

VOTER'S GUIDE 2026



Honolulu Board
of REALTORS®

Housing Advocates. Community Builders. Good Neighbors.

Each election year, the Honolulu Board of REALTORS® asks candidates for Honolulu County races key questions regarding priority issues affecting REALTORS®, their clients, and the real estate industry. Candidates seeking support from REALTORS® are invited to provide their responses for our Voter's Guide.

Your vote matters. This year's Elections will be held for Honolulu City Council Districts 2, 4, 6, and 8. Review this Voter's Guide to get to know the candidates running for these offices and to make an informed vote.

Please feel free to share the guide with clients, family, friends, and neighbors in your district, as legislative decisions and policies impact housing and our communities.

As REALTORS®, our members are housing experts and advocates who understand housing issues facing our communities. HBR supports good public policy and educates elected officials, government agencies, and the community about the positive and negative impacts of proposed legislation.

CANDIDATES

DISTRICT 2: Waialeale, Village Park, Royal Kunia, Launani Valley, Wahiawā, Whitmore Village, Mokulē'ia, Waialua, Hale'iwa, Waimea, Pūpūkea, Sunset Beach, Waiale'e, Kahuku, Lā'ie, Hau'ula, Punalu'u, Kahana, Ka'a'awa, Kua'loa, Waiāhole, and Kahalu'u

- Matt Weyer

DISTRICT 4: Hawai'i Kai, Kuli'ou'ou, Niu Valley, 'Āina Haina, Wailupe, Wai'ala'e Iki, Kalani Valley, Kāhala, Wilhemina Rise, Kaimukī, Kapa'hulu, Diamond Head, and Waikīkī

- Tara Malia Gregory
- Jason Liang*
- Trevor Ozawa
- Tommy Waters

*Candidate did not respond

DISTRICT 6: Portions of Kaka'ako, Downtown Honolulu, Punchbowl, Papakolea, Pauoa Valley, Nu'uānu, Iwilei, Liliha, 'Ālewa Heights, Kalihi and Kalihi Valley

- Tyler Dos Santos-Tam
- Corey Morihara

DISTRICT 8: Portions of 'Āiea, Waimalu, Newtown, Pearl City, Seaview, Crestview, Waipi'o Gentry, Koa Ridge, Mililani Town, and Mililani Mauka

- Val Okimoto

Election will be done by mail-in ballot.

PRIMARY ELECTION - SATURDAY, AUGUST 8

VOTER'S GUIDE

Candidates running for each City Council District were asked to submit information about their background and provide their position and approach regarding the following issues:

- 1. HOUSING DEVELOPMENT:** Honolulu continues to face a structural housing shortage. Given the City's authority over zoning, permitting, infrastructure, and adaptive reuse, what specific policy changes or process improvements would you champion to meaningfully increase housing production – particularly for kama'āina homebuyers and workforce households?
- 2. REAL PROPERTY TAX:** Real Property Tax policy affects affordability, buyer behavior, and the City's fiscal stability. What principles, such as equity, predictability, economic impact, or housing outcomes, would guide your approach to setting rates and classifications for owner occupants, long term rentals, and investment properties?
- 3. SHORT-TERM RENTALS:** Given recent legal challenges, enforcement limitations, and the growing need for mid-term rentals to support local residents (e.g., during renovations or emergency displacement), should the city revisit its short-term rental regulations – including minimum rental periods, zoning, or enforcement tools? Why or why not?
- 4. SHORELINE:** With sea-level and shoreline changes occurring, how should the City balance shoreline adaptation strategies (e.g., setbacks, managed retreat, infrastructure relocation) with the rights and expectations of private property owners?

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CANDIDATE PROFILE - DISTRICT 2



DISTRICT 2 - Waikele, Village Park, Royal Kunia, Launani Valley, Wahiawā, Whitmore Village, Mokulē'ia, Waialua, Hale'iwa, Waimea, Pūpūkea, Sunset Beach, Waiale'e, Kahuku, Lā'ie, Hau'ula, Punalu'u, Kahana, Ka'a'awa, Kualoa, Waiāhole, and Kahalu'u



Matt Weyer

YEARS LIVED IN DISTRICT: 22

CURRENT POSITION/OCCUPATION: Honolulu Councilmember, District 2

PREVIOUS PUBLIC OFFICES/APPOINTMENTS HELD: None

CURRENT & PREVIOUS COMMUNITY, CIVIC OR POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT: Prior Waipahū Neighborhood Board

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT



Honolulu continues to face a structural housing shortage. Given the City's authority over zoning, permitting, infrastructure, and adaptive reuse, what specific policy changes or process improvements would you champion to meaningfully increase housing production – particularly for kama'āina homebuyers and workforce households?

