



After the Fire USA

Maui After Action

Report: Delegation #3

April 2024: Eight Months Post-Disaster

ABSTRACT

This report contains observations and recommendations for the community of Maui, external stakeholders, and those seeking to assist post-megafire disaster of August 2023. This report is submitted respectfully, acknowledging that After the Fire USA is an external stakeholder and open to correction.

Jennifer Gray Thompson, MPA
CEO + Founder, After the Fire USA

After the Fire USA is an initiative of Rebuild Northbay Foundation, a registered nonprofit (501c3 & 501c4). We help communities navigate wildfires across the American West. We collaborate with public officials (regional, state, and federal), the private sector, and the nonprofit community and support community-led and designed recovery.

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April 8-12, 2024: Eight Months Post-Disaster

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AFTER THE FIRE

RECOVER. REBUILD. REIMAGINE.

Our approach to this work involves actively listening to the unique voices of megafire-affected communities. Simultaneously, we remain cognizant of the anticipated phases of disaster recovery.

For our third deployment, we specifically focused on providing Technical Support for Local Leadership. This period is crucial as it bridges the response phase and the subsequent rebuilding phase. It demands a delicate balance—acknowledging loss, planning for the future, and considering mitigation and resilience in the face of potential future megafires.

While we recognize that the mere mention of another megafire can be deeply distressing, we have firsthand experience with this reality. In 2017, the North Bay Fires ravaged 8,900 structures across four counties. Each of these counties subsequently faced additional megafires. Sonoma County, for instance, endured two more in 2019 (Kincaide and Walbridge), and in 2020, the Glass Fire occurred, slightly overlapping with the 2017 Nuns Fire. Although we fervently hope to avoid such events, our practical experience suggests otherwise. Hence, accessing and leveraging mitigation funds, such as BRIC, should be integral to the recovery process.

The people of Maui are diligently working toward recovery, but they are not magical beings. They deserve external support that uplifts their vision and demonstrates what is achievable based on their desired outcomes. This fire recovery is the most intricate in our history, necessitating a surgical approach—one that not only acknowledges the centrality of the people but also guides them all the way home. To achieve this, the people of Maui require what community leader Archie Kalepa aptly calls “A Sail Plan.”

The eighth month after the disaster serves as both reflection and anticipation. While the exhaustion from the six-month mark lingers, we often witness a renewed sense of purpose. Frontline responders may find the courage to step back momentarily or for an extended period. Progress is evident in debris removal, surpassing initial expectations. Fire survivors are now ready to engage in earnest discussions about rebuilding—though not everyone shares this readiness—and some even advocate for an expedited process.

However, we caution against haste during this phase. A community that takes the time to plan will ultimately arrive at the same destination as one that rushes forward. Yet, the rebuilt community will likely be significantly more resilient. A rapid rebuild without community planning carries the very real risk of replicating vulnerabilities from before the fire.

On the island, long-term recovery systems are taking shape; the LTRG (Long-Term Recovery Group) is fully forming, roles are being clarified, and processes are underway. This period can be confusing, often witnessing power struggles among community leaders vying for influence in the aftermath of disaster. We advocate against unilateralism and emphasize true collaboration, even though we recognize it is the more challenging path. It requires additional effort. However, the end result will be a recovery that centers on the people of Lahaina and Kula, benefiting all of Maui, rather than catering solely to a select few. To be clear, the inclination toward unilateral decision-making often stems from frustration and a desire to “just get things done,” which we understand well. Having navigated the long-term challenges of recovery and rebuilding after a megafire, we strongly advocate for community-led visioning and the reimagining of Lahaina.

While we acknowledge the impact on Kula, our understanding is that it may not necessitate community planning. However, community healing and support remain essential.

During this phase, external agencies face their greatest challenge: ensuring that the recovery process is genuinely community-led and community-designed. We emphasize, once again, the critical importance of placing the people of Lahaina at the heart of rebuilding their town. While striving to deliver excellent services for recovery, we must be cautious not to inadvertently silence the voices of those who envision their children and grandchildren playing on the soccer fields—the same fields where their great-grandparents once fished and sailed. Lahaina belongs to them; the rest of us play supporting roles in what Archie Kalepa aptly termed “The Sail Plan” during the 22nd Annual Native Hawaiian Convention.

A reminder: Debris removal brings both benefits and challenges. The health advantages of eliminating toxic ash are undeniable, and many anticipate immense relief when the soot-stained remnants of homes and the burnt-out car husks are cleared away. However, it’s essential to recognize that debris removal can also evoke a sense of loss. While the tragedy’s external remnants vanish, the internal navigation of what transpired remains—an emotional journey that intertwines with memories of life before the fire.

How We are Working in Maui

After the Fire USA is a 501c3 non-profit organization that helps communities navigate megafires. We are supporting the community of Maui in the following ways:

- I. Provide ongoing virtual and in-person support for local leadership on the island of Maui. This support includes public, private and nonprofit organizational leadership;
- II. Coordinate deployments to the island of Maui with disaster survivors & leaders, subject matter experts, and national funders;

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III. Create written recommendations post-deployment for use by both external and internal stakeholders;

IV. Support the integration of Maui leaders into our Wildfire Leadership Network, the most comprehensive and in-depth network of experienced leaders in megafire.

