

Hawai'i Interagency Council for Transit-Oriented Development
Minutes of Meeting No. 73
Friday, September 19, 2025
9:30 am

Office of Planning and Sustainable Development
235 South Beretania Street. 6th Floor
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813
and Via Videoconference

<https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/op/lud/01TODCMTG/20250919/2025-09-19TODCouncilMeeting.mp4>

Members/ Designees Present:	Mary Alice Evans, Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD), Co-Chair Dean Minakami, Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC), Co-Chair David DePonte, Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS) Nancy McPherson, Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) Heidi Hansen Smith, Department of Health (DOH) Ian Hirokawa, Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) Harold Alejandro, Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) Ryan Tam, Hawai'i Community Development Agency (HCDA) Benjamin Park, Hawai'i Public Housing Authority (HPHA) Michael Imanaka, Stadium Authority (SA) Michael Shibata, University of Hawai'i (UH) Representative Luke Evslin, House of Representatives Tim Streit, City and County of Honolulu (City) Shannon Arquitola, County of Hawai'i (COH) Jodi Higuchi Sayegusa, County of Kaua'i (COK) Scott Forsythe, County of Maui (COM) Cathy Camp, Central Pacific Bank, Business Representative Kevin Carney, Affordable Housing Connections LLC, Housing Advocate Ramona Mullahey, U.S. Housing & Urban Development, Honolulu Office (HUD) (Ex-officio)
Members/ Designees Excused:	Brooke Wilson, Office of the Governor (GOV) Keith Regan, Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS) Keith Hayashi, Department of Education (DOE) Ryan Yamane, Department of Human Services (DHS) Ed Sniffen, Department of Transportation (DOT) Senator Chris Lee, State Senate Laura Kodama, Castle and Cooke Homes, Developer Representative
Other Designees/ Alternates Present:	Seiji Ogawa, OPSD Kauano Batangan, Maui Metropolitan Planning Organization (Maui MPO)
TOD Council Staff:	Ruby Edwards, OPSD Carl Miura, OPSD Rachel Beasley, OPSD

1. **Call to Order**

Mary Alice Evans, Co-chair, called the meeting to order at 9:36 a.m.

2. **Introduction of Members**

Members and guests introduced themselves.

Evans welcomed Diana Setness to the TOD Council meeting. She recently joined OPSD as a housing analyst and will be working on the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Pathways to Removing Obstacles (PRO) to Housing grant.

3. **Review and Approval of Minutes of July 18, 2025 Meeting**

The July 18, 2025 TOD Council Meeting Minutes were approved as circulated.

4. **For Discussion & Action: Dissolution of Existing and Establishment of a New Permitted Interaction Group (PIG) to Update the State TOD Strategic Plan, Adding a New Member**

Dean Minakami explained that the Permitted Interaction Group (PIG) to update the State TOD Strategic Plan was formed at the July Council meeting to fulfill the requirements of Act 159 enacted this year. Act 159 calls for identifying TOD areas in each County to strengthen State–County coordination on projects and infrastructure investments. He noted that the current PIG membership did not include the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and the University of Hawai'i (UH), which have significant land holdings. He recommended adding DLNR and UH so that they could participate in the PIG's work.

(The meeting was interrupted at this point and was reconvened several minutes later.)

Minakami explained that the existing PIG needed to be dissolved and reformed with the expanded membership. Dean confirmed that Mary Alice Evans would continue to chair the PIG, with each County planning department serving as co-chair for its respective County group.

A motion was made by Tim Streitz and seconded by Scott Forsythe to dissolve the existing PIG and establish a new PIG with DLNR and UH as additional members. The motion was approved with no objections. OPSD staff will contact the newly reconstituted PIG members to coordinate next steps and schedule the first meeting.

5. **Informational Presentation: Hawai'i Housing Planning Study, Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC)**

Rebecca Soon, Ward Research

Minakami introduced Rebecca Soon of Ward Research to present the results of the 2024 Hawai'i Housing Planning Study (HHPS), a statewide analysis updated every five years since 1992 to assess housing needs. Soon explained that the study draws on 2022 Census data and 2023 demand survey data, with projections through 2027. She acknowledged contributions from County planning departments, Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL), and other agencies, and noted that Ward Research had assumed responsibility for completing the study in late 2024. The final report, published in 2025, highlights the scale of Hawai'i's housing crisis and provides key insights for planners and policymakers.