I co-introduced and passed legislation to facilitate adaptive reuse (Bill 51 (2024)); quicker permitting (Bill 40 (2024)); adoption of the C-PACE program (Bill 56 (2023)) - which supported subsequent state efforts with Reso. 23-197; extending ADU waivers (Bill 63 (2024)); extending the affordable housing tax credit (Bill 29 (2025)); updating the apartment and apartment mixed-use zoning districts standards (Reso. 25-105); and increasing Downtown density (Reso. 26-39). I have also introduced pending legislation to expedite development processes and reduce discretionary processes (Reso. 26-57). I have also introduced legislation to expand the City's down payment assistance program, which is pending additional Council input.

I support (1) expanding the downpayment assistance program; (2) simplifying and expediting permitting, including greater specificity in criteria instead of after-the-fact discretion; (3) advocating for the adoption of tax increment financing; (4) investments in infrastructure to allow for the development of housing; (5) the allowance of greater density in the urban core; (6) incentives and waivers that match the rising cost of construction; (7) making City land available for the creation of housing; and (8) ensuring investment occurs at all AMI levels to support the entire housing market.



REAL PROPERTY TAX

Real Property Tax policy affects affordability, buyer behavior, and the City's fiscal stability. What principles, such as equity, predictability, economic impact, or housing outcomes, would guide your approach to setting rates and classifications for owner-occupants, long-term rentals, and investment properties?

I introduced Bill 45 (2024) to increase the low income tax credit, which caps Real Property Tax payments to 3% of a household's income. I support increasing this amount to 100% AMI. In lieu of increasing the tax credit, I also introduced Bill 34 (2023), which would have increased the homeowner occupant exemption to \$250,000 (\$300,000 for seniors). I have voted in support of all legislation that has increased the homeowner occupant exemption and low income tax credit during my time on the Council. I support the creation of a long-term rental classification (ex., 6 months rented) to afford a lower tax rate for those utilizing their home for housing, understanding that Res A may have a direct impact on rent costs and should be contemplated in tax reform.



SHORT-TERM RENTALS

Given recent legal challenges, enforcement limitations, and the growing need for mid-term rentals to support local residents (e.g., during renovations or emergency displacement), should the City revisit its short-term rental regulations – including minimum rental periods, zoning, or enforcement tools? Why or why not?

I think it is reasonable to revisit the 90-day minimum given the shown need for rentals (ex. displaced due to disaster; domestic violence victims; those transitioning due to work; and more). I support a Short-Term Rental tax rate that is fair, which is why I opposed the initial larger jump proposed. I also kept it within its current classification when amending the version of the empty-homes tax moving through the Council, understanding that STRs were already subject to a higher rate.



SHORELINE

With sea-level and shoreline changes occurring, how should the city balance shoreline adaptation strategies (e.g., setbacks, managed retreat, infrastructure relocation) with the rights and expectations of private property owners?

The City is subject to State requirements regarding coastal projects. With that in mind, managed retreat must contemplate the ability of individuals to modify and rebuild homes already in place. It must also contemplate reasonable actions, such as shoreline nourishment and restoration, where appropriate. Any legal taking must comply with constitutional requirements, including fair compensation.

