



ENVISION  
**LĀ'IE**  
Press Kit

## About Envision Lā'ie

Envision Lā'ie brings together area residents and Lā'ie's major institutions in an effort to address the current and future needs of the Ko'olau Loa region. Everyone is invited to express his or her views. The goal is to plan a future that reflects the community's vision of a quality of living in Lā'ie that is balanced and sustainable for all generations.

Participants include residents and community leaders, business owners, students, public officials and landowners. Brigham Young University–Hawaii, the largest employer in the Ko'olau Loa area and the Polynesian Cultural Center (PCC), the state's most popular paid-visitor attraction, are both located in Lā'ie. Hawaii Reserves, Inc. (HRI) manages and owns land affiliated with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) that has called the area home since it purchased 6,000 acres in Lā'ie nearly a century and a half ago. The LDS Church has supported the Envision Lā'ie process since its inception in 2008.

In April 2009, more than 600 people attended Envision Lā'ie community open houses, participated in workshops and mapped out possible solutions to the problems they face. Among their concerns were rising home prices, lack of affordable housing, and fewer and fewer jobs in the area. When polled, Oahu and Ko'olau Loa residents echoed the findings of the Envision Lā'ie process, sharing a common desire to find a balance between economic, community and environmental priorities for Lā'ie and Ko'olau Loa.

Some community-based ideas include converting the old cane-haul road into a bypass route to better connect communities off the highway; affordable housing in Malaekahana; and jobs and future growth options for BYU-Hawaii and PCC. Other improvements and issues include new bike paths and sidewalks, jobs/housing balance, improved BYU–Hawaii housing and ride-sharing, Laie Hotel replacement and concerns about development for non-residents.

Among Envision Lā'ie's accomplishments thus far are the new 1.2-mile Mālaekahana Bike and Pedestrian Path. A community partnership project connecting Lā'ie and Kahuku, the bike path was dedicated in 2011 and is widely used by public school students, teachers and residents. In addition, last year, the Honolulu City Council approved a permit for the construction of a 200-plus room hotel to replace the dilapidated 49-unit Laie Inn, razed in 2009. Also in 2011, BYU–Hawaii broke ground for a new multi-use facility, marking the beginning of much-needed campus growth.

Envision Lā'ie issues regular updates:  
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## Housing

In February 2012, the median sales price for homes on O'ahu jumped 8.6 percent to \$618,900, the highest it's been in more than a year. For many islanders the high cost of housing keeps the dream of homeownership out of reach.

No one knows this reality better than the residents of Ko'olau Loa, where only 10 percent of residents can afford a house at the median price. Homes in Lā'ie and Ko'olau Loa are overcrowded, with household sizes that are 60 percent larger than the rest of the island. When surveyed, Ko'olau Loa residents indicated that a lack of affordable housing and the high cost of living have substantially impacted their quality of life. As a result, the community's goal is to increase the number of homes available and lower the cost of housing so that it is in line with the area's median income.

Envision Lā'ie has undertaken a multi-step government approval process for additional housing on 300 of the 900 acres in the Malaekahana area owned by Hawaii Reserves, Inc.

Affordable housing solutions that Envision Lā'ie is exploring:

**Smaller Units:** A mix of types, including low-rise apartments; condominiums; townhomes and small, clustered, single-family detached homes.

**Rental, Leasing & Ownership:** Alternative tenure or ownership structures, such as affordable rentals, various ground lease structures, and community land trusts to preserve affordability for future generations.

**Government Programs:** Innovative regulatory initiatives such as Low Income Housing Tax Credits and Community Facilities Districts to develop housing and infrastructure more affordably.

**Cost-effective Construction:** New technology provides quality housing and sustainable building designs and materials. The added benefit is energy-efficient, greener buildings.

**Market-rate Housing Offset:** Revenue from market-rate housing will help offset the costs of the affordable housing units.

More than ten years ago, nearly 80 percent of area homes were purchased by Ko'olau Loa residents; that number has steadily declined and dropped below 50 percent in recent years.

Without innovative and flexible housing solutions to meet current needs, future generations will be forced to go elsewhere to find housing and work—leaving the community's identity to be shaped by the few who can afford to buy homes in the area.

