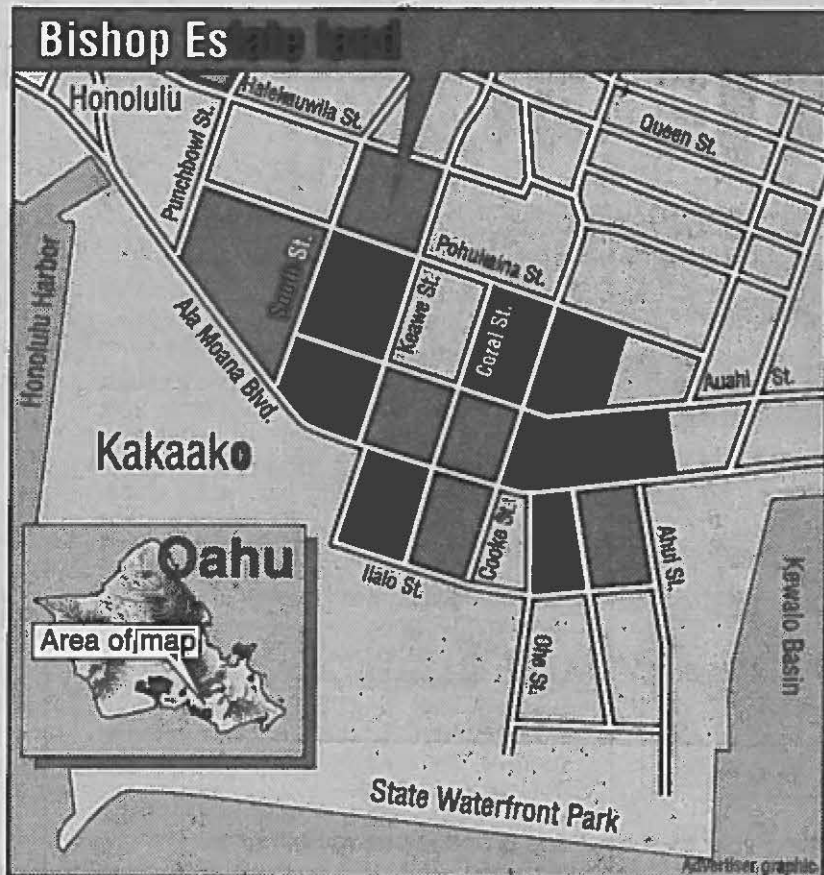


Neil Hannahs
"We want to build a community"



Kakaako

Bishop Estate gets approval for mid-range residential projects

By Darren Pai
Advertiser Staff Writer

"Middle class" has not been a phrase associated lately with the state-guided redevelopment of Kakaako, criticized by some as too pricey.

But the Bishop Estate yesterday said a major thrust of future development of its Kakaako properties is for mid-priced housing.

The state Hawaii Community Development Authority yesterday approved the Bishop Estate's master plan to build a 54-acre "urban village" in Kakaako.

The 50-year plan calls for developing hundreds of condominiums priced between \$250,000 and \$350,000, along with retail and commercial uses.

"We want to build a community, with middle-class housing as our base," said Neil Hannahs, Bishop Estate's Kakaako improvement manager.

Hannahs said a majority of

the 2,700 residential units would be in the aforementioned price range.

With upscale icons such as Restaurant Row and the Waterfront Towers condominiums, the Kakaako redevelopment effort has been knocked by affordable-housing advocates as having lost sight of its goal: to build a middle-class neighborhood near downtown.

The estate's focus on mid-priced housing reflects both the authority's desire to serve the local community and a softer real estate market, said Eric Masutomi, director of planning for the authority.

"Bishop Estate is just responding to the market that's there," Masutomi said. He called high-priced developments such as Waterfront Towers and Restaurant Row "an anomaly" in the greater scheme for Kakaako.

"Those were the result of the Japanese 'bubble' in Hawaii's economy in the late '80s," he

said. "The perception that Kakaako is a high-priced area is inaccurate."

Hannahs said the estate wants to avoid building only high-end condominiums, hoping instead to reach all economic classes.

Auahi Street would become the centerpiece of the area — an "urban gathering place" — featuring shops and restaurants, Hannahs said. Retail space would be devoted to "community-centered" businesses such as drugstores, dry cleaning, possibly even a supermarket, he said.

Hannahs said the estate will begin with residential development on the ewa end of its parcel, near Restaurant Row.

No construction dates have been set. Hannahs said the project's timetable will be dictated by the ebb and flow of the state's economy. Commercial office space will be built only when the economy is strong enough to support it, he said.