

Neal S. Blaisdell Center

MASTER PLAN

Public Workshop #1

Meeting Summary

February 10, 2015

6-8:30 pm

Blaisdell Center Hawaii Suites

I. Purpose

The purpose of the Public Workshop was to introduce the purpose and need for the Blaisdell Center Master Plan project and provide an opportunity for the general public to become engaged in the planning process by providing their perspectives on the project vision, goals, potential opportunities, policies, programs, and plans. The meeting was attended by over 165 members of the public.



Before the meeting began, attendees were shown a looping slideshow featuring experiences at Blaisdell Center to jog their memories, as well as images from the great performing art and entertainment venues around the world to incite inspiration. Mayor Kirk Caldwell provided the opening remarks to formally introduce the project to the community. The City introduced the project team—AECOM, WCIT Architecture, Auerbach, and Lincoln Center Global—and provided different ways the audience could engage in the planning process: 1. Comment cards were provided to all attendees to be filled out; and 2. Participants could also log on to <http://blaisdellcenter.mindmixer.com> to provide feedback during and after the workshop.

The event presentations (attached to this summary) and small group discussions were focused around the three themes of the past, present and future of the Neal S. Blaisdell Center.

II. The Past

Rob Iopa (WCIT Architecture) provided an overview on the past of Blaisdell Center by revisiting the history of Hawaii—how the islands came to be through Papa and Wakea, its foundation born through Haloanakalaukapalili and Haloa, and the kanaka who came to inhabit the land (aina). Mr. Iopa described the land division system of ahupua'a and the importance of water that shaped land uses in this area. The influences of the written word, which shaped storytelling, and the western influences that shaped Hawaii during the turn of the century were discussed, as was the evolution of Hawaii as a “melting pot” and an international place during the 20th century that exacerbated a decline in Hawaiian identity. During the peak of this international period following the statehood, Blaisdell Center was

constructed. In more recent history, there has been a resurgence of Hawaiian culture, as well as an appreciation of the other cultures that make Hawaii diverse and unique.

Following the presentation, audience members participated in a group activity to answer the question: *What is your past experience at the Blaisdell Center?* Answers from the audience¹ showed just how diversely experiences at Blaisdell Center touched on the lives of Oahu residents. Experiences ranged from graduations to Broadway shows, concerts, Rainbow Classic basketball games, Boy Scouts Makahiki games, Kamehameha Schools Song Contests, military events, cultural events, expos, and so much more.

On the cards that were distributed at the meeting, attendees were asked: *What is your most positive memory at Blaisdell Center?* Respondents noted that Blaisdell Center is where the public got to experience authentic local productions, local-scale fine arts performances, and national and global acts such as The Doors, The Lion King, and Cirque du Soleil. Blaisdell Center is where someone got to see Carlos Santana do a sound check in person. Many of us had the experience of going to Blaisdell Center for life's important memories such as graduations and supporting the hometown University of Hawaii basketball team.

People could also share their great memories online at <http://blaisdellcenter.mindmixer.com>. The responses on the site focus on a variety of concerts and Symphony and Broadway performances, as well as expos and the fish ponds. Overall, we go to Blaisdell to shop, share our talents, be entertained, learn, and just enjoy its calming grounds and photogenic architecture.

III. The Present

Tracy Kubota (City and County of Honolulu, Department of Enterprise Services, Deputy Director) presented an overview of the state of Blaisdell Center, an important community resource that receives over 800,000 visits every year. Blaisdell Center is unique in that it provides different types of facilities on a single campus in the heart of Honolulu. Not without challenges, Blaisdell Center has been experiencing expenses that exceed revenues generated. It is currently operating under an outdated model, and certain facilities are underutilized. Moreover, operating costs continue to mount on its aging facilities, and the struggles to keep up, while competing with newer facilities.

The audience was then asked to discuss in small groups: *What is your current experience at Blaisdell Center?*¹ The less than complete food services were noted, as well as the parking capacity, which tends to run out quickly. Participants fondly noted the calming landscaping, while pointing out the Center's outdated architecture. The absence of a "hangout" area by the concert hall, as well as a desire for Blaisdell Center to bring more shows—local and national production alike—was mentioned. It was clear that Blaisdell Center is a resource that the community loves and wants to improve.

