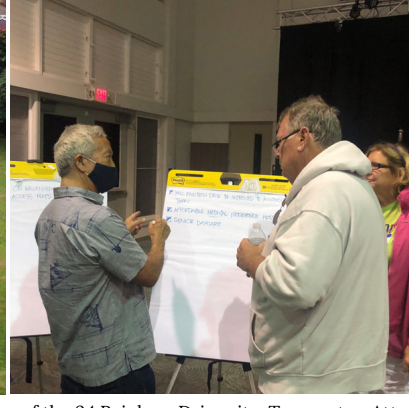




Office of Housing and Community Development NEWSLETTER



Left: An aerial view of the 34 Rainbow Drive site. Top center: Attendees learn more about the project during a May 15, 2023, community meeting at Aupuni Center. Bottom center and right: Attendees of the September 14, 2023, Open House offer input on the development of open acreage at the site in Hilo. County of Hawai'i photos

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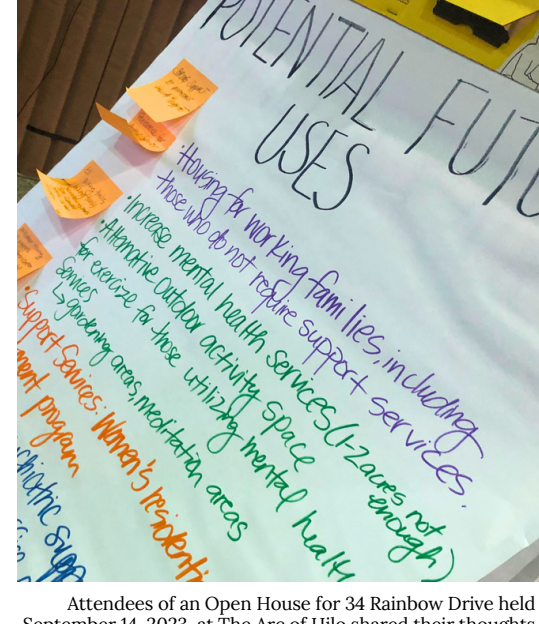
34 Rainbow Drive master plan taking shape

A master plan for the future of 34 Rainbow Drive is taking shape.

Dozens of residents, stakeholders and other interested parties participated in a community meeting in May and an Open House in September to help guide the Office of Housing and Community Development to determine the best use of the vacant acreage in Hilo.

Through the well-attended public outreach events, combined with an online StoryMap and survey, planners Fung Associates Inc. and PBR Hawaii & Associates Inc. and the Office of Housing and Community Development have gained a better understanding of the community's needs.

"The Office of Housing and Community Development appreciates the dedication of our community in helping to identify potential opportunities for development of the open land at 34 Rainbow Drive. This site, located near hospitals and other



Attendees of an Open House for 34 Rainbow Drive held September 14, 2023, at The Arc of Hilo shared their thoughts on the potential future uses for the site in Hilo.



CDBG, HOME, HOME-ARP AND HTF FUNDING AVAILABLE

Proposals will be accepted through November 15

The County of Hawai'i Office of Housing and Community Development has issued a request for proposals for a share of over \$10 million in federal funds.

Proposals from eligible agencies and organizations seeking the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development grants and funding will be accepted until 4:30 p.m. November 15, 2023.

"The Office of Housing and Community Development is pleased to announce this request for proposals for funding that will support a variety of efforts to enhance the quality of life for Hawai'i Island communities. Over the years, these federal investments have helped with constructing and renovating low-income, senior, and veteran housing, acquiring and renovating shelters for victims of domestic violence, and making community facilities accessible to all," said Housing Administrator Susan Kunz. "We encourage all eligible applicants to submit their projects for funding consideration."

For 2024, the County of Hawai'i anticipates it will receive about \$2.6 million for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program in 2024; \$3 million for the HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program; \$1.97 million for the HOME-American Rescue Plan (HOME-ARP) Program; and \$3 million for the National Housing Trust Fund (HTF) Program.

For more information on program criteria, eligibility requirements, and program objectives for each funding opportunity, visit www.housing.hawaiicounty.gov/grants-funding.

Kukuioala Emergency Shelter and Assessment Center on schedule



County of Hawai'i Office of Housing and Community Development Housing Administrator Susan Kunz (far left) and Community Engagement Division Manager Sharon Hirota (left) get an update on the Kukuioala Emergency Shelter and Assessment Center from contractors during a recent site visit.

Site preparation is progressing smoothly for the Kukuioala Emergency Shelter and Assessment Center in Kailua-Kona.

