

## OUR OPINION

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# Reject proposal for vacation 'cabins' above Hawaii Kai

### THE ISSUE

A developer has revised a plan for building vacation structures in a hillside above Hawaii Kai Golf Course.

A developer's second attempt to win approval of a plan to build vacation cabins on a barren hillside overlooking the Hawaii Kai Golf Course was again resoundingly opposed this week by nearby residents concerned about preservation and congestion. The developer would be wise to abandon the idea of developing preservation land.

More than 200 people packed in a Hawaii Kai elementary school were nearly unanimous Tuesday night in a show of hands rejecting the proposal by developer QRM LLC. The city rejected the developer's proposal in 2006 because it failed to meet requirements under the land's preservation zoning.

The revised proposal calls for 83 cabins in Mauuwai Valley, one of two parcels from QRM's initial proposal, which included 181 cabins there and land mauka of Queen's Rise.

However, Greg Knudsen, chairman of the Hawaii Kai Neighborhood Board, said the plans show structures that look like two-story townhouses, along with tennis courts, swimming pools and clubhouses. Rep. Gene Ward (R, Hawaii Kai) said a single cabin would be one too many.

Vacation cabins are permitted on preservation land only as an "accessory use." The initial plan was rejected because the opportunities to hike, bike, climb, swim, play tennis, golf, fish, snorkel and scuba-dive appeared "accessory to the vacation cabins," said Henry Eng, director of the city Department of Planning and Permitting. He said QRM would have to show that the cabins are secondary to those activities.

The rules also require the developer to address neighborhood concerns, provide details about the targeted market, length of guest stays, ownership, operation and traffic information and show that it would not change the character of the surrounding area. This week's hearing before the neighborhood board satisfied a requirement enacted by the City Council after the 2006 decision.

The neighborhood board voted unanimously in 2006 against the proposal, and its scaling back does not come close to addressing the concerns. ARM attorney William McCorriston promised that the Queen's Rise parcel would be given to conservation organizations, but that offer failed to reduce the opposition.

The issue is preceded by successful opposition in the 1980s to proposals to construct condominiums at Queen's Beach and a hotel near Sandy Beach. The neighborhood board will vote on Jan. 29, but its decision will be advisory and not binding on the city. However, McCorriston and his client should realize that any proposal to build tourism housing in the area will be rejected.