CANDIDATE PROFILES - DISTRICT 4



DISTRICT 4 - Hawai'i Kai, Kuli'ou'ou, Niu Valley, 'Āina Haina, Wailupe, Wai'ālae Iki, Kalani Valley, Kāhala, Wilhemina Rise, Kaimukī, Kapahulu, Diamond Head, and Waikīkī



Tara Malia Gregory

YEARS LIVED IN DISTRICT: From SoCal to living in Waikīkī (2013) and Kapahulu (2014); moved to Texas (2016) and returned home in 2023 to Aina Haina/Hawai'i Kai

CURRENT POSITION/OCCUPATION: Business Owner

PREVIOUS PUBLIC OFFICES/APPOINTMENTS HELD: East Honolulu Regional Vice Chair and District 18 Chair, HRP (2025)

CURRENT & PREVIOUS COMMUNITY, CIVIC OR POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT: Advocate for Health, Fitness & Nutrition Programs in Hawai'i, UH CTAHR Cancer Remission Program focused on women of Indigenous Filipina & Hawaiian Decent , Advocate for Parental Rights & Protection of Keiki, At the forefront of Voter Integrity in Hawai'i, Emergency

Preparedness Point Person for East Honolulu (mobilize with King's Oahu, New Hope Hawai'i Kai, The House Established, and Inside Outreach), Nation of Hawai'i Ahupua'a Restoration.



Trevor Ozawa

YEARS LIVED IN DISTRICT: Lifelong resident, 43 years (aside from going away for college and law school)

CURRENT POSITION/OCCUPATION: Attorney (Real Estate and Business)

PREVIOUS PUBLIC OFFICES/APPOINTMENTS HELD: Honolulu City Councilmember, District 4 (January 2015-January 2019); Chair, Committee on Zoning and Planning; Chair, Committee on Budget

CURRENT & PREVIOUS COMMUNITY, CIVIC OR POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT:

Current: Washington Place Foundation, Board Member; youth sports coach, basketball and soccer; Outrigger Canoe Club, men's paddling team member; longtime East Honolulu community volunteer

Previous: Japanese Cultural Center of Hawai'i, Board of Governors; Diamond Head Theatre, Community Board; Kapiolani Park Trust, Chairman; Waikiki Business Improvement District, Board member; Waikiki Beach Special Improvement District, Board member



Tommy Waters

YEARS LIVED IN DISTRICT: 35

CURRENT POSITION/OCCUPATION: Honolulu City Council Chair & Councilmember, District 4

PREVIOUS PUBLIC OFFICES/APPOINTMENTS HELD: Hawai'i State House of Representatives, District 51

CURRENT & PREVIOUS COMMUNITY, CIVIC OR POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT: Chaired the Judiciary and Higher Education Committees and served as Majority Whip. Elected to the Honolulu City Council (2019) and have served as Council Chair since 2020.



HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Honolulu continues to face a structural housing shortage. Given the City's authority over zoning, permitting, infrastructure, and adaptive reuse, what specific policy changes or process improvements would you champion to meaningfully increase housing production – particularly for kama'āina homebuyers and workforce households?



Tara Malia Gregory

My philosophy is simple: efficiency creates affordability. When government leaks time, money, and coordination, local families ultimately pay the price. Before we ask taxpayers to fund something new, we have a responsibility to maximize what they've already invested in.

The City has one of the biggest opportunities to increase housing production by becoming a more efficient partner. Every unnecessary delay adds cost, uncertainty, and ultimately raises housing prices.

I would champion:

- **Concurrent departmental reviews** where appropriate instead of sequential reviews.
- **Measurable permit review timelines** with public accountability.
- **Regular audits of the permitting process** to identify bottlenecks and eliminate unnecessary steps.
- **A single City project manager** for larger housing projects to improve coordination.
- **Modern auditing and process-management technology** to improve efficiency and reduce repetitive manual work.

Before creating new programs, I would evaluate the housing programs, incentives, and planning efforts taxpayers have already funded to determine what's working, what's not, and where the gaps are.

I also believe we need a comprehensive inventory of our existing affordable and workforce housing, so we preserve and rehabilitate what we already have while planning for future growth.

Because land is limited on O'ahu, I support thoughtful **adaptive reuse, mixed-use development where appropriate**, and making better use of existing infrastructure.

Finally, housing requires partnership. The **State** sets land use policy, the **City** delivers efficient permitting and infrastructure, and the **private sector** builds housing. We need a coordinated **5-, 10-, 20-, and 30-year housing strategy** with measurable goals that helps today's residents stay while creating opportunities for the next generation to come home.