Crews are on schedule to complete mass grading and an access road for the center by the start of 2024. Vertical construction of the much-needed facility will follow.

The Kukuioala Emergency Shelter and Assessment Center will be built in two phases. The project's first phase is funded in part by a \$10 million federal grant secured by U.S. Sens. Brian Schatz and Mazie Hirono.

The first phase includes 16 emergency shelter units, assessment center, shared community restroom facilities with showers, community center and shared kitchen space, office space for case management services, a manager's unit, and open space for community building activities. In addition, up to 46 safe overnight parking stalls will be provided at the site for unsheltered individuals living in vehicles.

A second phase will add 48 affordable permanent housing units with supports, bringing the total number of units to 64.

Affordable Connectivity Program applications being accepted

ELIGIBLE HOUSEHOLDS CAN RECEIVE A DISCOUNT TOWARD INTERNET SERVICE

Looking for ways to save on monthly bills? The Affordable Connectivity Program, which offers a discount toward internet service, might be able to help.

The Affordable Connectivity Program is a Federal Communications Commission initiative developed to help families and households afford internet service.

Under the program, eligible households can receive up to \$30 per month toward broadband service and up to \$75 for households on

Hawaiian Home Lands. Additionally, eligible households can receive a one-time discount of up to \$100 off a laptop, desktop computer or tablet.

Funded through the \$65 billion Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act passed by Congress in November 2021, the Affordable Connectivity Program is administered by the Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office.

For more information, visit <https://broadband.hawaii.gov/acp/>



New inspection standards for Section 8 rentals

NEW 'NSPIRE' MODEL PRIORITIZES HEALTH, SAFETY, AND FUNCTIONAL DEFECTS OVER APPEARANCE

The National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE) went into effect on October 1, 2023.

NSPIRE improves the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's oversight by aligning and consolidating inspection regulations used to evaluate HUD housing across multiple programs. It strengthens HUD's physical condition standards, formerly known as the Uniform Physical Condition Standard (UPCS) and the Housing Quality Standards (HQS).

The new model prioritizes health, safety, and functional defects over appearance. It implements inspections that better reflect the true physical condition of the property. The NSPIRE model supports the adoption of sound, year-round maintenance practices.

With the move to NSPIRE, there will be some shifts of inspections standards for Section 8 rentals.

NSPIRE going into effect requires no immediate action from Section 8 Participants, however, OHCD encourages participants to work with their landlord, rental owner, or property manager to ensure units meet these new standards.

A few of the major changes include but are not limited to:

Carbon Monoxide (CO) Alarm:

If you have a:

- Gas Stove
- Attached Enclosed Garage
- Gas Water Heater in the home
- Fire Place
- Other Gas or Wood burning appliances

in your Section 8 Rental Unit, at minimum, you will need to install a Carbon Monoxide (CO) Detector/Alarm in the hallway(s) near the bedrooms.

Smoke Alarm:

Smoke Alarms will need to be present in ALL:



The National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE) went into effect on October 1, 2023, for Section 8 rentals. Courtesy photo

- Bedrooms
- Hallways
- Kitchens
- Stairwells
- Common areas (includes living rooms and dining rooms)

Carbon Monoxide Alarms and Smoke Alarms are considered Life-Threatening deficiencies

and must be fixed within 24 hours of the County Housing Inspection. Failure to do so will result in the Housing Agency Abating Payments. Recoup of payments during Abatement is not possible.

For more information, including specific standards, visit <https://tinyurl.com/yc3k3bcn>.

A friendly reminder for our Partner Landlords:

If you're doing a New Lease, please submit an Unsigned Proposed Rental Lease Agreement prior to the lease going into effect. The County of Hawai'i Office of Housing and Community Development must APPROVE the lease before it goes into effect. You'll also need to turn in a Request for Tenancy Approval Form (RTA) and letter documenting the termination of current lease.

Questions? Email landlord.housing@hawaiicounty.gov

Reporting Income or Family Changes is Required for Section 8 Participants

Section 8 families are required to report in writing any change in income (increase or decrease) within 30 days. Also, any changes to a household composition, must be reported within 30 days. Updated information can be emailed to sec8info@hawaiicounty.gov, faxed to (808) 959-9308, mailed to OHCD, Existing Housing Division, 1990 Kino'ole St., Hilo, HI 96720 or submitted in-person at our office or drop box outside the building.

