

MOLOKA'I

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT
ACTION PLAN 2026 - 2028

Ki'eki'e Kāmākou i uka, ha'aha'a Kalaupapa i kai, 'O Moloka'i Nui a Hina nō ia, ka heke o nā moku

*Lofty is Kāmākou in the uplands
Kalaupapa sprawls humbly near the
sea's edge. These places are indeed of
Moloka'i, the choicest of islands.*



Greatness is found
in people of all
walks and stations
in life. What is
more important
is for one to uplift
one's home and
genealogy.

LEIMOANA COLLECTION

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01. PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN

The number of visitors on Molokaʻi may be small compared to the rest of Hawaiʻi, but their presence is felt deeply on the 32x10-mile island. Since 2019, visitor arrivals have fallen by more than half to about 30,000 a year, according to the *2024 Annual Visitor Research Report* from the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT). Despite these relatively low numbers, residents feel their impact on community and *ʻāina* (land): visitors trespassing to reach Moaʻula Falls and Moʻomomi, walking on the protected reefs at Kūmimi, and clearing out shelves at Friendly Market during emergencies. At the same time, residents spoke of how the absence of visitors affects them too. Visitor spending dropped 10% from 2023 to 2024 (ibid). Residents expressed concern for the island’s economy, noting reduced hours, limited employment opportunities, and operational challenges that local businesses face as the visitor market has become too small to sustain them.

The purpose of this plan is to address the issues that come from both visitor presence and absence through **destination management**: reducing strain where it occurs, strengthening what supports daily life and the economy, and ensuring that tourism aligns with Molokaʻi’s values and capacity. The plan is the product of community engagement with *kamaʻāina* (locals) from across the island, where concerns and proposed ideas were elevated into a focused set of actions to address the tourism-related issues Molokaʻi faces.

The central role of residents in developing and implementing destination management plans is fundamental across Hawaiʻi, but on Molokaʻi that centrality has particular weight. As the 2018 *Molokaʻi Island Community Plan* states, “Molokaʻi residents are very protective of their rural and traditional-based lifestyles” as well as their autonomy, having watched the other islands of Hawaiʻi nei contend with consequences of inadequately managed tourism growth. That vigilance is further shaped by a history of decisions made elsewhere: where policy, funding, and messaging were often determined off-island while Molokaʻi endured the impacts. Yet, while the island is often misunderstood as “anti-tourist,” what the Molokaʻi community shared was far more nuanced and inclusive: not a rejection of visitors, but a conviction that tourism is enhanced when locally defined, guided, and structured, so that visitor presence strengthens what exists rather than puts it at risk.

Destination management on Molokaʻi therefore begins with an understanding that the island is first and foremost a home (not a product or a brand) and that the *kuleana* (responsibility) to care for ʻāina and people must guide how visitors are welcomed. Prioritizing home in managing a destination means that stewardship, protocol, and resident well-being give shape to visitor movement, learning, and expectations. This reflects a model of tourism rooted in *pilina* (connection): locally owned opportunities, guided access where it is needed, and visitor behavior grounded in respect and knowledge, as if entering someone’s home with intention and awareness. Through this approach, Molokaʻi can cultivate forms of tourism that support local livelihoods, uphold community values, and protect the island’s integrity for future generations.

ALIGNMENT WITH HAWAI'I'S STATEWIDE DESTINATION MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The work of destination management on Moloka'i is part of a broad statewide mandate established under Chapter 201b-3(a)(14), Hawai'i Revised Statutes, which directs Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) to carry out and coordinate "destination management" in Hawai'i, defined in the statute as:

A collaborative and coordinated process with public, private, and community stakeholders to manage the various elements of a visitor destination in order to:

- *Create, implement, and monitor strategies that attract targeted visitor markets and improve visitor experiences;*
- *Improve natural and cultural resources valued by Hawai'i residents and visitors;*
- *Develop and maintain tourism-related infrastructure to prevent overcrowding and overtaxing sites and resources; and*
- *Ensure that the provision of services enhances the visitor experience.*

The same engagement that informed this plan shaped a collective **vision** for destination management and the **guiding principles** underlying every island's DMAP. Conversations across the *pae 'āina* (archipelago), including those held on Moloka'i, helped define this shared vision for tourism stewardship:

"Destination management in Hawai'i is rooted in deliberate, ongoing stewardship that honors 'āina, culture, and community as the foundations of both our beloved home and our world-renowned visitor destination. Acting collaboratively as government, industry, residents, and visitors, we embrace the kuleana (responsibility) to guide tourism into greater harmony with Hawai'i's people and places, reducing strain while regenerating reciprocity, connection, and abundance for generations to come."

1. Pua kalaunu ma ke kai

‘O Honouli Wai

Wahine 'ilikea i ka poli 'o Moloka'i

Nō ka heke

Wahine 'Ilikea

The statewide vision is expressed through four guiding principles:

PRINCIPLE	MEANING	PRACTICE
MĀLAMA Stewardship <i>of ‘Āina (Land)</i> <i>and Culture</i>	Caring for what sustains and distinguishes Hawai‘i (its lands, waters, and living heritage) through protection and restoration.	Intentional, strategic action that advances protection, restoration, and resource management to heal ecosystems, safeguard cultural sites and practices, and care for Hawai‘i’s storied places.
LAULIMA Collaboration <i>and Accountability</i>	Acting together in shared <i>kuleana</i> (responsibility) across community, industry, and government agencies.	Interagency coordination, community governance, transparent data, and adaptive management that ensure alignment, accountability, and sustained communication with stakeholders.
LŌKAHI Harmony <i>and Reciprocity</i>	Cultivating relationships among residents, visitors, and ‘āina through respect, care, connection, and attentive response to strain.	Visitor engagement, place-based interpretation, stewardship opportunities, and responsive visitor management that deepen connection to place, reinforce care for communities and ‘āina, and address tourism-related strain as it emerges.
HO‘ŌLA Regeneration <i>and Growth of</i> <i>What is Good</i>	Nurturing the conditions for abundance so tourism replenishes rather than depletes.	Reinvestment of revenues, strengthened infrastructure and labor force, and regenerative tourism practices that respect ‘āina, support local businesses, operationalize traditional knowledge, and advance community well-being.

Rather than dictating the structure of this plan, these statewide principles ground its overall approach to **destination management**. They inform the strategies, objectives, and actions that follow, guiding how statewide priorities are translated into place-based solutions for Moloka‘i.

“WAHINE ‘ILIKEA”

A SONG CELEBRATING MOLOKA‘I BY DANIEL KAMAKAHI

THE WHITE CLOUDS OF MOLOKA‘I ARE DESCRIBED AS A FAIR SKINNED WOMAN IN THIS MELE

NOTE: While the DMAP presents a structured, time-bound action plan for addressing priority management needs, HTA regularly advances destination management through multiple efforts, programs, initiatives, and functions that support the same statutory objectives and guiding statewide principles. These include visitor education and post-arrival marketing (VEPAM), pre-arrival messaging, resident engagement, product development, and stewardship and community capacity-building initiatives such as HTA's Community Partnership Programs (CPP) and Community Tourism Collaborative (CTC) programs. Although these efforts are only occasionally referenced within this DMAP, they remain integral to how destination management is carried out in practice and how community well-being, visitor satisfaction, and stewardship outcomes are shaped over time.

NOTE: A number of existing Moloka'i plans including the *Moloka'i Island Community Plan* (2018), the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands' *Malama Cultural Park Special Area Plan* (2022), and the *2017–2026 Maui County Tourism Industry Strategic Plan* call for managing tourism to support resident well-being and involvement, protect cultural and natural resources, and maintain Moloka'i's small-town, rural character. This DMAP builds on those priorities as well, while responding to Moloka'i's current tourism realities.

HOW THIS PLAN BUILDS ON AND DIFFERS FROM THE FIRST DMAP CYCLE

Moloka'i enters this next phase issuing a strong mandate to turn long-standing priorities into visible progress. Many of the actions in this plan build upon those laid out in the 2021–2023 DMAP: calls for visitor education, support for regenerative local enterprises, and regular communication between residents and tourism partners. Community voices throughout this process affirmed that while the pace of change must remain true to Moloka'i and the caution needed for deliberate, informed action, the outcomes of action must be realized: *real* progress on education efforts, *real* increases in economic benefit to locals, *real* reduction in strain on natural resources, community, or ways of life. This plan responds by focusing on actions that strengthen Moloka'i's capacity to guide tourism on its own terms and with its own people.

A 2024 State Auditor report and another independent evaluation highlighted areas where the DMAPs could evolve: clearer agency roles, better measurement, and more realistic, sequential action planning. These reports were also considered in the formation of this plan.

To reflect those lessons and respond to current conditions, the 2026–2028 Moloka'i DMAP introduces several key refinements:

- **A hotspot-centered, place-based approach to destination management.**

The previous DMAP identified a set of hotspots through a review of community input, agency feedback, and partner consultation; however, the criteria and process used to identify and prioritize those sites were not explicitly stated, and hotspots were one of several planning considerations rather than the primary organizing focus. **This DMAP places hotspots and sites under strain at the center of its approach,** introducing a stakeholder-informed, quantitative framework for identifying **sites under strain** across the island and designating within them a smaller subset of critical, **priority hotspots** where tourism-related pressure is most acute and implementation most promising. The plan moves beyond identification by centering **targeted, site-specific management actions** for priority sites, reflecting a more place-based focus on managing tourism impacts where they are greatest.

- **Stronger measurability and clearer articulation of progress.**

Each hotspot and site under strain action in this plan is structured with defined steps laid out by fiscal year, anticipated deliverables, and intended outcomes, enabling more consistent tracking and communication of progress and success over time. These measures place greater emphasis on outcome-based indicators than the previous plan to better assess whether actions are producing meaningful change on the ground, while still including select process measures where appropriate. Action steps and deliverables are intended to guide implementation and may be refined over time in response to evolving conditions, operational considerations, and on-the-ground realities.

A comprehensive implementation timeline for all actions included in this plan is provided in Appendix B.

- **Clearer roles and accountability in interagency collaborations.**

Each hotspot and site under strain action also identifies specific management partners and roles, including relevant divisions within agencies (e.g., the Division of Forestry and Wildlife within the Department of Land and Natural Resources) and named community and industry partners where sensible, rather than broad designations alone. During the drafting process, HTA engaged these partners directly and secured provisional commitments to collaborate, helping ensure actions are grounded in organizational capacity and shared *kuleana*. Where implementation authority sits with other agencies (e.g., for enforcement, land management, transportation, or infrastructure), HTA is often included as a coordinating/convening partner to support alignment, communication, and visitor-facing strategies.

- **Identified opportunities for aligned destination management beyond named actions.**

While this plan identifies a defined set of priority hotspots and site-specific actions for this cycle, it also articulates destination-wide management strategies and lists stakeholder-identified priorities for priority sites. These elements recognize destination management as a collaborative, ongoing endeavor, in which community-led, agency-led, or independently funded efforts that advance identified priorities may be considered aligned with DMAP outcomes, regardless of whether they are named as actions in this cycle. Communities, agencies, and partners are encouraged to utilize this DMAP as a reference framework when advancing actions aligned with the strategies, priorities, outcomes, and sites articulated in this plan.

- **A different stakeholder engagement process.**

Unlike the previous DMAP cycle, where the island's Steering Committee drafted actions that were subsequently taken to the broader public for input, during this DMAP cycle, island-wide community meetings, industry sessions, and Advisory Group discussions were conducted concurrently. This ensured that stakeholder inputs directly and iteratively guided the structure and content of the plans. For more details about the engagement and creation process, see Section 2: Development Process for the Plan.



02. DEVELOPMENT PROCESS FOR THE PLAN

The Molokaʻi Destination Management Action Plan (DMAP) was developed through an iterative planning process spanning **July 2025 through early 2026**. Rather than following a linear “consult once and decide” approach, the plan evolved through repeated cycles of engagement, analysis, drafting, and refinement.

Throughout the planning period, many inputs informed development. Community and industry perspectives, advisory guidance, agency and partner dialogue, HTA staff insights, and ongoing research were considered together to identify emerging priorities, refine strategies, and develop feasible actions.

Input gathered through this process shaped the plan at several levels:

- **Strategies (Section 4)** synthesize recurring themes raised through engagement and organize how the DMAP responds to those concerns.
- **Hotspots and sites under strain (Section 5)** align with locations repeatedly identified by stakeholders as experiencing concentrated tourism-related impacts.
- **Actions (Sections 5 and 6)** were developed to address these themes while remaining feasible within the DMAP timeframe and partnership context.

As additional input was gathered, draft materials were revisited with various stakeholders and refined. This approach helped ensure that the DMAP’s structure, priorities, and actions emerged from shared patterns across engagement rather than isolated comments or individual meetings.

This section describes how engagement, analysis, and drafting informed each other during the planning process. **A schedule of meetings and engagement activities is provided in Appendix A.**



The DMAP was shaped by weaving together four strands of knowledge...

...over multiple phases of engagement, insight, and action.

Community & Industry Voices

Virtual Engagement • In-Person Sessions • Public Comment Portal

Research & Analysis

Tourism Data • Existing DMAPs & Plans • Thematic Synthesis

Agency & Partner Coordination

State & County Agencies • Community Organizations • Implementation Feasibility

HTA Leadership & Staff Guidance

Destination Managers • Program Insights • Operational Context

Initial Insights & Priorities

Legislative direction, research, and HTA priorities informed early understandings and identified a preliminary focus on hotspots.

Early Engagement & Emerging Themes

Initial sessions with industry, community members, and Advisory Group stakeholders surfaced broad island priorities and helped shape early stage management themes.

Focused Dialogue & Action Development

In-person community sessions and ongoing Advisory Group dialogues refined themes into island-specific strategies, solidified priority hotspots, and offered more specific insights that informed related management actions.

Draft Development & Refinement

Multiple draft iterations, continued stakeholder input, and consultation with potential action partners refined actions, strengthened plan framing, and clarified feasible pathways for implementation.

This Destination Management Action Plan is crafted with intention, iteration, and aloha. Like a *kaula* (rope), it seeks to weave knowledge from many sources to create lasting change for our communities.

Inspiration for this illustration comes from “Aha Weave featuring John Kaimikaua” on YouTube.

HOW THE DMAP WAS WOVEN TOGETHER

The planning process was iterative and collaborative, with **engagement, analysis, and drafting occurring in ongoing cycles** rather than discrete phases. Input gathered at each stage helped to identify recurring themes, locations experiencing tourism-related strain, and possible directions for action. As new insights emerged, draft ideas were revisited with stakeholders and refined.

This approach allowed the plan to evolve over time and helped ensure that strategies, hotspot priorities, and actions reflect patterns consistently raised across engagement rather than isolated feedback.

1. Establishing the Initial Frame

Planning for the DMAP began with a review of existing conditions, policy direction, the 2021-2023 DMAP and other island-specific management plans, and available visitor and other tourism-related data. This work informed the situational analysis and SWOT (Section 3), providing an initial picture of the possibilities, pressures, and management context facing the destination.

Key contextual drivers for the plan included legislative direction to focus management efforts on hotspots and sites under strain, as well as findings from the State Auditor and internal HTA review related to destination management accountability and implementation described in Section 1.

While this research provided an early baseline for the plan, additional plans, studies, and policy context continued to be incorporated as they were identified through engagement with partners.

2. Advisory Guidance and Iterative Direction

An island Advisory Group provided ongoing guidance throughout the planning process. Convened by HTA, the group included representatives from the visitor industry, ‘āina stewardship groups, State and County agencies, visitor bureaus and destination organizations, business and community leadership, and other partners with relevant experience in tourism and resource management. A list of these individuals is provided at the end of this plan.

The Advisory Group met several times and provided their *mana’o* (input) as the plan evolved, reviewing emerging themes, discussing locations raised as experiencing tourism-related strain, and helping shape the direction and scope of proposed actions. This input helped refine early concepts, identify priority locations for management attention, and ensure that draft strategies and actions reflected a broad range of perspectives.

Additional information on Advisory Group meeting dates is provided in Appendix A.

