

Figure 6-3: Development Potential of In-Fill Housing Sites



At top left, this vacant ±3-acre site, presently zoned commercial, could accommodate a site layout for up to 10 residential lots with a minimum area of 10,000 square feet each, with two houses on each lot sharing a common septic unit. A drainage easement on the eastern side of the property, however, would reduce the development potential to about 16 dwellings. Below left, the site of the Mini-Storage building could be subdivided into two residential lots, with two dwellings on each lot sharing a common septic unit, for a total development potential of four dwellings.

#### 6.4 Recommendations Concerning Town Character

Kilauea’s rural charm is quite evident, not only in the scenic landscapes that surround the town, but also in the historic features and the informal, inviting character of the architecture and streetscapes, in both the commercial developments and the residential neighborhoods. These are qualities well worth protecting in the existing town, and expressing in the future expansion of the town. At the same time, some interventions are desirable to improve the quality of life in the town:

- First, while the roadway right-of-way design for Kilauea’s streets is generally adequate for a rural town, there are some places where improvements would be desirable from the standpoint of safety and convenience. It would be impractical in terms of cost and disruption, and undesirable in terms of community design, to improve Kilauea’s streets – either in the existing town or in the proposed town expansion area – to current County standards. However, modest improvements such as paved walkways and traffic calming measures at key intersections would be cost-effective and appropriate to the rural design context.

- Second, one of the limitations of the town's present street network is the prevalence of cul-de-sacs. As a result of this street pattern, vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle routes are indirect and less convenient. Although the intent of cul-de-sacs is to slow the speed of traffic, it has been found that drivers sometimes tend to speed even more along straighter stretches of street in order to "compensate" for the time lost in following a circuitous route. In addition, the less direct pedestrian and bicycle routes discourage people from using these modes for short trips, adding to vehicular traffic. Current thinking about effective traffic circulation and management advises a more inter-connected grid of streets rather than cul-de-sacs.
- Third, there are nonconforming commercial and industrial uses on residential-zoned properties in town that cause nuisances for surrounding residential neighbors, such as noise and traffic. For the most part, these uses are located in plantation-era buildings that have been adapted to their current use, and the original investment cost for the building had been amortized. The County has allowed improvements to these properties via Special Permits, in part as an acknowledgment that there are no suitable sites for these community-serving uses elsewhere in town. The proposed land use plans shown in Figures 6-1 and 6-2 will provide new sites for commercial and light industrial uses, and their locations will avoid impacts on adjacent residential uses. Therefore, the nonconforming uses in town should be phased out and the properties converted to residential use.
- Fourth, while Kilauea is fortunate to have several historic buildings of distinctive character and new buildings that are generally attractive and complementary to the rural ambience, there is no guarantee that this condition will be perpetuated in the existing town or carried over to the new additions to the town. Some of the new residences built outside of town are much larger in scale than those in town, but the large lots on which they are situated and their physical separation from town diminishes the contrast in scale and architectural scale. During the public meetings for the *Kilauea Town Plan*, as well in previous planning community meetings, residents have generally expressed a reluctance to accept residential design covenants or restrictions, but there is some support for design guidelines for commercial and public buildings.<sup>7</sup>
- Finally, Kilauea's origin is in plantation agriculture, with sugar cane as the area's export crop. Today, agriculture remains an important activity in the region, but the crops are more diverse and the market is for local consumption as well as export. The town supports a two thriving farmers' markets per week, attesting to the vitality of agriculture as an economic activity in the area. The farmers' markets also provide a valuable service to the community, by offering fresh produce at reasonable prices to local residents in a town that lacks a supermarket. While these markets appear to be functioning reasonably well, it would be highly desirable to incorporate a more intentional design for the farmers' markets in the areas designated for future commercial use.

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<sup>7</sup> The most recent and direct expression of this is the polling by the Kilauea Neighborhood Association at its meeting on June 29, 2005.

Following are the recommended principles and implementation measures concerning town character:

- **Retain rural street standards for the existing town and apply these standards to the proposed town expansion area.** The cross-section design for existing streets in town is self-evident. For the town expansion area, streets should follow the same basic design, but perhaps with some minor modifications, as needed, for more effective management of stormwater.<sup>8</sup> If the Planning Commission cannot assume the authority to modify public works standards to achieve this objective, it may be necessary to apply the waiver authority enable by State statute for the development of affordable housing projects.<sup>9</sup>
- **Design the street system for the town expansion area based on the principle of “connectivity”.** The new street system should avoid cul-de-sacs and tie into the existing network of streets in the town. Figure 6-4 indicates points where connections are recommended. During the second phase of town expansion – i.e. – the area between Kūhiō Highway and the ravine (see Figure 6-1) – it will be necessary to acquire a residential lot on Kaikala Street to make the connection between the street systems. The owner of this lot could be offered a property in the town expansion area as compensation.
- **Provide walk/bike paths along collector streets.** Drainage swales on either side of the street function reasonably well, but paved pathways along principal streets would allow pedestrians a place separate from the roadway surface where they can walk when the drainage swales are full or muddy (see photo below right.) The recently constructed asphalt pathway pathway along Kīlauea Road (photo below left) illustrates what can be done on other streets in town. **To increase the chance for funding, it is recommended that these pathways be built only on one side of each of the collector streets (see Figure 6-4.)**