Delegation Bios

1 - David Reid

CZU Lightening Complex Fires (2020)

Director, Santa Cruz County Office of Response, Recovery & Resilience

Subject Matter Expertise: Public sector, CDBG-DR, Rebuilding, Housing, Debris Removal Insurance, Constituent Recovery Challenges

Prior to joining the Office of Response, Recovery & Resilience, Dave served as a senior staff member for the First District County of Santa Cruz Supervisor for eight years. Through extensive constituent work, community organizing and coalition building, he helped ensure that our local government served Santa Cruz County residents. Prior to this, Dave worked in Public Works and the Redevelopment Agency, where he gained experience in community engagement, project management and public infrastructure maintenance. As a former research scientist with the USGS with a Masters in Coastal Geology, Dave possesses a comprehensive understanding of the science behind climate change and how our community and local government can prepare and respond to it.

In his role as Director, he seeks to serve the public to recover, adapt, innovate and become more resilient. Over the past 3 years as Director Dave and the OR3 team have been working closely with CZU Wildfire impacted families and County departments navigating the technical, financial, and emotional challenges to recovery. In 2023 the County was impacted by two federally declared disasters, OR3 has been supporting the County and community during the recovery journey. OR3 is also the lead on the adoption of our County Climate Action and Adaptation Plan in 2022, with implementation work on-going.

2 - Jenn Kaaoush

Marshall Fire Survivor 2021 - Smoke Damage

Director, Superior RisingTrustee, Town of SuperiorVeteran (Army)

Subject Matter Expertise: Post-Disaster Community Leadership, Local Government (elected)

As Director of Superior Rising, a non-profit formed to support residents in their recovery from the Marshall Fire, Kaaoush has been advocating directly for them since the fire. This includes: streamlining government processes, sourcing funds and resources, pushing upwards to state and federal authorities to put people first, opening more funding, and removing obstacles that slow the community's recovery and future planning efforts.

Kaaoush understands the high likelihood of another horrible event affecting Colorado in the future, and is using her knowledge, relationships, and experience to ensure other communities will not have to relearn all the lessons the Marshall Fire victims have garnered in the aftermath of this disaster.

Kaaoush currently serves on the Town of Superior Board of Trustees. She has also served on the Town's Planning Commission, the Town's Parks and Recreation Committee, and on the Board of the Democratic Women of Boulder County. Through her work as a Planning Commissioner and Superior Rising leadership, Jenn has cultivated collaborative relationships with local, regional, state and national community members. Kaaoush is a fourth generation Army Veteran and a Former Diplomat having served in embassies in the Middle East region.

3 - Reva Feldman

Woolsey Fire (2018)

City Manager, Malibu (ret)

Subject Matter Expertise: Public sector leadership before, during and after disaster; City + County Management; Coastal Issues

Reva Feldman is an executive level leader with over 25 years of public sector experience working in city management and disaster preparedness, response and recovery to help ensure that local and state municipalities are prepared for emergencies and are able to respond quickly and efficiently before and after a disaster.

Ms. Feldman first served as the chief operating officer for a state park agency and then served as city manager for the City of Malibu, CA. Her strong leadership skills, knowledge, experience, and profound dedication to local government spurred her many notable achievements, including leading Malibu through the 2018 Woolsey Fire. Ms. Feldman retired from public service in 2021 and opened a consulting firm that supports local government and the city management profession. She serves as a Senior Fellow at Portland State University entities and is a frequent speaker for public and private organizations.

4 - Tennis Wick

North Bay Fires (2017) Kincaid + Walbridge Fires (2019), Glass Fire (2020)

Director, Permit Sonoma

Subject Matter Expertise: Rebuilding Post-Disaster; County Leadership; Mutual Aid, Debris Removal; Permit Processes

Tennis Wick has served as Permit Sonoma (Permit and Resource Management Department) Director since November 2013. The agency balances environmental protection and sustainable development of Sonoma County's natural resources through the agency's planning, engineering, building, fire prevention, natural resources, code enforcement and administration divisions.

Before joining the County of Sonoma, Wick worked as a principal at Berg Holdings responsible for government affairs, site acquisition, design and entitlement. Previously, Tennis practiced as a partner at the engineering and planning consulting firm CSW/Stuber-Stroeh Engineering Group, Inc. He began his career with the County of Marin where he led current planning as Development Chief.

Wick is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners (10447) and the American Planning Association. Tennis Wick holds a Juris Doctor degree from Golden Gate University School of Law and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science with a Public Service Emphasis from the University of California, Santa Barbara.

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A long-time Petaluma resident, Tennis Wick has been civically active twice serving as a City Planning Commissioner and as Board President of the Friends of the Petaluma River, Petaluma Peoples Service Center and the Petaluma Area Chamber of Commerce. Wick currently serves as past president of the California County Planning Directors Association.

Tennis is part owner of Hen House Brewing Co. He and his wife Holly have four grown daughters and three granddaughters and are active in endurance sports, cooking and gardening.

5 - **Jennifer Gray Thompson, MPA**

jennifer@afterthefireusa.org

North Bay Fires (2017) Kincaid + Walbridge Fires (2019), Glass Fire (2020)

Founder & CEO, After the Fire USA; Executive Director, Rebuild NorthBay Foundation; Bipartisan Policy Center Disaster Response Reform Task Force

Subject Matter Expertise: Community Recovery, Long-Term, Federal Advocacy, Wildfire Leadership Network, Frontline Community Support, Local + Federal Government; Public Policy

"We advocate, educate, collaborate to address the Era of Megafire."