3. Listening to Recurring Concerns and Emerging Themes

Early engagement with community members and industry stakeholders focused on understanding how tourism is experienced in daily life across the island and where its impacts are most visible.

Rather than simply listing comments, the project team looked for patterns in what people raised repeatedly, how they described those concerns, which locations were consistently cited as places of concern, and what types of actions stakeholders suggested in response.

Through this process, several recurring themes began to emerge across conversations, including concerns related to traffic, infrastructure, and access; enforcement and safety; natural and cultural resources; visitor education; local economic benefit; and resident engagement, among others.

These themes helped shape later in-person community sessions, where participants explored these topics in greater depth and discussed potential approaches for addressing them.

As the process progressed, **these recurring themes were refined several times until they were synthesized into the management strategies presented in Section 4.** While the strategies do not correspond directly to individual comments raised during engagement, they reflect the broader patterns and priorities that emerged and helped organize how the DMAP responds to those concerns.

Additional information on the timing, format, and locations of community and industry engagement is provided in Appendix A.

4. Partner Coordination

Throughout the planning process, HTA Destination Managers and other HTA staff engaged directly with State and County agencies, ‘āina-based stewardship organizations, and other potential implementation partners. Several of these entities are listed at the end of this plan.

These conversations focused on:

- understanding roles, internal processes, staffing capacities, and operational limitations,
- alignment with existing programs, policies, and capital investments,
- clarification of jurisdictional responsibilities,
- identification of feasible pathways for implementation and partnership,
- and securing provisional commitments to included actions.

This coordination helped ensure that proposed actions reflect both stakeholder priorities and practical implementation realities.

5. Draft Development, Review, and Refinement

Insights from stakeholder engagement, advisory dialogue, analytical work, and partner coordination were brought together to develop draft strategies and actions. These materials were refined through multiple rounds of drafting and review as the plan evolved.

Draft concepts were shared with Advisory Group members, HTA staff, and relevant partners to confirm that they accurately reflected stakeholder concerns and appeared feasible within the DMAP planning period. A draft version of the DMAP was presented publicly in February 2026 through a virtual session and an online commentary portal, providing an opportunity for additional feedback from community members and stakeholders. Input received during this stage informed late stage revisions before finalization of the plan in March 2026.

HOW ACTIONS WERE DEVELOPED

Actions included in this plan were informed by stakeholders' *mana'o* (insight). Ideas for action suggested by stakeholders were evaluated for feasibility and the ability to advance the statewide vision for **destination management** (Section 1). Actions proposed in this plan are those that:

- Align with one or more of the three Moloka'i management strategies (Section 4),
- Apply the statewide DMAP hotspot and site-under-strain framework (Section 5); through targeted, site-specific action at priority hotspots, or support those efforts through complementary management approaches, and
- Could reasonably demonstrate measurable outcomes within the FY 2027–2029 planning period.

Site-specific actions at priority hotspots form the core of this DMAP. These actions were honed for sites on the island where tourism-related strain is most acute and where the feasibility of near-term management intervention is strongest. They reflect the plan's primary emphasis on addressing tourism-related pressure, safety concerns, and cultural and environmental impacts at specific strained locations.

In addition to these site-specific actions, the plan includes a smaller number of other management actions that support hotspot management by addressing broader destination conditions and opportunities (Section 6). While hotspots identify places where visitor pressure is currently concentrated, visitor behavior is shaped by factors that extend beyond any single site, including how visitors receive information and what alternatives they perceive to be available. Research from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa finds that when access is limited at one heavily visited location, visitor demand can shift to nearby sites rather than dissipating (Moromizato 2025). These other actions therefore focus on visitor education, coordination, engagement, and targeted place-based initiatives that shape how visitors move through and interact with the island. While these actions may be applied at specific locations, they are not primarily driven by site strain and are intended to reinforce, complement, and strengthen the effectiveness of hotspot-focused management.

In developing proposed actions, HTA conducted a review of existing plans and studies – including those led by the Department of Land & Natural Resources (DLNR), Hawai'i Department of Transportation (HDOT), County agencies, and local organizations – to ensure that actions build on existing work where appropriate and avoid duplicating ongoing efforts.

Draft actions were reviewed by the Advisory Group and identified action partners, who provided feedback on feasibility, implementation considerations, and alignment with desired outcomes at identified sites under strain. HTA incorporated this feedback in refining the actions before presenting the draft plan for community review through public meetings and an online review portal in February 2026.

While actions in this plan are presented with defined timelines, proposed steps, and anticipated deliverables to support clarity and measurability, DMAP implementation will follow an **adaptive management approach**. Specific implementation details may evolve over time in response to changing conditions on the ground, emergent priorities, shifts in visitor behavior, resource conditions, and community needs, among other reasons. In some cases, actions may be sequenced differently, postponed, rescoped, or refined to reflect new information, while maintaining alignment with the plan's core intent and intended outcomes.

As destination management is a “collaborative and coordinated process with public, private, and community stakeholders,” as defined by Chapter 201B-3(a)(14), Hawai‘i Revised Statutes, implementation is shaped by factors beyond any single entity’s direct authority. These include funding availability, procurement outcomes, partner capacity, regulatory processes, and interagency coordination, among others. While leads and action partners were identified during plan development and commitment provisionally secured, implementation of several actions is contingent on partner participation and readiness, available funding, and legislative appropriations. Any material changes to action steps, timelines, or deliverables will be documented and communicated through ongoing reporting and engagement to ensure transparency.

Although actions included in this plan represent priority initiatives identified for advancement within the DMAP planning period, they do not represent the full spectrum of destination management activity occurring or needed on Moloka‘i. Consistent with the statutory definition of *destination management*, community-based stewardship, hosting, education, safety guidance, and place-based management efforts are understood to be **core components of destination management**, whether implemented through DMAP actions or other public, private, or philanthropic pathways. Initiatives that advance the intent of the Moloka‘i management strategies (Section 4) and the statewide destination management framework (Section 1) may be considered aligned with destination management goals regardless of funding source or implementing entity. Communities, agencies, the visitor industry, and other partners are encouraged to reference and draw from this DMAP when advancing actions aligned with these strategies, priorities, and outcomes.

Finally, some suggestions raised throughout the DMAP process did not advance as actions and were instead organized into two additional categories:

- **Additional Opportunities Identified Through Stakeholder Engagement:** ideas raised by stakeholders that could advance destination management but fall outside the specific actions included in this DMAP. These may include recommendations for action by other agencies, potential pathways for future HTA consideration, or broader policy requests that could influence destination management outcomes. Select recommendations are included in **Appendix C** of this plan, while a full listing of opportunities is available on the HTA website.
- **Infeasible or Out-of-Scope:** ideas that proved impractical, outside legal authority, or otherwise unworkable within this DMAP cycle. These are not included in the plan.

Collectively, the actions and positions outlined in this document seek to advance **destination management** on Moloka‘i in ways that support harmony, stewardship, regeneration, and collaboration.



03. TOURISM & DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ON MOLOKA'I

Before turning to the strategies and actions of this plan, it is important to understand the conditions related to tourism that shape daily life on Moloka'i today. Over the course of the DMAP development process, residents, industry partners, and agency staff shared observations about the island's current pressures and capacities: insights echoed in and expanded by State and County data. Taken together, they offer a grounded picture of the **situation** in which destination management will operate during this DMAP cycle.

That picture shows an island whose tourism landscape is shaped less by volume than by capacity, scale, and sensitivity to outside influence. Few visitors travel to Moloka'i when visiting Hawai'i, yet limited airlift, minimal accommodations, degrading infrastructure, and a small commercial base mean that small changes in visitor behavior, presence, or demand are felt quickly in daily life, even as the presence of visitors contributes to the local economy and maintaining services like airlift that are critical for locals. Tourism plays a modest but meaningful role for some families and businesses, but its future on the island is approached with diligent caution, rooted not in hostility toward visitors but in a long-standing vigilance among many residents against displacement and external control that could alter Moloka'i's identity.

The following sections capture some of the island-wide conditions affecting **destination management** on Moloka'i today. They draw on quantitative indicators, stakeholder input, and analytical tools used during planning to understand where demand concentrates and when strain peaks. What emerges is a snapshot of Moloka'i's present moment: the patterns of movement, economic realities, management challenges, and community sentiment that inform the work, strategies, and actions ahead.

KEY ISLAND-WIDE CONDITIONS

CONGESTION AND VISITOR VOLUME

- **Moloka'i hosts the fewest visitors of any island, with 468 visitors on an average day in 2024.** Put another way, visitors make up about six out of every 100 people on the island. (*2024 Annual Visitor Research Report*, Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism).
- Visitor arrivals in 2024 (~30,000) were less than half of 2019 levels, and far below a peak of nearly 120,000 visitors in 1992.
- **Behavioral impacts** like trespassing, reef trampling, and use of unsafe or closed trails create more friction than visitor volume itself, particularly at unmanaged or lightly stewarded sites.
- During DMAP stakeholder engagements, several residents expressed that **visitors to Moloka'i often arrive with inaccurate information about conditions, cultural and community protocols, or appropriate access**, leading to unintentional impacts and misdirected travel.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

- **Visitor spending on Moloka'i averaged roughly \$175 per person per day in 2024**, about 28% below the statewide average of \$243, reflecting limited lodging, dining, retail, and activity options. **Spending patterns similarly show lower expenditures in key categories:** visitors to Moloka'i spend the equivalent of \$60 for food and beverage, \$43 for entertainment and recreation, and \$29 for shopping for every \$100 spent statewide, underscoring the island's minimal commercial footprint (*2024 Annual Visitor Research Report*, DBEDT).
- Several residents and operators who participated in DMAP engagement and the island Advisory Group noted that tourism provides **modest but meaningful revenue**, with activity surging during major annual paddling events like Nā Wāhine o Ke Kai and Moloka'i Hoe.

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Airlift remains constrained, with approximately 35,000 arriving seats in 2024 (nearly 20% below pre-pandemic levels) according to DBEDT's 2024 Annual Visitor Research Report. This can create a sense of scarcity and **direct competition for limited seats** between residents and visitors, limiting the island's ability to absorb fluctuations in visitor demand.
- **Moloka'i's infrastructure is limited in scale and condition**, with residents noting deteriorating roads, insufficient parking, aging wayside facilities, and minimal public restrooms across the island.
- Roughly three-quarters of accommodations on Moloka'i are **vacation rentals**, resulting in limited centralized visitor services and few structured points for orientation or stewardship (*2025 Visitor Plant Inventory Report*, DBEDT). Furthermore, as many as 30% of these vacation rentals may be phased out in the next decade due to County legislation passed in 2025, further reducing lodging options for visitors.

MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES & ISSUES

- Several natural and cultural sites of high interest to visitors (e.g., Moa'ula Falls, Mo'omomi) **are accessible only through private, leased, or kuleana lands**, leading to recurring friction and highlighting the need for clearer visitor preparation and community-led access protocols.
- There is **no structured point of orientation for visitors**, with residents noting the absence of an airport welcome, visitor center, or on-island hub to both welcome and greet visitors and explain cultural protocols, *kapu* (prohibited) areas, safety, or which sites are appropriate to visit.
- Unmanaged visitor entry and unvetted guiding at sites **create safety risks and inconsistent cultural orientation to place**, underscoring opportunities for vetted, community-aligned operators and formalized stewardship roles.
- Several residents participating in DMAP meetings expressed interest in **community-led stewardship and values-based visitor management**, emphasizing that Moloka'i needs systems that support area-specific guides, protect *wahi pana* (storied places), and convey Moloka'i's expectations in a way that keeps tourism small-scale, respectful, and aligned with community priorities.

RESIDENT SENTIMENT REGARDING TOURISM

- According to DBEDT's *Spring 2024 Resident Sentiment Survey*, **only 41% of Moloka'i residents believe the island is "run for tourists at the expense of local people,"** (statewide average: 67%), likely as a result of Moloka'i's small visitor load and limited focus on tourism.
- However, **only 53% of Moloka'i residents believe tourism is "worth the issues associated with it"** (statewide average: 62%), and only 31% of Moloka'i residents describe tourism as "mostly positive" for them and their families (statewide average: 40%). This demonstrates reservations to tourism overall, as well as the limited direct economic impact is perceived to have for local families.
- **During DMAP community engagements:**
 - Many residents emphasized that **tourism must remain smaller-scale and aligned with local values**, reflecting a regularly-cited desire for visitors to understand cultural expectations and treat the island as though entering someone's home.
 - Several residents articulated a preference for "come, spend, and leave" tourism that offers economic benefit and investment without inducing further population pressure through relocation. Select others, however, expressed support specifically for those who want to relocate to the island, as it may create additional opportunities for economic diversification.
 - With tourism impacts still comparatively restrained, **residents see a critical window to shape a values-centered approach now**, ensuring that future visitation strengthens community, supports local businesses and youth, and protects the island's identity while creating opportunities for external contributions to the local economy.

MOLOKA'I SWOT ANALYSIS

The SWOT analysis below summarizes the strengths and weaknesses of Moloka'i as a destination, alongside opportunities to strengthen management and threats to effective stewardship. It was used as a planning tool to inform priorities and actions, rather than as a comprehensive assessment of all conditions impacting destination management.

STRENGTHS

- Strong, cohesive community and cultural identity
- Active cultural practitioners and resource stewards
- Clearly defined sensitive and sacred sites
- Low visitation enables proactive management innovation
- Deep resident commitment to protecting place and lifestyle
- Strong sense of local ownership and pride
- Nationally significant Kalaupapa cultural heritage
- Desire for greater community impact and engagement on tourism decisions

OPPORTUNITIES

- Low visitation allows proactive, values-based management design
- Strengthen community-led stewardship at key sites
- Establish central visitor orientation and education hub and/or presence
- Develop vetted, community-aligned guiding and access systems
- Expand visitor cultural programming through local practitioners
- Improve digital accuracy and visitor information pathways
- Build agency-community coordination for shared-site management
- Targeted social investments such as voluntourism aligns with community and enhances resilience

WEAKNESSES

- Limited and unreliable airlift
- Limited accommodation, retail, and dining options
- Small visitor base slows product development and diversification
- Aging roads, parking and public facilities
- Sparse commercial activity limits visitor spending and economic benefit from tourism
- Moderate water quality and infrastructure limits tourism, particularly in Kaluako'i
- No centralized visitor orientation or education point
- Limited State and County presence islandwide for enforcement
- Low visitor satisfaction with experience

THREATS

- Economic downturns reducing funding for management
- Resident skepticism of tourism impeding community-aligned management efforts
- Visitor decline harming viability of tourism business endeavors, stewardship and education systems
- Further reductions in lodging availability
- Climate change impacting roads, coasts, and access
- Limited workforce to support stewardship initiatives
- Outmigration of residents
- Digital misinformation driving unmanaged site visitation



04. MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR MOLOKA'I 2026 - 2028

Rooted in extensive stakeholder engagement on Moloka'i, this plan advances three interrelated strategies for **destination management** on the island over the next three years:

1. Resource & Elevate Local *ʻIke* (Knowledge)
2. Curate Visitor Engagement & Education
3. Establish Durable Foundations

Community, agency, and industry stakeholders who engaged in the DMAP process, as well as Advisory Group members, were prompted to identify **problems**, **issues**, or **needs** related to tourism-related strain in their communities as a component of DMAP outreach. In some cases, they proposed **specific ideas for action** that informed or complemented those observations and concerns.

Evaluating these stakeholder contributions for common themes led directly to the destination management strategies that follow, which in turn anchor the actions included in this plan.



STRATEGY 1: RESOURCE & ELEVATE LOCAL 'IKE

Honoring Moloka'i knowledge through investment and promotion.

Objective: Invest in Moloka'i knowledge, leadership, and enterprise so tourism strengthens local capacity and reflects the island's expertise, *mo'olelo* (narratives), and priorities.