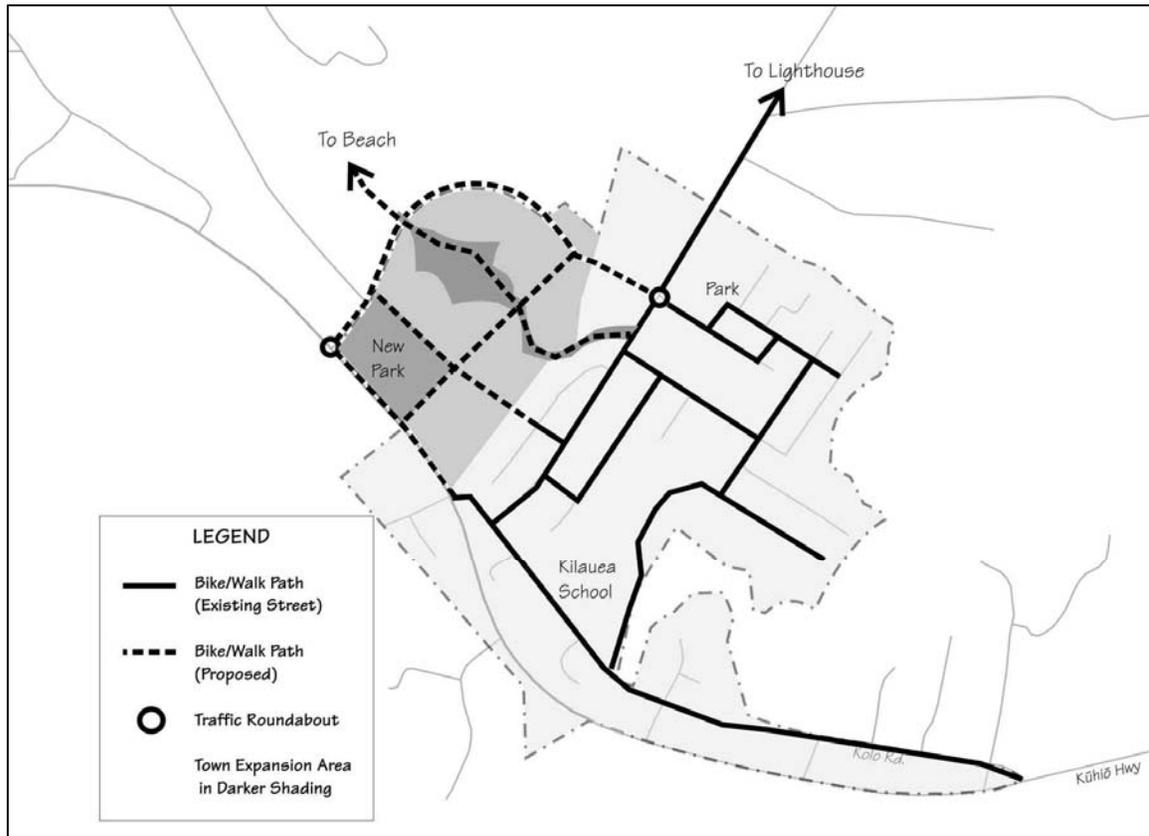


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<sup>8</sup> Examples of alternative street and drainage designs for rural towns are found in State of Hawai'i Office of Planning, *Low Impact Development: A Practitioner's Guide*, June 2006.

<sup>9</sup> Chapter 201G, Hawai'i Revised Statutes

**Figure 6-4: Circulation Plan for Kilauea Town and Expansion Area**



- **Phase out non-conforming industrial uses on residential streets.** The County should discontinue the issuance of Special Permits to prolong the life of nonconforming uses – especially those of a light industrial nature – on residential-zoned properties. Instead, these uses should be phased out and encouraged to relocate to areas that are appropriately zoned. Most of these are in older, adaptively re-used structures whose cost has been amortized, as in the example of the Mini-Storage shown in the photo below. These properties should then be redeveloped and converted to residential use.

