Kaua‘i County Wastewater Coordination Meeting Summary

Date/Context

Virtual coordination meeting between the UH WRRC HCPT Overlay Team (Chris, Amy, Robert) and Kaua‘i County Wastewater Division (Donald, Barrett; additional county staff listening).
Meeting held to review preliminary cesspool clusters and status classifications in the Kaua‘i version of the HCPT Sewer Expansion Overlay.
The discussion occurred in the broader context of Act 217 requirements and parallel work by Carollo Engineers on county wastewater plans.

Purpose

Collect county feedback on:
• accuracy of cesspool clusters and assigned status categories
• suitability of the four planning status labels
• correct identification of county versus private system service areas
• capacity constraints and technical barriers that affect proximity-based classification
• terminology concerns related to the use of “feasible”

Key Narratives and Findings

1. Project Scope and Goals

The UH HCPT Overlay is an Act 217 deliverable that maps opportunities for centralized wastewater expansion across all counties.
The Kaua‘i tool aligns with Carollo’s statewide wastewater assessments, particularly their use of density criteria, proximity thresholds, and classification of centralized versus decentralized service.
UH intends to publish a public-facing version of this data through the HCPT web application and produce a final report by June 2026.
Carollo’s work continues into the following year, so UH will maintain a living update structure to incorporate their final costs and project polygons once released.

2. Data Coordination

• UH updated the cesspool inventory using county billing data and correction lists provided by Kauaʻi Wastewater.
• Clusters are defined as areas with at least 50 cesspools within 0.125 miles, matching Carollo's threshold.
• Proximity to existing sewer infrastructure is measured as within 2 miles of county or private laterals or mains, again mirroring Carollo's method.
• County repeatedly emphasized that proximity alone is insufficient, because:

- many clusters lie near systems that lack spare capacity
- topographic barriers make apparent proximity misleading
- sea level rise restrictions may prevent service even where infrastructure exists
  • County asked that UH reflect capacity limitations wherever known.
  • UH requested updated or more refined sewer service area polygons; county indicated that mains and laterals already supplied may be the best available delineation.
  • County confirmed several areas already sewered that still appear as cesspool clusters in the UH inventory; UH will remove these.

3. Terminology and Communication

County expressed sustained concern about the term "feasible," because it creates a public expectation that a project might occur.
They stressed that many areas are only *proximally possible* and not feasible in the economic or permitting sense.
County prefers:
• "technically possible,"
• "proximal,"
• or classification that signals geographic potential rather than commitment or priority.
County noted that equal labeling of disparate areas would lead residents to pressure the county unjustifiably.
UH clarified that feasibility here refers solely to proximity to existing systems, consistent with Carollo's initial guidance, and does not reflect plant capacity, elevation barriers, shoreline setbacks, or cost.
County encouraged UH to add clarifying notes and disclaimers.

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4. County / Project Specific Details

Area / Project	Status / Notes	Cost / Constraints
Anahola	UH marked as feasible based on a 2004 DHHL plan.	County states this is not within county sewer reach; DHHL-based, not county. Reclassify to infeasible for county connection.
Anahola Homestead and Upper Cluster	UH marked as technically feasible.	County states terrain barrier (steep grade along Kūhiō Highway corridor). Extremely expensive; would require separate regional plant. County unlikely to fund.
Coastal Rectangle near Wailua / Lydgate vicinity	UH marked A4.	County Planning strongly opposes continued service or entitlements due to sea level rise. Permitting unlikely.
Līhu‘e – Kapule area (right-side small cluster)	Only cluster fully in county service area.	County has capacity for this portion. Correct classification.
Līhu‘e – Western clusters near Puhi	UH marked as county-feasible.	County: these lie within Puhi Water (private system) and are separated by a stream. Must be reclassified as private system.
Kōloa	Mostly private system area.	UH map aligns; no changes requested.
Numila / Lima Ola development areas	UH polygons misaligned with actual service. Some parcels already sewered; others part of future development with no current capacity.	County reports limited to no capacity for expansions. A&B parcels expected to grow; revise polygons.
DHHL Makai and Mauka areas (Kōloa vicinity)	UH marked as technically feasible.	County confirms partial service but lacks capacity for additional DHHL phases. Add capacity constraints to notes.
Kekaha Triangle (113 homes)	Missing from UH cluster inventory due to incomplete county data.	County identifies this as one of the highest priority low hanging fruit areas. UH will add as A4 and remove erroneous points. Current plant lacks capacity and sits in tsunami zone; relocation may be required.

Waimea vicinity	UH marked as technically feasible.	County confirms no capacity in existing Waimea WWTP; plant likely must be relocated inland. Extremely costly. Note as technically possible but capacity-limited.
Hanalei area	UH marked feasible for private system due to proximity.	County notes significant groundwater and shoreline constraints. UH acknowledges lack of individual system feasibility assessment in this phase.
Kelia	Not in UH clusters.	County confirms expensive, no plans; do not include as a cluster.

Reclassification sources:
- Reclassifications above are **county-driven** unless otherwise indicated.
- UH-driven changes involve correction of inventory errors and cluster geometry.
- Joint discussions informed terminology shifts and placement of capacity notes.

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5. Cross-County / Coordination Issues

- Kauaʻi highlights the need for plant capacity information across all counties, since proximity alone is misleading.
- Private system boundaries are critical on Kauaʻi and need explicit integration into the HCPT Overlay; this differs from counties where private systems are rare.
- Carollo's timeline complicates full alignment, because their final costs will not be released for approximately one year; UH must publish interim results before then.
- County urged UH to adopt terminology and disclaimers consistent across counties to prevent misinterpretation.
- Discussion underscored the political sensitivity of labeling areas "feasible," since legislative interest may rise where counties have little chance of delivering projects.

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6. Next Actions

UH WRRC Team

- Update clusters based on county corrections, including removal of sewered areas and addition of missing clusters (notably the Kekaha triangle).
- Reclassify clusters in Anahola, Puhi, and DHHL areas as directed.

• Add capacity notes, shoreline constraints, and planning issues to each cluster's detail field.
• Request refined sewer service area data if available.
• Adjust terminology in legend and pop-up reports to avoid implying guaranteed feasibility.
• Continue aligning density and proximity logic with Carollo.

Kaua'i County

• Provide clarifications on service areas, particularly for Numila, Līhu'e, and DHHL zones.
• Consider sharing plant capacity data for integration.
• Review UH's updated spreadsheet and dashboard.

Carollo (via UH scheduled meeting)

• Validate density and proximity frameworks.
• Confirm cost estimates and final cluster boundaries once available.

Legislators (Informational)

• None assigned during this meeting, but county expects legislators to be informed of capacity and cost barriers to avoid misinterpretation of "feasible" designations.

Core Takeaways

Kaua'i County stressed that proximity-based feasibility must not be interpreted as true feasibility, because plant capacity, shoreline setbacks, elevation barriers, and extremely high costs could render many clusters impractical.

County requested multiple reclassifications, most of which stem from private system boundaries or technical constraints not visible in UH's proximity-based map.

UH will incorporate capacity notes and refine cluster geometries, while keeping the overall classification system aligned with Carollo's framework.

Both parties recognized that more detailed and accurate cluster boundaries will emerge over time once cost data and facility capacities are integrated.

The meeting reinforced the importance of careful terminology and transparent disclaimers to prevent public or legislative misinterpretation.