Jennifer Gray Thompson MPA, the CEO of After the Fire USA, LLC & After the Fire USA (501c3), has a remarkable journey rooted in community disaster. She graduated from Dominican University and earned a Master's of Public Administration from the University of Southern California's Price School of Public Policy. In 2017, after devastating fires in San Francisco's North Bay, she became the Executive Director of Rebuild NorthBay Foundation (RNBF), a 501c3 formed to help the region rebuild. In response to the Era of Megafires, a relatively recent chronic climate-based disaster, RNBF created After the Fire USA in 2020. Gray Thompson was named to Forbes' 50 over 50 IMPACT List in 2022 and appointed to the Bipartisan Policy Center Disaster Response Reform Task Force in 2023. As a nationally recognized subject matter expert (SME) in megafire recovery, she presents at several national conferences, including those hosted by the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Fannie Mae, Smart Cities, FEMA, MIT, NVOAD, and more. Jennifer has also been featured in local, regional, and national news outlets, including NPR's All Things Considered, NBC News, Meet the Press, and CBS Evening News. She hosts the "How to Disaster" podcast, which amplifies best practices, survivor experiences, and mitigation measures to ensure safety. Her commitment to equitable and resilient recoveries empowers wildfire communities and bridges the gap between those on the frontlines of disaster and those who create policies.

Maui Meetings

Mahalo to those who informed this After Action Report. We appreciate your time, expertise, compassion, service, and dedication to the people of Maui. We are here to listen first, learn, and advise. The list below is published to be transparent. On occasion, we may inadvertently miss a person or an organization.

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Every megafire is different, even as some elements are the same. This means we bring knowledge, but we must first listen and learn the fire we are in *today*. The people listed below helped us to better understand and serve.

The Maui Fire is the most complicated we've seen in our history and requires a truly collaborative effort that centers the people's and culture's needs first, which includes the land.

Thank you for allowing us in.

- **Zeke Kalua** (Executive Assistant, Maui County): Tour of Burn Scar + Historical Context
- **County of Maui:** Planning + Public Affairs + Communications + Mayor's Office
- **Francis Kau** (State Disaster Recovery Center Coordinator at Hawaii Emergency Management Agency)
- **Nicole Huguenin** (Maui Rapid Response)
- **Justin Petrochko** (United Global Engagement (United Airlines))
- **Pulin Thakkar** (United Global Engagement (United Airlines))
- **Danielle Dreis** (Executive Director, GEM)
- **Greg Shepherd** (Director of Operations, GEM)
- **Mike Renner** (4 Leaf Inc.)
- **Alfy Basurto** (Rebuild Maui)
- **Laurie Alton** (Maui Mayor's Advisory Committee)
- **SeaRay Beltran** (Construction Safety Oversight Consultant, PIRM Group International LLC)
- **Lauren Nahme** (SVP for Maui Recovery, Hawaii Community Foundation)

Recommendation #1: Activate the Recovery Dashboard Immediately

We have confirmed the County of Maui has the Recovery Dashboard Wireframe provided by the City of Santa Rosa and County of Sonoma. We strongly recommend this tool be activated immediately. It will aid in transparency, communications, and collective comprehension and reduce rumors, misinformation, and malfeasance. Further, Maui is unique in the protection of the burn scar. Therefore, many community members have never been in the restricted area. We applaud these protections while acknowledging they can contribute to an information vacuum that makes the work of the public sector harder than is necessary.

Update: The County is actively working on this recommendation.

Disaster recovery dashboards play a crucial role in monitoring and managing recovery efforts during and after a disaster. Let's explore how they provide valuable insights:

1. **Real-Time Monitoring:** Dashboards offer **real-time data visualization**, allowing responders to track the progress of recovery operations. [By displaying key metrics on a single screen, they provide a clear picture of the ongoing efforts1.](#)
2. **Tracking Rebuilding Progress:** With a disaster recovery dashboard, responders can monitor the rebuilding process. [It helps identify areas that require more resources or attention, ensuring an efficient recovery1.](#)
3. **Comparing Pre- and Post-Disaster Status:** These dashboards allow users to compare the **pre-disaster baseline** with the **current status**. [By visualizing changes, responders can assess the effectiveness of recovery efforts2.](#)
4. **Transparency and Accountability:** Dashboards enhance transparency by showing where recovery funding is allocated and how it's being utilized. [This knowledge ensures that disaster-related activities have the greatest impact on those in need3.](#)

Disaster recovery dashboards empower responders with real-time insights, aid decision-making, and contribute to effective recovery efforts.

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[Disaster Recovery Tracking Tool | \(trackyourrecovery.org\)](https://trackyourrecovery.org)

How to Use the Tool:

[About the Disaster Recovery Tracking Tool | Disaster Recovery Tracking Tool \(trackyourrecovery.org\)](#) WHAT IS A RECOVERY DASHBOARD?

A **recovery dashboard** is a tool designed to monitor and assess efforts to revive economic activity and build back better after significant disruptions, such as a megafire. These dashboards provide insights into the quality of recovery across various dimensions, including economic strength, inclusivity, environmental sustainability, and resilience.

Examples after megafire:

1. Santa Cruz County, California:

o **Recovery Permit Center Dashboard:** The **CZU Fire Loss & Recovery Permit Center Dashboard** provides data on rebuilding progress, including dwelling permits issued and in process. o Explore the dashboard [here](#).

2. Santa Rosa, California:

- **Rebuilding Resources:** The City of Santa Rosa offers information on rebuilding after the October 2017 wildfires.
- Learn more [here](#).

3. Sonoma County, California:

- **Rebuilding Process:** Permit Sonoma outlines the streamlined permitting approach for unincorporated Sonoma County after major wildfires (including the 2020 Glass Fire and 2019 Kincade Fire).
- Explore the process [here](#).

