

PUBLIC COMMENT

re: Na‘alehu Interim Housing Development 2026

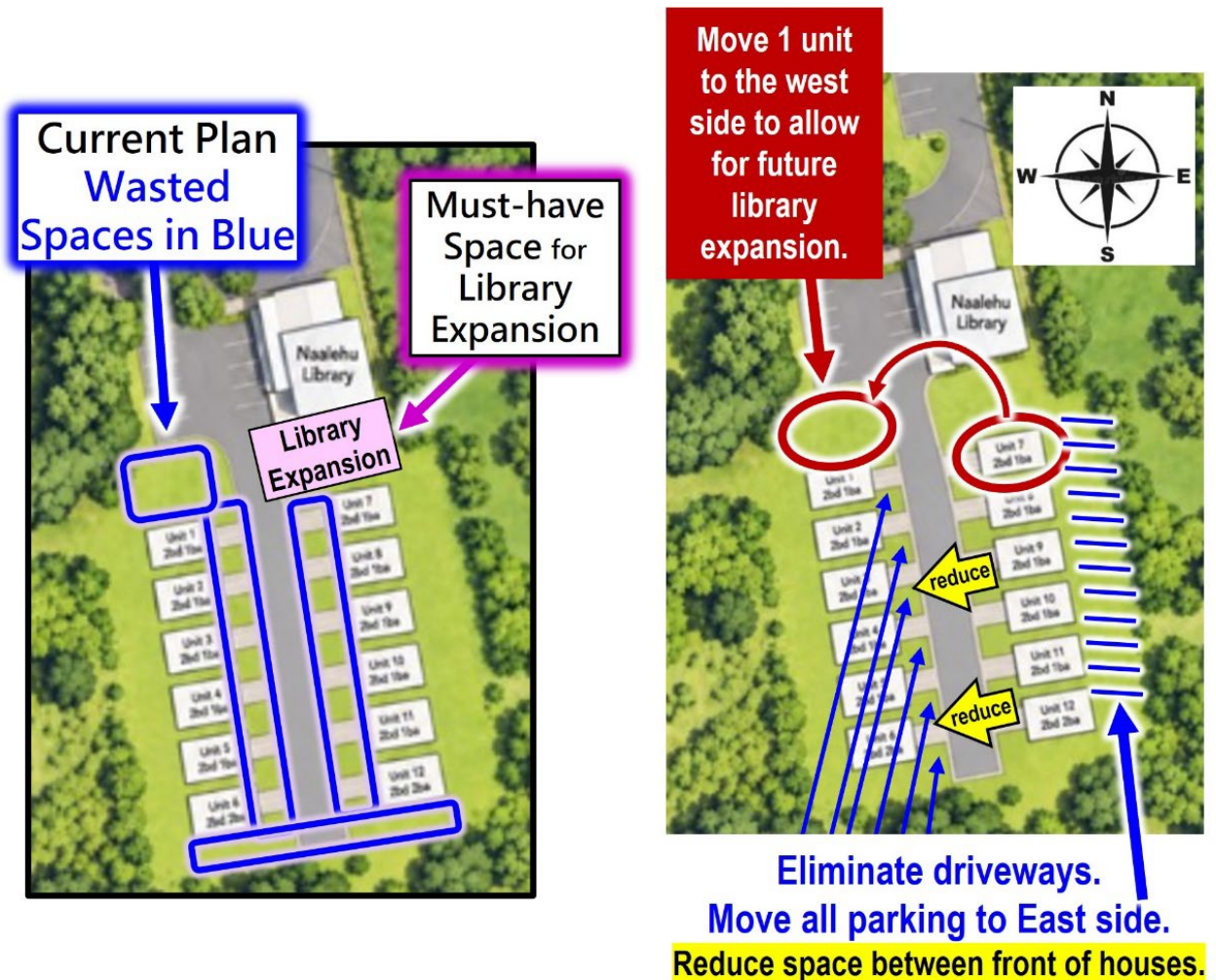
From: Vanessa Ott

To: input@communityvoice.net

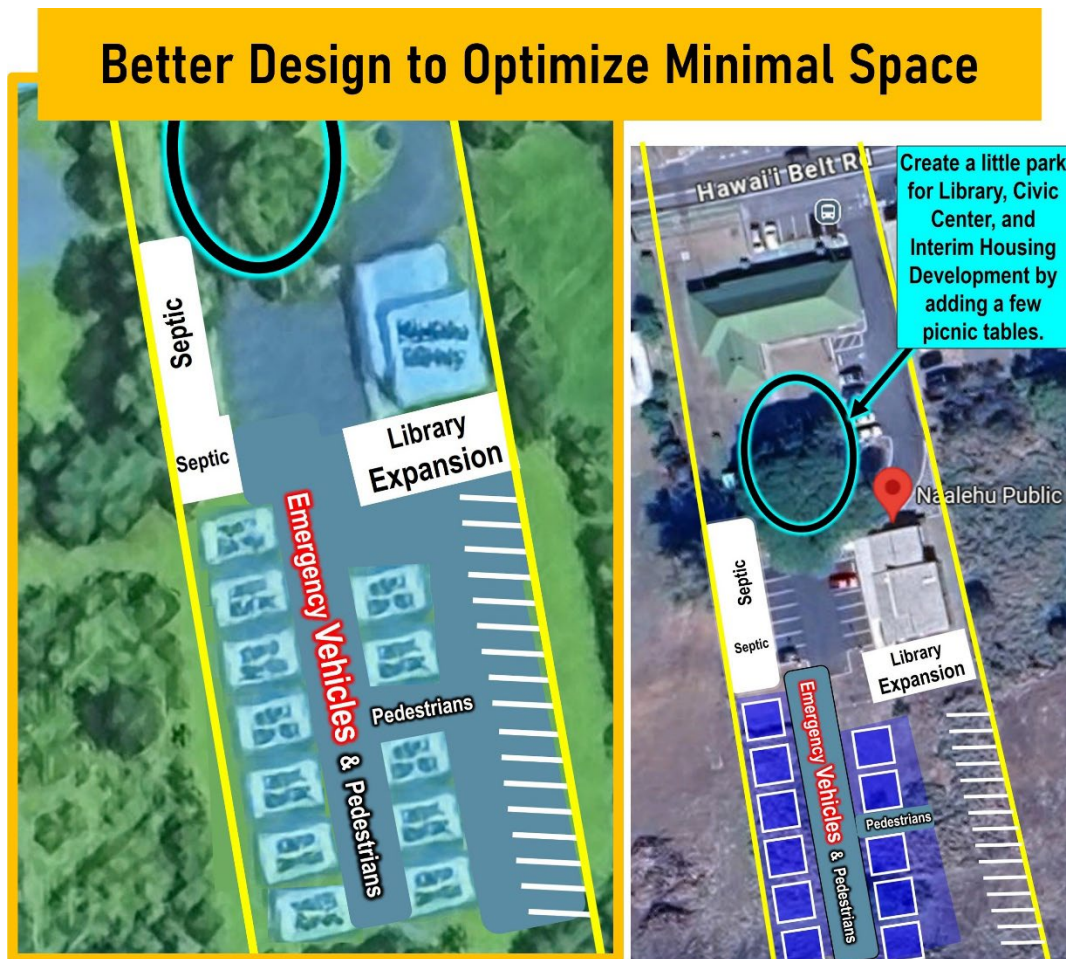
Date: Oct 17, 2026

I support the goal of providing 12 interim housing units in Na‘alehu built and maintained by the State of Hawai‘i. However, the current housing complex’s design will wipe out the Ka‘ū community’s hope of ever having a decent-sized library.^[1] **Therefore, I beg that any building on this state land be required to accommodate future Na‘alehu State Library expansion.**

Although much of Ka‘ū is considered “country,” this interim housing community should be designed as if it were in an urban area where space is extremely limited. If the State is going to pack 12 housing units in such a small space, the complex can’t be designed like a suburban development with every house having a small yard and driveway in front. If we optimize the available land as shown in the picture, we can create a safer interim housing community *and* have room to expand the library in the future.



Consider this. In many European cities, built centuries before cars, there are parking lots at the end of a street just a short walk from everyone's front door. Only residents may park in those lots. There are no cars on the street between two rows of houses. Only emergency vehicles and pedestrians can be on the street making it safer for baby carriages, tricycles, bicycles, pedestrians, ambulances, fire trucks, and a leisurely stroll after dinner. The next picture is a rendition of what the complex could look like with 12 housing units, parking, a park, and a bigger library if wasted space is used more judiciously.



ADVANTAGES OF A BETTER DESIGN THAT OPTIMIZES SPACE

- Enables future expansion of the Na'alehu Library.
- Separates pedestrian traffic from motor vehicle traffic.
- Eliminates the need for sidewalks.
- Provides a safe area for tricycles, wheelchairs, baby carriages and pedestrians.
- Emergency vehicles don't have to share the road with cars.
- Provides 16 (maybe more) parking spaces.
- Gives more of a sense of community with all houses facing each other on the "Emergency Vehicle & Pedestrian" throughway.
- Septic system for housing complex & library has easy access for maintenance.