Soon summarized major findings, noting that Hawai'i will need 64,490 additional housing units by 2027, up from just over 50,000 estimated in the 2019 cycle. Methodological updates included accounting for pipeline projects already in progress and incorporating "swap space" units—vacant homes temporarily in transition between occupants. The report details unmet housing demand by County, tenure type (rental vs. ownership), and price segment, with the greatest shortages in affordable units for households earning below 80% of area median income. Some higher-income categories showed small surpluses, reflecting market mismatch rather than adequacy of supply.

The study also examined housing needs among specific populations, including Native Hawaiian beneficiaries, those on the DHHL waitlist, seniors, and individuals experiencing homelessness or fleeing domestic violence. Soon noted that these projections are likely conservative, particularly for vulnerable populations. Regionally, Hawai'i Island showed the greatest interest from DHHL applicants for relocation; Maui County had the highest percentage of severely cost-burdened households; and Kaua'i faced significant losses of housing stock to vacation rentals, eroding the effect of nearly equal number of new homes. Affordability is defined by a person or household spending less than 30% of their income on housing. The study also looked at "crowding" where multiple households live in a unit. In Hawai'i, even though the population is declining, the demand for housing is increasing. Household members want to move out and find their own affordable place to live.

She pointed out several factors impacting the gap over the last several years:

- County-level efforts to curb illegal vacation rentals appear to be making difference in closing the gap in housing stock. Between 2017 and 2022, the number of housing units went from vacant to occupied dropped by about 20%.
- There has been a spike in the number of units that have come online.
- Seasonal units drain supply: 35,884 are seasonal, up by 5.1% from 2017.
- Significant number of sales are out-of-state buyers (25%).
- New construction may not be addressing the local housing need.
- Active-duty military members and dependents make up 6% of the population but occupy 14% of O'ahu's rental units. Housing vouchers can be factor in overall affordability.

Transportation and affordability were also analyzed through a Housing & Transportation Index, which measures combined costs as a percentage of household income. The goal is to spend no more than 45% of household income on combined housing and transportation costs. Urban Honolulu is the lowest at 42% and Kailua had the highest at 62%. The report linked these findings to transit-oriented development opportunities, especially around Skyline rail service. Survey results indicated that nearly one-quarter of prospective movers to O'ahu would prefer to live near a rail station, with many willing to trade parking for lower rent, larger units, or secure bike parking. At least 1,100 units were identified as immediately in demand near rail, with larger long-term potential.

Soon concluded by emphasizing the importance of education on alternative housing models, such as shared equity and long-term leasehold, noting that survey respondents showed increased willingness to consider these options after learning more about them. Council members praised the study for providing robust analytics and helping guide future planning. Minakami commended Soon and her

team—who took on the project mid-way through—for completing the study and delivering a comprehensive report within the original timeline.

6. **Informational Presentation: Hawai'i State Department of Education (DOE) Employee Housing Survey**

Tammi Oyadamori-Chun, DOE

Tammy Oyadamori-Chun presented findings from the 2024 DOE Employee Housing Survey, conducted with nearly 10,000 respondents (a 43% response rate). The study showed that 35% of DOE employees are housing cost-burdened, with homeownership at 50% compared to 62% statewide, and that housing costs are a major driver of retention risk—41% of employees reported being likely to leave due to affordability challenges. Retention risks were highest among non-homeowners, those having part-time jobs, newer employees, those unable to live in their preferred zip code, and living in Maui County. While 77% of staff reported commute times under 30 minutes, interest in workforce housing was strong: 54% of respondents expressed interest in DOE rental housing, with preferences for in-unit kitchens, two or more bedrooms, and pet-friendly units. When the survey was conducted in 2024, a significant number of the Lahaina respondents were living in temporary housing.

Oyadamori-Chun explained that demand is particularly high among newer and cost-burdened staff, but noted a mismatch between employee housing preferences and hard-to-staff locations. About 22% of non-homeowners indicated plans to purchase a home within three years, suggesting the need for both rental and homeownership support. Employees were overwhelmingly likely to be retained if they were offered rental housing. She said DOE is getting ready to open the Lahaina Workforce Housing Project, with 47 units funded by CIP and disaster relief for completion in spring 2025 and noted other workforce housing initiatives on Maui targeting healthcare workers and educators. Oyadamori-Chun concluded that high housing costs remain a critical barrier to recruitment and retention. She emphasized the need to consider retention at the workplace (e.g. school), importance of interagency partnerships, and targeted housing strategies to sustain Hawai'i's education workforce.