The **Legislature and State** set the framework through land use policy, financing, and long-term planning. The **City** clears the path through efficient permitting, infrastructure, and accountable implementation. The **private sector** invests, innovates, and builds. The **community** helps shape neighborhoods that people are proud to call home.

Government shouldn't create friction. Government should create clarity. My goal is to help build bridges between all of those partners so we're solving problems together instead of working in silos.



HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

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Trevor Ozawa

The shortage is real, and so is the reason for it. It takes too long and costs too much to build here. As the Council's former Zoning and Planning Chair, I dealt directly with the land use and permitting decisions behind these projects, and as Budget Chair, I saw where good ones stall. My focus is on process, not slogans.

First, fix permitting at DPP. Set firm timelines, expand third-party and self-certified plan review for licensed architects and engineers, and finish moving the system fully online so a permit takes weeks, not years. Second, invest in the infrastructure that actually caps growth. Sewer, water, and road capacity determine how much housing the island can carry, and we cannot approve homes the system can't support.

Third, make it easier to build the housing local families can actually use: accessory dwelling and ohana units, adaptive reuse of underused commercial and office space, and sensible density near rail. I would also tie City incentives to for-sale, owner-occupant housing with real local-preference and resale protections, so the homes we help create stay with kama'āina and workforce families instead of becoming investment inventory.



HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

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Tommy Waters

Honolulu continues to face a structural housing shortage. Given the City's authority over zoning, permitting, infrastructure, and adaptive reuse, what specific policy changes or process improvements would you champion to meaningfully increase housing production – particularly for kama'āina homebuyers and workforce households?

Honolulu's housing shortage is not the result of a single policy failure. It is the result of decades of rising construction costs, infrastructure constraints, and a permitting system that too often adds time, uncertainty, and expense to projects that provide needed housing.

My priority is simple. Increase housing opportunities for local people and make homeownership attainable for more families.

To accomplish that, I support a comprehensive housing strategy that increases both homeownership and rental opportunities. This includes modernizing and accelerating permitting by establishing dedicated review tracks and predictable timelines for housing projects. Time is money, and every month of delay ultimately increases housing costs.

I also believe there is a need to expand homeownership pathways for local residents. This includes strengthening first-time homebuyer assistance, financial literacy and homeownership education, and partnerships that help teachers, first responders, healthcare workers, and other workforce households purchase homes in the communities they serve.

At the root of any solution, we must address a growing affordability challenge driven by escalating condominium maintenance and HOA fees. For many local families, the monthly HOA payment has become nearly as burdensome as the mortgage itself. Rising insurance costs, deferred maintenance, utility expenses, and regulatory requirements are driving fees higher across O'ahu. The City should work with condominium associations, property managers, insurers, lenders, and residents to identify solutions that help control costs, improve long-term maintenance planning, reduce unnecessary regulatory burdens, and avoid passing avoidable expenses onto homeowners. Housing affordability is not just about the purchase price, but also about the total cost of staying in your home.

Since before my tenure as the Councilmember of District 4 and Council Chair, I have also supported housing policies that prioritize long-term community stability, allowing kama'āina families to remain in Hawai'i while supporting responsible growth.

We cannot regulate our way out of a housing shortage. We need partners in the real estate, financial, and development sectors working together to address our housing crisis. Building our way out of it only works when we ensure that housing remains attainable for residents.

Housing affordability is more than building new units. It means helping local families buy a home, keep a home, and pass that home on to the next generation.



REAL PROPERTY TAX

Real Property Tax policy affects affordability, buyer behavior, and the City's fiscal stability. What principles, such as equity, predictability, economic impact, or housing outcomes, would guide your approach to setting rates and classifications for owner-occupants, long-term rentals, and investment properties?



Tara Malia Gregory

My approach to Real Property Tax is guided by four principles: **fairness, predictability, affordability, and long-term economic health**. Tax policy shouldn't just generate revenue, it should help produce the outcomes we want to see. That means bringing residents, businesses, housing professionals, and government to the same table to define those outcomes, measure our progress, and adjust when necessary.

First, I believe owner-occupants should continue to receive meaningful tax relief because people who live in their homes are the foundation of strong neighborhoods.