Residents repeatedly emphasized that Moloka'i already holds the *'ike* (knowledge) to guide tourism: the understanding of how to host, teach, and steward responsibly. What is needed now are the resources and partnerships to turn that *'ike* into opportunity. This strategy supports local practitioners, organizations, and small businesses that carry community-based solutions, providing training, micro-grants, and other tools to build visitor experiences and other tourism-related economic activity that is aligned with Moloka'i values. It also commits to continuing DMAP engagement as a process that uplifts local expertise and decision-making, ensuring that both the direction and the benefits of tourism remain grounded in the island's people. By investing in Moloka'i's own educators, storytellers, long-term stewards, and entrepreneurs, this approach builds a stronger, more self-determined economy rooted in community well-being.

Select Associated Actions:

- **Kūmimi Beach:** Community Stewardship Pilot at Kūmimi and Sandy Beach (*Action KB-1*)
- **Island-wide:** Micro-Grant and Training Program for Community-Based Tourism (*IW-7*)
- **Island-wide:** Ongoing Community Engagement Process for DMAP Implementation (*IW-8*)



STRATEGY 2: CURATE VISITOR ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION

Guiding visitors with unified and targeted intention, clarity, and community voice.

Objective: Shape how visitors experience and engage with Moloka'i by creating clear, community-defined pathways for experiences that invite meaningful learning while limiting access to sensitive places.

Residents emphasized the need to not only manage but **guide** how visitors move through and experience the island, thus protecting places and ways of life while ensuring a high-quality visitor experience. Moloka'i's approach blends welcome with restraint: directing visitors toward meaningful opportunities to learn from community hosts and experience authentic connection, while redirecting them from other areas or stories not meant to be shared with non-residents. This balance strengthens resident well-being and visitor experience by replacing common confusion with clarity, and by swapping chance encounters with greater and clearer access to intentional, values-based engagement in place. Through coordinated orientation, interpretation, and boundary-setting, the island defines what respectful visitation looks like on its own terms.

Select Associated Actions:

- **Hālawā & Moa‘ula Falls:** Deterrence Options to Reduce Traffic Beyond Kūmimi (HV-3)
- **Island-wide:** Pre-Arrival Education and Welcome System for Visitors (IW-6)
- **Island-wide:** Shared Stewardship for Sacred & Sensitive Places (IW-1)



STRATEGY 3:

ESTABLISH DURABLE FOUNDATIONS

Creating lasting systems of care, communication, and stewardship.

Objective: Strengthen the long-term presence and consistency of community stewardship by supporting ongoing care, safety, maintenance, and messaging at key visitor sites and shared spaces.

Residents across Moloka‘i spoke about the importance of work that endures: investments and systems that remain effective after initial action has concluded. Durability entails the creation of structures, systems, and strategic investments that will continue to guide visitor behavior, improve resident quality of life and visitor experience, care for precious natural and cultural resources, and convey community standards over time. The included management actions aim to build access systems, install signage, and invest in stewardship of sites, with each action strengthening a visible and lasting expression of care for place and people. In doing this, Moloka‘i can best ensure that standards of safety, respect, and education remain steady, even as people and conditions change.

Select Associated Actions:

- **Hālawā & Moa‘ula Falls:** Community-Led Managed Access Framework (HV-1)
- **Kūmimi Beach:** Durable, Locally Designed Educational Signage (KB-3)
- **Kaunakakai:** Coordinated Community-Agency Stewardship Dialogue (KKI-2)



SITES UNDER STRAIN: DESTINATION 05. MANAGEMENT IN FOCUS

Tourism-related strain on Molokaʻi is experienced most tangibly in specific places: along roadways, in bays, at beaches, and in other areas where visitors, residents, and natural resources interact every day. These are the settings where Molokaʻi's destination management strategies can have the greatest and most immediate impact when translated into **concrete action**.

With that in mind, this DMAP is intentionally centered on the locations where tourism-related pressures are most evident. These **sites under strain** – the roads, beaches, valleys, trails, and corridors repeatedly raised as places of concern during stakeholder engagement – are places where tourism-related activity intersects with natural, cultural, or community resources, creating or intensifying impacts that diminish resident quality of life, the visitor experience, and the overall health of our natural resources. Strain, as defined in this plan, may arise from the scale or behavior of visitation, or from visitation occurring in places that are unsafe, culturally inappropriate, environmentally sensitive, or otherwise restricted from public access.

Within this broader set of sites, the plan identifies a smaller number of **hotspots**. Hotspots represent the most **acute subset of sites under strain**: locations where tourism-related pressure is concentrated, multifaceted, and persistent; and where the need for coordinated, site-specific management is most apparent. By distinguishing hotspots from other sites under strain, the plan identifies where targeted actions are prioritized, versus where ongoing coordination, monitoring, or broader initiatives are more appropriate.

This approach builds on the 2021–2023 DMAPs, which identified named hotspots through a review of community input, agency feedback, partner consultation, and implementation-phase evaluation, but did not include the comprehensive process used to select those sites in the final plan. This plan strengthens that foundation by outlining a clear, collaborative framework for **identifying, prioritizing, and advancing action** at sites where tourism-related pressures are concentrated, placing site-specific management at the forefront of the DMAP and strengthening coordination among public, private, and community partners to sustain resident well-being, the visitor experience, and the health of Hawaiʻi's natural, cultural, and infrastructural resources.

HOW SITES UNDER STRAIN WERE IDENTIFIED AND EVALUATED

Input on potential sites came from multiple types of stakeholder engagement. **Community participants** shared input on a wide range of locations where they observed visitor-related strain, including impacts to natural and cultural resources, traffic and infrastructure challenges, and areas where more visitor education or management could improve conditions or behavior. Responses reflected where the impacts of tourism are experienced locally and provided the foundation for identifying areas of concern.

As part of their charge, **Advisory Group members** were explicitly asked to identify hotspots using a shared definition: *places where impacts from visitors or the visitor industry significantly contribute to pressure on natural, cultural, or community resources*. Potential sites were also informed by HTA recommendations.

From this combined input, the planning team compiled a list of potential hotspots and evaluated each using **thirteen (13) shared criteria**, grouped into three (3) dimensions:

1. Where tourism-related strain is occurring,
2. How serious or consequential that strain is, and
3. How feasible it is for HTA and its partners to act within the scope of the DMAP.

Each location was assessed using a combination of quantitative and qualitative inputs, including Advisory Group review, the frequency and intensity of stakeholder comments, and other available data and analysis. Feasibility was assessed separately through HTA and agency input, considering jurisdiction, resources, and alignment with the DMAP's scope.

A color scale was then applied to show both **strain** and **feasibility** ratings for each site. These scales move in opposite directions: **high strain (red)** indicates greater pressure and concern, while **high feasibility (green)** indicates a stronger ability to act through collaborative, coordinated management.

COLOR SCALE

COLOR	IDENTIFICATION/COMPOUNDING FACTOR	FEASIBILITY
	Very high: Severe conditions, risks, or vulnerabilities clearly present and widely evident	Very low: Limited ability for HTA or partners to act within current scope or resources
	High: Notable and recurring conditions requiring coordinated management attention	Low: Some capacity for action, but significant barriers remain
	Moderate: Emerging or situational conditions manageable with targeted effort	Moderate: Feasible with coordination or additional resources
	Low: Minimal pressures or sensitivities at present	High: Clarity of solution; authority, partners, and resources available for action
	Not applicable or insufficient information	Not applicable or insufficient information

HOW PRIORITY HOTSPOTS AND SITES FOR THIS DMAP WERE DETERMINED

Following the evaluation to identify sites under strain, those sites that showed **significant levels of Tier 1 and Tier 2 criteria rated red (very high strain) or orange (high strain)** were classified as **hotspots**. Sites exhibiting some strain but which did not reach those thresholds remained “**sites under strain**” for purposes of this document. These areas reflect real and ongoing pressures or community concerns but were not elevated to hotspot status for this DMAP cycle based on relative severity and implementation feasibility.

The Moloka‘i Advisory Group, in consultation with HTA, selected **priority hotspots and sites of strain** for focused DMAP action during the 2026–2028 DMAP cycle. A limited number of priority sites were chosen to ensure that limited available resources (e.g., staffing, funding, and partnerships) could be applied effectively and efficiently; and that included actions could be sequenced based on feasibility and readiness, allowing each action to achieve measurable results within the DMAP implementation period. The identification of priority sites and development of associated actions reflects this sequencing approach and is not intended to limit other agencies, organizations, or communities from advancing management actions aligned with DMAP outcomes at other sites under strain, nor to foreclose consideration of site-specific actions for other locations in future DMAP cycles.

While several sites under strain are not addressed through site-specific actions in this DMAP due to resource and sequencing considerations, they were considered in constructing **broader destination-wide management actions** presented later in this document. These actions are designed to shape visitor movement, knowledge, expectations, and coordination across the island, thereby improving conditions at all sites under strain through changes in visitor behavior, distribution, and management practices broadly.

Communities, agencies, industry, and other partners are encouraged to continue organizing, coordinating, and advancing place-based efforts aligned with included DMAP strategies, priorities, and outcomes, regardless of whether a site is named for focused action in this cycle. All DMAP-identified sites under strain are indexed at the end of this section and will continue to be monitored by HTA in collaboration with partners for changes in conditions, feasibility, and partnership readiness that may adjust their designation as hotspots or sites under strain. Hotspot identification and site-specific DMAP action are part of a repeatable, island-wide destination management approach that will evolve over time, with additional sites considered in future DMAP cycles as readiness and capacity align.

2. Nani wale nō nā wailele uka

O Hina ‘o Hāhā ‘o Mo‘oloa

Nā wai ‘ekolu i ka uluwehiwehi

‘O Kamalō i ka mālīe

CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING AND PRIORITIZING HOTSPOTS

CATEGORY 1 - Identification

“Is this site under strain related to tourism?”

CRITERION

DEFINITION / FOCUS

Access Infrastructure & Arrival Pressure

Strain created by how people **reach** the site. Reflects whether approach routes and arrival infrastructure (e.g., road capacity, parking, trailheads, marine landings, neighborhood adjacencies) are overwhelmed, unmanaged, unsafe, or reliant on informal / illegal access points.

On-Site Capacity & Crowd Pressure

Strain created by what happens once people are **at** the site. Reflects whether conditions within the area (e.g., trails, lookouts, beaches, pools, facilities) are overcrowded or exceed what on-site infrastructure and management can safely or sustainably support.

Community Strain & Resident Impact

Degree to which visitation disrupts surrounding communities through noise, trespass, blocked driveways, neighborhood congestion, or interference with local use.

Site Degradation & Maintenance Stress

Observable environmental, cultural, or infrastructural wear and tear (or escalating maintenance burden) linked to visitation (e.g., erosion, litter, vandalism, or declining water quality).

CATEGORY 2 - Context & Compounding Factors

“How serious or consequential is that strain?”

CRITERION	DEFINITION / FOCUS
Cultural Sensitivity	Presence of sacred, historic, or community-valued cultural sites or practices vulnerable to visitation impact.
Environmental Sensitivity	Ecological fragility or biodiversity importance that heightens the consequence of overuse.
Safety & Risk	Degree of danger to visitors, responders, or nearby residents based on incident history or inherent hazards such as cliffs, flash floods, surf, or traffic conflicts.
Visibility & Promotion	Level of amplification through social media, influencers, or commercial marketing that fuels visitation.
Local Economic Benefit & Reciprocity	Extent to which visitation can generate tangible community benefit (e.g., jobs, local commerce, stewardship funding). High strain with low benefit indicates higher priority for intervention.

CATEGORY 3 - Feasibility & Viability

“Can HTA and its partners realistically act within the mandate of the DMAP?”

CRITERION	DEFINITION / FOCUS
Jurisdictional Clarity & Legality of Access	How clear and actionable the site’s ownership, access rights, and management responsibilities are for HTA and its immediate DMAP partners. Ambiguity or contested access reduces feasibility.
Cost & Resource Demand	Financial and staffing requirements relative to what HTA and its partners can plausibly support or co-fund within the plan period.
Implementation Timeline & Complexity	Realistic timeframe and administrative lift for DMAP-aligned action, considering permitting, coordination, and policy processes within the DMAP window of FY 2027 – FY 2029.
DMAP Alignment & Partnership Leverage	Extent to which effective action falls within HTA’s mandate or can be catalyzed through formal collaboration mechanisms. Sites requiring action entirely outside HTA’s role score lower.

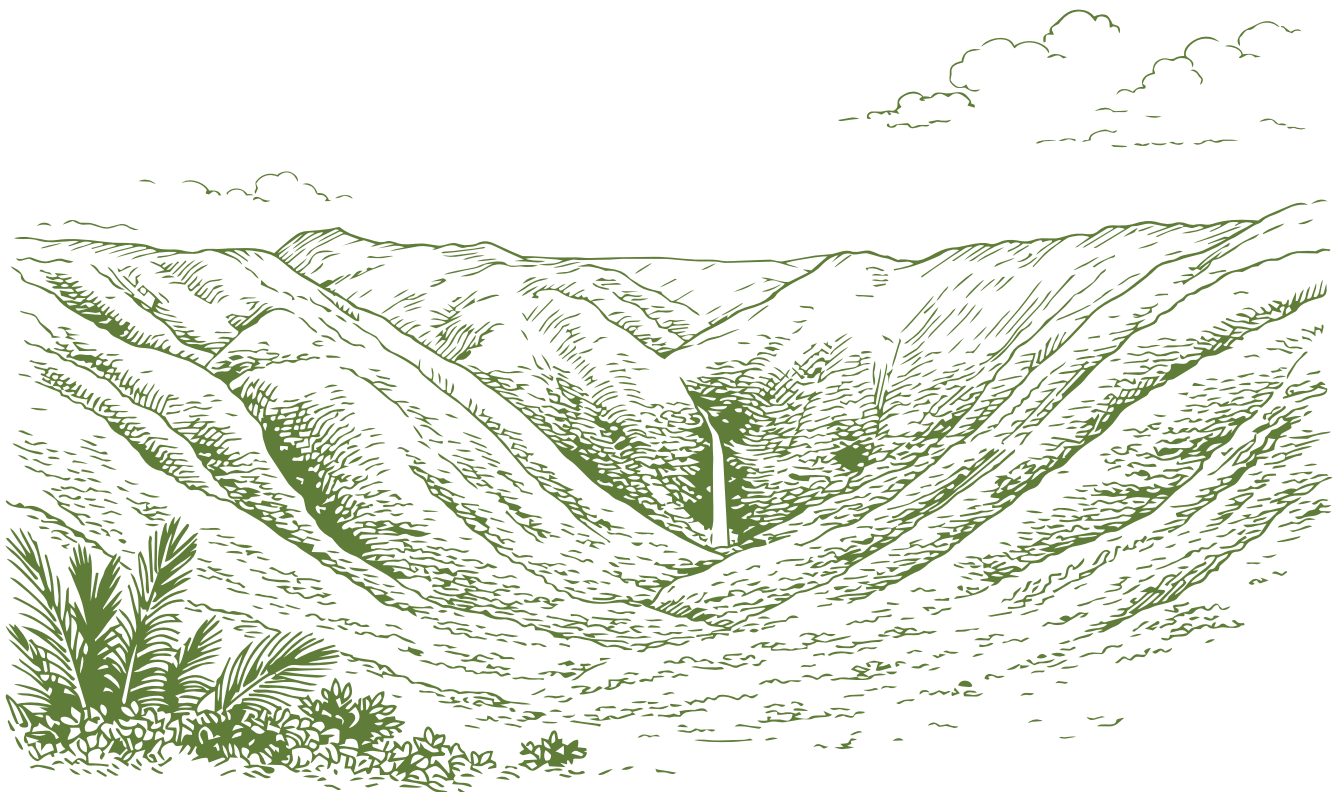
HOTSPOT: HĀLAWA VALLEY & MOA'ULA FALLS

LOCATION: HĀLAWA, HĀLAWA MOKU, MOLOKA'I

At Moloka'i's far east end, **Hālawā Valley** is one of Hawai'i's oldest continuously inhabited places: a living (agri)cultural site of *lo'i kalo* (kalo patches), *heiau* (places of worship and cultural practice), and ancestral *mo'olelo* (stories). The valley's back reaches feed toward Moa'ula and Hīpuapua Falls, two striking and sacred waterfalls long tended by lineal descendants and sought out by visitors.

