

Hui Māla 'Ai

Connecting Food Gardens Across Hawai'i

Convening #29, July 30th 2026



Hawaiian Council, Kapolei

Agenda

- 9:15am – Coffee, light breakfast, sign-in
- 9:30am – Opening circle and introductions
- 9:45am – Work in the mala
- 10:30am to 11:45am – Strategic Planning Session “5 Goals in 5 Years”
 - Another round of introductions
 - Background
 - Introducing the goals that Hui Māla ‘Ai aims to accomplish over next 5 years
 - Individual Ranking Activity
 - Conversation Cafe
 - Share back
- 11:45am to 12:00pm – Member Updates & Closing

Introductions (again!)

Please share your name and what brought you to Hui Māla 'Ai or this convening today.



CNHA garden 4/12/24



Ho'ōla 'Āina Pilipili 4/25/25



Ka Papa Lo'i O Kānewai 9/6/24



UGC Vermiculture Class 8/9/25



Punchbowl Housing Garden 12/5/24



Reminder to get a group photo!

Hui Māla 'Ai Strategic Planning Process

Background - Where We've Been

- National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program, technical assistance
- Understanding collective impact
- Building a common understanding of the problem
- Brainstorming possible solutions
- Leadership Team developed preliminary draft with 5 goals in 5 years.



Core Components of Collective Impact

1. **Common Agenda** - All participants have a shared vision for change, including a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions.

2. **Backbone Infrastructure** - Dedicated staff and strong leaders who possess specific skills to serve as the backbone for the entire initiative and coordinate participating organizations and agencies

3. **Mutually Reinforcing Activities** - The extent to which, and in what ways, are partners' activities differentiated, while still coordinated through a mutually reinforcing plan of action?

4. **Shared Measurement System (SMS)** - Collecting data and measuring results consistently across all participants to ensure that efforts remain aligned and participants hold each other accountable.

5. **Continuous Communication** - Consistent and open communication is needed across the many players and among external stakeholders to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation.

Group 1 (Rufino, Dana, Anya, Heejung, Kyrsten)

Challenges & Barriers to Increasing Access to Food Gardens

- resources
 - database / information
 - waiting list
 - limited
 - network / relationships
 - high learning curve / mitigation
 - soil quality
 - water quality / source
 - climate zones
 - pests
 - time / capacity for engagement
 - leadership
 - paid not just volunteers
 - succession plan
 - safety / security
 - respect for space / lack of pilina / kuleana / aloha
 - vandalism
 - trespassing
 - loitering
 - culture / language
 - all indigenous
 - on a human level plan forward
- \$ *overarching absence of indigenous practices/knowledge in entire food system
- ITEK: Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge
- “ITEK” Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge
- move karaka

Solutions

- * build pilina (relationship/woven) *
 - transparency / share resources (data)
 - trust → partner / commit
 - (time / prioritize w/ balance ? respect
 - → show up / consistent / honest / realistic
 - “big picture” mindset
- resources
 - funding
 - collaborative efforts / invest
 - public / private partnerships
 - policy
 - ITEK
 - creating common language & foundation
 - public initiatives / collective goals
 - “30 by 30”
 - CNHA 500 bundles/month w/in 1 year
- training / education at all levels of the food system
 - producer
 - consumer / buyers
 - farmer
 - nutritionists
 - chefs

Group 2 (Jason, Cyrus, Shannon, Jesse)

Challenges

- theft @ Makiki community garden (food, tools)
balancing access w/ security
houseless nearby - showering, etc.
- ↑ ^{access +} relationships w/ Early Child Education providers
 - buses are expensive ^{lots of} ~~places~~ ^{not ECE friendly (0-5 yrs)}
 - ECE includes wide range of contents
 - difficulty of partnering w/ DOE or others
- Lack of mulch @ community gardens b/c of CRB
- can't do food waste compost @ com gardens
b/c rats. Permits required?
maybe not?
- lack of space/land
- cultural barrier in DPR - resistance to planting projects in parks
- ensuring right people in place to ensure long-term sustainability. small projects especially require dedicated people
- creating welcoming env. @ more public gardens