Second, we should encourage long-term housing stability. Tax policy should support long-term rentals that provide homes for local families while recognizing their role in increasing housing availability.

Third, we need to carefully evaluate how tax policy influences investment decisions. Private investment plays an important role in financing new housing, but our tax structure should encourage outcomes that increase housing opportunities for kama'āina while discouraging speculation that drives up costs.

Finally, every tax decision should be evaluated for its long-term impact on affordability, housing production, and the City's fiscal health. Before asking taxpayers to contribute more, we should continue improving government efficiency, reducing unnecessary spending, and ensuring taxpayers receive value from the dollars they're already investing.

My goal is a tax system that is fair, predictable, and aligned with a long-term housing strategy, one that supports homeownership, encourages long-term rentals, strengthens our neighborhoods, and maintains the City's financial stability.



REAL PROPERTY TAX

Real Property Tax policy affects affordability, buyer behavior, and the City's fiscal stability. What principles, such as equity, predictability, economic impact, or housing outcomes, would guide your approach to setting rates and classifications for owner-occupants, long-term rentals, and investment properties?



Trevor Ozawa

As a former Budget Chair, I look at Real Property Tax from both sides of the ledger. It funds core City services, and it directly affects whether local families can afford to stay in their homes. My guiding principles are predictability and fairness.

Owner-occupants deserve the strongest protection, including a meaningful home exemption and guardrails so a spike in assessed value doesn't price a longtime family out of a home they already own. Long-term rentals that house local residents should be treated as part of the solution, not lumped in with speculation, because taxing them like investment property just shows up later as higher rent. I would reserve the heavier classifications for genuine investment and transient-use property. Most important, any change should be phased and announced well in advance. Buyers, sellers, and owners can plan around a rate they see coming. What they cannot plan around is a surprise.

The empty homes tax is the clearest example of how not to do this. The underlying goal, getting genuinely warehoused, absentee-owned units back into local hands, is a fair one, and I take it seriously. But the version the City kept advancing was blunt enough to sweep in local families with a second home meant for their keiki, kupuna who travel, estates in probate, and owners simply between tenants, and it carried real constitutional and administrative problems. Your organization opposed it and urged the Council to wait for the facts, and the measure stalled with a costly feasibility study still unfinished. I would not pass a tax first and promise to fix it later. I would sit down with the Board of Realtors and the people who actually live this, aim narrowly at the true speculators who warehouse housing and can well afford to pay, and build in real exemptions and due process from the start. If we cannot design it to reach the right owners without punishing everyone else, we should not pass it at all.



REAL PROPERTY TAX

Real Property Tax policy affects affordability, buyer behavior, and the City's fiscal stability. What principles, such as equity, predictability, economic impact, or housing outcomes, would guide your approach to setting rates and classifications for owner-occupants, long-term rentals, and investment properties?



Tommy Waters

Real Property Tax policy affects affordability, buyer behavior, and the City's fiscal stability. What principles, such as equity, predictability, economic impact, or housing outcomes, would guide your approach to setting rates and classifications for owner-occupants, long-term rentals, and investment properties?

My approach to Real Property Tax policy is guided by four principles: fairness, predictability, affordability, and fiscal responsibility.

Owner-occupants and long-term residents should not be taxed out of their homes because of market conditions beyond their control. That is why I have supported increasing homeowner exemptions and providing targeted relief for kūpuna and local families. Property tax policy should recognize that a home is first and foremost a place to live and not simply an investment asset.

At the same time, property owners, businesses, and realtors need predictability. Sudden or dramatic changes in classifications or rates create uncertainty that can negatively affect housing decisions, investment, and long-term planning. Residents and businesses deserve a tax structure that is transparent and stable.

I also believe tax policy should support housing outcomes. Long-term rental housing plays a critical role in Honolulu's housing ecosystem. It should not be treated the same as speculative or non-resident investment activity that removes housing from the local market.

Finally, we must balance affordability with the City's responsibility to fund essential services and infrastructure. Most of the services Hawaii residents depend on every day are delivered by our counties, so fiscal discipline is critically important. The goal should be to maximize efficiency, reduce waste, and, whenever possible, deliver targeted relief before asking taxpayers to bear an additional financial burden.