Visitors drawn by the valley's beauty travel a narrow, deteriorating coastal road and often enter with little understanding that access through the valley and to the falls crosses both private and kuleana lands where cultural protocols and *kapu* (prohibitions) have long been in place. Unpermitted tours and unguided hikers illegally transiting the valley cause tension with *'ohana* (families) who live in and *mālama* (care for) the valley, raising concerns over safety, liability, and respect for sacred (agri)cultural spaces.

The following actions reflect the aforementioned **deliberate, community-first approach** to destination management on Moloka'i that prioritizes relationship, collaborative consideration, and protection over rapid intervention. They collectively advance destination management priorities for Hālawā Valley & Moa'ula Falls (see next page) that were articulated by residents, lineal descendants, and Moloka'i stakeholders:



1. **Protection of a living cultural and agricultural landscape**, recognizing Hālawā as an inhabited place of lineal stewardship, cultural protocol, and *kuleana* (responsibility)
2. **Community authority over visitor access and behavior**, with approaches guided by resident priorities, land tenure realities, and cultural protocols and practice
3. **Reduction of unmanaged and unauthorized visitor entry**, particularly unguided access that creates safety risks, trespass, and harm to *lo'i kalo*, *kapu* areas, and *'ohana* or *kuleana* lands
4. **Clear visitor orientation before entry into sensitive areas**, emphasizing understanding of place, expectations for conduct, and informed decision-making rather than promotion
5. **Support for lawful, community-aligned guided experiences**, while discouraging unpermitted activity that undermines resident stewardship and safety
6. **Improved visitor safety along the East End corridor**, including better understanding of road conditions, limited emergency access, and appropriate stopping points
7. **Deliberate, relationship-based progress at the pace of *pilina* (connection)**, prioritizing trust, collaboration, and long-term durability over rapid or externally imposed interventions

Other community-led, agency-led, or otherwise funded efforts that advance these priorities may be considered aligned with destination management outcomes for the area.



HOTSPOT INDICATORS

OVERALL PRIORITY

IDENTIFICATION

CONTEXT & COMPOUNDING FACTORS

FEASIBILITY & VIABILITY

	Access Infrastructure & Arrival Pressure
	On-Site Capacity & Crowd Pressure
	Community Strain & Resident Impact
	Site Degradation & Maintenance Stress
	Cultural Sensitivity
	Environmental Sensitivity
	Safety & Risk
	Visibility & Promotion
	Local Economic Benefit & Reciprocity
	Jurisdictional Clarity & Legality of Access
	Cost & Resource Demand
	Implementation Timeline & Complexity
	DMAP Alignment & Partnership Leverage

SITE SWOT

STRENGTHS

- Deep lineage of resident stewards and lineal descendants
- Existing guided experiences modeling appropriate access and storytelling
- Natural barriers limit large-scale visitation
- Strong alignment around protection-first principles

OPPORTUNITIES

- Community-led access management linking certified activities to visitor entry
- Hālawā Park and roadside pull-out as gentle control points
- Reduction in non-essential traffic past Kūmimi Beach
- Elevation of lawful guided experiences

WEAKNESSES

- Fragmented management of land in the valley
- Narrow access road with limited emergency reach
- Unpermitted guiding and unguided hiking
- Dearth of permitting support for community operators
- Minimal on-site visitor orientation signage or infrastructure

THREATS

- Unsafe driving and unmanaged visitation
- Ignoring of certified guidance rules by community
- Liability and legal exposure deterring community participation in official pilot programs



VERY HIGH/VERY LOW



HIGH/LOW



MODERATE



LOW/HIGH



N/A

*PLEASE SEE COLOR SCALE ON PAGE 23 FOR HOTSPOT ANALYSIS

MANAGEMENT ACTIONS, HĀLAWA VALLEY & MOA'ULA FALLS (HV)

HV-1: DEVELOP A COMMUNITY-LED MANAGED ACCESS FRAMEWORK FOR HĀLAWA VALLEY

HV-1

Management Strategy: Resource & Elevate Local 'Ike, Establish Durable Foundations



Goal: Develop a community-led framework to explore and define sustainable approaches for managing visitor entry, orientation, and guidance into Hālawā Valley, grounded in resident priorities, cultural protocols, environmental considerations, and land tenure realities.

Justification: Residents consistently identified Hālawā Valley as Moloka'i's most sensitive site with respect to visitor impacts, safety risks, and trespass across public, private, and kuleana lands. Stakeholders described persistent unguided entry, damage to lo'i kalo, disregard for *kapu* (prohibited) areas, and visitor injuries occurring far from emergency access often driven by limited visitor understanding of the valley as a living, lineal, and agricultural landscape.

Across Hawai'i, advancement of managed access efforts at sensitive places such as **Hā'ena State Park, Honolua, and Kealahou Bay** have typically begun with community-informed planning processes to understand land tenure, agency authority, visitor behavior, and cultural priorities before determining any on-the-ground measures. This action initiates that same **deliberate, front-end planning process** for Hālawā Valley, without presuming outcomes, enforcement mechanisms, or implementation models within the valley.

Lead: Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA): *convener, DMAP funding support*

Projected partners:

- Procured Moloka'i-based or -experienced consultant: *facilitation, synthesis, report production*
- Hālawā residents, businesses, and landowners: *community considerations, lived experience*
- Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) – Conservation & Coastal Lands (OCCL): *conservation district management, tour permission considerations (CDUP)*
- County of Maui – Parks & Recreation (DPR): *Hālawā Park site coordination, park interface*
- County of Maui – Planning Department: *special management area (SMA) permit allowances*

Implementation framework:

PHASE	PROPOSED ACTION STEPS
FY 2027	HTA: • Procure a Moloka'i-based or Moloka'i-experienced consultant to support facilitation, documentation, and synthesis of a community-led framework development process • Provide coordination support for engagement activities in Hālawā as needed Procured consultant: • Facilitate a culturally grounded engagement process (e.g., listening sessions, small group discussions, and working meetings) with Hālawā stakeholders • Document resident and landholder perspectives on visitor behavior, safety concerns, trespass patterns, and entry into the valley, as well as cultural protocols and kapu • Engage DLNR and other agencies to understand legal authorities, land tenure constraints, and possibilities for managing visitor entry and orientation • Conduct informational outreach, where appropriate, to other communities or organizations with managed access or visitor orientation models to understand lessons learned and limitations • Synthesize input into framework considerations for community review Community partners, landowners, and agencies: • Share lived experience, land access considerations, and operational realities related to visitor entry into the valley • Identify land tenure, legal, economic, cultural, governance, conservation, and other factors that must shape any future visitor entry or orientation approach Procured consultant: • Draft the framework, with community input, land tenure realities, cultural protocols and considerations, agency authorities, and identified constraints • Facilitate community review and refinement of draft framework components • Produce a final <i>Hālawā Managed Access & Visitor Orientation Framework</i>, addressing elements including: ◦ approaches for reducing unauthorized entry and trespassing; ◦ options for guiding, orienting, or otherwise managing visitor entry; ◦ appropriate roles (if any) for paid, visitor-facing presence in the valley; ◦ mechanisms for visitor education, deterrence, and redirection that respect cultural protocols and land tenure realities; ◦ governance, enforcement limitations, and agency authorities that shape what is feasible and lawful; ◦ long-term sustainability, including funding, staffing, and community capacity

FY 2027
(CONT.)

Community partners, landowners, and agencies: Review and provide feedback on draft elements

HTA: Support coordination among partners and facilitate alignment with applicable agency roles and constraints

FY 2028-FY 2029
(ONGOING)

HTA + community partners and agencies:

- Explore realization of framework-identified components, as feasible
- Coordinate next steps for implementation actions

Anticipated deliverables:

- Community engagement sessions conducted and documented
- Summary of resident-identified visitor entry, safety, and orientation considerations
- *Hālawā Managed Access & Visitor Orientation Framework* finalized

Intended outcomes:

- Shared understanding of and approach to coordinated, culturally appropriate, and lawful approaches to visitor entry into Hālawā Valley
- Clear foundation for designing visitor-facing orientation measures aligned with community needs and land tenure realities
- Reduced ambiguity around roles, constraints, and long-term sustainability considerations

HV-2: DESIGN AND INSTALL INTERPRETIVE AND SAFETY SIGNAGE AT HĀLAWA ROADSIDE PULL-OUT

Management Strategy: Resource & Elevate Local 'Ike, Curate Visitor Engagement & Education



Goal: Install clear, culturally grounded interpretive and safety signage at the existing roadside pull-out above Hālawā Valley to inform visitors of road hazards, access limitations, and cultural context ahead, encouraging informed decision-making and reducing unmanaged entry into the valley.

Justification: The drive into Hālawā is steep, narrow, and hazardous, with limited emergency access once travelers descend. Stakeholders described visitors continuing past the roadside pull-out above the valley as often unaware of road conditions, access limitations, or the cultural sensitivities beyond, increasing safety risks for both visitors and residents.

Moloka'i residents expressed frustration that visitors often proceed without understanding where public access ends, when guided access is expected, or why entry into the valley carries *kuleana* (responsibility). While the roadside pull-out is not a formal scenic overlook and has limited capacity for vehicles to stop for extended periods, it is widely used by visitors as a pause point before continuing into the valley. Providing modest, community-informed interpretive and safety signage at this location can help create a moment for visitors to learn, assess conditions, and make informed decisions before proceeding.

This approach is consistent with the *Moloka'i Community Plan* (2018), which encourages the preservation of scenic resources and supports the development of scenic overlooks, roadside pull-outs, and signage that help residents and visitors better understand and appreciate Moloka'i's landscapes.

Lead: Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA): *coordination and DMAP funding*

Projected partners:

- Hawai'i Department of Transportation (HDOT) – Highways: *site authority, safety/design review*
- Hālawā residents, landowners, 'ohana, and practitioners: *cultural guidance, content co-creation*

Implementation framework:

PHASE	PROPOSED ACTION STEPS
FY 2027	HTA + HDOT: Coordinate to confirm land ownership, jurisdiction, safety standards, and allowable signage types at the pull-out HTA: • Convene community-based design discussions with Hālawā residents, landowners, and practitioners to inform signage content, language, and tone • Develop draft signage concepts that communicate: ◦ Road conditions and limited emergency access ahead ◦ Cultural and historical context of Hālawā Valley ◦ Expectations regarding access, including where entry is limited or guided • Submit signage concepts to HDOT for technical and legal review Hālawā community and landowners: Provide guidance on appropriate messaging, language (including Hawaiian/English usage), imagery, and cultural protocols HDOT: Review signage for compliance with safety, visibility, and regulations
FY 2028	HTA: Coordinate fabrication and installation of approved signage at the pull-out HDOT: Support installation within approved parameters HTA + HDOT + Hālawā community/landowners: Participate in a community blessing or orientation, as appropriate, following installation

HV-2

Anticipated deliverables:

- Community-informed signage concepts developed and reviewed
- HDOT technical and regulatory approval secured
- Fabrication and installation of interpretive and safety signage at the Hālawā pull-out
- Community blessing or orientation conducted following installation

Intended outcomes:

- Visitors clearly informed of driving conditions and access limitations ahead of the valley
- Increased visitor understanding of Hālawā's cultural significance and community expectations
- Reduced unmanaged vehicle traffic and independent entry beyond the pull-out
- Improved visitor safety and alignment with community-led care for Hālawā Valley

HV-3: EXPLORE DETERRENCE OPTIONS TO REDUCE VISITOR TRAFFIC BEYOND KŪMIMI BEACH

HV-3

Management Strategy: Establish Durable Foundations

Goal: Explore voluntary, non-regulatory approaches to discourage unnecessary driving beyond Morris Point and Kūmimi Beach, while preserving access for residents, authorized guides, and Pu'u o Hoku Ranch.

Justification: Residents raised concerns about safety hazards and congestion on the easternmost stretch of Kamehameha V Highway. Road conditions beyond Kūmimi Beach are extremely narrow, with limited shoulders, minimal pull-outs, and no reliable emergency access. Community members described issues and near-misses driven by visitor traffic unfamiliar with the road's constraints.

Because the majority of visitor vehicles on Moloka'i are rental or peer-to-peer vehicles and the highway is funded federally, **private-sector deterrence tools** (rather than road closures or formal restrictions) may offer a practical way to reduce non-essential traffic while maintaining resident access. Exploring these concepts in coordination with transportation agencies and community partners allows Moloka'i to assess what is feasible, lawful, and effective before advancing any pilot efforts.

Lead: Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA): *convener; coordination support*

Projected partners:

- Alamo Rental Car: *pilot exploration*
- Peer-to-peer platforms (e.g., Turo, Airbnb, VRBO): *platform coordination, owner advocacy*
- Hawai'i Department of Transportation (HDOT) – Highways: *road authority, safety consultation*

Other projected stakeholders:

- Hālawā-based guides and businesses: *local insight, access needs*
- Pu'u o Hoku Ranch: *essential access user and major landowner*

Implementation framework:

PHASE	PROPOSED ACTION STEPS
FY 2028	HTA: • Convene partners to review safety concerns and discuss potential voluntary deterrence approaches related to visitor driving beyond Kūmimi Beach • Coordinate with HDOT and other advisors to understand legal, safety, liability, and implementation constraints • Produce a short feasibility memo summarizing potential deterrence options, partner interest, and key constraints, after exploratory discussions Partners: • Participate in exploratory discussions regarding potential deterrence tools, which may include: ◦ Advisory language in rental agreements or booking platforms describing road hazards and access limitations ◦ GPS-based or mobile-app warnings triggered as vehicles approach Kūmimi Beach ◦ Informational inserts or notifications at the point of rental or booking ◦ Voluntary surcharges or other mechanisms designed to discourage non-essential travel, where feasible and appropriate • Identify exemption considerations for residents, authorized guides, and essential users
FY 2029	HTA & implementing partners: • Advance any agreed-upon pilot efforts emerging from FY 2028 exploration, as feasible and voluntary • Coordinate monitoring or assessment of pilot effectiveness and challenges

Anticipated deliverables:

- At least one multi-partner convening focused on East End traffic deterrence options
- Feasibility memo summarizing potential voluntary deterrence mechanisms by end of FY 2028
- Optional deterrence measures advanced in FY 2029, subject to partner interest and feasibility

Intended outcomes (if fully enacted):

- Reduced unmanaged visitor driving along the narrow East End corridor
- Improved safety for residents, authorized guides, and essential users
- Stronger coordination among transportation, industry, and community partners
- Practical, non-regulatory tools identified to discourage unmanaged visitor access

SITE UNDER STRAIN: KŪMIMI BEACH

LOCATION: KŪMIMI, KONA, MOLOKA'I

Kūmimi, also known as **Murphy's Beach** or **Morris Point**, lies along Moloka'i's southeastern coast near Mile Marker 20 – a narrow stretch of sand backed by coastal trees and shallow reef flats. It is one of the few clearly signed public beach access points on the East End, making it both beloved and vulnerable. Calm waters and easy roadside entry draw families, snorkelers, and travelers seeking an accessible swimming spot, but the same convenience contributes to pressure on a fragile nearshore ecosystem and surrounding private lands. When unmanaged, vehicles can crowd the shoulder, trash accumulates, and visitors unaware of reef etiquette can unintentionally trample coral and disturb fishing grounds.

Yet Kūmimi is also a place of care. Local fishers, families, and educators have long taken it upon themselves to steward the area, informally teaching visitors about safety, marine life, aloha, and *kuleana* (responsibility). Residents emphasized that when community members are present at the beach, behavior improves; when no one is there, “people don't listen.” Kūmimi therefore represents both a challenge and an opportunity for destination management on Moloka'i: a visible, high-use site where modest investment in local stewardship can protect cultural and ecological integrity while modeling visitor education done the Moloka'i way.



