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ISLAND COMMENTARY

All eyes Ewa

Ho'opili's developer extols the master-planned project's virtues

By **Mike Jones**

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There's unfortunately been some misinformation about Ho'opili — O'ahu's first fully-integrated, transit-oriented, job-generating, "traditional" community that puts homes near jobs, schools, shopping and parks. Let me take this opportunity to set the record straight and to share some information I believe Oahu's residents will be happy to hear.



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Part of the Ewa Plain acreage proposed for the Ho'opili project is currently used by Aloun Farms.

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It's about more than just homes.

Ho'opili — which means "coming together" in Hawaiian — does propose building 11,750 new homes (which is a lower density than called for in the Ewa Development Plan) to be built over the next 20 to 25 years. While other Oahu developments are planned, Ho'opili will be the only community that will provide a significant number of affordable and competitively-priced homes in the area.

But Ho'opili is more than a bedroom community.

The real innovation of Ho'opili is that it will create thousands of new jobs in the area, which allows people to live where they work, thus helping to keep cars off the road.

Visionary, long-term planning pays off.

Back in the 1970s, Campbell Estate and the city created a vision for a second urban core on O'ahu — the new "Second City" — to help ease the pressure on growth in Honolulu. This was one of the most visionary land-use decisions in Hawaii's history.

Other major efforts now underway to complete the Second City include the build-out of downtown Kapolei, the UH-West Oahu campus, the Salvation Army's Kroc Center and Department of Hawaiian Home Lands' retail center and residential development. Ho'opili helps complete that vision, providing homes and jobs to make the dream of a Second City a reality.

Perhaps the most critical part of the Ewa Development Plan is not only did the city indicate where growth should occur, it wisely planned for where growth should not happen. The Ewa Development Plan, and Ho'opili's fit within it, is an open space "protection plan," limiting growth to certain areas.

Farming will continue at Ho'opili for years.

Currently, the site is being used on an interim basis for diversified agriculture. Accordingly, tenants were provided meaningful and substantial concessions at the outset given the temporary nature of their use.

The tenants' transition from the Ho'opili lands does not need to occur overnight, but should be ratable to accommodate the 20-year-plus build-out. When the time does come many years from now, we will work closely with the farmers in their relocation efforts to provide a smooth transition.

Contrary to recent claims, of the approximately 128,000 acres of agricultural lands on Oahu, roughly 40,000 acres have been classified as A, B or Prime, and much of these lands are outside of the urban growth boundaries.

The good news is that farming will continue at Ho'opili for many years, and it will continue well beyond that in key areas that have been set aside as agricultural lands in perpetuity by the Ewa Development Plan.

It is a community planned by, and for, local residents.

Over the last four years we've reached out to hundreds of residents, community leaders, local businesses, native Hawaiian cultural experts and others to help guide us in the planning and development process.

As a kamaaina company with deep roots in Hawaii, we welcome the community's input on our draft plans. We will continue to work closely with the community, keeping the community informed via our website (www.hoopilioahu.com), monthly newsletter, community presentations and other vehicles.

We hope we can count on your support for this new community that was designed by and for the people of West Oahu, and that represents the kind of smart-growth, people-friendly development that will ensure a brighter future for Hawaii.

Mike Jones is president of D.R. Horton-Schuler Division Hawai'i, the developer of Ho'opili.