Kiana Otsuka asked whether the DOE Employee Housing Survey showed if staff selected preferred zip codes near their current workplaces or farther away. She emphasized that this information could help the TOD Council align workforce housing with transportation options such as Skyline on O'ahu, bus routes, and rural transit, while also addressing teacher shortage areas. Oyadamori-Chun explained that while the survey gathered data on where employees live, work, and want to live, it did not connect preferred zip codes with work locations. They noted, however, that many employees wanted to move out of their current zip codes and that aligning housing with hard-to-staff, often rural schools remains a high priority for DOE.

7. **For Discussion & Action: Projects Proposed for Inclusion in the State TOD Strategic Plan**

a. **County of Kaua'i (COK), Department of Public Works, Līhu'e Facility Plan - Līhu'e Wastewater Treatment Plant and Collection System Improvements**

Jodi Higuchi Sayegusa and Donald Fujimoto provided a brief overview of the TOD area and project. Dustin Yamamoto presented on the Līhu'e Wastewater Treatment Plant and Collection System Improvements Project. They explained that the study will evaluate system capacity, condition, and future needs to support infill housing, cesspool conversions, and major new developments in Līhu'e. It is also aimed at supporting the Līhu'e Town Infill Development Project, which promotes denser, walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods with more

workforce housing and enhanced mobility and transit. With projected growth potentially more than doubling the system's load, the project will assess pipelines, pump stations, and treatment processes, while also exploring effluent reuse and sustainability options. The existing Līhu'e population is about 22,000 people. With the new developments coming on line such as DHHL's, it will increase the population by 34,000 people. He noted that the County also received a \$1.5 million HUD PRO Housing grant to support improvements to the Līhu'e wastewater treatment plant's aeration system.

b. County of Hawai'i (COH), Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD), 34 Rainbow Drive Affordable Housing

Neil Erickson described the 34 Rainbow Drive Project at the site of the old Hilo Memorial Hospital near Rainbow Falls. The 25-acre property has undergone master planning and environmental assessments, and OHCD has issued an RFP for renovation proposals. He described the area's history as a health services corridor and outlined plans to repurpose the site for housing, noting the potential for up to 300 multifamily units across two developable areas. Since this area is very close to Carvalho Park, it will be important to set up some type of connection for direct access. With utilities nearby and strong community input supporting housing, he emphasized the project's readiness to move forward, estimating that vertical construction could begin as early as 2028. The total cost to develop the two areas is about \$20 million based on 2024 estimates.

c. COH, OHCD, Ainaola Workforce Housing

Erickson presented an overview of the Ainaola Workforce Housing Project in Waiākea Uka, Hilo, noting that while the County was not requesting funding this year, the project remains a priority for future TOD-related planning. The site, consisting of two County EO parcels along Ainaola Drive on a bus route, has potential for both single-family and multifamily housing, though further studies on soils, archaeology, and infrastructure are needed before development can proceed, with a realistic timeline of 2027–2028. Erickson emphasized the importance of keeping the project active despite past cost overruns and its withdrawal from the County CIP budget.

Action Item: Council approval to accept the projects for inclusion in the State TOD Strategic Plan. A motion was made by Cathy Camp and seconded by Nancy McPherson to accept the three projects as TOD projects in the TOD Strategic Plan. Tim Streitz asked whether the Ainaola project's low-density, single-family orientation aligned with TOD Strategic Plan goals. Evans explained that Neighbor Island TOD definitions may allow for lower density. Erickson clarified that of the approximately 290 planned units, only 75 are single-family, with the majority envisioned as townhomes or multifamily housing if sewer connections and other infrastructure can be addressed. The sewer system is about 1 ½ miles away and it would cost over \$8 million to connect to it.

Representative Evslin raised questions regarding prioritizing expansions to serve both new development and existing neighborhoods in Līhu'e without wastewater service. The Kaua'i County presenters emphasized that the study would help identify priorities and funding strategies to ensure reliable wastewater service for housing and TOD-related growth. Yamamoto explained that the study will evaluate both, ensuring wastewater capacity does not limit new development while also assessing opportunities to connect unsewered areas, though feasibility will depend on distance and cost. Fujimoto added that recent legislation expanding accessory dwelling units (ADU) and accessory residential units (ARU) could quickly consume current capacity. He highlighted DHHL's planned 1,000 homes as a key project that should connect to the County system. He also

acknowledged funding as the biggest challenge, noting that projects must balance “biggest bang for the buck” investments with smaller and achievable improvements. Representative Evslin wants his department to notify homeowners whether they are high or low priority if funding is available, so that they know whether to invest in a septic system. Fujimoto mentioned that relatively few cesspools remain in Līhu‘e area that could benefit from conversion.