Keeping families in Ko'olau Loa preserves the culture, character, beauty and history of this unique island community. Providing homes for longtime residents and additional housing that allows for the growth of major employers BYU-Hawaii and the Polynesian Cultural Center will help improve the balance among economic, community and environmental priorities.

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## Employment

Ko'olau Loa has two primary economic engines; and both are clean-running and work in unison. With 400 full-time and several hundred part-time staff, Brigham Young University–Hawaii is the region's largest employer. The Polynesian Cultural Center (PCC) employs more than 500, many of them university students. Together the two entities provide approximately 27 percent of all jobs in the region and 69 percent in Lā'ie. (The other major employer in the area is Turtle Bay Resort.)

Having “green” industries such as education and cultural tourism as economic and social drivers is an ideal situation for a small town like Lā'ie. However, Ko'olau Loa residents must travel farther and farther from home to find other employment. Today, there are only 6,000 jobs for Ko'olau Loa's 5,000 households. That translates into 1.2 jobs per household, compared to 1.9 jobs for the rest of the island. The lack of jobs has also contributed to a poverty rate of 13 percent in Ko'olau Loa, nearly double the rate for the rest of O'ahu. For Ko'olau Loa to remain vital and vibrant, BYU–Hawaii and PCC must remain dynamic and relevant.

After years of little or no growth, the 2,700-student BYU–Hawaii, like other universities and colleges on O'ahu, plans to increase annual enrollment by 5 to 7 percent, on average, to meet growing student and economic demands. To accommodate an increased student population, two married student apartment buildings, seven single-student dormitories, and one single-student apartment building will replace and add to existing on-campus housing options.

Long-range plans include possibly expanding PCC as well. The Lā'ie hotel redevelopment alone will likely add an estimated 100 plus new jobs for community residents and student training positions.

The area's economic sustainability centers around BYU–Hawaii and PCC, and the community is keenly aware of this reality. When surveyed, 71 percent of Ko'olau Loa residents support the growth of BYU–Hawaii.

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**BYU-Hawaii Breaks Ground for New Facilities**  
**Multi-use facility launches first phase of college town revitalization**

(Lā‘ie, HI–December 17, 2011)–Brigham Young University–Hawaii marked the beginning of its campus construction project today with a groundbreaking ceremony for a new multi-use facility. The 41,000 square-foot, two-story building will be home to the College of Business, Computing and Government with technology-enhanced classrooms. The facility will include chapels, faculty and ecclesiastical offices and will be used for Church meetings on Sundays.

At the groundbreaking, Doug Chin, managing director for the City and County of Honolulu, spoke about both the economic and cultural importance of BYU–Hawaii to the community.

“When we look at BYU–Hawaii and we realize it employs 400 full-time people as well as several hundred part-time people, we realize what a valuable contribution it makes to the community,” he said. “We are very excited to be able to see this multi-purpose building being built because it represents a further expansion, more jobs and ... a commitment to the community.”

The 2,700-student BYU–Hawaii is the largest employer in the Ko‘olau Loa area. The construction of the multi-use facility, the first significant expansion of the 55-year-old school in decades, is part of a larger plan to incrementally increase student enrollment by five to six percent per year. Eventually, 10 new buildings, including two married-student apartment buildings, seven single-student dormitories, and one single-student apartment building will replace or add to existing on-campus housing options.

“BYU–Hawaii is the economic and social center of Lā‘ie. When the school grows, the rest of the town benefits,” says Pane Meatoga, president of La‘ie Community Association. “We launched Envision Lā‘ie three years ago so we could carefully plan a future that protects the quality of life and emphasizes the values of the people who live in Ko‘olau Loa. It’s an effort that is supported by more than 70 percent of Ko‘olau Loa residents.”

“We are humbled by the support we’ve received from the community for our plans to sustain the campus,” said BYU–Hawaii President Steven C. Wheelwright. “We appreciate the value placed on higher education, and invite the community to continue using our campus for the enrichment of all who surround us.”

Those participating in the groundbreaking included BYU–Hawaii executives, Auntie Gladys Pualoa-Ahuna – a kupuna whose family ties to Lā‘ie pre-date Western contact – and other community leaders.

Brigham Young University–Hawaii, founded by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, was established in 1955. Today, BYU–Hawaii’s 2,600 undergraduate students come from more than 70 different countries.

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