

OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY

STRATEGIES AND TOOLS WORKSHOPS

Track 2: Sustainable Tourism

Session 1: Tourism Development Capacity – Balancing Economic Prospects with Community Values and Lifestyles

Session Chair: Mayor Jeremy Harris, City and County of Honolulu

Facilitator: Harrison Rue, Citizen Planner Institute, Honolulu, Hawaii

Case Study Presenters: Chuck Gee, Dean Emeritus, University of Hawaii, School of Travel Industry Management, Honolulu, Hawaii

The Honorable Noah Idechong, Congressman, Founder of the Palau Conservation Society, Koror, Palau

Mayor Tai Herman, Aitutaki Island, Cook Islands

Zhang Fuchan, Deputy Director, Xi'an People's Congress and Former Vice Mayor, Xi'an, China

Respondent: Peter Apo, Office of Waikiki Development, City and County of Honolulu

Tourism is a competitive business – and tourists are drawn to places that are unique and attractive. The best destinations are great places to live, work, play – and visit. Maintaining a healthy tourist economy requires assessing an area's cultural, natural, and human resources and competitive advantages and disadvantages. Determining compatible visitor markets and appropriate levels of tourism can help preserve a community's economic viability; while minimizing impacts on community lifestyle and customs.

Highlights from discussion by respondents and audience: see summary below.

Session 2: Land Use Planning – Managing the Physical Resources of an Area

Session Chair: Jo Ann Yukimura, Former Mayor, Kauai, Hawaii

Facilitator: Harrison Rue, Citizen Planner Institute, Honolulu, Hawaii

Case Study Presenters:

The Honorable Noah Idechong, Congressman, Founder of the Palau Conservation Society, Koror, Palau

Mayor Ken Takeuchi, Kamakura, Japan

Larry Helber, AICP, Helber Hastert & Fee Planners, Honolulu, Hawaii

John Whalen, President, Plan Pacific, Inc. Honolulu, Hawaii,

Respondent: Randall Fujiki, Department of Planning and Permitting, City and County of Honolulu

Appropriate land use planning and regulations can help preserve, manage, and showcase an area's special attractions. Inappropriate development can help destroy a community's natural resources, cultural heritage, and lifestyle. Sustainable tourism development looks at an area's unique attractions – and then establishes policies and regulations that encourage appropriate growth while preserving and managing valuable resources.

Highlights from discussion by respondents and audience: see summary below.

Session 3: Urban Design – Integrating Cultural Heritage in Facility Design

Session Chair: Mayor Jeremy Harris, City and County of Honolulu

Facilitator: Harrison Rue, Citizen Planner Institute, Honolulu, Hawaii

Case Study Presenters:

The Honorable Noah Idechong, Congressman, Founder of the Palau Conservation Society, Koror, Palau

Mayor Phummisak Hongsyok, Phuket, Thailand

Mayor Tadatoshi Akiba, Hiroshima, Japan

Respondent: Malcolm Tom, Deputy Managing Director, City & County of Honolulu

Every new building can either add or take away from a destination's attractiveness. Great places preserve and protect historic and architectural resources – while making sure new buildings fit into the community like 'good neighbors'. Tools like cultural landscape districts, design districts, and other special management areas can help ensure that new development enhances a community's quality of life.

Highlights from discussion by respondents and audience: see summary below.

Session 4: Infrastructure Planning – Improving a Community's Quality of Life

Session Chair: Mayor Jeremy Harris, City and County of Honolulu

Facilitator: Harrison Rue, Citizen Planner Institute, Honolulu, Hawaii

Case Study Presenters:

The Honorable Noah Idechong, Congressman, Founder of the Palau Conservation Society, Koror, Palau

Hiro Yoshi Sato, Director General, Sendai, Japan

Mayor Phummisak Hongsyok, Phuket, Thailand

Mayor Tadatoshi Akiba, Hiroshima, Japan

Respondent: Abe Malae, CEO, American Samoa Power Authority, Pago Pago, American Samoa

Highlights from discussion by respondents and audience: the summary below covers all four sessions. A separate workshop was added on May 5 to focus in on design, planning, and infrastructure issues for the Palau delegates. Highlights from that special session appear at the end of this summary.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY – KEY ISSUES

What is carrying capacity? How many rooms are really needed? How should Palau proceed? Infrastructure availability determines capacity.