The actions which follow advance destination management priorities for Kūmimi Beach that were identified by East Molokaʻi residents:

1. **Protection of nearshore reef ecosystems and fishing grounds**, particularly in shallow, easily accessed areas vulnerable to trampling, disturbance, and litter
2. **Regular visitor orientation and education** so expectations for reef etiquette, rubbish disposal, and safety are clear and durable
3. **Improved site care and basic infrastructure**, focused on rubbish management and cleanliness in ways that do not invite overuse or change the character of the beach
4. **Support for local knowledge holders and educators**, recognizing their role in shaping visitor behavior and modeling *mālama ʻāina* (care for the land) and kuleana in real time
5. **Practical, scalable management approaches suited to Molokaʻi**, prioritizing small, low-impact investments that can be sustained as necessary

Other community-led, agency-led, or otherwise funded efforts that advance these priorities may be considered aligned with destination management outcomes for the area.

HOTSPOT INDICATORS

OVERALL PRIORITY	
IDENTIFICATION	Access Infrastructure & Arrival Pressure
	On-Site Capacity & Crowd Pressure
	Community Strain & Resident Impact
CONTEXT & COMPOUNDING FACTORS	Site Degradation & Maintenance Stress
	Cultural Sensitivity
	Environmental Sensitivity
	Safety & Risk
	Visibility & Promotion
FEASIBILITY & VIABILITY	Local Economic Benefit & Reciprocity
	Jurisdictional Clarity & Legality of Access
	Cost & Resource Demand
	Implementation Timeline & Complexity
	DMAP Alignment & Partnership Leverage

SITE SWOT

STRENGTHS

- Clear public access; visible and teachable site
- Calm, shallow reef suited for family use and education
- Ongoing local stewardship by local residents
- Strong cultural grounding of place

OPPORTUNITIES

- Resource existing stewards through a pilot program
- Add cultural and environmental signage co-developed with residents to inform visitors when stewards not on site
- Integrate site into island-wide visitor education messaging
- Extend model to nearby Sandy's Beach once established

WEAKNESSES

- No restrooms, rubbish bins, or structured parking
- Narrow roadside shoulder causes congestion and safety risks
- Steward presence inconsistent; dependent on availability of "volunteering" residents
- Remote location heightens limited safety risks

THREATS

- Continued reef damage and litter without management
- Coastal erosion and storm impacts on the narrow beach
- Inability to secure long-term funding or structure for an ongoing stewardship model
- Vandalism of future installed infrastructure (signs, bins)
- Irregular rubbish pick-up on East end of Moloka'i



VERY HIGH/VERY LOW



HIGH/LOW



MODERATE



LOW/HIGH



N/A

*PLEASE SEE COLOR SCALE ON PAGE 23 FOR HOTSPOT ANALYSIS

MANAGEMENT ACTIONS, KŪMIMI BEACH (KB)

KB-1: PILOT A LIMITED, PEAK-PERIOD VISITOR STEWARD PRESENCE AT KŪMIMI BEACH

KB-1

Management Strategy: Resource & Elevate Local *Ike*, Curate Visitor Engagement & Education



Goal: Pilot a one-year, peak-period visitor-facing presence at Kūmimi Beach to improve safety awareness, educate visitors, and coordinate site care during periods of highest use.

Justification: Across engagements, East Molokaʻi residents emphasized that “if nobody’s [at Kūmimi], people don’t listen.” Local fishers and families who frequent the area expressed a willingness to serve as stewards if provided modest resources and support for coordination. A **targeted, limited on-site presence during peak periods** can help address concerns about reef degradation, inappropriate visitor behavior, and rubbish accumulation by providing early safety and access messaging, reinforcing community expectations, and offering a visible point of contact.

This approach aligns with the *Molokaʻi Island Community Plan (2018)*, which calls to **preserve, protect, and manage natural land and water resources, support increased community-based stewardship and education, and protect and maintain Molokaʻi’s oceans, beaches, and recreational areas**. Community members stressed that they want lasting collaboration and a clear demonstration that care for their community extends beyond a funding cycle. As the pilot progresses, HTA will work to strengthen pathways so the program is positioned for long-term success after the DMAP period, as appropriate.

Lead: Hawaiʻi Tourism Authority (HTA): *oversight, DMAP funding*

Projected partners:

- Procured local organization: *visitor orientation, limited on-site presence and monitoring*
- Department of Land & Natural Resources – Conservation & Coastal Lands (OCCL): *coastal site coordination, access approval in conservation areas, conservation district use permit (CDUP)*
- Private landowners and lessees: *access and stewardship conduct permissions on surrounding private lands, as necessary*

Other projected stakeholders:

- Ka Honua Momona: *reef and resource stewardship expertise*
- Community members and nearby residents: *identification of additional local priorities*

Implementation framework:

PHASE	PROPOSED ACTION STEPS
FY 2027	HTA: Procure a Moloka'i-based organization to provide a one-year, peak-period visitor steward presence at Kūmimi Beach Procured organization: - Propose staffing hours, coverage periods, and deployment rationale appropriate to observed visitation patterns and peak-use condition - Begin providing a visible, visitor-facing presence during identified peak periods to: - Share safety information related to ocean conditions and site hazards - Reinforce appropriate visitor behavior and community expectations - Serve as a point of contact for basic visitor questions - Collect loose rubbish encountered during presence periods, without assuming kuleana for waste hauling or disposal - Collect observational data during presence periods, such as: - Estimated number of visitors observed - Number and nature of visitor interactions - General visitor behavior patterns relevant to safety or site use - Volume of loose rubbish encountered and collected (if any) OCCL + private landowners/lessees: Coordinate site access, operational considerations, and any permitting or use requirements (e.g., CDUP) related to the pilot
FY 2028	Procured organization: Continue remaining one-year, peak-period presence and data collection as defined through procurement and initial pilot experience HTA: - Engage procured organization and analyze data collected to determine success of the pilot based on success measures determined during procurement - Make a formal, evidence-informed determination regarding continuation, modification, or conclusion of on-site presence
FY 2029	HTA + Partners: - If continued presence is warranted, support limited continuation aligned with evaluation and explore alternative funding models - If not warranted, conclude active staffing and shift emphasis to passive measures or related site DMAP actions, as appropriate

KB-1

Anticipated deliverables:

- Procured Molokaʻi-based organization providing limited, peak-period visitor steward presence
- Defined staffing plan and data-collection approach aligned with observed visitation patterns
- Data-based pilot continuation measures and thresholds established through procurement (e.g., visitor counts, interaction levels, observed safety issues, rubbish encountered)
- Visitor interaction and site-use data collected during pilot periods

Intended outcomes:

- Measurable **reduction in reef walking and litter incidents** observed within 2+ years, based on stewardship logs and community reports
- Improved visitor awareness of safety considerations
- Clear, data-driven understanding of actual visitation levels and visitor behavior at the site

KB-2: INSTALL DURABLE TRASH RECEPTACLES AND RELATED SIGNAGE

KB-2

Management Strategy: Establish Durable Foundations



Goal: Reduce visible litter and improve site conditions by installing durable trash receptacles and related signage, supported by Kūmimi steward oversight and coordinated rubbish removal through Action IW-3.

Justification: East Molokaʻi residents described persistent litter and waste accumulation at Kūmimi and nearby shoreline areas, noting that rubbish detracts from the area's natural beauty, cultural significance, and overall experience for both residents and visitors. Accumulated trash places an ongoing burden on the community and contributes to visitor perceptions of neglect at a highly visible site.

Providing durable trash receptacles, paired with values-based signage, offers a practical, low-impact way to reduce litter at the source. Addressing visible rubbish supports cleaner conditions, reinforces shared responsibility for caring for Kūmimi as a valued place, and elevates the visitor experience of the area.

Lead: Hawaiʻi Tourism Authority (HTA): *coordination, DMAP funding, recruitment of funding partners*

Projected partners:

- KB-1 stewardship organization: *light monitoring, disposal coordination*
- IW-3 ʻōpala (trash) collection team: *servicing, disposal coordination*
- Department of Land & Natural Resources – Conservation and Coastal Lands (OCCL): *land management, approvals in conservation areas*
- Private landowners and lessees: *installation approvals on surrounding private lands, receptacle design coordination, as necessary*

Implementation framework:

PHASE	PROPOSED ACTION STEPS
FY 2027	HTA: - Recruit funding partners to purchase and install a limited number of durable trash receptacles at Kūmimi, potentially to include landowners and lessees for the area - Coordinate with KB-1 and IW-3 teams for collection and disposal of trash - Design and install simple, values-based signage encouraging proper rubbish disposal (e.g., messages reinforcing mālama and kuleana for the area) with approvals from OCCL or relevant landowner, depending on location and jurisdiction KB-1 site stewardship group: - Monitor condition and use of trash receptacles during periodic site presence - Share basic observations (e.g., overflow, misuse, placement issues) to inform adjustments if needed OCCL + landowners/lessees: Provide site approvals and guidance related to design, placement, and installation of rubbish bins
FY 2028-FY 2029 (ONGOING)	KB-1 site stewardship group: Continue monitoring and observation of receptacles, sharing information with HTA as necessary HTA: Continue coordination with IW-3 rubbish collection and disposal organization

Anticipated deliverables:

- Durable, approved trash receptacles installed at Kūmimi by FY 2027
- Values-based signage installed encouraging proper rubbish disposal
- Monitoring observations shared by the KB-1 stewardship organization
- Ongoing coordination with island-wide rubbish collection partners (Action IW-3)

Intended outcomes:

- Reduced visible litter accumulation at Kūmimi and surrounding shoreline areas
- Improved site conditions and experience for residents and visitors
- Clear, low-maintenance sign infrastructure supporting shared kuleana for place care

KB-3: INSTALL DURABLE, LOCALLY DESIGNED EDUCATIONAL SIGNAGE

KB-3

Management Strategy: Resource & Elevate Local *Ike*, Curate Visitor Engagement & Education, Establish Durable Foundations



Goal: Promote reef protection, cultural awareness, and visitor safety at Kūmimi through bilingual, weather-resistant signage that conveys clear visitor guidance alongside community-rooted cultural context.

Justification: East Molokaʻi residents reported that visitors often walk on the reef at Kūmimi, damaging coral and marine life. While the limited community stewardship presence (Action KB-1) will provide on-site education during peak periods, stewards cannot be present at all times. Durable, well-placed signage is therefore valuable to reinforce key messages consistently.

Because Kūmimi has limited cell service and minimal digital reach, **physical signage remains the most reliable visitor communication tool**. Community members expressed a desire for signage that does more than warn, pairing reef protection and safety guidance with cultural and historical context that helps visitors understand why care and restraint are expected. This action focuses on shaping those visitor-facing messages through community collaboration and installing signage that endures beyond active presence.

Lead: Hawaiʻi Tourism Authority (HTA): *visitor-facing messaging coordination, signage fabrication*

Projected partners:

- Department of Land & Natural Resources – Conservation and Coastal Lands (OCCL): *land management, approvals in conservation areas*
- Landowners and lessees: *installation approvals on surrounding private lands, as necessary*
- Ka Ipu Makani Cultural Heritage Center & Molokaʻi History Project: *cultural and historical content*
- Ka Honua Momona: *reef and resource stewardship expertise*
- KB-1 stewardship organization: *message reinforcement, site insight*
- Area residents, educators, students, cultural practitioners, landowners/lessees, and kūpuna: *content contributors*

Implementation framework:

PHASE	PROPOSED ACTION STEPS
FY 2028	HTA: • Convene community partners to shape visitor-facing messaging that integrates: ◦ Reef protection and safety guidance ◦ Cultural and historical context ◦ Clear expectations for respectful behavior (e.g., rubbish disposal) • Coordinate bilingual content development (ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi / English) • Fabricate 2–3 durable, weather-resistant educational panels • + OCCL and landowners/lessees: Coordinate installation of approved signage at Kūmimi or surrounding private lands, with landowner/lessee approvals

FY 2028
(CONT.)

Community partners:

- Provide cultural, historical, and environmental guidance for signage content
- Engage local students, where appropriate, to contribute artwork or short statements reflecting site meaning
- Participate in a small community unveiling or blessing, as appropriate

OCCL + landowners/lessees (as necessary): Review proposed signage concepts and locations for consistency with land management and conservation requirements

Site stewardship group: Share observations regarding signage condition or effectiveness during site presence

Anticipated deliverables:

- Community-informed messaging integrating reef protection, cultural context, and visitor guidance
- Bilingual (‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i / English) educational signage content developed, including student-supported artwork or messaging, where appropriate
- Fabrication and installation of 2–3 durable educational panels at or around Kūmimi
- Informal process established for periodic review and refresh of signage content, as needed

Intended outcomes:

- Increased visitor awareness of reef etiquette, cultural significance, and site expectations
- Reduced harmful behaviors, such as reef walking, even when stewards are not present
- Elevated visibility of local knowledge, values, and youth contributions in visitor education
- Consistent, place-appropriate messaging that supports long-term care of Kūmimi

2. "BEAUTIFUL WATERFALLS OF THE UPLAND
HINA, HĀHĀ AND MO'OLOA
THE THREE WATERS IN THE VERDANT OVERGROWTH
OF KAMALŌ, IN THE CALM"

ADDITIONAL SITES UNDER STRAIN

In addition to **priority hotspots**, stakeholders identified other hotspots and sites under strain across Moloka'i experiencing varying levels of tourism-related strain, access challenges, or community concern. These sites are listed below. While they were not advanced for targeted action in this DMAP cycle due to resource limitations, **other management actions** included in the following section are designed to shape destination-wide conditions in ways that are intended to improve conditions at multiple sites under strain.

Furthermore, work undertaken by community organizations, agencies, or other partners at these sites that advances the statewide destination management principles described in Section 1 and the island-specific management strategies outlined in Section 3 may be considered aligned with destination management objectives, where such efforts demonstrably contribute to improved safety and experience, reduced strain, cultural or environmental stewardship, and community well-being. The absence of site-specific actions in this plan is not meant to preclude aligned management efforts from occurring, provided such efforts remain consistent with all applicable legal restrictions, cultural protocols, and site-specific access limitations.

On that note, some sites may have **restricted or prohibited access** due to legal restrictions, access across privately held land, safety hazards, or presence of sensitive resources. Their inclusion reflects **observed or reported visitation and associated management concerns**, not an indication that they are appropriate for visitation or that intervention is warranted outside of authorized management actions.

HTA will continue to monitor these sites for changes in conditions, compounding pressures, and readiness for coordinated management action. As feasibility, resources, or partnerships evolve, these locations may be addressed within this DMAP cycle or considered for more targeted action in future DMAP cycles.

Additional Sites Under Strain:

- Hale o Lono
- Kapuāiwa Coconut Grove*#
- Kawakiu
- Mo'omomi & Kawa'aloa
- Papōhaku
- 'Ilio Point#

* Hotspot in 2021-2023 Moloka'i DMAP

Kapuāiwa and 'Ilio Point Natural Area Reserve are legally closed to public access. They are included due to visitation and related concerns reported during DMAP stakeholder engagement.

06. OTHER ACTIONS



This Destination Management Action Plan (DMAP) is **first and foremost focused on hotspots and sites under strain**. As described in the preceding sections, these are critical locations where tourism-related pressure, safety risks, and impacts on cultural and natural resources are most acute, and where targeted, site-specific management is most urgently needed. These sites emerged consistently through community and industry stakeholder engagement and remain the central priority of this plan.

At the same time, stakeholders were clear that **conditions at individual sites do not occur in isolation**.

Visitor behavior at hotspots is shaped by decisions made elsewhere in the destination system: where visitors are encouraged to go, what they understand before arrival on-island or at specific sites, how broad access is managed, and how agencies and partners coordinate across the island. Research conducted at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa has observed that when access is restricted at a heavily visited location, displaced visitor demand often shifts to nearby sites rather than dissipating, reinforcing the need to consider how management at individual sites influences conditions elsewhere (Moromizato 2025). Without attention to these broader dynamics, even well-designed site-specific actions are more difficult to sustain and new hotspots can arise.

For this reason, the DMAP includes a limited set of other actions that **support and reinforce hotspot and site-specific management**. These actions align with Moloka'i's destination management strategies (**Resource & Elevate Local 'Ike; Curate Visitor Engagement & Education; Establish Durable Foundations**) and respond to recurring calls for action raised through stakeholder engagement. Each action was refined in consultation with the Moloka'i DMAP Advisory Group and relevant partners to best ensure alignment, feasibility, and shared accountability.

