

Theme 4: The Future of Lahaina

Hopes and concerns about the future of the community.

Keeping Lahaina Lahaina



I just really hope that we can come to a really good compromise of safety and [restoring our culture], something that everybody gets a little bit of something represented. Because we have such a deep historical connection, our Hawaiian connection, the cultural side of that. You know, visually, it'd be great to have historical buildings rebuilt. Like to see, just the historical side. We're restoring, I think it's the plantation house on Front Street...

Yeah, however, we're going to do it in a safe way. Yeah. I mean, people used to get hurt because they would fall from the uneven sidewalks and the wooden sidewalks. But hopefully, just make it visually kind of what... we loved about it.

I stopped listening to a lot of things. You know, **the last I heard was going back and forth, were they gonna make it a smart city or something. I think that would be so sad if they did that. I don't think it should be made. I think it should be something more sacred and a memorial of the people there.** Or, even better would be somehow return it back to the way it was, but it would be nearly impossible because those are all historical, you know, buildings and stuff. Yeah. But I'm very anxious and interested to see what it will be.



I fear, personally, that everything that is rebuilt will be homogenized and lose character... **But the reality is that Lahaina is a very unique and beautiful place,** and it wasn't something that was... no two buildings looked the same in the area that was burned. And now we're going to see this loss of the character that was there...as the town of Lahaina, I don't envision it to be the way that we all remember it, or the way that we want it. And I do envision sadly that a lot of people will have to sell their plots of land because they can't afford to pay for it, and they're not getting enough insurance money



for it, and I think that the entire [town] there will be a shift... **I pray that it's not just another mini-Honolulu, or just a metropolitan area that has no character.**

It's never going to be the same. It's going to lose the charm. It's going to lose everything.

Competing priorities

It's hard to find a right solution for that. But maybe the government can do better preparing systems and organizing better solutions for the natural catastrophes... So, **we can protect Maui and we protect, you know, protect the people.** And it's not easy, you know, when you lose [the tourism revenue that] we are depending on. **If we don't have tourists, how are people going to live here?**



I don't see any movement right now in Lahaina. Like, I live here, and I drive through Lahaina, but, like, the future, **I would like to see Lahaina, like, the shrubs and the banyan tree get recovered...** I don't know how the future can look for Lahaina because, I mean, you know, I would like to see Lahaina in a better way, like, **more housing opportunities and the schools for the kids** because we only had one school there and yeah. I mean, I kind of, I just I don't know what to say. Like, how can I see in the future, because, you know, there are a lot of things with other people decide about it.



We got hotels right now begging to shore up the coastline. Grant permission to shore up the coastline to protect their properties without any concept of what that does to the shoreline. Like, oh, we're going to protect your property and destroy the whole town, right? By diverting the ocean. Like, you already had your 50 years of service, let it go. Right? But no. What do you think the chances are that they're going to cave into that? **No, they're going to shore up the freaking coastline, just like they do over Kihei. The ocean will be coming over the road...** washing over the cars they're trying to get from one side to the other. Like, that's okay. Because, you know, we don't want to put the road, you know, away from the ocean. Let's just rebuild it right here and put up another concrete thing that literally gets pushed into the road by the ocean.



We want to go underground with utilities, but everyone wants to get home, and it's going to cost so much money, so we'll do it in the future. And you say, oh, really? Like, no one's there now. Do it now. It's not gonna get any cheaper. And we're already displaced, so take [advantage]. But those are just my ideas. **Other people, you know, they're saying, to hell with underground utilities, just get me home, you know? And so, I don't know what recovery means. Will we ever recover? There's no recovery to this. It's life-altering.**

A people-centered place



I think that the priority with rebuilding is definitely revitalization of the land and of Hawaiian connections and resources first. And then wherever the buildings can fit in after that, absolutely. I would like [King Kamehameha III Elementary School] to be closer to Lahaina. I am not happy with where [the school] is now. But I think the kids that go there absolutely

do deserve a more positive space than a bunch of portables on some concrete. And I'm not saying that that's super bad because obviously they did it so fast that... it was an efficiency first thing. But I don't think that should be permanent. **I think that the kids deserve Front Street.**



So, we all pretty much say, like, if we have a chance to go back, we would go back. But most of us rented our homes. Only one of my uncles owned his home... But he is kind of hesitant to rebuild just because of how much it's going to cost, and he doesn't really know what actually is going to happen in Lahaina, how they're going to rebuild the rest of Lahaina. And also, if he's the only one that goes back, he doesn't want to be the only one that goes back. If we're all going to stay (on another island), then he's going to stay here... **And my worry is that they are going to turn it into another Waikiki which would be the total opposite of what Lahaina was.** So, I think if most people that live there and worked there went back, it would be the closest to being fully back to how it was. **I feel like most of Lahaina, it was the people. It was the people that made Lahaina Lahaina.**