

MidWeek

UH Students Unveil Design Concepts For Hoopili

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About 14 University of Hawaii doctoral students in architecture recently unveiled their design concepts for Hoopili, a proposed master-planned Ewa community.

The work was part of their "Architecture 506: Asia-Pacific Topical Architecture Studio" class, which focused on transit-oriented development - the creation of compact, walkable communities centered around public transportation. As part of their research, the students spent a week in Denver to study its plans for mass transit.

Students made their presentations at a May dinner meeting of the Hoopili Task Force, which is advising developer D.R. Horton-Schuler Division on everything from the community's types of homes and parks to its mix of shops and restaurants and its overall feeling.

One student group's concept portrayed pocket parks feeding into a central park, which would be surrounded by retail facilities with a pedestrian-only access along one side that would have "people flowing from retail into the park setting and back and forth." The group also called for a more open setting between neighbors - a trait Maeda Timson of the Kapolei Neighborhood Board disagreed with, saying, "I like the idea that the home has a nice front, it's a good view, it's open to the road ... but basically I would like to have a more intimate place because I don't want to see my neighbors every day."

Another group stressed connectivity within Hoopili and within the entire Ewa region, an idea that was well-received by the task force. The group also stressed building orientation that makes maximum use of daylight and ventilation and connecting green paths around the city to reduce the need for cars. The group designed a city of six districts - with themes like international, creative and active - that would provide a variety of daily and weekly activities for residents.

The third group focused on an elevated light rail system whose technology would make it "no louder than FedEx trucks" and which would be "a source of pride for Hoopili and Honolulu." The group also suggested moving the transit stop to the center of the community from its planned location along Farrington Highway, on the perimeter of the community.

Schuler president Mike Jones said the students had "very fresh ideas, and I think it's a good thing that we listen to them and try to integrate some of them as best we can here," he said, highlighting the concepts of different districts - like the urban and international districts - as an idea that Schuler had "thought a little bit about before" but which the students "drilled home."

Hoopili, which will target first-and second-time home buyers, could bring around 11,750 homes and at least 7,000 jobs to the community. The first homes are expected to be available around 2012, with the entire project due for completion in about 25 years.

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