Unlike the hotspot and site-specific actions presented earlier in this plan, the actions in this section are not accompanied by multi-year implementation frameworks with year-by-year action steps or designations for leads or partners. This distinction is intentional. Many of these actions will be advanced through existing programs, initiatives, and planning processes that operate on their own update cycles within HTA and other agencies, where duplicative timelines would add limited value. Others rely on interagency coordination that cannot be effectively sequenced in advance. In these cases, flexibility is essential to ensure actions can be assigned, integrated, timed, and adapted as conditions evolve.

This portion of the plan is organized into two complementary sections:

1. **Sites of Opportunity** recognize that managing visitor pressure also involves shaping where visitors are encouraged to go. By intentionally strengthening underutilized areas with community interest and capacity to host more visitors, the plan seeks to redistribute visitor traffic and reduce pressure on sensitive sites. In this context, destination activation functions as a management tool used to support hotspot relief, not simply a strategy for growth.

This plan designates **Kaunakakai** as a **Site of Opportunity**. Kaunakakai is not under acute visitor-related strain, yet it is central to how residents and visitors move through and experience Moloka'i. With existing services, nearby cultural and community assets, and community interest in thoughtful reinvestment, this designation enables proactive, place-based management initiatives that strengthen core services, support community priorities, and improve visitor orientation: advancing Moloka'i's destination management strategies even in the absence of significant tourism pressure.

2. Island-Wide Actions (IW) strengthen destination-wide systems and initiatives that support site-specific management. While this DMAP is centered on hotspots and sites under strain, these island-wide actions reflect the issues and ideas for action most frequently raised by community members and industry stakeholders throughout the engagement process. These actions focus broad action related to items like visitor education and communication, activation of existing programs, community support, stewardship improvements, resident engagement, and interagency coordination. While the effects of these actions are often realized at specific locations, they are designed to work in tandem with site-based actions by enhancing the broader management system in which those sites operate.

Together, these actions reinforce a core principle of destination management: **effective action at sites under strain is enhanced through aligned action across the destination as a whole**. While distinct from the actions presented earlier for hotspots and sites under strain, the actions in this section aim to make those site-based efforts more effective, durable, and responsive to community priorities.

For detail on how action items were developed through stakeholder engagement, drafting, and review, refer to Section 2: Development Process for the Plan.



SITE OF OPPORTUNITY: KAUNAKAKAI

LOCATION: KAUNAKAKAI, KONA, MOLOKA'I

While **Kaunakakai** was not identified as a site under strain, Moloka'i's central town is among the most frequently visited areas by tourists. Nearly every visitor passes through the town to access groceries, gas, and dining, and it sits down the road from identified site under strain **Kapuāiwa Coconut Grove**. While Kaunakakai does not regularly experience visitor crowding, it is the island's **primary interface** between residents and travelers, making it a logical site for coordinated management and stewardship investment.

Stakeholders noted that earlier efforts to orient visitors (e.g., greeters, airport information booth) no longer exist, leaving no consistent place for education or welcome. Across meetings, residents emphasized that Moloka'i's challenge is not managing numbers but ensuring **visitors are prepared and respectful** before moving through the island. A community-run visitor center in Kaunakakai was identified as a practical way to reintroduce orientation in a way led by Moloka'i's people and aligned with local values.

Including Kaunakakai as a complementary **Site of Opportunity** reflects its strategic importance: several island-wide DMAP actions presented later in this plan will take greatest shape here and would be boosted by site-specific actions in the town.

The following actions advance destination management priorities for Kaunakakai that were identified through engagement with Moloka'i residents, community organizations, and agency partners:

1. **Community-led visitor welcome and orientation**, ensuring that more visitors encounter and understand Moloka'i's values, expectations, and norms before moving through the island
2. **Strengthening Kaunakakai as a primary point of interface between residents and visitors**, where stewardship, care, and clear communication set the tone for respectful behavior elsewhere
3. **Durable, locally governed platforms for visitor education**, reducing reliance on temporary or externally driven orientation efforts
4. **More reliable access to clean, functional public restrooms in Kaunakakai**, reducing pressure on private businesses and ensuring basic dignity for residents, workers, and visitors
5. **Improved upkeep of shared public spaces**, including parks, walkways, harbor-adjacent areas, and town facilities that shape residents' daily life and visitors' first impressions of Moloka'i
6. **Clear coordination, kuleana, and accountability for public-space care**, addressing fragmented or unclear maintenance responsibilities across State, County, and land-holding entities

Other community-led, agency-led, or otherwise funded efforts that advance these priorities may be considered aligned with destination management outcomes for Kaunakakai.

HOTSPOT INDICATORS

OVERALL PRIORITY

IDENTIFICATION

CONTEXT & COMPOUNDING FACTORS

FEASIBILITY & VIABILITY

Access Infrastructure
& Arrival Pressure

On-Site Capacity
& Crowd Pressure

Community Strain
& Resident Impact

Site Degradation
& Maintenance Stress

Cultural Sensitivity

Environmental
Sensitivity

Safety & Risk

Visibility & Promotion

Local Economic
Benefit & Reciprocity

Jurisdictional Clarity
& Legality of Access

Cost & Resource
Demand

Implementation
Timeline & Complexity

DMAP Alignment &
Partnership Leverage

SITE SWOT

STRENGTHS

- Central hub connecting residents and visitors with most services (e.g., markets, gas stations)
- Strong community pride and volunteer spirit
- Active stores, harbor views, and landmarks
- Walkable town core with potential for visitor orientation and education site
- Existing cultural center

OPPORTUNITIES

- Revive "Moloka'i Main Street" beautification as a stewardship model
- Launch community-led visitor education and orientation center downtown
- Create shared stewardship partnerships for parks and harbor areas
- Support signs expressing local values and stories

WEAKNESSES

- Aging infrastructure; closed or unsanitary restrooms
- Overlapping jurisdictions hinder maintenance of key sites and beach parks
- Limited wayfinding, parking, and pedestrian safety (note: slow pace lowers safety risk)

THREATS

- Continued neglect eroding resident pride and safety
- Houselessness and vandalism without coordinated response
- Extreme weather or fire damaging aging buildings
- Loss of community trust if agencies fail to act collaboratively

VERY HIGH/VERY LOW

HIGH/LOW

MODERATE

LOW/HIGH

N/A

*PLEASE SEE COLOR SCALE ON PAGE 24 FOR HOTSPOT ANALYSIS

KKI-1: ESTABLISH A MODEST COMMUNITY-LED VISITOR CENTER OUTFIT

KKI-1

Management Strategy: Resource & Elevate Local *Ike*, Curate Visitor Engagement & Education



Goal: Establish a modest, community-led visitor center outfit, embedded within an existing Kaunakakai facility and supported by an online presence, to deliver locally grounded visitor *welina* (welcome), orientation, and related messaging on Molokaʻi.

Justification: Across engagements, residents consistently called for restoring a visitor orientation presence once provided by airport greeters and in-town kiosks. Stakeholders emphasized that visitors should learn Molokaʻi's values, responsibilities, and expectations early and directly from Molokaʻi community voices, so stewardship guides and enhances their experience from the outset.

Given the limited number of visitors to Molokaʻi, a small, locally operated visitor center outfit integrated into an existing space could meet community needs and enhance visitor experience on the island. When paired with light-touch airport orientation and a related online presence, this approach creates a durable, community-led platform for visitor education while remaining proportional to Molokaʻi's scale, visitation levels, and capacity.

Anticipated deliverables:

- Community-informed development process of a modest visitor center outfit model
- Procurement and selection of a Molokaʻi-based operating organization
- Pilot visitor orientation program launched at Hoʻolehua Airport
- Online visitor information presence established and locally managed
- Community-led visitor center outfit operating within an existing Kaunakakai facility
- Ongoing data collection and evaluation of visitor engagement and effectiveness

Intended outcomes:

- Visitors receive consistent, community-led orientation grounded in local values and conditions
- Improved visitor welcome experience and preparedness before exploring the island
- Strong alignment between in-person and online visitor information
- Enhanced community involvement in how Molokaʻi is introduced, explained, and represented to visitors

KKI-2: CONVENE A COORDINATED STEWARDSHIP DIALOGUE FOR THE KAUNAKAKAI CORRIDOR

KKI-2

Management Strategy: Establish Durable Foundations



Goal: Convene State, County, and community partners in a structured, outcome-oriented dialogue to clarify *kuleana* (responsibilities), identify priority needs, and determine coordinated next steps for stewardship and basic facility care along the Kaunakakai corridor.

Justification: Kaunakakai is Molokaʻi's primary civic and commercial junction, used daily by residents and visited by nearly all travelers. Community members emphasized that the condition of shared public spaces like restrooms, walkways, lighting, and park areas affects residents' sense of dignity, safety, and pride of place, while also shaping visitors' first and lasting impressions of Molokaʻi.

Stakeholders noted that challenges in Kaunakakai are often **not the result of neglect by any single entity**, but rather unclear or fragmented kuleana across agencies and landowners. Closed or unsanitary restrooms, inconsistent maintenance, and uncertainty about responsibility undermine everyday use and create visible strain in a high-use area. These conditions impact the destination by influencing visitor behavior, length of stay, and respect for place, while also placing disproportionate burden on residents and local businesses who have to supplement unavailable public infrastructure like restrooms.

Community members also noted that planning efforts such as the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands' (DHHL) *Malama Cultural Park Special Area Plan (2022)* identify potential improvements for nearby public spaces in the Kaunakakai corridor, including facilities and community-oriented programming. However, progress on these initiatives has been limited, reinforcing the importance of coordinated dialogue to clarify roles, priorities, and pathways for implementation.

By convening relevant agencies and community voices in a deliberate, solutions-oriented dialogue, Molokaʻi-invested stakeholders can identify pathways for shared stewardship, clarify roles, and determine which improvements and/or investments should advance through appropriate leads and funding sources.

Anticipated deliverables:

- Structured convenings focused on stewardship and basic facility care in the Kaunakakai corridor
- Documented clarification of *kuleana* and coordination gaps related to restrooms, parks and other facilities
- Priority list of specific stewardship and infrastructure issues requiring follow-up
- Summary memo outlining recommended pathways and responsible leads

Intended outcomes:

- Clearer understanding of roles and responsibilities for shared public spaces in Kaunakakai
- Improved coordination among agencies and community partners
- Stronger foundation for targeted, realistic improvements

ISLAND-WIDE ACTIONS (IW)

The following actions apply Moloka‘i’s destination management strategies at an island-wide scale. With limited resources, this plan advances only a select number of these actions with high potential for impact in the next three years.

To seek alignment statewide, complementary initiatives are included in the DMAPs for Hawai‘i’s other five main islands. The actions advanced here reflect concerns heard consistently in community engagements on Moloka‘i while contributing to shared statewide principles of stewardship, harmony, regeneration, and collaboration. As these initiatives are implemented and evaluated, successful approaches may be refined and expanded to other parts of the state.

IW-1: SUPPORT A COLLECTIVE COMMUNITY PRACTICE OF SHARED STEWARDSHIP FOR SACRED AND SENSITIVE SPACES

IW-1

Management Strategy: Resource & Elevate Local *‘Ike*, Curate Visitor Engagement & Education



Goal: Uplift a practice where community decides which places and stories should not be shared with or recommended to visitors and ensures that those who interact with visitors honor those decisions.

Justification: Community members emphasized that not every place on Moloka‘i is meant to be talked about, mapped, or visited. Some places carry cultural meaning, kapu, or sensitivity that call for restraint and silence rather than exposure. Others shared that confusion and tension can arise when visitors learn about such places via word-of-mouth, social media, or tours that do not reflect community guidance.

By creating a **community-determined set of shared guidance** (i.e., “do not promote” list) and by orienting visitor-facing businesses, guides, and organizations to that guidance, Moloka‘i can maintain a unified, values-based approach to managing the destination by protecting its most sensitive places and continuing to welcome visitors. This action supports destination management by shaping what is not promoted, discussed, or encouraged, reinforcing care for place through collective agreement rather than regulation.

Anticipated deliverables:

- Community talk-story sessions convened to identify places/stories not to be shared with visitors
- Concise, community-informed guidance document produced and maintained as a living reference
- Guidance distributed to **visitor-facing businesses and organizations** on Moloka‘i
- Orientation conversations/sessions to support partner understanding and use of the guidance
- At least one community check-in conducted to review and affirm or update the guidance

Intended outcomes:

- Greater consistency in what is and is not recommended to visitors across Molokaʻi
- Reduced exposure and pressure on culturally sensitive or *kāpu* places
- Visitor-facing partners better equipped to respond to questions with respect
- Strengthened community control over how Molokaʻi is discussed and represented

IW-1**IW-2: IMPROVE ACCURACY AND DATA HYGIENE OF VISITOR-FACING ONLINE INFORMATION****IW-2**

Management Strategy: Curate Visitor Engagement & Education, Establish Durable Foundations



Goal: Improve accuracy of visitor-facing online information about Molokaʻi by identifying and working with content owners to correct misleading, outdated, or inaccurate digital content (e.g., listings, maps, business information, and visitor resources) so visitors arrive with realistic expectations and reliable guidance.

Justification: Residents noted that visitor challenges on Molokaʻi can stem from **inaccurate or outdated online information**. Visitors rely on search engines, maps, blogs, review platforms, and other websites that may reference businesses that no longer exist, misstate services or access conditions, or provide misleading and culturally inappropriate descriptions of places, rules, facilities, or logistics.

These inaccuracies can contribute to confusion, misdirected travel, unrealistic expectations, and strain on residents, businesses, and limited infrastructure. Improving the hygiene of visitor-facing digital information is therefore a **practical destination management intervention**: one that reduces downstream impacts by addressing problems upstream, before visitors arrive or while they are navigating the island.

This action focuses on **correcting inaccurate information**. It creates a low-cost process for improving how Molokaʻi is represented online, supporting both resident well-being and visitor preparedness.

Anticipated deliverables:

- Island-wide audit of visitor-facing online information completed
- Correction or update requests submitted for at least ten (10) high-priority inaccuracies or instances of improperly shared information in FY 2027
- Correction or update requests submitted for at least ten (10) additional inaccuracies or instances of improperly shared information in each of FY 2028 and FY 2029
- Internal tracking log documenting issues, submissions, and outcomes maintained annually
- A repeatable data hygiene workflow established for ongoing use

Intended outcomes:

- More accurate and current online information shaping visitor expectations before arrival
- Fewer visitors misdirected by outdated or misleading digital content
- Reduced confusion, frustration, and unnecessary strain on residents and local services
- A durable, low-cost destination management practice that improves visitor readiness without increasing promotion or on-site intervention

IW-3: PROCURE SEASONAL ‘ŌPALA (RUBBISH) MANAGEMENT FOR SELECT HOTSPOTS AND SITES UNDER STRAIN

IW-3



Management Strategy: Establish Durable Foundations

Goal: Improve the condition and visitor experience of important sites included in the Moloka‘i DMAP by procuring a locally grounded organization to provide seasonal, coordinated ‘ōpala (rubbish) management, reducing impacts on natural resources, cultural places, and shared community spaces.

Justification: Several residents independently raised concerns about overflowing or unmanaged rubbish at beaches, pull-outs, and other visitor-facing areas. Regardless of who generates the waste, unmanaged ‘ōpala negatively affects environmental health, resident well-being, and visitor perception of the island. Further, responsibility for rubbish management is often fragmented across agencies or unclear at specific sites, resulting in gaps in collection and care.

Rather than replacing existing agency responsibilities, this action is designed to supplement and reinforce them by providing targeted, seasonal support focused on priority locations. Contracting a local organization with experience in ‘ōpala management can address impacts in a practical, focused way. This approach treats trash management as destination management infrastructure, protecting sensitive sites and improving visitor experience while directly investing tourism resources back into the community.