PALAU – KEY CHARACTERISTICS

2,000 year recorded history. 55,000 dives/year. 54,000 to 63,000 tourists/year. 110 rooms total, 25 in largest hotel. Traditional 'Bul' system of conservation – elders put a ban on fishing – 3 years, 8 no-fish zones. Rainwater catchment is encouraged

WHAT GOVERNS THE NUMBERS?

Assuming 2.7 jobs per hotel room, how many jobs are needed?

Palau – 4,000 adult jobs = 1,300 rooms if all are tourist jobs

Or – keep more than (the typical) 17 cents/dollar.

Or – Increase use of local supplies and materials. Maybe max out at 30 to 34 cents/dollar retained. Fewer visitors, higher quality product. Lower cost of services, lower impact

Higher paying tourists have other impacts: Higher land and housing costs. Consider needs of locals balanced with tourists: beaches, water. Score investors' past track records – get real references and pick the best. Invest on smaller scale with greater local share.

Palau could take investment risk and keep benefits and ownership. 12 out of 200 Rock Islands allowed for tourism; the rest are preserved for local use and conservation.

Koror – using Moratoriums and regulations; allowing sport fishing; snorkeling leads to greater impact; the fish that are left are more valuable than those taken.

MASS TRAVEL/TOURISM CHANGES PLACES

How can we direct change? Tourist customers are not always right. Both leadership and inclusive planning are needed.

Aloha = Unconditional Love

Separate – one-to-one

Maintain hospitable host is best strategy

Ho'okipa Model – George Kanahale

Three elements – guest, host, place

Natural to welcome visitors / Love is the host in a strange land

COMPATIBLE LAND USE PLANNING

Conduct assessment, focus development on tourist nodes, concentrate tourist facilities on nodes, create critical mass and bring facilities together for least impact. Create places that draw both locals and tourists.

DESIGNING A SCENIC AREA

8 meters (25 foot) height limit. 15 meters in some places could be allowed.

Administrative guidance is required on details. Most will comply with guidelines.

Currently have a landfill next to hotel and dive shop; no design guidelines.

With only 8,000 cars and a few miles of road, there are still major traffic jams.

Want to improve pedestrian experience and reduce traffic congestion

HOW TO SHAPE DEVELOPMENT

Look for other sites for growth. “Just say no” especially near rivers. Use preserved lagoon for many related uses without exploiting. Maintain cultural practices (aquaculture). How do you stop strip commercial development on new road? Just say no? Design guidelines for buildings. Require setbacks or build-to lines (poorly-designed setback rules help create strip development).

Focus developments on nodes – existing settlements/hamlets. It's hard to say who gets development and who gets 'nature'. How to avoid special interests calling the shots? End up with the “best plan” by getting input from all on where & how to develop.

Current foreign investment policy: the ball is in investors' court. Need to decide the 'where and how' of development (the vision) and solicit bids from developers/investors around the world (rather than just sit back and let investors decide).

Developer pressure breaks height limit and other regulations. Transfer of development rights possible – but may not be needed if most developable land is public. Who (what agency) makes development decisions?

Fiber optics and electric readily available. No sewer/water systems in most areas – alternative systems for hamlets could be better than linear distribution. Use traditional power structure (elders and chiefs) that don't get voted on to make key land use decisions that won't get changed easily. Use public process that fits with local culture. Define on map 'places of the heart' that everyone cares about and is willing to protect

Use infrastructure investments (where, when, how, what kind) to control growth

- 1) Set overall limits
- 2) Enforcement/regulations
- 3) Decide on locations
- 4) Create land use plan

URBAN DESIGN

Challenge of providing urban park space in very dense cities. Multiple use of open space is needed. Work with nearby residents in park design.

SPECIAL PALAU WORKSHOP NOTES

What kind of tourist products fit Babeldoab?

For locals, minimum wage is \$2.50/hr. For foreigners, there is no minimum wage (current prevailing rate is \$1.25/hr).