SHORT-TERM RENTALS

Given recent legal challenges, enforcement limitations, and the growing need for mid-term rentals to support local residents (e.g., during renovations or emergency displacement), should the City revisit its short-term rental regulations – including minimum rental periods, zoning, or enforcement tools? Why or why not?



Tara Malia Gregory

Yes, I believe the City should revisit its short-term rental regulations. Why? Because our housing needs, legal landscape, and neighborhood priorities continue to evolve. We should periodically evaluate whether our regulations are achieving their intended purpose while balancing the many competing needs across our communities.

However, I don't believe a one-size-fits-all policy should be applied across Honolulu. Every neighborhood has its own character, housing inventory, infrastructure, and community concerns. **What works in Waikiki may not be the right solution for Hawai'i Kai, Kāhala, Kaimukī, or other residential communities.** Our policies should reflect those differences rather than assuming one solution works everywhere.

For example, one neighborhood may be most concerned about preserving housing for local families, while another may be dealing with parking, traffic, noise, public safety, or enforcement issues. Other communities have kūpuna who depend on rental income to remain in their homes, while others see a greater need for legitimate mid-term rentals during home renovations, medical treatment, military assignments, or emergency displacement. Those are different issues, and they deserve different conversations.

If we revisit the ordinance, I would evaluate:

- Whether **minimum rental periods** are achieving their intended purpose.
- Whether **zoning regulations** accurately reflect the character and housing needs of each neighborhood.
- Whether **enforcement tools** are realistic, effective, and consistently applied.
- How we can better accommodate legitimate **mid-term rentals** for families displaced by emergencies, major home renovations, medical treatment, military assignments, or temporary work.
- Are there **neighborhood-specific impacts** related to STRs, including public safety, parking, traffic, noise, housing availability, or enforcement, that should be considered?

Any changes should be guided by reliable data, measurable outcomes, and meaningful input from the neighborhoods most affected, not assumptions.

My goal is balance: protecting residential neighborhoods, preserving housing opportunities for kama'āina, supporting public safety, respecting private property rights, recognizing that rental income can be an important source of financial stability for some homeowners, especially kupuna, and acknowledging that different communities require different solutions.

The goal isn't simply to regulate short-term rentals. The goal is to create policies that reflect the realities of each neighborhood while balancing housing, safety, property rights, and economic stability for the people who live there.



SHORT-TERM RENTALS

Given recent legal challenges, enforcement limitations, and the growing need for mid-term rentals to support local residents (e.g., during renovations or emergency displacement), should the City revisit its short-term rental regulations – including minimum rental periods, zoning, or enforcement tools? Why or why not?



Trevor Ozawa

Yes, and I say that as a real estate attorney who has watched the City lose in court and lose credibility at the same time. The current approach has produced litigation, uncertainty, and uneven enforcement, which is the worst outcome for owners and neighbors alike. I would revisit it with three goals.

First, legal durability. The rules need to survive a court challenge, so owners are not building their lives around ordinances that may not hold. Second, room for legitimate mid-term rentals, the 30-to-89-day stays that local families rely on during home renovations, insurance displacement, medical treatment, or a job transition. Those are not the transient-Waikiki problem, and the rules should not treat them as if they were.

Third, administration that is proactive instead of reactive. The City should run a real permitting and licensing function that processes applications and collects annual fees, so the program pays for itself and generates revenue rather than running as a chronic mess. That should be paired with a properly staffed enforcement division that goes after the genuine violators with proportionate, collectable penalties. Right now, the City tends to point fingers and drop draconian fines that too often land on the owners who actually followed the rules, while the real violators go untouched. Clear rules, fairly administered and fairly enforced, will always beat sweeping rules no one can rely on.



SHORT-TERM RENTALS

Given recent legal challenges, enforcement limitations, and the growing need for mid-term rentals to support local residents (e.g., during renovations or emergency displacement), should the City revisit its short-term rental regulations – including minimum rental periods, zoning, or enforcement tools? Why or why not?



Tommy Waters

Given recent legal challenges, enforcement limitations, and the growing need for mid-term rentals to support residents (e.g., during renovations or emergency displacement), should the city revisit its short-term rental regulations – including minimum rental periods, zoning, or enforcement tools? Why or why not?