- owners of land (state, city, etc) not allowing access

- ↑ control of common spaces
- difficulty of ^{balancing w/} democracy

- involvement of facilities/custodial workers varies (e.g. at schools, etc)

- DOE - huge opportunity re: compost, food waste but no systemic effort for compost + mulch

- economics of hauling contracts

- different challenges for diff situations

- individuals - com gardens
- collective - Ho. U. in m.

Solutions

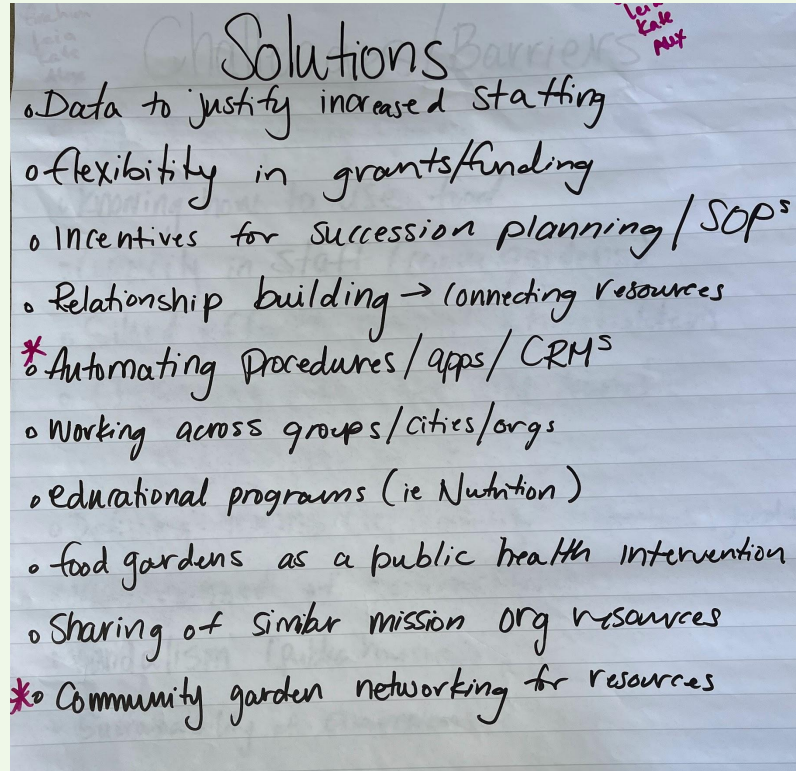
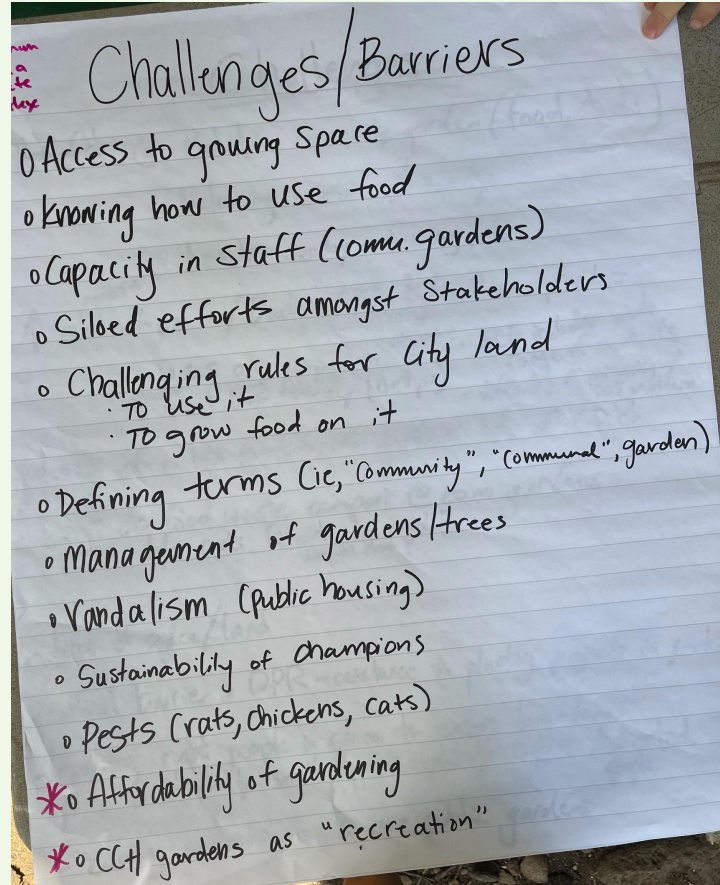
community gardens - think of houseless as a resource - build relationships