4. Jackson County, Oregon:

- **Recovery Mapping - Firebrand Collective:** The Alameda Fire Loss & Recovery Dashboards visualize wildfire recovery in Jackson County.
- Access the dashboards [here](#).

5. Boulder County, Colorado: o [Marshall Fire and Wind Event Recovery - Boulder County](#)

[Report: How to Create a Recovery Dashboard](#)

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Recommendation #2: Community Visioning

One of the most difficult tasks in recovery is maintaining hope as the community navigates these very difficult and often exhausting stages of recovery between response and rebuilding. At this stage, it may feel impossible to set a vision for the recovery when the technical knowledge is still being learned at a very steep curve.

We assert there is no better time than now.

We strongly recommend the community embrace the visioning that has been set by leaders, such as Archie Kalepa's "Sail Plan." We recommend the community does not wait for the "right moment" but instead set sail and adjust the job as needed, according to conditions and capacity of the crew.

We are firm believers in setting the outcome desired and then reverse engineering to achieve the outcome. For example, our vision at After the Fire USA is to help megafire communities recover, rebuild and reimagine via locally led and designed recovery. We do this by deployments, coaching, education, advocacy, and convening. And we have rules -- we call them values -- to guide our behavior.

MISSION: We support communities as they **RECOVER** from fire, **REBUILD** their lives, and **REIMAGINE** a more resilient future through prevention, innovation, and facilitation of community-designed recovery.

VALUES

LISTEN first: "What do you need and how can we help?"

Serve the community in FRONT of you

Lean into LEARNING, ADAPTING, INNOVATING

Act with integrity ALWAYS

What we cannot do is predict the exact conditions to achieve our vision and mission. We argue it is most important that we enter into a community with our values as non-negotiables and our vision as the north star with our mission as the intended outcome, but how we do that work varies according to the conditions, capacities, scale of megafire, demographics, and of course, the quality of our relationships on the frontlines of the disaster. It varies.

We have certain adaptable tools and systems we know happen in every fire, but we don't hesitate to help for fear of getting it wrong. We know flexible, compassionate, ethical leadership will guide us and when we make mistakes, we know how to apologize and correct. We go into fire communities ears first,

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not mouth forward. We know how to listen to the community and then we figure out how to execute our mission and vision.

Mistakes are an important part of executing the vision. Mistakes are inevitable when a group of people set out to be brave and do big, great things. This allowance for mistakes is very hard to accept when the love for community is visceral and generational and when a legacy of colonialism looms large. When a community has already experienced massive injustice, the very notion of getting anything wrong is paralyzing and fraught.

We argue the values set forth will carry forth, even when mistakes are made. We strongly recommend grace and communication to resolve issues. We believe the people of Maui have an unusually skilled group of leaders more than capable of carrying a vision to get all the way home.

Our recommendation is an encouragement to set sail with intention sooner rather than later. Hope, optimism, shared purpose, and structured determination can and do make the largest difference in getting the community all the way home. This is true across every community we've ever worked in after a megafire.

Finally, we believe Maui's recovery will inform the rest of the country about what is possible after a megafire in a way we've not seen previously. We love the adage, "What is good for Hawaii is good for everyone."

We look forward to supporting the incredible community of Maui through the most difficult recovery with the greatest potential for an equitable, climate-resilient, culturally informed, resident-focused rebuild.

Community Visioning: Published Commentary

(1) [Archie Kalepa Keynote | 22nd Annual Native Hawaiian Convention - YouTube](#)

[Lahaina's Vision for the Future, Part 2: Navigating a Sail Plan, Finding comfort in the shade of Lele, Pushing the reset button](#)

By [Wendy Osher](#) November 18, 2023 · 3:18 AM PDT* *Updated November 18, 2023 · 8:25 AM* 2.5kShares

Lahaina Bypass vantage to West Maui Mountains. File photo by Wendy Osher

Three residents of West Maui joined in a panel discussion Wednesday on their vision for the future of Lahaina. It is one of many presentations held at the 22nd Annual Native Hawaiian Convention, which concluded on Friday at the Maui Arts & Cultural Center in Kahului. The wildfires and their destructive aftermath created a prominent backdrop in the discussions about Lahaina and the town's road to

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recovery. Residents Kaipō Kekona, Archie Kalepa and Ke‘eaumoku Kapu reflected on their vision for the future of Lahaina and what the beloved town has to offer moving forward. *This is Part 2 in a 3 part series.* (Part 1 is posted [here](#)).



Archie Kalepa. PC: Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (11.15.23)

All Hands on deck: Navigating a Sail Plan

“I was not there on Aug. 8. I question myself, ‘Why was I not there?’ I probably would not be standing here if I was home,” said Archie Kalepa during a keynote address. That fateful day, Kalepa was on the mainland. He woke up at 3

a.m. to find breaking news of what was happening in Lahaina, and immediately made his way to the airport with plans to return home to Maui. But with Maui airport operations shut down, Kalepa ended up on the Big Island where he bought four generators, and rallied a group of friends with boats and jet skis to help.

Upon arrival at Kahului Harbor on Maui, Kalepa called a police officer friend who suggested that he launch from Mā‘alaea since the roads into Lahaina were closed. “I got to Mā‘alaea, and it was chaos—a lot of confusion,” Kalepa recalled. “We began to organize all the boats and all the people that were staring to deliver supplies. On our way to Lahaina, I had four jet skis and a big boat loaded with everything [including] my family. On the way to Lahaina, I made it a point to sit behind everyone so that they could not see me crying.” “I know that place from the ocean,” said Kalepa, a longtime waterman.

