In 2012, 30 acres of land makai of Ala Moana Boulevard in Kakaʻako were transferred from the State of Hawai‘i to the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) as a settlement for past-due Public Land trust revenue debt of $200 million for its use of ceded lands.

This landmark settlement represented the end of one of the longest-running disputes related to the State of Hawai‘i’s use of the Native Hawaiian people’s ancestral lands.

Spread across 10 parcels, the Kakaʻako lands are 14 percent of the total land area (221 acres) that makes up Kakaʻako Makai.

In late 2022, these lands were named Hakuone, which represents the history and cultural significance of the area.

Kuilei Consulting, the Native Hawaiian led in-house developer consultant for OHA, is actively working with the Native Hawaiian community, the public, and real estate professionals to develop an inclusive master plan for Hakuone that will be finalized in 2023.

The Hakuone parcels are currently restricted to retail and commercial uses. OHA is working to lift a 2006 prohibition by the State Legislature that bans residential housing on these lands.

Without a repeal of this prohibition, OHA will not be able to generate revenues consistent with a $200 million investment, which assumed a 400-foot building height limit for select parcels when appraised by the state at the time of the settlement.

OHA is supporting legislation in the 2023 session that will allow for the development of housing of up to 400 feet in height on three of the 10 Hakuone parcels, with a focus on kama‘aina needs for affordable and residential workforce units at various income levels.

The principles of self-determination and governance over Native Hawaiian lands have always been vital in best serving Hawai‘i.

The lands currently generate roughly $4.5 million in gross income and $3.2 million in net income. Twenty percent of gross profits go directly to fund OHA’s grants programs that support Native Hawaiians in areas such as education, housing, health and economic stability. Fifty percent of net profits help care for OHA’s legacy lands.

Once developed, Hakuone has the potential to generate millions of dollars in additional funds that will be put into community-based programs to directly benefit Native Hawaiians. A full spectrum of housing options in a thoughtful, mixed-use community will allow OHA to realize this goal. The development of Hakuone will also bring a broad long-term economic benefit to local businesses and workers.

By pursuing mission-driven collaborations with seasoned developers, OHA will be able to create various streams of revenue sources. Cohesive, pono and balanced multi-use developments will create a residential and working community complementing existing and planned development on the mauka side of Ala Moana Boulevard.

Hakuone will also support the development of a cultural marketplace that invests in intellectual capital, seeking possibilities of exploration and innovation in education, health and political leadership to establish Kaka‘ako Makai as a safe, accessible and sustainable modern Hawaiian landmark in Honolulu’s urban core.