

WHAT DOES THE DRAFT VOLCANO LONG RANGE PLAN REALLY SAY?

This handout was prepared by the Volcano Long Range Plan (VLRP) committee of the Volcano Community Association (VCA) to respond to comments made about the plan during the community meeting at Cooper Center on January 16, 2015. To review the current draft of the Volcano Long Range Plan go to the Volcano Community Association (VCA) website <http://www.volcanocommunity.org>, and choose Long Range Plan on the top bar.

COMMENT: THE VLRP IS GOING TO DICTATE TO ALL VOLCANO RESIDENTS HOW TO DESIGN AND MAINTAIN THEIR HOUSES.

Design

guidelines to be developed are to apply only to the commercial district along Old Volcano Road in Volcano Village to maintain its historical and rural character. This proposed district, if accepted by the community, would extend somewhere between Ira Ono's Garden Arts establishment, along the Old Volcano Highway, to about the boundary with the national park. If you live in the Volcano Golf Course subdivision, Mauna Loa, 'Ōhi'a, Royal Hawaiian, or Hawaiian Orchid Island Estates, Upper Fern Forest, and almost the entirety of Volcano Village, no design guidelines would apply to your homes and property! Design guidelines for this area would apply only to new structures, or to significant modifications to existing structures, and to landscape and visual qualities. It applies to commercial structures; whether it applies to residential structures remains to be decided. A committee of residents would be formed to serve as representatives of the community who would recommend to the County Planning Director any actions he/she might take regarding permit or variance applications in this area. Pp 19-20; 33-36.

COMMENT: THERE IS NO NEED FOR A PLAN FOR THE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT BECAUSE THE LACK OF COUNTY WATER AND DEPENDENCE ON WATER CATCHMENT NATURALLY LIMITS COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT.

Commercial development is occurring despite the water catchment constraint. For example, the Tai Tai restaurant, the Volcano True Value Hardware Store, and associated commercial structures were developed with water catchment. Some commercial facilities such as the Volcano Store and attached restaurants rely largely on water catchment because their water needs are modest. New businesses may also have modest water needs or be willing to develop large water catchment systems like those at the Tai Tai restaurant.

COMMENT: THE PROPOSED BIOSPHERE RESERVE DESIGNATION WOULD LEAD TO UNITED NATIONS CONTROL OR INTRUSION.

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park is a World Heritage site and an International Biosphere Reserve, both United Nations (UNESCO) designations. The Park was designated an International Biosphere Reserve because of the unique, endemic native plant, animals, and ecosystems it supports and for its leadership role in the islands in protecting and restoring them. The VLRP advocates including the community of Volcano as a Transition Area within the Biosphere Reserve. A Biosphere Reserve Transition Area is a place where people live

and work, and where the human presence may be dominant but not destructive. **These UN designations involve absolutely no United Nations control or regulation; the UN simply designates areas.** The National Park Service retains total control of park management within Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. UNESCO officials have never once attempted to direct or control the Park in any manner. The County of Hawai'i would continue to be the governing body for land use within the community of Volcano. The purpose of seeking designation as a Transition Area within the biosphere reserve is educational. It would provide a moral force for decision making on the part of residents about activities that might affect the native forest canopy. Pp. 7-8.

COMMENT: THE VLRP JUST ADDS ANOTHER LAYER OF GOVERNMENT.

*What the plan does is allow from bottom-up planning, returning authority to the community for long term planning. The purpose of community plans is to bring decision-making authority to the level nearest to the people who will be affected. We consider this to be the purest declaration of the democratic process, where the residents of the community are able to prevail in lieu of County or State land use decisions. The local community would, for the first time, be in a position to guide County planners in decisions about conditions of building permits and to have more control over land clearing and development. **Without the plan, many of the most valuable features of living in Volcano will be lost, including the historic, rural character of the downtown, the forest canopy and songs and sights of colorful native birds, and historic neighborhoods.***

COMMENT: EDUCATION AND PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY, NOT COUNTY ORDINANCE, SHOULD GUIDE BEHAVIOR OF PROPERTY OWNERS TO PROTECT THE VALUES OF VOLCANO COMMUNITY.

The Volcano Plan emphasizes an educational, rather than coercive, approach in the development of the community. The introductory sections of the plan describe the values that community members have expressed over the years, and in some detail how these values will be protected. Certainly some of the terminology in the Plan that sounds coercive will need to be changed. But, the plan throughout stresses participation by residents in managing their properties, development of simple and attainable rules to protect scenic and historic values, and an educational approach toward understanding why such standards would be adopted. The Building in the Forest brochure, and the proposal for a Transition Area are examples of a participatory and non-coercive approach toward development. The Volcano Community Association, parent organization of the VLRP committee, is actively dedicated to an educational approach to leadership. It regularly sponsors local workshops on weed control, native plant propagation, and forest restoration. The VCA is also sponsoring the Cooper Center nature trail and forest restoration project; you may have noticed that the ginger disappeared from the forest behind Cooper Center. A major theme of the nature trail will be about the value of Hawaiian rainforest. When complete, the project will serve as a model of forest restoration for the Volcano area.