[1] WHY KA'Ū NEEDS A BIGGER LIBRARY IN NA'ALEHU

The Ka'ū district is the largest, in terms of land mass, in the entire state. Unfortunately, the Na'alehu Library is appallingly tiny. There are no meeting rooms to serve the community. Any meetings held there completely crowd out library patrons. There is no storage for books that the Friends of the Ka'ū Libraries could sell to raise money for the Ka'ū Libraries (Na'alehu and Pahala), nor any place in the library for a small book store. Limited space means a very limited number of books to browse.

Some may argue that because we have Pahala Public & School Library, which is larger than the Na'alehu Library, we don't need a larger library in Na'alehu. Nothing could be further from the truth. Ka'ū's population is growing, and most of that growth is in Ocean View, which is 25 miles from Pahala, and only 12 miles from Na'alehu.

The table below shows the financial and time expenditures for individuals from each community to get to either library. If just 1% of the people from each community make only one visit to the Na'alehu Library the total cost to the community is about \$306.55 for gas, and 50 hours or more of the people's time. That's almost half the amount of time and money for 1% of the community to get to the Pahala Library (\$596.35 and 88 hours or more).

	Population	% of Ka'ū Population	Round Trip to Pahala Library			Round Trip to Na'alehu Library		
			Miles	at \$5.80/gal 30 mi/gal Gas Cost	Hrs:Mins	Miles	at \$5.80/gal 30 mi/gal Gas Cost	Hrs:Mins
Hawaiian Ocean View	4,864	57.6%	49.2	\$9.51	1:20	22.8	\$4.41	0:42
Discovery Harbour	1,171	13.9%	35.8	\$6.92	1:12	8.6	\$1.66	0:18
Na'alehu	811	9.6%	26.2	\$5.07	0:54	negligible	negligible	negligible
Wai'ohinu	198	2.3%	30.2	\$5.84	1:00	4.2	\$0.81	0:12
Pahala	1,403	16.6%	negligible	negligible	negligible	26.2	\$5.07	0:54

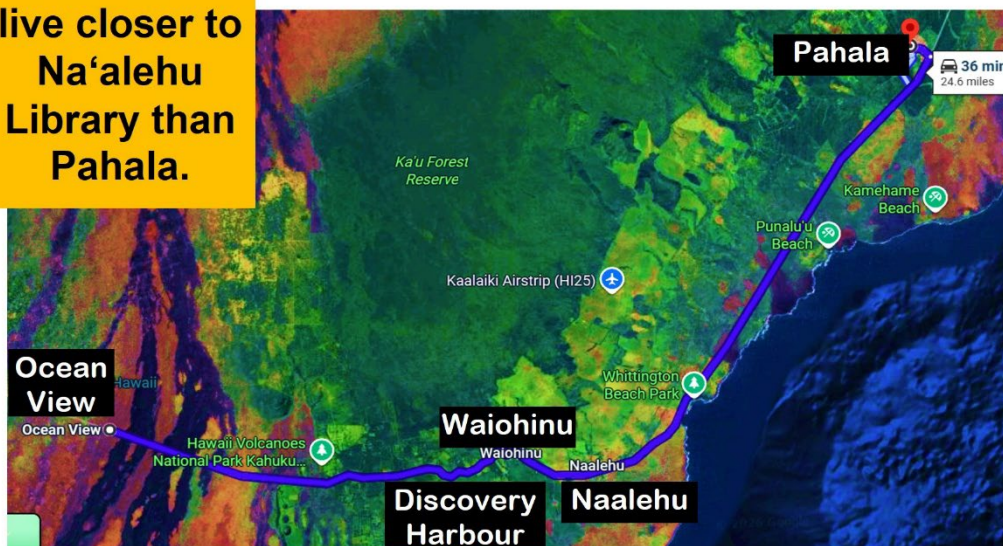
TOTAL KA'Ū
POPULATION **8,447**

**83% of Ka'ū
Residents
live closer to
Na'alehu
Library than
Pahala.**

**Pahala
Library**
\$596.35
88 hrs
11 mins

← **Total Cost** →
for 1% of the
population from
each town to visit

**Na'alehu
Library**
\$306.55
50 hrs
35 mins



A bigger, better library in Naʻalehu has been on my wish list since I first became a teacher at Naʻalehu Elementary School and discovered Naʻalehu Library in 2007. It was in a double-wide and didn't even have a bathroom!

The Naʻalehu Library has always gotten short shrift when it comes to facilities. Our local library needs to be larger and more functional. The land just south of Naʻalehu Library is the *only* place the library can expand. The current design of interim housing project on that parcel of land threatens Naʻalehu Library's future expansion, and would deal a crippling blow to the intellectual growth of this community.

Therefore, I implore the State of Hawai'i to design the interim housing project so that Naʻalehu Library, the southernmost library in the U.S.A., can grow and adequately serve our remote, southern Big Island community.

Mahalo,



Vanessa Ott