“When we got into Lahaina, I remember everyone sitting in front of me, and I was in the back, listening and seeing my family, my friends—cry... What shocked me is what I saw. The only thing I could relate it to at that time, was the pictures that I had seen of Hiroshima.”

Kalepa pulled around to Māla Wharf and sat there for about an hour as the group devised a plan to get to shore. This included contact with lifeguards who provided access and enabled the offloading of supplies. Making his way home, Kalepa observed his surroundings. “All that was left of Lahaina was Leali‘i. I’m worried about my family—my sister, my niece, my aunty—our family’s homes. I had to be strong,” he said.

Leali'i Parkway. PC: Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (11.15.23)



“We stood up the first [hub in Lahaina](#). We also stood up Ground Zero EOC (Emergency Operations Center),” said Kalepa, who was among a group that also included Amos Lonokailua-Hewett, Makalapua Kanuha and Ke’eaumoku Kapu. “Because this fire engulfed Lahaina so quickly, there was confusion. It wasn’t about blame, because it happened too fast,” said Kalepa, who called the mayor to coordinate further. When asked about his vision for the future of Lahaina, Kalepa responded: “It’s really hard for me to say... because the way I see it, it’s important for everyone to have a contribution to that sail plan.”

“For me, it’s making sure that everyone has a voice, that everyone is heard, and everyone can contribute to what that would look like. Because we have one chance to get this right. I want to make sure we hear from people in our community that can change this place for the better.”-Archie Kalepa

In humility, Kalepa said he struggled with having the right to answer the question. “I think about all of it and how important it is. I just want to say that I’m not ready to answer that question... in all fairness to this audience... because I want them to have that right first,” he said.

Abundance: Finding comfort in the shade of Lele

[Kaipo Kekona](#), who was instrumental in standing up distribution point in Nāpili to help friends and neighbors in need during the early days of the fire aftermath, embraced the sail plan metaphor. He envisions a place full of abundance, reminiscent of the landscape he knows not through experience, but from an ancestral bond and stories from generations past.

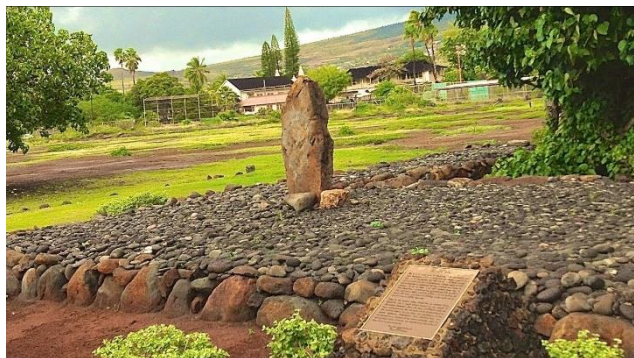


Kaipo Kekona (11.15.23) PC: Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement

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“I’m only one person in a large community. What I have as visions and what I can see is a fruitful future for our people and our community. It’s only one person’s perspective, but I’m happy to share,” said Kekona. He explained that there’s a lot involved in making a sail plan, including thought and materials. “If you plan on sailing anywhere, you need that wa’a (canoe). In order to have a wa’a, you need the lā’au (plant), and not only the lā’au, but the sennit/cordage to lash your implements. You need the lā’au to make handles,” said Kekona.



All these parts, he said, are metaphors that represent the community coming together to accomplish a great task.

“All of the little intricate things that we need—water to sustain a voyage, the food—all of those are all of our community. Those are the little intricate parts that we need in order to build this vessel and prepare and nurture the people that will go on to it,” but as Kekona explained,

he will not be among those on the journey.“

“Our children, our children’s children—they are the ones that are going to sail that wa’a. We’re just going to build it. We’re going to nurture them, and feed them, and make them strong and healthy so that when this voyage goes on, they can get to that destination confidently and have a strong relationship with each other and continue to build that pilina,” said Kekona.

“When we speak of what that looks like, and you know the understanding of *Ka Malu Ulu O Lele* [*The shade of the breadfruit trees of Lele, (the old name for Lahaina)*], what it was full of. There’s descriptions when you read into the testimony, both native and foreign—they describe Lahaina’s landscape so full of abundance that even the rockiest crevices were producing food or sustenance needed to maintain a healthy community,” said Kekona.

“When you really think of that and you grow up in Lahaina, and try to envision what that looks like, I didn’t get to see any of that, but I get to dream about it every day.”-Kaipo Kekona “I think of [Kahoma](#), [Kanhā](#), and I think of dry rocky cliff sides, and I’m trying to imagine: ‘Wow. Imagine having so much stuff everywhere, that there was no room for anything else, so you decide to try and grow something on the rocky cliff.’ That’s how much we were producing and kept pouring into that ‘āina. We kept giving and giving, growing more... never seeing an end,” said Kekona.

He spoke of references to the forest systems of [kauila](#) and [uhiuhi](#). “Trees that are no longer available, we had forests of them in Lahaina. [Hālona](#) was an uhiuhi forest up on the slopes of Ku’ia, known to find multiple different hardwoods. Luako’i on Mauna Kawahine—legends told of protocols to harvest lā’au and go to the stone quarry to harvest your ko’i (adze) in order to carve whatever it was they were making—

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wa‘a, hale (house), implements for farming... implements for fishing. All of those resources were found in Ka Mala Ulu O Lele,” said Kekona.

“I want to see that grow out of this situation we’re in today. Let us find the people who bind us together. Let us find the strength in our lā‘au, in our community. Let us find the ko‘i that define the future and shape our world as we’re going to see it; the kālaimoku (high official), the kālai wa‘a (canoe carver)—all of those people. They’re in our community.