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

RENT to a Housing Voucher Participant
With a 1-Year Lease receive additional

Landlord Incentive Bonus \$3,000

Contact landlord.housing@hawaiicounty.gov or Call (808) 959-4642, ext. 1904, to get started today

Only while funding is available. First qualified, first serve basis. Voucher types only: FYI (Foster Youth to Independence) and VASH (Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing). There are a limited number of bonus incentives remaining for EHV and Mainstream Elderly & Non-disabled vouchers.



Program offers tax break to owners of affordable rentals

Property owners who comply with the County of Hawaii's Affordable Rental Housing Program requirements may apply for a reduction in real property taxes for the July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025, tax period.

Application forms are available online at www.hawaiipropertytax.com or at the Real Property Tax Division's office at Aupuni

Center in Hilo and West Hawai'i Civic Center in Kailua-Kona.

Applications, and supporting documentation, must be postmarked or submitted to the Real Property Tax Division no later than 4:30 p.m. December 31, 2023.

Because the submittal deadline falls on a Sunday, property owners who plan to submit an application in-person at a Real Property Tax Division

office should do so by 4:30 p.m. December 29, 2023.

Affordable Rental Housing Rates for the 2024-25 tax period are as follows:

- Studio: \$1,202
- One Bedroom: \$1,276
- Two Bedrooms: \$1,658
- Three Bedrooms: \$2,134
- Four Bedrooms: \$2,355
- Five Bedrooms: \$2,708
- Six Bedrooms: \$3,061

Affordable Rental Housing

Rate exceptions are available for the following ZIP Codes: 96719, 96725, 96738, 96739, 96740, 96743, 96745, and 96755.

- Studio: \$1,311
- One Bedroom: \$1,392
- Two Bedrooms: \$1,809
- Three Bedrooms: \$2,328
- Four Bedrooms: \$2,569
- Five Bedrooms: \$2,954
- Six Bedrooms: \$3,339

For more information, call (808) 961-8201.

MASTER PLAN:

Continued from front

services, offers a unique opportunity for the County of Hawai'i to create a place where members of the community can receive the support and housing they need to prosper and thrive," said Housing Administrator Susan Kunz.

During the September 14, 2023, Open House, comments on potential future uses focused on housing types and complementary supportive services such as mental health resources, recreational amenities, and medical facilities.

Among the suggestions for future uses were building affordable housing with supportive services including crisis stabilization, a one-stop mental health facility mirroring Arizona's crisis care model, and detox services. Others suggested a women's residential treatment program, emergency shelter and support services for the homeless, psychiatric care for youth, vocational training and afterschool programs, childcare services, and much more.

Of the two conceptual master plan layouts presented during the Open House, participants expressed a preference for the second alternative, which includes a through-road option, citing safety and access reasons.

Now, planners will work to complete the master plan and accompanying environmental

assessment and archaeological studies for the site. If all goes as planned, the master plan and draft studies should be complete in spring 2024.

The master plan and studies are funded in-part by a \$13 million Congressional earmark secured by U.S. Sens. Mazie Hirono and Brian Schatz.

The majority of the federal funding is being used to renovate the old Hilo Memorial Hospital, which is located within the 25-acre site at 34 Rainbow Drive. The renovation of the existing facility is covered under the 34 Rainbow Drive master plan.

Constructed in the 1920-30s, Hilo Memorial Hospital served the community's health care needs until the 1950s when Hilo Hospital opened on the grounds of what is today Hilo Medical Center.

The old hospital and the state land it sits on are under the management of the County of Hawai'i by way of a governor's executive order. Per the order, the County must maintain the historic building, prompting the renovation work.

Since the closure of Hilo Memorial Hospital, various agencies and entities have occupied the facility.

Currently leasing space in the building are Big Island Substance Abuse Council and HOPE Services Hawai'i. HOPE Services since late 2019 has operated its portion of the building as Keolahou, an



Top: Conceptual master plan layout alternative 1. Above: Conceptual master plan layout alternative 2. Of the two conceptual master plan layouts presented during the Open House, participants expressed a preference for the second alternative, which includes a through-road option, citing safety and access reasons. Courtesy renderings

emergency shelter, and Hale Kūlike, a permanent supportive housing program serving single men.

For more detailed information or to keep up to date on the 34 Rainbow Drive project, please visit <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/>

stories/87313daae1124f2e863fa191003fa091.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO VIEW THE 34 RAINBOW DRIVE STORYMAP



UPCOMING OFFICE CLOSURES

- Friday, November 10 — Veterans Day
- Thursday, November 23 — Thanksgiving Day
- Monday, December 25 — Christmas Day
- Monday, January 1, 2024 — New Year's Day



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- Online: www.housing.hawaiicounty.gov
- Email: ohcd@hawaiicounty.gov