IV. The Future

Kara Barnett (Lincoln Center Global) and Linda Cheu (AECOM) presented ideas for inspiration for the future of Blaisdell Center. Major strategies presented included the following:

- Create gathering places reflective of local context

¹ The answers drawn from the participants during the three questionings were varied and wide ranging, and the responses provided in the notes provide a small sample of the responses produced.

- Create spaces supporting local traditions and art forms
- Drive programming and financing through private and public partnerships
- Mix cultural, retail, entertainment, and recreation

Examples of successful arena revitalizations were featured, including the Ford Center, IN; Erie Insurance Arena, PA; Resch Center, MI; and Iowa Events Center, IA. The presentation then highlighted Lincoln Center’s own redevelopment efforts—a former roadway fronting the Lincoln Center gave way to additional pedestrian space; a green rooftop was added onto a restaurant and is used for picnicking today; and the spaces outside of the ticketed venue are actively used by patrons and the general public alike.

After the presentation, the participants were provided with the following question: *What is your vision for Blaisdell Center?* There were many ideas generated by the public and they varied from management by a private entity (as opposed to continuing the City) to co-operative spaces shared by different arts communities, food truck events, big screens for outdoor performances, maintenance of the current iconic look, and elimination of particular facilities. Below are the most common themes for the future improvement of Blaisdell Center that were discussed among the small groups.

- Make Blaisdell Center a world-class destination
- Maintain a campus with multiple venues
- Provide more amenities: food concessions, restaurants, cafes, and shops
- Activate outdoor gathering spaces with plazas, events and activities
- Pursue private-public partnerships and revenue generating opportunities
- Balance new development with open space and iconic architecture
- Integrate the site’s rich history, including the natural spring, into its design and programming
- Curate thoughtful programming: big and small programs, local and national-scale productions alike
- Design energy efficient and sustainable facilities
- Connect to the surrounding areas: Kakaako, McKinley High School, Punchbowl, Capital District



On the cards that were provided, attendees also provided robust comments to the question: *What is your vision for Blaisdell Center (in three words or less).* Blaisdell Center is seen as a community asset that should continue to be retained. Participants expressed the desire to modernize the facility with better seating and parking, reception areas, and smarter facilities that are energy efficient. They also wanted more reasons to make visits to Blaisdell Center longer—more food offerings, new venues, and activated green spaces. Blaisdell Center should also be a place that acknowledges its location with respect to Hawaiian history and incorporate the mauka-to-makai principle—start with the existing spring on the property; be the connection between the history of the land and the present. Contrary to the high-rise development happening all around, Blaisdell Center should maintain low(er) building heights but consider redevelopment with high-profile and iconic architecture. Participants encouraged the City to experiment with different types of activities, such as the farmers market. They would like more offerings—local and

national alike, and perhaps extend the place of performance to the facility grounds outside of it—but do not make it too chaotic and loud. Strengthen the connection to the pedestrian activities in Makiki and Kakaako, but include more parking on-site. Make Blaisdell Center a truly world-class place.

The same question was asked online, and participants would like to see restoration of historic features related to Old Plantation (Ward Estate), major upgrades to the aging facilities, some preservation of historic structures, better parking facilities, more accessible venues, smaller events, expansion of events to outdoor areas, mixed-use development, a dedicated home for the Symphony, and rededication of the site as a war memorial.

V. Next Steps

The next steps for the City's consultant team are to gather information on the surrounding context and perform market research. Information gathered will be used to generate alternatives that factors in the input collected today. Alternatives will be presented at the next public meeting, which will be held later in the year.

Comments and feedback on the topics above, and more, will continue to be collected online throughout the duration of the planning process.

The Public Workshop adjourned at 8:30pm.

Neal S. Blaisdell Center
BLAISDELL CENTER MASTER PLAN

<http://blaisdellcenter.mindmixer.com>

Public Workshop February 2015

City of Miami WCI ARCHITECTURE AECOM Lincoln Center Global AUERBACH POLLOCK FRIEDLANDER

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Team Introductions
2. How to Get Engaged
3. Blaisdell Center: Past and Breakout #1
4. Blaisdell Center: Present and Breakout #2
5. Blaisdell Center: Future and Breakout #3
6. Next Steps/Wrap Up



Team Introduction:

Mayor, Kirk Caldwell
 George Atta, Director DPP
 Department of Enterprise Services
 Tracy Kubota / Megan Muramatsu