Anticipated deliverables:

- Local organization procured to provide seasonal ‘ōpala management services
- Rubbish stewardship agreements reached with relevant landowners and lessees, as relevant
- Seasonal rubbish management implemented during peak visitor periods
- Basic service logs documenting locations, frequency, amount collected, and conditions observed

Intended outcomes:

- Improved cleanliness and condition of visitor-facing sites during peak travel periods
- Reduced impacts to ‘āina, kai, and cultural landscapes from unmanaged rubbish
- Enhanced resident satisfaction, visitor experience, and perception of care for place

IW-4: MAKE EMERGENCY PROTOCOLS VISIBLE AND ACTIONABLE FOR VISITORS AND HOSTS

IW-4



Management Strategy: Establish Durable Foundations

Goal: Ensure visitors and visitor-facing operators are informed about existing emergency and evacuation protocols so they are prepared to respond appropriately during alerts and incidents.

Justification: Residents cited congestion, confusion, and inconsistent visitor behavior during past alerts and emergency situations. Although emergency protocols exist, visitors and those hosting them may lack awareness of where to find guidance or how to act appropriately when alerts are issued.

On Molokaʻi, where evacuation routes are limited, roads are narrow, and response capacity is constrained, unmanaged visitor movement can quickly affect broader safety responses. Destination management has a role in ensuring that existing emergency guidance is visible, accessible, understandable, and consistently shared through visitor-facing channels before emergencies occur.

Anticipated deliverables:

- Existing emergency and evacuation protocols translated into visitor-facing guidance formats
- Training sessions delivered to lodging operators and short-term vacation rental (STVR) hosts
- Public-facing access points (e.g., QR codes or signage) directing visitors to official emergency guidance installed at priority locations
- Ongoing availability of current emergency guidance through visitor-facing channels

Intended outcomes:

- Visitors know where to find official emergency information and what is expected during alerts
- Visitor-facing operators are prepared to guide guests appropriately during emergencies
- Reduced visitor-related congestion or confusion during evacuations
- Emergency response remains resident-first and unobstructed

IW-5: DEVELOP AN EVENT SURGE MANAGEMENT PLAYBOOK FOR MAJOR CANOE RACES

Management Strategy: Establish Durable Foundations



Goal: Reduce strain on residents, shorelines, and public infrastructure during the island's largest race weekends by coordinating temporary surge services, clear roles, and shared communication protocols.

Justification: Molokaʻi Hoe and Nā Wāhine o Ke Kai bring pride, cultural practice, and visitors to the island, but they also create short-term surges in traffic, waste, parking demand, and restroom use that fall on small public systems. Community feedback emphasized that challenges during race weekends are about lack of coordination around surge needs, unclear kuleana, and insufficient temporary services.

A lightweight, pre-agreed Event Surge Playbook would allow agencies, race organizers, and businesses to plan ahead for predictable peak occupancy conditions. By clarifying roles, staging needs, service hours, and communications in advance, Molokaʻi can support these important events while minimizing resident burden and protecting nearshore and town environments.

Anticipated deliverables:

- Event Surge Playbook finalized and shared with all partners
- Roles and coordination agreements documented (MOU or equivalent)
- Temporary restrooms, waste services, and parking/traffic plans activated during race weekends
- Optional resident-first retail coordination incorporated into surge communications

IW-5

Intended outcomes:

- Cleaner shorelines and public spaces during major event weekends
- Safer, more predictable traffic and parking conditions
- Reduced burden on residents and heightened visitor experience during high-impact events
- Clearer coordination and shared responsibility among organizers and agencies

IW-6: EXECUTE A COMMUNITY-VOICED VISITOR ORIENTATION & WELCOME CAMPAIGN

IW-6

Management Strategy: Resource & Elevate Local 'Ike, Curate Visitor Engagement & Education



Goal: Pilot a community-voiced visitor orientation and welcome campaign preparing visitors for respectful, informed travel on Moloka'i and reduces avoidable strain on residents, places, 'āina, and limited services.

Justification: Community members shared that many visitor-related challenges stem not from volume, but from visitors arriving without context or preparation. Travelers often lack understanding of the island's small scale, limited infrastructure, cultural protocols, and community expectations for respectful behavior. This gap can lead to unintentional harm to natural and cultural resources, inappropriate use of facilities, and frustration for residents, which can then go on to negatively impact visitors' experience in turn.

Because all visitors arrive by interisland flight, Moloka'i presents a rare opportunity to deliver consistent, place-specific education before visitors disperse across the island. When shaped by the community, education delivered just before and immediately upon arrival functions as a destination management tool by shaping expectations early, influencing behavior, and reducing downstream strain at a key moment.

This action advances HTA's Visitor Education and Post-Arrival Marketing (VEPAM) program in alignment with destination management outcomes and supports priorities from the 2018 *Moloka'i Island Community Plan*.

Anticipated deliverables:

- Community-authored welcome and orientation message piloted via interisland arrival channels
- Distribution of orientation materials through airlines, lodging, car-rental partners, and the Moloka'i Visitor Center Outpost (Action KKI-1)
- Community-voiced videos produced and deployed at commuter terminals
- Coordination with Lāna'i Action IW-4 on visitor orientation media
- Evaluation summaries informing continuation or refinement decisions

Intended outcomes:

- Visitors arrive with clearer understanding of Moloka'i's values, expectations, and limits
- Reduced avoidable strain on residents, resources, and facilities caused by unprepared visitation
- Orientation and welcome that reflect aloha as a relationship situated in kuleana
- Strong community and youth presence in shaping how Moloka'i is introduced to visitors
- Evidence-based guidance for sustaining or refining visitor education tools

IW-7: CONDUCT A MOLOKA'I MICRO-GRANT AND TRAINING PROGRAM FOR COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM INITIATIVES

IW-7

Management Strategy: Resource & Elevate Local 'Ike, Establish Durable Foundations



Goal: Support Moloka'i residents and organizations in strengthening small-scale, community-led visitor experiences and locally created products that reflect island values and align with local capacity and context.

Justification: Residents emphasized the need for greater local capacity to shape visitor interaction and develop offerings that reflect community values. Several community members expressed having ideas for small, culturally grounded businesses but facing barriers like unclear permitting, limited capital, and gaps in training related to business operations and visitor engagement.

As part of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT), the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) has a mandate to support local economic opportunity, which aligns with calls within destination management to enhance visitor experiences. A **time-limited pilot micro-grant and training program** allows HTA to direct targeted, community-rooted support to improve resident capacity and visitor readiness without creating a permanent or overly prescriptive program.

Visitor spending patterns underscore the value of such a pilot. DBEDT's *2024 Annual Visitor Research Report* notes that visitors on Moloka'i spend roughly 60% of the statewide average on food and beverage, 43% on entertainment and recreation, and 29% on shopping – reflecting limited availability of locally owned, visitor-ready options. A Moloka'i-specific pilot, developed and delivered with County partners, provides a practical way to assess how modest, well-designed investments can help close these gaps while keeping tourism benefits rooted in community.

Anticipated deliverables:

- Moloka'i-specific micro-grant and training **pilot program** designed and implemented
- Clear application and selection process used to award a limited number of small grants
- Trainings delivered in partnership with local business-support organizations
- At least one youth-led or youth-supported initiative funded

Intended outcomes:

- Increased local capacity to develop culturally grounded, community-led visitor experiences
- Expanded opportunities for Moloka'i-owned businesses and youth-led initiatives
- Stronger alignment between visitor spending and local economic benefit
- Clearer, more accessible path for residents to navigate business or product development
- Greater diversity of visitor-ready offerings rooted in Moloka'i values and regenerative principles

IW-8: ESTABLISH A REGULAR COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT CYCLE FOR MOLOKA'I DMAP IMPLEMENTATION

IW-8

Management Strategy: Resource & Elevate Local 'Ike, Establish Durable Foundations



Goal: Maintain a clear, predictable communication and engagement cycle that keeps Moloka'i residents informed about DMAP implementation and provides regular opportunities for dialogue, feedback, and place-based insight as destination management actions advance.

Justification: Residents from across Moloka'i emphasized that communication with tourism agencies is irregular and infrequent. Many community members expressed a desire not only to share concerns with relevant parties, but to understand what DMAP management actions are underway, what progress has been made, and how resident observations are informing long-term destination management decisions.

An ongoing, accessible engagement cycle supports transparency and accountability while helping HTA and destination management remain grounded in real-time, place-based conditions across the island. Because Moloka'i communities experience visitor impacts differently based on location and season, regular dialogue provides essential context that cannot be captured through occasional reporting alone. This action supports more responsive, adaptive DMAP implementation and helps build and sustain trust over time.

Anticipated deliverables:

- A public engagement schedule of in-person gatherings held across Moloka'i each year
- DMAP progress updates prepared and shared at each engagement
- Written summaries produced for engagement activities and shared through local channels
- Compiled themes from resident input documented and routed internally to inform implementation

Intended outcomes:

- Transparent, consistent communication between HTA and Moloka'i communities
- Clear resident visibility into DMAP actions, progress, and limitations
- Effective two-way communication, ensuring community insight informs ongoing destination management decisions and iteration
- Reduced frustration stemming from irregular or unclear engagement
- A stable, predictable engagement structure that supports trust and long-term collaboration throughout the DMAP period

3. Nani wale nō ka 'āina Hālawa

Home ho okipa a ka malihini

'Āina uluwehi i ka noe ahiahi

Ua lawe mai ka makani Ho'olua

EIA IHOLA NŌ KA PUANA O IA MELE NEI. E NĀNEA MAI.

Wahine 'Ilikea

A SONG CELEBRATING MOLOKA'I BY DANIEL KAMAKAHI

THE WHITE CLOUDS OF MOLOKA'I ARE DESCRIBED AS A FAIR SKINNED WOMAN IN THIS MELE

Pua kalaunu ma ke kai

'O Honouli Wai

Wahine 'ilikea i ka poli 'o Moloka'i

Nō ka heke

Crown flower by the shore

Of Honouli Wai

Fair skinned woman in the bosom of Moloka'i

Is the best

Nani wale nō nā wailele 'uka

O Hina 'o Hāhā 'o Mo'oloa

Nā wai 'ekolu i ka uluwehiwehi

'O Kamalō i ka mālīe

Beautiful waterfalls of the upland

Hina, Hāhā and Mo'oloa

The three waters in the verdant overgrowth

Of Kamalō, in the calm

Nani wale nō ka 'āina Hālawa

Home ho'okipa a ka malihini

'Āina uluwehi i ka noe ahiahi

Ua lawe mai ka makani Ho'olua

Beautiful is the land, Hālawa

Hospitable home to the visitors

Land verdant, in the evening mist

Brought by the wind of Ho'olua

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ADVISORY GROUP

Clare Albino
Chairman & Owner
Youth In Motion & Moloka'i
Outdoors and CSM
Management

Carrie Caparida
Grant Specialist
Kūha'o Business Center,
County of Maui

Lana Corpuz
Program Manager
'Āina Momona

Rosie Davis
Executive Director
Maui County Area Health
Education Center

William Dudoit
Manager
Alamo Rent-a-Car, Moloka'i

Butch Haase
Executive Director
Moloka'i Land Trust

Kaui Manera
Community Member
Moloka'i

Kilia Purdy-Avelino
Owner
Purdy Farms

Greg Solatorio
Owner
Halawa Valley Falls Cultural
Hike

Rob Stephenson
President
Moloka'i Chamber of
Commerce

Wailani Tanaka
Owner
All Things Moloka'i

COUNTY LEADERSHIP

Richard Bissen
Mayor
County of Maui

KALAMA'ULA HOMESTEAD ASSOCIATION

HTA STAFF

Caroline Anderson
*Interim President & CEO,
Director of Planning*

Kendrick Leong
Planner

Kui Adolpho
Destination Manager, Moloka'i

Blane Andrade
Destination Manager, O'ahu

Meagan DeGaia
*Destination Manager, Maui
& Lāna'i*

Patti Ornellas
Destination Manager, Kaua'i

Matthew Sueda
*Destination Manager, Hawai'i
Island*

WARD RESEARCH

Rebecca J. 'I. Soon
President

Jeff May
Research Analyst

Ryan Sasaki
Junior Research Analyst

SOLUTIONS PACIFIC

Brandon Fairchild
*Regenerative Tourism
Program Manager*

PACIFIC POLICY RESEARCH CENTER (PPRC)

Mary Lee
Executive Director

Melly Wilson
*Senior Research and Policy
Associate*

Corrin Barros
Senior Research Associate

HAWAIIAN COUNCIL

Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu
Cultural Ambassador

Mehanaokalā Hind
Senior Advisor to CEO

Devon DeAngelo
Head of Content

Sean Hauki-Williams
Associate Director

Marika Higgins
Graphic Design Strategist

Brenna Oldroyd
Graphic Designer

Hanalei Alapai
Jeriann Keolanui
Kaneheilua Lindsey
Field Team

MARKETING MANAGEMENT, INC.

Frank Haas
Principal

JLL, INC.

Dan Fenton
*Managing Director, Global
Tourism and Destination
Advisory*

Brisa Lee
*Analyst, Global Tourism &
Destination Advisory*

GLOSSARY

Average Daily Census:

The average number of visitors present in Hawai‘i on any given day.

Average Length of Stay:

The average number of days visitors spend in Hawai‘i, including both the day of arrival and the day of departure.

Community Benefit:

Positive outcomes for local communities resulting from tourism, which may include economic opportunity, reinvestment in infrastructure and public spaces, cultural preservation, environmental stewardship, and improvements to residents’ quality of life.

Community-Led Stewardship:

An approach to caring for and managing places in which local communities, cultural practitioners, and lineal descendants play a leading role in protecting natural resources, cultural sites, and community well-being.

De Facto Population:

The total number of people present in a place at a given time, including both residents and visitors.

Destination Management:

The coordinated planning and management of tourism in a place to address impacts, protect resources, and improve experiences for residents and visitors through collaboration among government agencies, communities, and industry partners.

Destination Marketing Organization (DMO):

An organization that promotes and supports travel to a specific destination through marketing, visitor information, and industry coordination.

Destination Stewardship:

The shared responsibility of caring for a place so that it can thrive for future generations. While *destination management* focuses on planning and coordination, destination stewardship emphasizes collective care and long-term *kuleana* for the place itself.

Hotspot:

A location where visitor use and tourism-related pressure are concentrated and where targeted management actions are prioritized.

Lineal Descendant:

A person who can trace direct family ancestry to individuals historically connected to a particular place or *‘āina*. In Hawai‘i, lineal descendants often maintain genealogical, cultural, and familial ties to specific lands, waters, and resources, and their perspectives are important in decisions related to stewardship, cultural practice, and place-based management.

Managed Access:

Strategies used to regulate how people enter or use a site in order to protect resources and improve visitor experience. Examples may include reservation systems, permits, transportation controls, or timed entry.

Mobility Hub:

A location where multiple transportation options connect (e.g., shuttles, buses, bicycles, walking routes) allowing visitors and residents to move between destinations more efficiently.

Multimodal Transportation:

A transportation approach that integrates multiple forms of travel, such as walking, bicycling, buses, shuttles, and private vehicles, to improve mobility and reduce congestion.

Per-Person Per-Day Spending:

The average amount of money spent by a visitor per day during their stay in Hawai'i.

Place-Based Management:

An approach to destination management that tailors strategies and actions to the specific conditions, culture, and needs of a particular community, *‘āina*, or site.

Priority Hotspot:

A hotspot selected for focused management action during the current DMAP implementation cycle.

Regenerative Tourism:

An approach to tourism that seeks to restore, strengthen, and sustain the environmental, cultural, and community systems of a place. Regenerative tourism goes beyond minimizing negative impacts by supporting activities and partnerships that help communities and ecosystems thrive over time.

Resident Sentiment:

Public attitudes and perceptions among residents regarding tourism and its impacts on their community and family system.

Site of Opportunity:

A location where visitor activity may be encouraged or better supported in order to distribute visitation more evenly and reduce pressure on heavily impacted sites.

Site Under Strain:

A location where strain is occurring due to visitor use, infrastructure limitations, environmental sensitivity, or other pressures. This designation may also apply where any level of visitor activity occurs in areas where public access is restricted or inappropriate.

