

Volunteers Needed

Volunteer participation is encouraged to conduct the outreach phase of the survey with the goal of hearing from as many residents of greater Pahoia's diverse population as possible. Interested persons may also choose to be a part of working committees involved with processing public input and developing the Pahoia Plan. **For More Information**, please send an email to pahoaplan@gmail.com or phone: 808-430-3991.