City and County of Honolulu
 Dept. of Planning and Permitting
 Kathy Sokugawa / Renee Espiau (PM)

<p><u>Urban Design/Planning:</u> Deanna Weber (PM) Kevin Butterbaugh (PD) Kristen Nishimura (Assist PM) Vaughan Davies Rob Iopa (WCIT) Sean Baumes (WCIT)</p>	<p><u>Economics:</u> Linda Cheu John Robinett David Stone Sarah Linford</p>	<p><u>Performing Arts :</u> Mike McMackin (Auerbach) Kara Medoff Barnett (LCG) Ron Austin (LCG) Claire Florian (LCG)</p>
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Mayor Kirk Caldwell's Opening Remarks











How to Get Engaged <http://blaisdellcenter.mindmixer.com>

Welcome to Blaisdell Center Master Plan.
Learn what's going on and share your ideas! The City & County of Honolulu is crafting a vision for the future of the Neal S. Blaisdell Center complex, exploring the possibility of new uses and gathering places.

Connect with Facebook or Sign Up with Email

Topics Join the discussion and add to current topics. [View All Topics](#)


Your BIG Ideas Posted 1:46 P. • 8 subscribers • 33 days remaining



What's your vision for the future of Blaisdell Center in 3 words or less?

My idea is:

[Learn More](#) [Share](#) [Continue](#)

Join the conversation: 

West & Associates Blaisdell Center Master Plan February 2015 6

Urban Land Institute (ULI) Rose Panel



Blaisdell Center: Past

This slide features a large aerial photograph of the Blaisdell Center building, overlaid with a teal color and a halftone dot pattern. The title "Blaisdell Center: Past" is centered in a bold, dark teal font. At the bottom, there are logos for Lincoln Center Global, AECOM, WCI ARCHITECTURE, and AUERBACH POLLOCK-FRIEDLANDER. To the right of the logos are three small inset images: a city skyline, a building facade with a large arched window, and a palm tree.