Stakeholder:

An individual, organization, or group with an interest in or connection to tourism and its impacts in a particular place. In the DMAP context, stakeholders include residents, community organizations, cultural practitioners, lineal descendants, businesses, industry representatives, government agencies, and other partners involved in destination management and stewardship.

Strain:

Pressure affecting a place, resource, or community that may arise from visitor use, infrastructure limitations, environmental conditions, or other factors. In the DMAP context, strain may also occur when visitor activities or access take place in areas where said access is restricted or prohibited, including unsafe, culturally sensitive, or environmentally protected locations.

Transient Accommodations Tax (TAT):

A tax applied to short-term visitor accommodations such as hotels and vacation rentals. In Hawai'i, the TAT is collected by both the State and counties, with the State currently levying an 11 percent tax and each county collecting an additional 3 percent.

Visitor:

An out-of-state traveler who stays in Hawai'i for at least one night but less than one year.

Visitor Education and Post-Arrival Marketing (VEPAM):

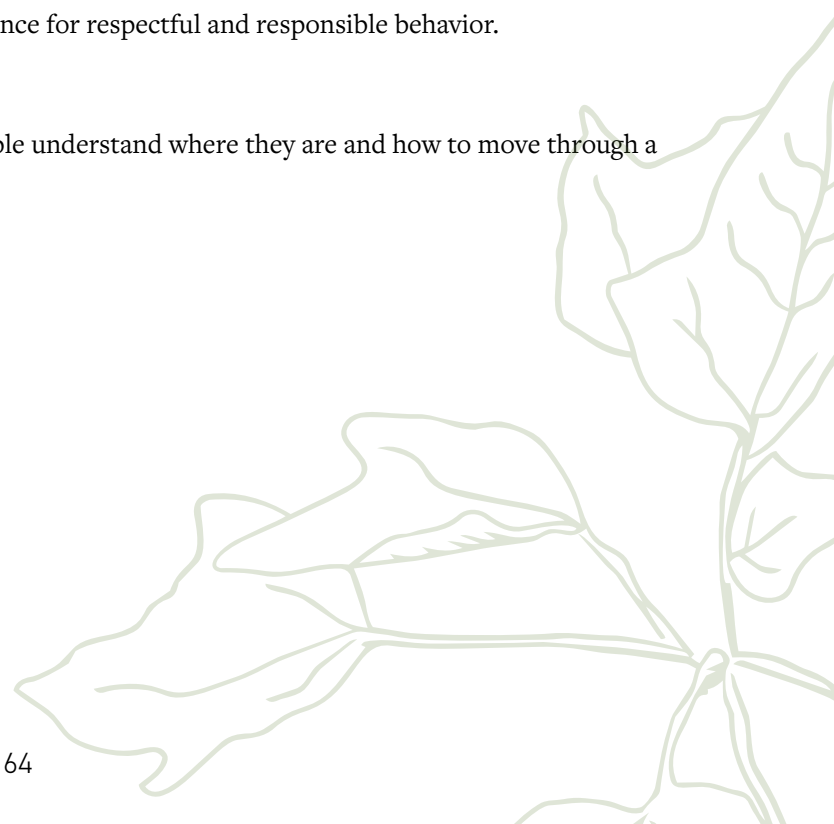
An HTA program focused on marketing to and educating visitors after they arrive in the islands, including information about appropriate activities, experiences, and responsible behavior that supports cultural, community, and environmental stewardship.

Visitor Orientation:

Information provided to visitors before or during their trip to help them understand local conditions, cultural and environmental context, safety considerations, and guidance for respectful and responsible behavior.

Wayfinding:

Signage, maps, and other navigation tools that help people understand where they are and how to move through a place safely and efficiently.



ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

State Agencies

DBEDT: Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism

DHHL: Department of Hawaiian Home Lands

DLNR: Department of Land and Natural Resources

HDOT: Hawai'i Department of Transportation

HTA: Hawai'i Tourism Authority

OCCL: Office of Conservation & Coastal Lands (DLNR)

County of Maui

DPR: Department of Parks and Recreation

OED: Office of Economic Development

Locations in Action IDs

HV: Halawa Valley & Moa'ula Falls

IW: Island-Wide (referring to an Island-Wide Action within the DMAP framework)

KB: Kūmimi Beach

KKI: Kaunakakai

Other Acronyms & Terms

DMAP: Destination Management Action Plan

DMO: Destination Marketing Organization

FY: Fiscal Year

STVR: Short-term vacation rental

TAT: Transient Accommodations Tax

VEPAM: Visitor Education and Post-Arrival Marketing

Appendices



APPENDIX A:

DMAP ENGAGEMENT SCHEDULE

The development of this DMAP included multiple rounds of engagement with community members, industry representatives, government agencies, and the island Advisory Group. These engagements helped identify sites under strain, refine emerging themes, and shape the strategies and actions included in the plan.

Advisory Group Meetings

The island Advisory Group provided ongoing guidance throughout the DMAP development process, helping review emerging themes, identify sites under strain, and refine draft actions:

- August 5, 2025
- September 2, 2025
- October 8, 2025
- December 2, 2025
- March 25, 2026

Community Engagement

Community engagement focused on understanding how tourism is experienced in daily life across Moloka'i and identifying locations where tourism-related strain is most visible.

Initial Virtual Engagement

- **August 12, 2025**

Initial session conducted to gather insights for both the DMAP and the HTA Strategic Plan.

In-Person Community Input Session

Facilitated session held in Kaunakakai focused on themes that emerged early in the process:

- **October 7, 2025: Moloka'i Community Session**

Participants discussed issues, points of concern, and stewardship needs across multiple regions of the island, including:

- East Moloka'i (Hālawā, Mana'e)
- West Moloka'i (Kualako'i, Maunaloa)
- Central Moloka'i (Kaunakakai)
- North Moloka'i (Kualapu'u, Ho'olehua)

These discussions helped further identify sites under strain and clarify desired outcomes for destination management.

Draft Review Sessions

- **February 25, 2026: Virtual Draft DMAP Review Session**

Session to present the draft DMAP and gather feedback on proposed strategies and actions.

Industry Engagement

Industry engagement focused on understanding operational realities, sector perspectives, and the role businesses play in destination management.

- **August 5, 2025: Virtual Industry Input Session**

Session conducted to gather *mana'o* (insight) from visitor industry representatives for both the DMAP and the HTA Strategic Plan.

- **September 22, 2025: Industry Engagement Session at the HTA Tourism Conference**

Facilitated discussions across six sector groupings:

- accommodations and lodging
- tours and activities
- transportation and access
- food, retail, and events
- marketing, media, and travel trade
- community and cultural stewardship partners

These discussions helped identify practical opportunities for industry participation in destination management.

Public Comment Period: February 2026

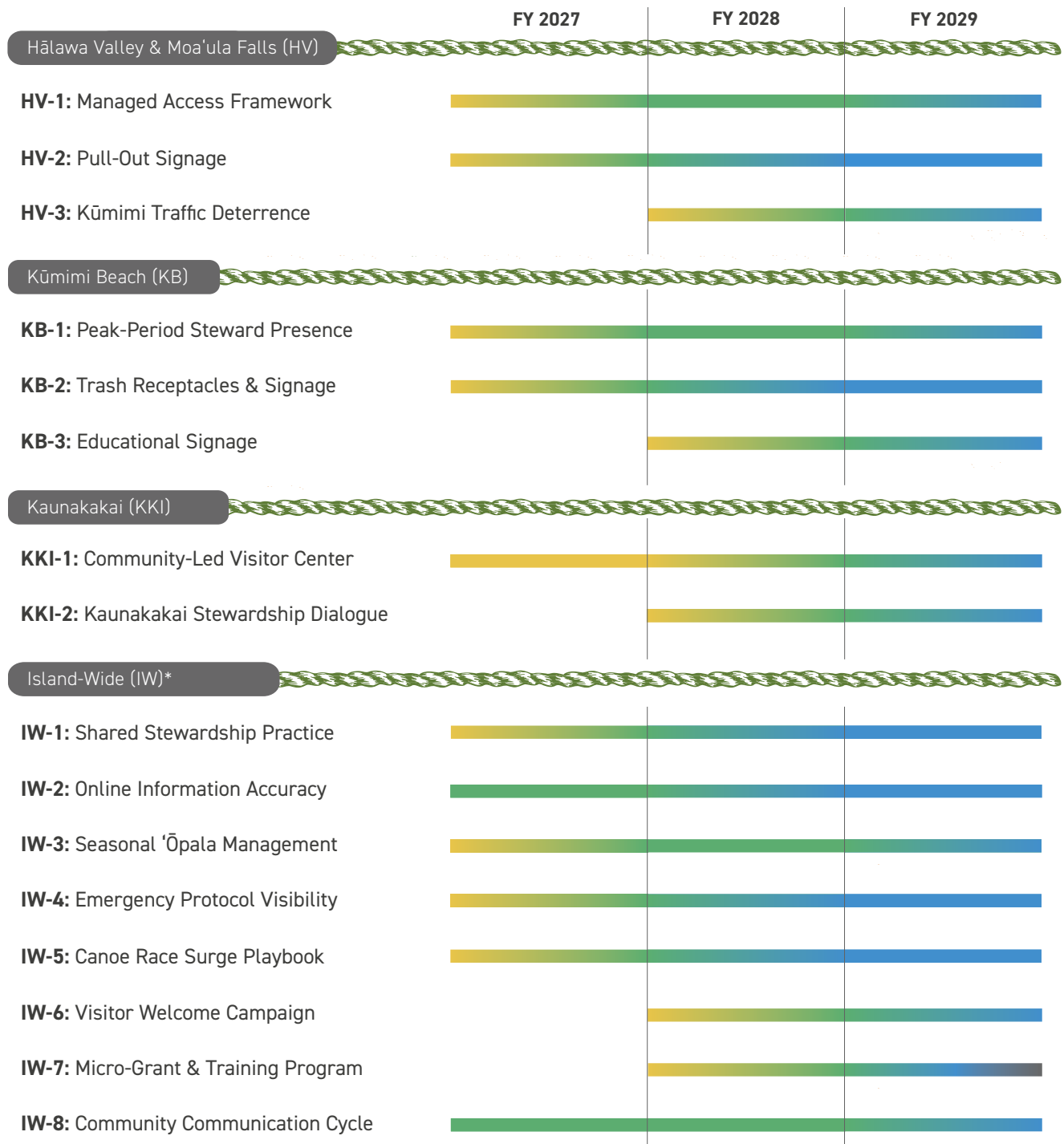
An online commentary portal was made available on the HTA website to gather additional feedback from community members, industry participants, and other stakeholders on the draft DMAP.

Agency and Partner Coordination

Throughout the planning process, HTA Destination Managers and other HTA staff engaged regularly with State and County agencies, 'āina-based stewardship organizations, and other partners. These conversations helped clarify agency roles, operational realities, and potential pathways for collaboration in implementing proposed actions.

APPENDIX B: THREE-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

■ Procurement / Planning ■ Implementation / Execution ■ Refinement / Review



*Timeline for Kaunakakai (KKI) and Island-Wide Actions (IW) has not been determined. Estimates provided.

APPENDIX C:

ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED THROUGH STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The DMAP identifies a set of priority actions that HTA and its partners will work to advance during the 2026–2028 DMAP implementation cycle. During engagement, however, stakeholders raised a wide range of additional issues, opportunities, and site-specific concerns related to destination management on Molokaʻi.

Given the breadth of topics raised and the practical limits of available resources, it is not possible for every idea or site identified to be translated into a formal DMAP action for the 2026–2028 implementation cycle. Many items relate to *kuleana* held entirely by other State and County agencies, while others may benefit from additional coordination, research, or feasibility assessment before specific actions can be defined.

Documenting these perspectives nonetheless helps ensure that stakeholder input gathered through the DMAP process remains visible and available to inform ongoing dialogue, coordination, and management efforts across all partners involved in caring for Molokaʻi as a home and visitor destination.

Opportunities identified through engagement fall into three categories:

1. Agency Opportunities

Areas of progress identified through stakeholder input that fall fully within the responsibilities of other State and County agencies. These are recommended for further consideration.

Examples include:

- **Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL):** Advance the *Mālama Cultural Park Special Area Plan* (2022) to activate the site as a community and visitor gathering space
- **Hawaiʻi Department of Transportation – Highways:** Repair and maintain the East End road serving Hālawā Valley to improve safety and access
- **Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR):** Strengthen enforcement and resource protection at sensitive sites such as ʻIlio Point, Moʻomomi, and Pāpōhaku with additional staffing and agency resources

2. Ongoing HTA Exploration

Topics raised during stakeholder engagement that HTA will continue exploring as partnerships, research, and planning efforts help shape potential future initiatives. These are recommended for continued exploration as opportunities evolve.

Examples include:

- **Strengthening opportunities** for residents, lineal descendants, cultural practitioners, and local businesses to help shape how the island is presented to visitors
- **Expanding visitor education opportunities through Molokaʻi Airport and Mokulele Airlines** so visitors receive place-based guidance before or upon arrival
- **Strengthening pathways** that connect visitor education, stewardship initiatives, and community-based tourism opportunities with **youth engagement and training**

3. Policy Considerations

Broader policy issues and community concerns that influence tourism, destination management, and community conditions but fall outside the scope of DMAP implementation as they typically require legislative action, statewide policy changes, or decisions by other agencies. These are recommended for further policy dialogue and consideration.

Examples include:

- **Addressing interisland transportation access and limited air service to Molokaʻi**, including concerns about airline seat availability for residents and visitors
- **Addressing helicopter tour activity and aerial disturbance over East Molokaʻi**, particularly near Hālawā Valley and other culturally sensitive areas
- **Supporting infrastructure and partnerships** that strengthen the production, processing, and sale of Molokaʻi-grown and Molokaʻi-made products

A broader listing of opportunities identified through DMAP stakeholder engagement across all six islands is available on the Hawaiʻi Tourism Authority website at [_HTTPS://HTA.HAWAII.GOV/DMAPS/](https://HTA.HAWAII.GOV/DMAPS/).

APPENDIX D:

OTHER RESOURCES

Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism: **2024 Annual Visitor Research Report**

<HTTPS://FILES.HAWAII.GOV/DBEDT/VISITOR/VISITOR-RESEARCH/2024-ANNUAL-VISITOR.PDF>

Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism: **2025 Visitor Plant Inventory**

<HTTPS://FILES.HAWAII.GOV/DBEDT/VISITOR/VISITOR-PLANT/2025VPI.PDF>

Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism: **Resident Sentiment Surveys**

<HTTPS://DBEDT.HAWAII.GOV/VISITOR/RESIDENT-SENTIMENT-SURVEY-REPORT/>

Hawai'i Tourism Authority: **Visitor Satisfaction & Activity Reports**

<HTTPS://HTA.HAWAII.GOV/VISITOR-SATISFACTION-AND-ACTIVITY/>

Hawai'i Tourism Authority: **Maui Nui Destination Management Action Plan (2021–2023)**

HTTPS://HTA.HAWAII.GOV/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/2026/06/HTA_MAUINUI_DMAP_2021-2023.PDF

County of Maui: **Moloka'i Island Community Plan (2018)**

<HTTPS://WWW.MAUICOUNTY.GOV/1684/MOLOKAI-ISLAND-COMMUNITY-PLAN-UPDATE#DOCACCESS-FO8BE-A208E57750E6C5BDDE4EED7B97E437415CC2886BC59D3D5A8EOFF648767>

Department of Hawaiian Home Lands: **Mālama Cultural Park Special Area Plan (2022)**

<HTTPS://DHHL.HAWAII.GOV/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/2022/07/ITEM-G-1-PLO-MALAMA-SAP-EXHIBIT-A.PDF>

Hawai'i Tourism Authority: **Maui County Tourism Industry Strategic Plan (2017–2026)**

<HTTPS://WWW.HAWAIIITOURISMAUTHORITY.ORG/MEDIA/5414/MAUI-COUNTY-TOURISM-INDUSTRY-STRATEGIC-PLAN-VOLUME-1.PDF>

Moromizato, N. (2025). *Analyzing travel flow to Hanauma Bay before and after the reservation system using big data*. University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, School of Travel Industry Management.

