

State officials envision tech park at Kalaeloa

TECHNOLOGY

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Seawater could replace tap water at Kalaeloa, where redevelopment plans include a possible second site for the Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawaii Authority.

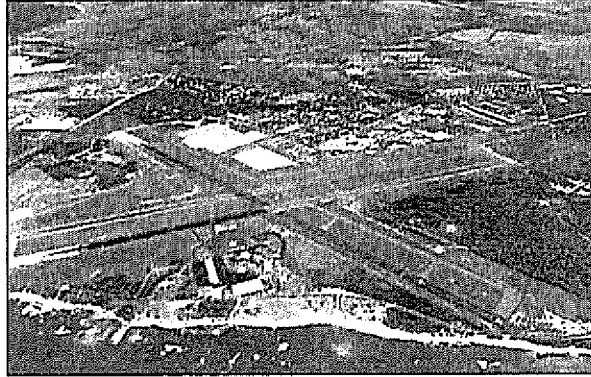
The Hawaii Community Development Authority, which is in charge of redeveloping the former Barbers Point Naval Air Station, says a technology park is among the options for the approximately 1,500 acres available for development on the Leeward side of Oahu near Kapolei.

HCDA officials recently discussed with representatives from both NELHA and the High Technology Development Corporation the possibility of setting aside space at Kalaeloa for a tech park. HCDA, NELHA and HTDC are all agencies attached to the state Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

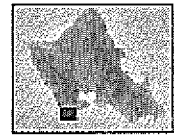
"We're really trying to look at as many different kinds of technologies or development opportunities that could sit out there," said Stanton Enomoto, HCDA's director of planning and development for Kalaeloa.

NELHA's only campus is just south of Kona International Airport on the Big Island. Among the 870-acre science and technology park's claims to fame is that it supplies tenants with seawater, both from the surface and from 2,000 and 3,000 feet below the surface.

While a second NELHA site on Oahu



Kalaeloa, Oahu



Part of the former Barbers Point Naval Air Station could become home to a technology park.

PHOTO COURTESY: HAWAII
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

would almost certainly provide seawater, whether or not it would provide the deep seawater that NELHA is known for remains to be seen.

Many technical and financial hurdles must be overcome before any plans can move forward. For example, NELHA's current location is ideal to draw deep seawater because a steep drop-off into the ocean allows deep seawater pipes to easily reach depths of 2,000 and 3,000 feet. No such drop-off exists at Kalaeloa.

In addition, the amount of land available at Kalaeloa is uncertain. When the 3,700-acre Barber's Point Naval Air Station was closed in 1999, a large amount of the land was given to a hodgepodge of federal, state and county agencies while other parts were set aside for entitlements. Approximately 1,500 acres are either owned by or have been allocated to the City and

County of Honolulu, the state Department of Hawaiian Homelands and the U.S. Navy.

How large any tech park would be depends on who is willing to provide the land. HTDC and HCDA officials have discussed the possibility of a 50- to 100-acre tech park on land the Navy has said it is willing to sell.

Another issue is whether there is demand for a NELHA site on Oahu. The Kona location sits about half occupied, but HTDC Vice Chairman Jay Fidell said he believes a second campus would work and is in discussions with NELHA officials on the project.

"The general recipe that NELHA follows, seems to me, would be a good concept at Kalaeloa," he said. "I think it's a great idea and in the next few months, you know, we may see it flower."

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