- create a culture of sharing that values abundance. Abundance mindset
- support services for houseless - access to green space
 - aina is part of mental health healing
- com. gardens for m. health

social infrastructure for long-term sustainability

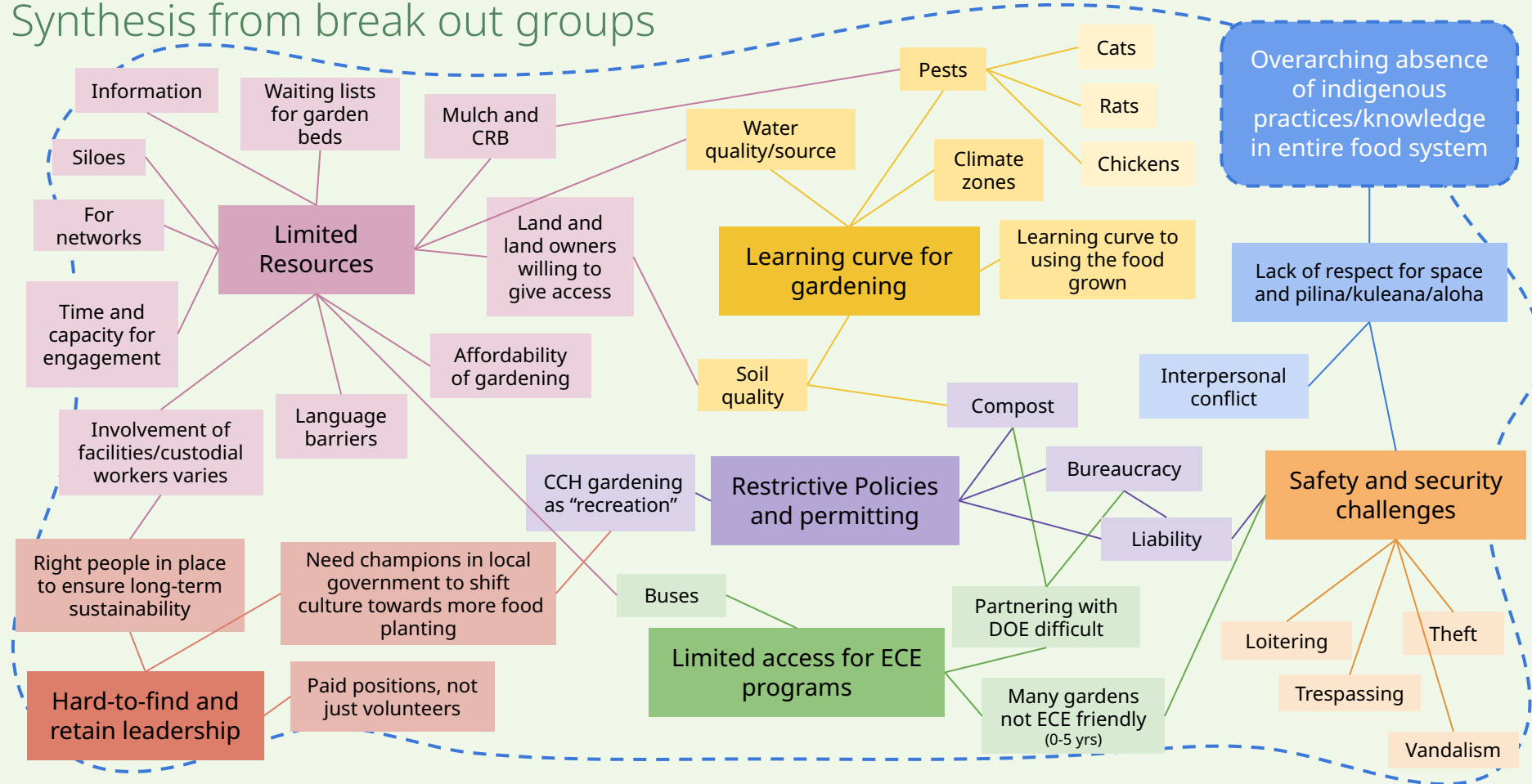
- building programming around the garden (e.g. ECE, students, tutoring, etc)
- incorporate it into workforce development
- gov't decision-makers disconnected. seeing admin out in gardens more participate in meetings held outside in gardens. provides inspiration.
- incentivizing the incorporation of gardens into programming through contracts
- encourage more guerrilla gardening. just do it!

