

18 March 2021

To Maui Planning Department
Attn: Kurt Wollenhaupt Kurt.Wollenhaupt@co.maui.hi.us

Subject: Comments to the Maui Planning Commission
Public Hearing on SMA permitting for the proposed Maui Coast Hotel Expansion
23 March 2021

Dear Mr. Wollenhaupt,

On behalf of the Maui Vista AOA, we wish to convey our concerns related to the proposed expansion of the Maui Coast property to include a six-story building with approximately 170 guest rooms plus an ancillary one-story building fronting South Kihei Road. Plans for this smaller structure presently include a coffee shop, small businesses and possibly conference rooms. Parking would be provided by both buildings but primarily at the rear of the property. The gulch in the center of the property would remain in its natural state.

Our main concerns are the following:

(1) Increased traffic on South Kihei Road

Even during the “off” tourist season, there is considerable traffic on South Kihei Road during most of the daylight hours. To exit the Maui Vista parking lot to head north on South Kihei Road often requires waiting until traffic stops for pedestrians crossing the road to the south. There is frequently “stop and crawl” traffic from Maui Vista past the Foodland shopping area. Increased biking and pedestrian traffic, while good for the environment, intensifies the problem for residents and tourists alike. The suggestion of increasing the size of the biking lanes offered by the Kihei Community Association begets the question of how this should be accomplished without major alterations to the existing automobile, bike and sidewalk areas.

We understand that a traffic study has been conducted in response to the SMA request; however, we are not aware if this study included wait times at various property intersections to South Kihei Road. We feel this type of study should be undertaken covering several time periods between 7 A.M. and 7 P.M. We respectfully request members of the Maui Planning Committee personally review the traffic flow on South Kihei Road between Alanui Ke Alii Road and Kupuna Street at random times during the day.

(2) The changing character of the Kihei Community

While the area is zoned for a hotel and Maui Coast operates currently as part of the community, the area is predominately residential in nature as condominium complexes and private homes front South Kihei Road both to the north and south of the Maui Coast Hotel property. Expanding the present Hotel is not in keeping with the character of the neighborhood as currently developed and encourages other groups to consider additional commercial entities in this area. Ultimately South Kihei Road could become entirely commercial in nature.

(3) The loss of property values to present residents of Maui Vista.

We admit that a new hotel will bring added tax revenue to Maui County in addition to tourist revenue island wide. At the same time a six-story hotel will severely limit the attractive views that many of our property owners have enjoyed for years, especially for owners in Buildings 2 and 3. Consequently, we expect some of our owners will experience a decrease in their property values.

We therefore request the following actions be taken prior to approval of the SMA for the Maui Coast Hotel expansion.

1. A survey be conducted to ascertain the impact of vehicular traffic to gain access from private property to South Kihei Road at various times of day.
2. Mitigate impacts to traffic by expanding the proportions of the left turn in/left turn out refuge lane to include properties North of the development including Maui Vista.
3. Require the hotel use adjoining easements for both employee and guest traffic to enter and exit the property permitting access to the enlarged parking lot at the rear of the property.
4. If expanding the bike lanes along South Kihei Road becomes part of the overall development, we request specific details be provided to property along South Kihei Road as it impacts all aspect of travel as well as possible encroachment to present property lines.
5. Request that the developers seriously consider limiting the height of the new hotel to four stories more in keeping with the buildings in close proximity to the north and along the western side of South Kihei Road. This would help alleviate the loss of property values to many Maui Vista owners.

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors of the Maui Vista Association of Owners
Don F. Smart, Secretary

cc: Maui Planning Department
planning@mauicounty.gov