Blaisdell Center: Past



Papa & Wākea

Blaisdell Center: Past



Hāloanakakalaukapalili & Hāloa

Blaisdell Center: Past



Āina & Kanaka



Blaisdell Center: Past



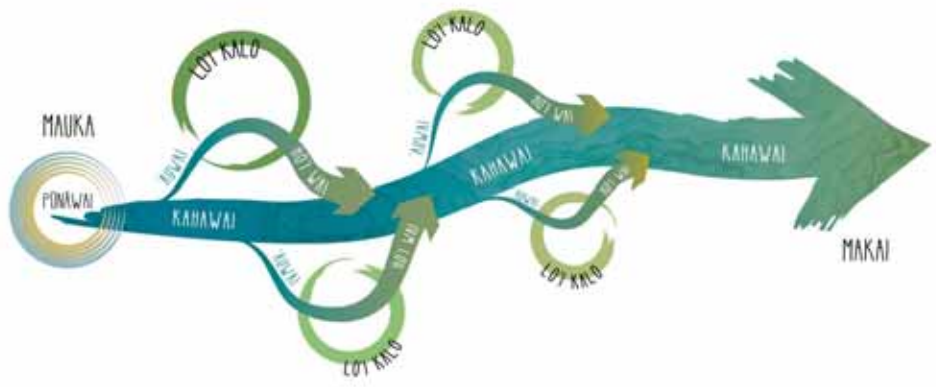
Ahupua'a Regions



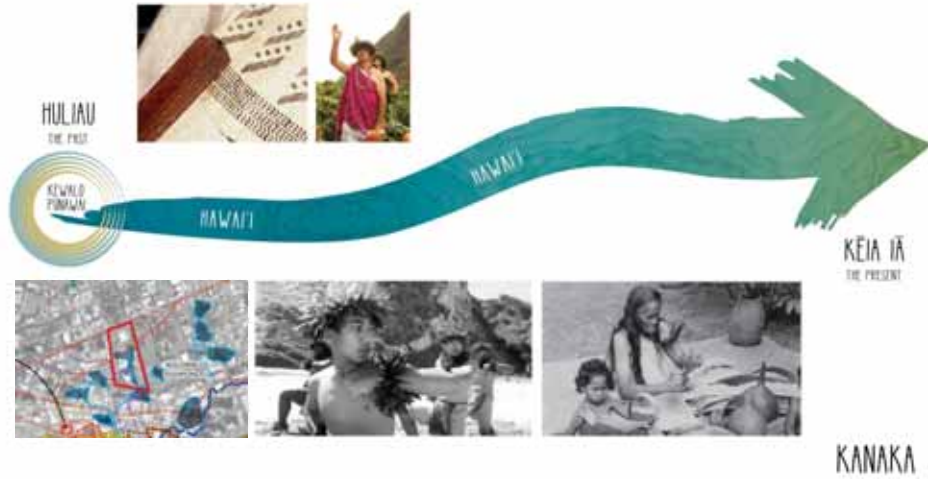
Blaisdell Center: Past



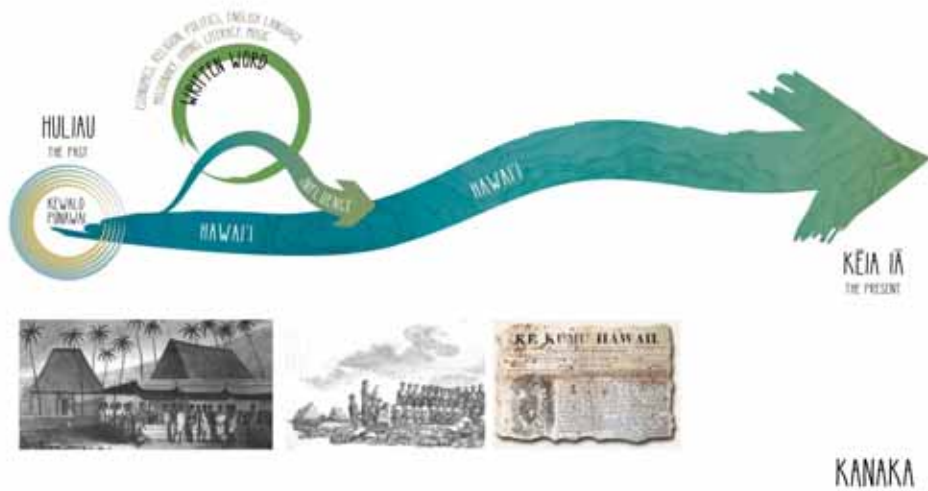
Blaisdell Center: Past



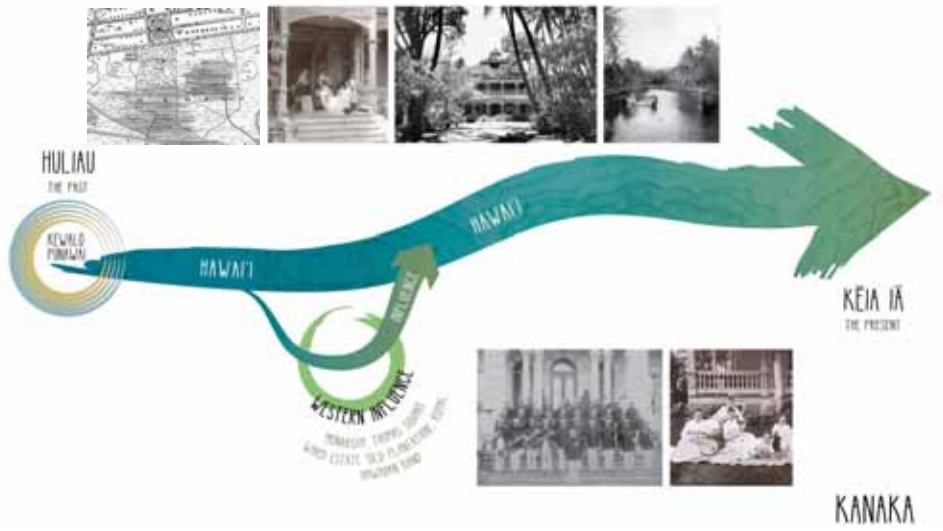
Blaisdell Center: Past



Blaisdell Center: Past



Blaisdell Center: Past



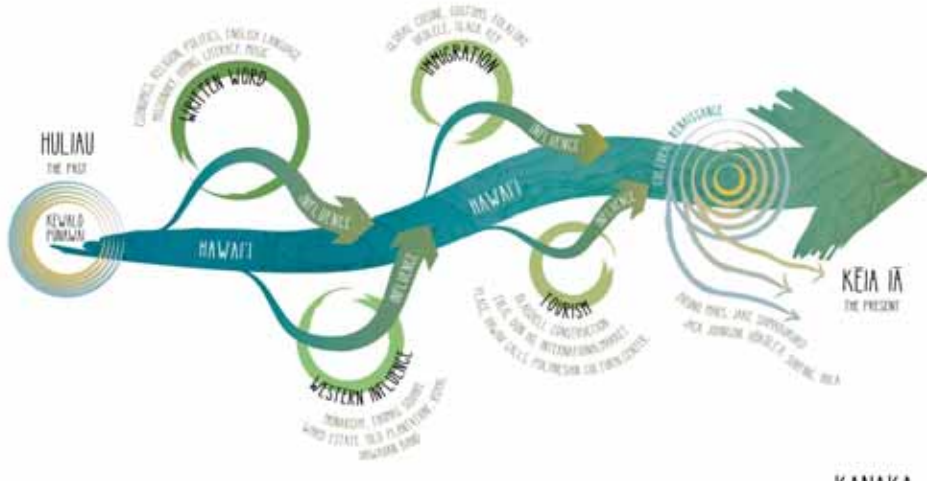
Blaisdell Center: Past



Blaisdell Center: Past



Blaisdell Center: Past





Blaisdell Center: Present



Strengths

- **Important community resource:**
 - Over 800,000 visits are made to the Blaisdell every year
 - Fifty year history of attracting a diverse range of residents
- **Unique venues:**
 - Capacity of facilities
 - Variety of facilities on one campus
- **Location:** In the heart of Honolulu



Challenges

- **Financial:** Expenses greater than revenue generated
- **Operational:**
 - Outdated operations model
 - Certain facilities are under utilized
- **Physical:** Aging facilities and local competing facilities

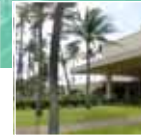
Breakout Group 2:

What is your current experience at the Blaisdell Center?



Lincoln Center Global

AUERBACH-POLLOCK-FRIEDLANDER
Architectural Architecture Interiors Planning and Design

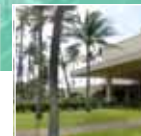


**Blaisdell Center: Future
*Ideas for Inspiration***



Lincoln Center Global

AUERBACH-POLLOCK-FRIEDLANDER
Architectural Architecture Interiors Planning and Design



Banyan Park, East West Center, Maui Arts & Cultural, Waikiki Shell

- Create gathering places reflective of local context



Night Market, Merrie Monarch, Graduations, & Maui Film Festival

- Create spaces supporting local traditions and art forms



Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA

- Drive development with private and public partnerships