Need to control where development and tourism occur. How to control what kinds of shops and services are allowed/encouraged? Who can do what? Where? Who decides? Large areas should be identified as agricultural, conservation, urban, etc. Zoning is critical. The status quo is building with no plans. We need education. Is it OK to have big buildings? Do we need laws that are harder to amend?

A video on local culture shown on incoming airline flights could be useful. It would convey "do's and don'ts" before arrival.

It's not income – It's awareness and expectations

How much tourism do we want? What kind of tourist? Do we want "high end" and fewer tourists? Divers? Those who can afford a premier experience? There are two main kinds of tourists: 1) leisure market, and 2) those attending conventions and meetings. Conventions/meetings allow resources and people to "rest" between events. Americans and Europeans are about 20% of the tourist market.

How do we elevate quality of life for locals? Can we achieve higher and steadier wages? Can we cover public operating costs (need to assess what these costs are first).

Palau has a unique experience to market: diving; ocean experience; people/local culture; rock islands (only allow limited access to a few islands). We should market to people who care for and take care of the environment, and who want to keep coming back.

Going for big conventions (800+ to 1,000+) means greater impacts on sewer and water. How to go after 200+ high-end meetings (\$700/night)?

Consider experience of Hopi Tribe (American Southwest). They built a small convention center in 1970s. Trained young people to be guides to special places. What is Palau's story? Myths, culture, history.

Currently there is a \$52 million total budget, with \$32 million local and \$12 million from tourists. Imported labor needed means social impacts. 75% of businesses are locally owned. The airport tax is \$1 million total. There is a 4% gross receipts tax and a 10% room tax. Is the range of taxes appropriate to the impacts and in line with other markets?

Need additional airline access and flights.

What kind of building & zoning rules are appropriate for Palau? Should we pass a law limiting number of rooms? Should we limit number of places – specific locations for tourist development? Take individual deals and greed out of planning formula

Tourists should continue to help pay for residents' needs. Make developers pay added contributions to offset costs of: parks, schools, roads, sewers, water, etc. Look ahead to costs for maintenance, replacement, expansion and operations.

Babeldoab Road: it will be either a threat (uncontrolled linear sprawl) or provide opportunity. It has 52 lane miles, and will require regular resurfacing every 12 year or so. Ten states have urban centers. Dredging and quarry sites exist along roads. Maintaining development around existing villages is the best option.

How do you stick with your decisions and not change the map? Nothing taller than the Bai (mens' hut)? Require visitors to respect place and people. Lower income tourists are causing most damage.

Visioning process and workshops are useful. Higher-ups aren't on board yet. Need to meet with and include all groups/factions. People want too many things – need to prioritize

- Which are most important?
- What info/ideas are most important?
- What leads to decisions (values, etc.)?
- What are internal politics?

Sixteen states are competing for golf courses and resorts. Planning and education are needed now. We should map key sites for conservation and development – GIS using info from all people. Learn from Honolulu's experience (both mistakes and successes) 'Do what I learned, not what I did!'

Renewable energy sources have potential, e.g., OTEC (ocean thermal energy conversion). Existing power costs are high and make renewables more feasible. The

Global Environmental Facility might provide assistance. Palau is a UN member and a Rio Earth Summit signatory.

Water catchments (roof) could be expanded, along with use of gray water for irrigation and composting of human waste for fertilizer.

What does Palau want? Elders and residents may not share “outsiders’ vision.” Who is responsible to make it happen? How can Honolulu help Palau? Need to create the vision first. Should we establish an International Advisory Board? Seek help with financing? Hiroshima will help. Board members can talk with elders. Investors are “idea brokers”

Require local equity investor in all development. Moratorium on development? Tourism study would be helpful. Prevent further erosion – both environmental and social

Some example considerations for building and zoning regulations:

HEIGHT	coconut tree (with exceptions for community buildings)
FOOTPRINT	compact vs. dispersed
FORM	reflect cultural artifacts, use energy-efficient shapes, siting
MATERIALS	local, lightweight
ENVIRONMENT	minimize disturbance
SAFETY	typhoons