I can stare into this audience and see all the individuals, and that’s what gives me comfort.”-Kaipo Kekona “I pray for our children. I feel like we are in unprecedented times. I feel like our children will be the results of some study, and all we can do is try to figure out how we are going to move forward,” he said.

Restoration: Pushing the reset button

Since the August wildfires, Kaua‘ula Valley resident, Ke‘eaumoku Kapu, has often referred to a “reset button.” He believes changes were supposed to come with the creation of a Historical Restoration Preservation Plan for Lahaina in 1961.



Ke‘eaumoku Kapu (11.15.23) PC: Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement

Lahaina served as the [Capital of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i](#) from 1820 to 1845. The [Lahaina Historic District](#) was designated in [1962](#), and [Hale Pa‘i](#) on the Lahainaluna campus was added to the National Register of Historic Places list in 1976. In 1997, more areas were added to the National Register of Historic Places including: [King Kamehameha III’s Royal Residential Complex](#), which includes Moku‘ula, Loko Mokuhinia and Hale Piula. The Lahaina Restoration Foundation notes that Lahaina had over [60 significant sites](#), museums and buildings that represented the history and culture of the town over a period of more than 500 years.

“Once all these other things started coming in, only for commercial activity use, our town fell into decay. It never was afforded the opportunity to resonate similar to all other recognized national historic properties throughout the United States of America.”

-Ke‘eaumoku Kapu



6 - Link to 2011 article about Lahaina Restoration Project, with cost estimates:

[Moku'ula Island and Mokuhinia Wetland Restoration in Lahaina Maui and remembering Akoni Akana \(mauitime.com\)](http://mauitime.com)



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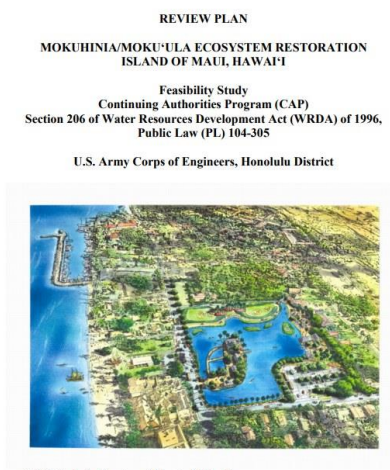


Slide from a session on Lahaina's Vision for the Future at the 2023 Native Hawaiian Convention on Maui. PC: Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (11.15.23). This image shows the cover of a proposal for the Historical Restoration and Preservation of Lahaina. The document was prepared for the Board Of Supervisors and Lahaina Restoration Committee by Community Planning Inc. in May 1961.

Mokuhinia (1961 Restoration Plan). Source: Lahaina Historical Restoration & Preservation, prepared by Community Planning Inc. (1961). Via CWRM

Website Link to Presentation: [Proposal for the Historical Restoration and Preservation of Lahaina, Island of Maui, State of Hawaii \(1961, Community Planning Inc.\) : Community Planning Inc. : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive](#)

Link to 2012 Restoration Army Corp Document: [REVIEW PLAN \(army.mil\)](#)



MSC Approval Date: November 2, 2012
Last Revision Date: October 12, 2012



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“All these areas are recognized to make sure Hawai‘i’s character and identity of this place known as Lele, was to blossom... This is the capital of the Kingdom. The Bill of Rights was signed here by [Kauikeaouli](#). The resurgence of Lā Kū‘oko‘a by [Timoteo Ha‘alilio](#), when he left Lahaina in [1842] to go to Europe to solidify the relationship of other countries—Belgium, France... Great Britain, the United States of America acknowledging that Hawai‘i is a sovereign monarchy. We cannot forget who we are,” said Kapu. “All these areas were supposed to be lifted up from the billows of the ash to know that we are people who are resilient, but nothing came of it,” Kapu said. “Recommendations that were given for all of these areas—the courthouse, Moku‘ula, all these areas... It never got to that full potential.”



Lahaina wildfire aftermath. PC: DLNR Hawai‘i. “Now I see the devastation as a great opportunity to push that reset button so that we can acknowledge what is really important —identity and character of a race of a nation, a people of Kō Hawai‘i Pae ‘Āina.”-Ke‘eaumoku Kapu “These properties are under the government entity of the state of Hawai‘i. These are lands that were seized. These are lands that should be returned,” said Kapu. “I think we have to have this discussion, and bring the dialogue to the forefront so we can go forward to make sure that the town

is well set and the people that flourish throughout that town will have dignity.”



PC: Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (11.15.23)

Wendy Osher

Wendy Osher leads the Maui Now news team. She is also the news voice of parent company, Pacific Media Group, having served more than 20 years as News Director for the company's six Maui radio stations.

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Housing Recovery

We are including this information and analysis as part of our After Action Report, but we do not have a recommendation associated.

[Maui Interim Housing Plan](#)

We have heard many opinions about the Housing Program from a variety of sources, both on the frontlines of the fire to national journalists. The reviews are mixed. The goal is to move fire survivors out of hotels and to remain on the island.

Our position is simple: we applaud the unprecedented program aimed at rehousing fire survivors on an island that is also the most remote place on Earth and one of the most expensive. We recognize this program is not applicable to all megafires, but we also see the paradigm behind it is nothing less than revolutionary in the world of federally declared disasters. To serve the community in front of you instead of blanketing a model that works great in Kentucky floods but not in Maui megafires is exactly the sort of flexible leadership we love to see and have never seen prior. We fully acknowledge the deficits and consequences. It can be BOTH / AND all at once.