The motion to incorporate the projects in the TOD Strategic Plan was approved hearing no objections.

8. **FY 2026 Statewide TOD CIP Planning Fund Awards**

Seiji Ogawa announced the FY 2025 TOD CIP Planning Fund awards, following OPSD’s July 1st call for proposals and subsequent informational meeting. He reminded members that \$2 million in TOD CIP funds appropriated to OPSD were made available to provide seed money for public agencies advancing projects in the State TOD Strategic Plan. From the proposals received, two projects were selected for funding:

- COK Department of Public Works, Līhu‘e Facility Plan - Līhu‘e Wastewater Treatment Plant and Collection System Improvements, \$1 million
- COH OHCD’s 34 Rainbow Drive Affordable Housing Project, \$1 million

Since both Counties had already presented their proposals earlier in the meeting, Ogawa invited the two agencies to add brief remarks. Fujimoto expressed appreciation for the grant award, noting that it will provide critical support for advancing affordable and workforce housing initiatives on Kaua‘i. He emphasized, however, that an estimated \$75 million in additional resources will still be needed over the next five years to address wastewater infrastructure requirements necessary for the Līhu‘e TOD infill development project. Fujimoto thanked Senator Sharon Moriwaki, Representative Luke Evslin, and the Legislature for their role in approving the appropriation for OPSD’s TOD CIP Planning Funds, acknowledging that the current grant would not have been possible without their commitment.

9. **Announcements**

a. **Webinar: Opportunity Zone (OZ) Investment Technical Assistance through Milken Community Infrastructure Center (CIC), September 23, 2025, 9 a.m.**

Ramona Mullahey, HUD Honolulu Office, invited all to attend the upcoming Milken CIC webinar on September 23, which will focus on infrastructure and capacity building to support projects currently in the pipeline. A Zoom link was provided for free registration for the webinar.

b. **Next Meeting and Preliminary Agenda Items for Future Meeting**

Evans announced that the TOD Council is planning to hold one of the upcoming TOD Council meetings in person. They will follow up with members regarding transportation assistance and provide details on the meeting arrangements once finalized. Minakami felt that in person meetings offers greater opportunities for collaboration. She noted from the meeting agenda future meetings and likely agenda items.

10. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:36 a.m.

Note: All meeting materials are posted at <http://planning.hawaii.gov/lud/state-tod/hawaii-interagency-council-for-transit-oriented-development-meeting-materials/>.

Guests/Attendees: Aiden Henderson
Ailina Laborte, City and County of Honolulu Department of Housing and Land Management (DHLM)
Brandon Soo, HCDA
Brian Canevari, School Facilities Authority (SFA)
Brian Lee, Hawai'i Laborers & Employers Cooperation Education Trust (LECET) Fund
Casey Shoji, Office of Senator Stanley Chang
Celine Chan, City Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP)
Cheri Nakamura, SFA
Chico Figueiredo, Governor's Housing Team
ChunKB
Cynthia Rezentes
Denise Iseri-Matsubara, Catholic Charities of Hawai'i Development Corporation
Derek Wong, Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR)
Diana Setness, OPSD
Donald Fujimoto, COK Public Works Department
Dustin Yamamoto, Brown & Caldwell
Franz Krainz, City DPP
Gailene Wong
Garet Sasaki, HCDA
James Hintley
Joe Kopsky, Office of Senator Sharon Moriwaki
Jason Coloma, COK Public Works Department
Jonathan Vuylsteke, Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation (HART)
Katie Rooney, Ulupono Initiative
Keri Higa, HHFDC
Kiana Otsuka, Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization (OahuMPO)
Laren Austace
Laura, HCDA
Lindsay Apperson, Governor's Housing Team
Lisa Emerson
Marissa Fry, Ward Research
Martin Anzellini, HCDA
Neil Erickson, COH OHCD
Rebecca Soon, Ward Research
Steph Chin, Brown & Caldwell
Susie Fong, Navy
Tammi Oyadamori-Chun, DOE
Trista Speer, Department of Human Services (DHS)
YagoAC, Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR)
Zac Bergum, COH Mass Transit Agency (MTA)

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