

# Hawai'i County Wastewater Coordination Meeting Summary

## Date/Context

October 9, 2025. Virtual coordination meeting between UH WRRC HCPT Overlay team (Chris, Amy, Robert) and Hawai'i County Wastewater staff. County participants included:

- Kelly Hartman
- Craig Kawaguchi
- Acting Division Chief Chris Laude (joined near the end)

This meeting followed WRRC's release of preliminary Hawai'i Island sewer expansion clusters and category assignments, developed using Corollo Engineers' density and proximity method.

## Purpose

Validate the 17 Hawai'i County sewer expansion clusters, refine the categorization rubric, and address county concerns about public communication, feasibility terminology, plant capacity constraints, and alignment with upcoming Integrated Wastewater Management Plans and Corollo's cluster designs.

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## Key Narratives and Findings

### 1. Project Scope and Goals

The HCPT Overlay is a required component of Act 217, intended to identify areas where centralized wastewater service is technically possible and to communicate this information to legislators and the public.

UH reiterated that the overlay is a planning and informational tool, not a construction plan.

WRRC must deliver draft products to legislative leaders (Rep. Lowen and Speaker Nakamura) by October 17 for internal review, with a full public-facing release coordinated afterward.

County expressed strong interest in ensuring that the tool aligns with their Integrated Plan timeline and messaging.

## 2. Data Coordination

- UH aligned its Hawai'i Island clusters with Corollo's method:  $\geq 50$  cesspools within 0.125 miles, screened by a 2-mile proximity threshold to existing county or private systems.
- UH identified 17 clusters; county reported that Corollo identified approximately 34 project areas.
- County was unable to share Corollo's geographies but noted that they subdivided areas more finely, partly for cost modeling.
- UH requested plant capacity data; county agreed to provide it in million gallons per day. Honoka'a was noted as the only plant with very limited capacity.
- UH will add capacity notes where relevant, since technical feasibility often requires plant upgrades.
- County will review the list of 17 clusters and QC attribute tables shared via the dashboard.

## 3. Terminology and Communication

County raised significant concern about public misinterpretation of "feasible."

They stated that polygons may cause homeowners to delay cesspool conversions, believing sewer service is coming, despite no funding and no binding plans.

County recommended stronger disclaimers and clarified descriptions in pop-ups.

They also requested clearer differentiation between internal legislative audiences and the general public.

UH agreed to revise category definitions and improve contextual information, including references to Act 217's purpose, scope, and intended audiences.

### Category refinement requests from county:

- **"Committed"**: Should include projects that are legally mandated even if unfunded.  
Proposed revision: *"Project funded or legally mandated, work not yet underway."*
- **"Planned"**: County recommended limiting this label to projects that appear in the CIP budget.
- **"Feasible"**: Should denote only that a cluster lies within 2 miles of existing infrastructure, not that it is economical, permitted, prioritized, or likely to be built.
- County emphasized the need to show capacity limitations and clarify that feasibility often depends on plant upgrades.

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## 4. County / Project-Specific Details

Area / Project

Status / Notes

Cost / Constraints / Category Comments

<b>Pāhala</b>	Only Hawai'i Island project currently underway.	Correctly labeled "Underway."
<b>Nā'ālehu</b>	Legally mandated by settlement. Not funded until construction year.	Should be classified "Committed: Project funded or legally mandated; work not yet underway."
<b>Remaining 15 clusters</b>	UH classified all as "Feasible" because of proximity to existing systems.	County reminded that feasibility requires considering plant capacity, CIP status, and economic constraints. All plants have some capacity except Honoka'a, which is limited.
<b>Honoka'a system</b>	Not a cluster, but relevant to multiple areas.	Limited remaining capacity; feasibility depends on upgrades.
<b>Private system areas</b>	Mixed across island.	County requested clear differentiation in pop-ups since some clusters fall near private service zones.
<b>County Integrated Plan areas</b>	County referenced approximately 35 areas.	UH has only replicated Corollo's methodology; will adopt county geographies once they are shareable.

#### Reclassification sources:

- Terminology and rubric changes are **county-driven**.
- Cluster geometries and density-based definitions are **UH-driven**, based on Corollo's published methodology.
- Plant capacity notes and CIP alignment will be incorporated jointly.

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## 5. Cross-County / Coordination Issues

- County stressed again that Corollo's final data is essential for accuracy, and that WRRC should adopt their 34 areas once available to avoid major future updates.
  - Achieving consistency in terminology across counties was seen as important for statewide credibility.
  - County reiterated the challenge of public-facing tools being released before their Integrated Plan, which contains more detailed prioritization and cost information.
  - UH confirmed that legislative deadlines require interim release, but updates will continue through June 2026.
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## 6. Next Actions

### UH WRRC Team

- Revise category definitions, especially “Committed” and “Planned,” and clarify the meaning of “Feasible.”
- Add plant capacity notes, once county supplies data.
- Update pop-ups to include contextual explanations, cost implications, and explicit disclaimers.
- Integrate county Integrated Plan geographies once they are available.
- Provide dashboard link, spreadsheets, and slides to county for quality control.
- Prepare refined map and definitions for briefing with Rep. Lowen and Speaker Nakamura on Oct 17.

### Hawai‘i County

- Review all 17 clusters using the dashboard and provide corrections, including discrepancies with the Integrated Plan.
- Provide plant capacity data in MGD.
- Clarify whether the 34 Corollo areas can be shared or described in more detail.
- Supply any additional information needed to avoid misleading homeowners.

### Carollo Engineers (via UH follow-up meeting)

- Validate cluster counts and ensure UH’s 17 areas correspond to the 34-area county list through methodology or shared geographies.
- Provide cost estimates once released.

### Legislators (informational)

- UH will supply a draft internal dashboard on Oct 17 for planning a larger Lawmakers Learn session later in the fall or early 2026.
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## Core Takeaways

County emphasized a sharp distinction between technical proximity and practical feasibility. Funding, plant capacity, permitting, CIP timing, and legal obligations deeply shape the true status of each area.

County requested substantial refinements to category definitions to avoid misleading homeowners and creating false expectations during their own Integrated Plan rollout.

UH agreed to revise terminology, add disclaimers, and integrate county feedback prior to the

October 17 legislative briefing.

The meeting reinforced the need for alignment with Corollo's forthcoming 34 project areas to prevent confusion across future updates.

Both parties recognized that the HCPT Overlay is an iterative planning tool, intended to evolve as new county data and priorities become available.