To be clear, most often, FEMA provides trailers for fire survivors and may make improvements to the site as needed for a determined period of time. Until Totem in Jackson County, (Almeda Fire 2020), the Stafford Act also required they pull out all support at that time, including infrastructure improvements beyond the pre-disaster conditions. This removal is to avoid a gift of public funds. Once the time period is over, FEMA may reposition the trailers or sell them. Usually, the only people who are able to stay in a disaster area with high land values are those who are insured and use their ALE or Loss of Use funds.

In Maui, a brand new model was needed that served all fire survivors, especially considering the large percentage of renters and the relatively low incomes compared to land value combined with the strong desire to keep Lahaina in the hands of Lahaina. Trailers would not work here. They would become landfill due to the remote placement of Maui, the climate conditions, and the limited buildable space.

The Interim Housing Plan was made possible by the partnership between FEMA, CNHA, HCF, ARC, State of Hawaii, and County of Maui. See link above in title for further information. The program costs ~\$450M and credit also goes to the millions of donors, community activists, NGO leadership, and those in civil service, both elected and employed.

Is it perfect? No. Not at all. We know about the empty units and the reasonable upset from those who cannot live on the other side of the island while working and attending school in Lahaina. We understand the unintended consequences of skyrocketing rents, illegal evictions, rejection of family pets, and frustration with a lack of enforcement for those who have exploited the plan.

These are valuable lessons learned that will have to be mitigated. We argue that the choice between doing nothing and the Interim Housing Plan is easy. We understand it can be maddening to be the Learning Fire as we were born in Sonoma County during the October 2017 megafires when no one knew anything about megafires of massive scale. From housing to debris removal to legal issues to insurance to resiliency, the process was painfilled, and yet, the learning could not be avoided. Our fire leaders got up every day and innovated in ways that helped every community subsequently. We made mistakes. We also made things far better.

We subscribe to the adage, "Practice relentless, imperfect progress" every day. To innovate is to be vulnerable on a grand scale; it means leaders must have the courage to reject what is safe and create what is needed. This is rare and necessary in federal disaster response. We know it is hard for many people in Maui to see the massive effort to adapt to the community's needs because they've not experienced this level of disaster here prior. We've had a front row seat to every megafire since 2017 and we can say with full confidence: this is different and it is better.

Empty Units: We expect a certain amount of empty units. This program has never been done before and it will be imperfect.

<https://www.mauinews.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/2024/04/taxpayers-footing-bill-for-units-remaining-empty/>

Housing Displacement

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EE-Dq2r2KZU>

Maui residents say the homeless crisis is getting worse.

Maui's Median Home Price

<https://mauiow.com/2024/04/04/mauis-median-home-price-rises-to-1-3m-in-march/>

Maui's median home price rose to \$1,303,692 in March of 2024, up 9.5% from 2023 when the median was \$1,191,000. The data was included in the latest data released by the REALTORS® Association of Maui (RAM).

The housing market experienced notable increases in single-family home sales with 75 homes sold last month, up 1.4% from the same time in 2023.

Business Recovery

We are including this information not as a recommendation, but instead to mark the moment in time of recovery. Business Recovery is often overlooked, sometimes for years, and we often witness hard conversations years into recovery when communities realize they have to rebuild homes and businesses concurrently.

<https://www.mauicounty.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=13352>

Press Releases

Posted on: April 5, 2024

County's OED shares results of Maui Business Check survey

The County of Maui Office of Economic Development (OED) this week published the findings of its Maui Business Health Check survey. Conducted from January to February 2024, the survey garnered responses from 290 businesses, shedding light on the post-wildfire challenges faced by the Maui business community and offering insights for progress.

The full report can be viewed at www.mauinuistrong.info/feedback (refer to “Maui Business Health Check” under “Past Activities”).

Initiated by OED, the Maui Business Health Check survey aimed to gather feedback from businesses directly and indirectly impacted by the August 2023 wildfires. The objective was to facilitate a deeper understanding of the hurdles that businesses encounter and to pinpoint areas where support and resources are needed.

Among the total 290 survey participants, 106 businesses were from Lahaina, representing a diverse range of industries. The top sectors included tourism and hospitality (27.6%); retail (22.8%); food and beverage (14.5%); and arts, culture and entertainment (11.4%).

Key findings include:

- Of those who participated in the survey, 52.4% reported no change in their business location, 27.8% currently lack a physical space and 19.8% have relocated.
- The top reasons for businesses relocating were: building was lost in fire (75%), unaffordable leases (8.9%) and fire damage/necessity for renovation (3.6%).
- Out of 290 businesses, 37.6% are still evaluating the impact of the wildfires on their business plans, while 36.2% significantly scaled back but plan to rebuild on Maui.



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- Financially, 43.8% of businesses described themselves as “critical, on life support,” with only 3.1% reporting “doing great, feeling great.”
- More than half of the businesses faced challenges in retaining or hiring employees, resulting in 1,936 job losses.
- A few businesses were able to expand and hire new employees, with 788 hired since the wildfires.
- Most Lahaina businesses expressed a desire to remain in West Maui, emphasizing the need for accessible office spaces and conducive environments for business operations.

Businesses also shared feedback on various topics ranging from commercial leases, financial assistance, taxes, marketing, communications, infrastructure and rebuilding.

