

Maui Redevelopment Agency

Inspiring reinvestment in Historic Wailuku Town

MRA Accomplishments

- Adoption of Wailuku Redevelopment Plan—2000
- Partner in the Restoration of Iao Theater
- Adoption of Zoning and Development Code 2002
- Streamlined permitting and variance process
- Creation of Tax Abatement District—2003
- Creation of Public Restrooms
- Market Street Improvements Design—2004
- Wailuku Design Guidelines—2006
- Parking Structure Conceptual Design—2007
- Securing of \$1.6 Million Federal grant for Parking Structure planning
- Litter and Sidewalk Maintenance Program—2008
- Development of website for Wailuku information
- Initiation of Market-Based Plan for Wailuku—2009
- Finalizing Cash-in-lieu ordinance and needs



MRA poised to stimulate economic reinvestment

The Maui Redevelopment Agency is committed to restoring Wailuku to the vibrant center of commerce, culture, and entertainment it once enjoyed. It is the County's civic center and the heart of the island, Wailuku is where the people of Maui come together for work, health, civic engagement, historic ambiance, and celebration.

But Wailuku's physical condition makes it a challenging place to invest. Substandard lots, aging infrastructure, crumbling buildings, and lack of parking do not invite investment.

The Maui Redevelopment Agency is partnering with Tri-Isle RC&D to bring the nationally renowned planning group, Progressive Urban Management Associates, to Maui to add their specialized services to the continuing revitalization of Wailuku. PUMA provides professional planning skills that advance

Yet, all these challenges can turn into assets with the assistance and direction of the MRA. The role of the Maui Redevelopment Agency is spelled out in Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS)53-2. It is the responsibility of the Maui Redevelopment Agency to eliminate and prevent the reoccurrence of slum and blight conditions. To do this, the State, and the County of Maui via MCC 2.4.050, have granted the MRA the ability to float bonds to finance public improvements, purchase property, provide flexible zoning and building requirements, and fast track

downtown and community development through the development of management, marketing, and financial implementation strategies that help communities compete in a changing economy.

Brad Segal, of PUMA says, "Balancing quality of life with economic development,

permit review procedures.

With the Redevelopment Plan, Town Assessment, Zoning and Development Code, and Design Guidelines now in place the MRA is poised to implement the plan's recommendations. The top priorities include:

- The Wailuku Municipal Parking Structure
- Comprehensive Market-Based Plan
- Vehicle, Pedestrian and Parking Improvements
- Financial Self-Sufficiency
- Public Infrastructure Upgrades

this market-based plan will provide short and long term systems to retain, grow and attract high quality development, new investment and appropriate businesses to the Wailuku Redevelopment Area."

The PUMA team will be in Wailuku the first week of February to begin the work.

Visit the MRA on the web at:

<http://mauiredevelopmentagency.com>

Or contact the MRA staff at
270-5517 or
erin.wade@mauicounty.gov

Maui Redevelopment Agency Board 2009-2010

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Staff Support provided by the Planning Department and Erin Wade, AICP, Small Town Planner

Collaborative problem solving improves service

Many organizations and government agencies operate in Wailuku and in the interest of Wailuku. The Maui Redevelopment Agency is working to foster an open dialog among groups, and all stakeholders, to maximize potential gains for our county seat.

This collaborative approach is enabling greater progress in less time than by unilateral involvement, and the outpouring of support has been inspiring.

Wailuku property owners have

come forward to help fund the Market-Based planning effort. The MRA has received in-kind support from area businesses and the Wailuku Main Street Association in bringing the Progressive Urban Management Associates (PUMA) team to Wailuku.

The University of Hawaii, Office of Public Health Studies will be working with the MRA to assist in making pedestrian improvements throughout the redevelopment area. Market Street merchants are keeping the new sidewalks clean and

trash picked-up.

The county's Office of Economic Development helped to structure the financing of the Market-Based plan. The Public Works Department has been maintaining the Market Street improvements. The Department of Finance is developing long-term financial viability strategies for Wailuku parking. The Police have assisted in the Wailuku Community Association's popular First Friday events, and crime prevention efforts. Together, we all help Wailuku meet its potential.

MRA prepared to be a proactive partner for the County in times of economic hardship

The Urban Renewal Law (HRS 53), acknowledges that the vitality of downtowns is inextricably tied to the long-term success of the larger region. As the foreclosure phenomenon in the housing market cascades through the commercial real estate market, real estate values are likely to decline over the next several years.

While this poses major challenges for most areas of the County, as well as the government coffers, it sets up the

opportunity of a generation for Wailuku.

The Urban Renewal Law specifically provides for the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) as a mechanism to fund public improvements within Wailuku, and other communities covered by HRS 53. Tax Increment Financing is best established for a district at times of economic decline because as the economy begins to rebound and property values improve, the incremental increase in the taxable value will flow into a fund dedicated for capital improvements within the Wailuku Redevelopment Area.

This fund and structure can serve several functions. First and foremost, it will allow the MRA to be self sufficient. As the market regains its footing, the MRA will no longer need regular subsidies. It would also serve to define the potential future value of the district and its borrowing potential. In particular it will allow the MRA to bond the public facility improvements, such as

the municipal parking structure, with strong assurance that the bonds will be paid back in a timely manner.

The logic of a TIF is that new development would not occur, "but for" the investment in public infrastructure. The involvement of the MRA in revitalization over the last decade has clearly determined that the private sector requires assistance with public improvements in order to make projects viable.

When TIF is used to complete public capital improvements, there is a dramatic increase in the amount of dollars and number of properties that are redeveloped. Ultimately this approach leads to a higher-valued downtown core that will continue to inspire investment both within the bounds of the Wailuku Redevelopment Area and the surrounding region. Maui County will reap the benefits of higher property values in the MRA and adjoining regions, and save MRA subsidies.

"Maui County's richness is in its four diverse and beautiful islands, sprinkled with unique small towns that our people call home. But Wailuku stands apart. Designated as the county's seat of government over 100 years ago Wailuku became everyone's town. Wailuku belongs to us all."

**Alexa Betts Basinger, Chair
Maui Redevelopment Agency**