Group 3 (Alex, Kate, Leigh Ann, Ram)



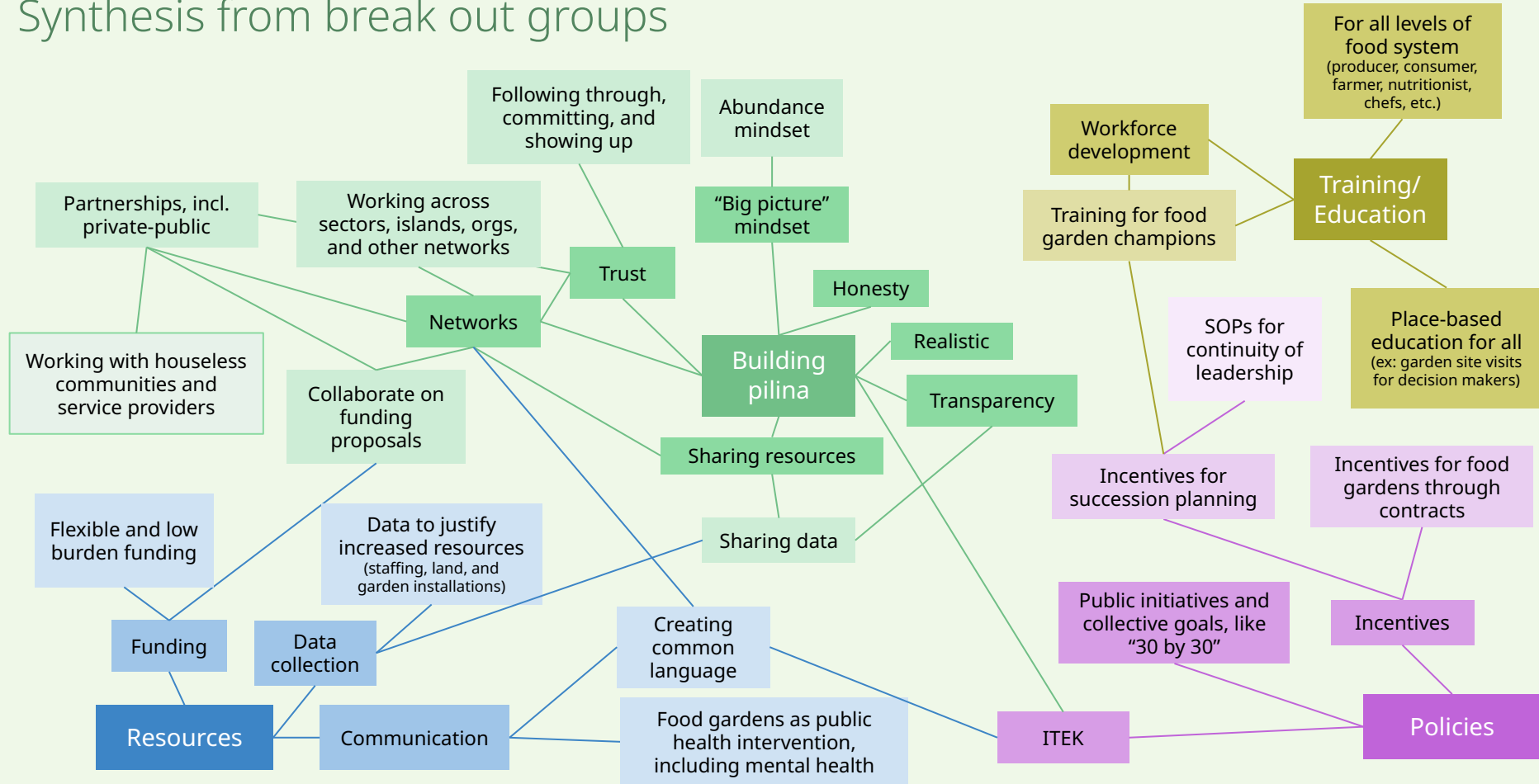
Challenges and barriers to increasing access to food gardens