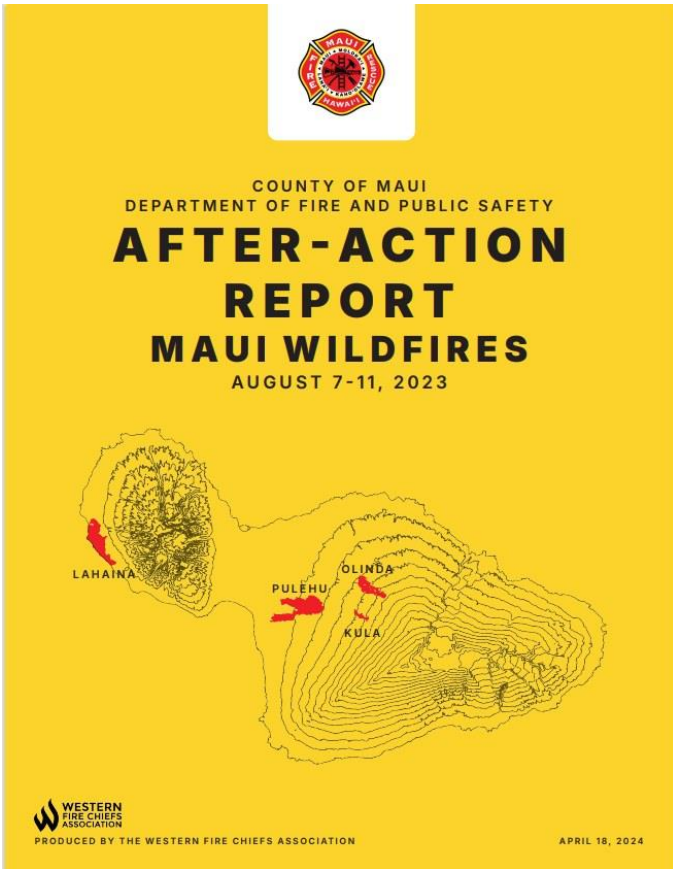
Luana Mahi, OED director, thanked businesses for participating in the survey.

“A heartfelt mahalo to the businesses that contributed to this vital Maui Health Check survey,” she said. “The wildfires have reshaped the operations of many local businesses, and surveys like this are instrumental in helping County and community stakeholders have a better understanding of the impact. Recognizing our businesses’ current needs and welcoming their feedback for potential solutions are crucial steps in advancing our island's recovery efforts now and in the future.”

For more OED resources for local businesses, visit the County website www.mauinuistrong.info.

Maui Fire Department, County of Maui Releases Maui Fires After Action Report (April 2024)

(watch press conference below)



Mayor Bissen Requests Proposals for After Action Report

[Maui mayor requests proposals for 'after-action report' 9 months after Maui wildfires \(msn.com\)](https://www.msn.com)

May 9, 2024

HONOLULU (HawaiiNewsNow) - Exactly nine months after the Maui Wildfires, there's a new effort to scrutinize the emergency response.

Mayor Richard Bissen issued a request for proposals on Wednesday to create an “after-action report” reviewing the Maui County Emergency Management Agency. The report will investigate MEMA’s communication with fire and police departments and the Emergency Operations Center on Aug. 8.

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[Proposals sought for After-Action Report of MEMA's coordination of Aug. 8 wildfire | News, Sports, Jobs - Maui News](#)

[News Flash • RFP issued for After-Action Report of MEMA's co \(mauicounty.gov\)](#)

Federal Resources: Collated by Bipartisan Policy Center for Maui

Helpful resources:

- GAO Report Appendix: See attached, a list of 27 programs that are available to disaster survivors and affected communities after a disaster.
- [CA Guide – Grant Resources](#): **PAGE 90** lists federal disaster prevention and relief grants available by agency. We've attached the disaster-specific section to this email (with the full guidebook in the link above). Notably, the disaster section does not include HUD resources. This guidebook also has an extensive list of other types of grants that may be of interest.
 - Page 3: Community and Regional Development
 - Page 15: Business and Labor
 - Page 22: Education and Cultural Affairs
 - Page 45: Housing and Social Services
 - Page 68: Natural Resources
 - Page 84: Environmental Quality
- [Flood Funding Finder](#): Includes an interactive chart with information about federal funding availability for floods. Most of these are applicable, though there are a few flood-specific programs, and this does not include wildfire prevention programs etc.
 - See a PDF version [here](#)

[Disaster Assistance programs by Category/Agency](#): Searchable tool from DisasterAssistance.gov

- [HUD Funding Navigator Tool](#): Interactive tool with information for funding on opportunities made available under the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), and other federal programs
- [IIJA Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\) Tracker](#): Includes information on funding availability for Bipartisan Infrastructure Law programs
 - See a simpler version: [Open and Upcoming Infrastructure Funding Opportunities](#)

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- See a version for the IRA: [Inflation Reduction Act Guidebook](#)
- [AECOM Fund Navigator](#): AECOM offers a service where you can buy access to interactive information on the BIL and IRA funding availability.
- [Puerto Rico website on recovery programs](#): Breaks down available disaster recovery programs created by —click on each of the categories to see more, especially “Other Recovery Funds.

Historical/Native Site Restoration Grants:

- [Historic Preservation Fund/Tribal Heritage Grants](#) from the Department of Interior
- National Trust for Historic Preservation (non-profit)
- National Park Foundation (non-profit)

[After the Fire USA Resources](#)

[After the Fire USA Home - After the Fire USA](#)

[2023 Wildfire Leadership Summit - YouTube](#)

[After The Fire USA - YouTube](#)

[How to Disaster | Podcast on Spotify](#)

[Maui After Action Report PDF](#)



Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Gray Thompson, CEO After the Fire USA

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