Granville Island, Vancouver, British Columbia

- Mix of cultural, retail, entertainment, and recreation



Seattle Center, Seattle Washington



Arena Improvements

- Arenas around the countries face similar challenges...many are success stories now



Ford Center, Evansville, IN



Erie Insurance Arena, Erie, PA



Resch Center, Green Bay, MI



Iowa Events Center, Des Moines, IA

Integrated Entertainment Districts

- Successful entertainment venues can create lively districts



American Airline Center / Victory Park, Dallas, TX



LA Live, Los Angeles, CA



Arena District, Columbus, OH

Lincoln Center, New York, NY: Present



"The arts are not for the privileged few, but for the many. Their place is not on the periphery of daily life, but at its center. They should function not merely as another form of entertainment but, rather, should contribute significantly to our well being and happiness."

– John D. Rockefeller III, Lincoln Center's first President

Lincoln Center, New York, NY: Past



Lincoln Center, New York, NY: Present

- Increased ease of pedestrian access
- 21st century technology



Lincoln Center, New York, NY: Present

- Create welcoming public spaces, indoor and outdoor



Lincoln Center, New York, NY: Present

- Creative use of new and improved spaces for public performances



New World Center, Miami, FL

- Use technology to engage the public and new audiences



Southbank Centre, London, England

- Activate outdoor space around the clock



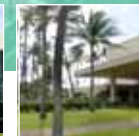
Harpa Concert Hall and Conference Centre, Reykjavik, Iceland

- Master plan for connectivity and revitalize urban areas



Breakout Group 3:

*What is your vision of the future
at the Blaisdell Center?*





Blaisdell Center: Next Steps/Wrap Up
<http://BlaisdellCenter.mindmixer.com>



  **AECOM** Lincoln Center Global
 AUERBACH POLLOCK-FRIEDLANDER
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