Synthesis from break out groups



Solutions to these challenges and barriers

Synthesis from break out groups



Hui Māla ‘Ai Strategic Planning Process

Background - Where We’ve Been

DRAFT

Values

Aloha ‘Āina *Love for the land*

Love, respect, and responsibility for the land as a source of life, identity, and future wellbeing.

Pono *Justice & balance*

Commitment to justice, balance, and equitable access for all communities.

Laulima *Collective action*

Collective action and collaboration that expands access to locally grown food.

Pilina *Relationship building*

Nurturing strong connections among people, place, and knowledge systems.

Guiding Principle

‘Ike Kūpuna

‘Ike Kūpuna embodies the everlasting, reciprocal relationship between humans and our natural environment.

- We care for the water, from source. (Mālama Wai)
- We care for the land which feeds. (Mālama ‘Āina)
- We care for the ocean where we travel and harvest. (Mālama Kai)
- We care for our community. (Mālama Kaiāulu)

Vision

A Hawai‘i where everyone has access to learn about, grow, and share local food.

Mission

Hui Māla ‘Ai increases access to sustainable food gardens across Hawai‘i by cultivating knowledge, resources, and relationships.

Hui Māla 'Ai Strategic Planning Process

Background - Where We're Going

- Today's session - check our drafted goals against the needs of the membership (online engagement option for those not present will also be provided)
- Integrate feedback into new draft
- Aiming for late fall share out with the broader network for comments
- Aiming for adoption by end of the year

Hui Māla 'Ai Strategic Planning Process

5 Goals in 5 Years



GOAL 1. Create more food gardening opportunities

Outcomes:

- More residents have access to places to grow food, including indigenous and kūpuna crops, in their own communities.
- A working list of decision-makers for public, private, and in-between spaces (workplaces, housing developments, churches) exists, and those decision-makers are asked "if no can, how can?" and are themselves drawn into Hui Māla 'Ai.
- A clear, published process exists for requesting and activating underutilized land for a food garden, including provisions for growing kūpuna crops, as part of the Guide to Creating a Community Garden in Hawai'i (see Goal 3).
- More gardens exist, more food is grown locally, and more residents are growing, learning to grow, and sharing food with their community.
- People passionate about this work are connected to each other, and awareness of Hui Māla 'Ai grows. People know they can come to Hui Māla 'Ai whether they need space to garden or have space to offer.

Hui Māla 'Ai Strategic Planning Process

5 Goals in 5 Years



GOAL 2. Be a funding source for small-scale community-based food growers

Outcomes:

- [TBD]# small-scale growers have received [TBD]\$ in funding through Hui Māla 'Ai's efforts.
- [TBD]# gardens, growers, or small farms have been sustained, created, or expanded through Hui Māla 'Ai funding.
- Growers know to come to Hui Māla 'Ai for funding, and Hui Māla 'Ai can report what share of requests it is able to fulfill.
- Hui Māla 'Ai has secured or applied for [TBD]\$ in larger institutional or government grants, diversifying beyond a single funding source.

Hui Māla 'Ai Strategic Planning Process

5 Goals in 5 Years



GOAL 3. Provide technical support and communication

Outcomes:

- The Guide to Creating a Community Garden in Hawai'i is finished, published, and accessible — including how to navigate red tape and barriers, especially on public land.
- A central library of technical assistance resources and templates (bylaws, plot agreements, MOUs) that garden leaders across islands can adapt.
- A peer-to-peer technical assistance network connecting experienced garden leaders with new ones.
- Garden leaders report greater confidence and capacity to start and sustain a garden.

Hui Māla 'Ai Strategic Planning Process

5 Goals in 5 Years



GOAL 4. Host gatherings and hands-on learning

Outcomes:

- An annual multi-island gathering rotates host island, strengthening statewide relationships and shared identity among growers.
- Monthly Zoom convenings continue as a reliable touchpoint, with a clear, predictable rhythm of which months focus on hands-on skill-building versus communication and networking.
- Increased peer-to-peer skill-sharing and adoption of practices across islands.

Hui Māla 'Ai Strategic Planning Process

5 Goals in 5 Years



GOAL 5. Champion state and county-level zoning and micro-agriculture policy

Outcomes:

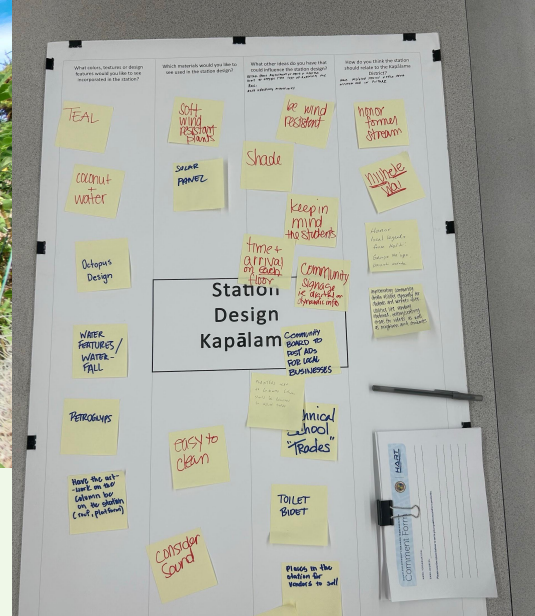
- Reduced permitting or zoning barriers for food gardens on non-agricultural land in at least one county.
- Hui Māla 'Ai is recognized by county planning departments as a resource and stakeholder voice on food-garden-related land use.
- Model zoning and policy language exists and is available for adaptation across counties.

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 - Conversation Cafe
 - **Round 1:** Each person shares their #1 priority goal and why
 - **Round 2:** Open conversation with "What have you experienced as a real need in your garden or community/organization that connects to these goals? What would it look like for the Hui to support that?"
 - **Round 3** (if time): "What's one thing you want to make sure gets back to the leadership team?"
 - Share back
- 11:45am to 12:00pm – Member Updates & Closing



Member Updates?





Closing & Baseline Survey

For new participants:

<https://forms.gle/KHE1TLUzGwRcusDp7>

Resources:

- Hui Māla 'Ai [website](#)
- [List of funding opportunities](#)

Next convening:

Office hour in mid-August, date and time TBD