The primary purpose of Honolulu's housing stock should be to house the people who live and work here. That principle remains unchanged. At the same time, I recognize that short-term rentals, when appropriately located and responsibly regulated, play an important role in Hawai'i's visitor economy. They provide lodging options for travelers, generate income for property owners, support local jobs, and contribute to economic activity in our communities. The goal should not be to eliminate short-term rentals, but to ensure they are thoughtfully managed as part of our larger housing and economic stability goals.

One area worthy of discussion is the role of Bridge Rentals, short- and mid-term rentals in serving local needs. Families displaced by home renovations, medical situations, military transfers, or unexpected emergencies often need housing options that fall somewhere between traditional long-term rentals and visitor accommodations. The recent Kona Low flooding demonstrated this reality firsthand, as many North Shore residents faced significant property damage, lengthy repairs, insurance claims, and temporary displacement from their homes. Bridge rental options can provide a vital lifeline for families during these challenging periods, helping them remain close to their jobs, schools, and support networks while they recover. These accommodations can also offer valuable options for Hawai'i residents returning home to visit family, care for loved ones, attend graduations, weddings, funerals, cultural celebrations, or other important life events.

Enforcement is equally important. Rules only work if they are clear, enforceable, and consistently applied. Property owners deserve certainty, neighbors deserve accountability, and residents deserve confidence that the law is being fairly enforced.

Before considering major new restrictions, I look first to work with the Department of Planning and Permitting to strengthen enforcement of existing laws. Recent discussions have highlighted ongoing challenges, including limited access to booking data, legal barriers, and difficulties identifying and pursuing illegal operators. As a result, enforcement efforts have not always kept pace with the realities of today's short-term rental market. The goal should be a regulatory framework that is fair, enforceable, and effective, one that protects neighborhoods and housing opportunities for residents while providing clear expectations for responsible property owners.

Ultimately, it is about striking the right balance: preserving housing opportunities for kama'āina families while recognizing that responsibly managed short-term rentals in appropriate locations can provide economic and community benefits without exacerbating Honolulu's housing shortage. Good policy should be guided by data, community input, housing impacts, and long-term sustainability—not ideology.



With sea-level and shoreline changes occurring, how should the city balance shoreline adaptation strategies (e.g., setbacks, managed retreat, infrastructure relocation) with the rights and expectations of private property owners?



Tara Malia Gregory

My approach is guided by four principles: **preparedness, public safety, private property rights, and long-term planning.**

The City has a responsibility to lead by preparing, not simply reacting after erosion or flooding becomes a crisis. Good planning gives residents, businesses, and property owners time to prepare, reduces long-term costs, and helps protect both lives and property.

I would champion:

- **Developing neighborhood-specific shoreline adaptation plans** based on erosion rates, flooding risk, infrastructure, environmental impacts, and community needs.
- **Maintaining and regularly updating shoreline hazard maps** using the best available science so property owners have clear information to make informed decisions.
- **Developing a 5-, 10-, 20-, and 30-year shoreline adaptation strategy** with measurable milestones, public reporting, and regular review.
- **Prioritizing the protection, maintenance, or relocation of critical public infrastructure** before failures become costly emergencies.
- **Coordinating with State agencies, environmental scientists, coastal engineers, Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners, property owners, and affected communities** to develop practical long-term solutions.
- **Exploring voluntary incentives, technical assistance, and collaborative solutions** before considering mandatory managed retreat where feasible.

Managed retreat may become necessary in limited locations where public safety leaves no reasonable alternative, but it should be a last resort, not the starting point. Any decision should be transparent, supported by science, include meaningful community engagement, and provide property owners with clear expectations and adequate time to prepare.

Preparedness isn't just about responding to disasters, it's about anticipating them. Good planning gives people options. Poor planning leaves people reacting to emergencies.

Ultimately, I believe the City's responsibility is to lead with transparency, collaboration, and long-term planning so we protect our beaches, public infrastructure, private property rights, and future generations.



With sea-level and shoreline changes occurring, how should the city balance shoreline adaptation strategies (e.g., setbacks, managed retreat, infrastructure relocation) with the rights and expectations of private property owners?



Trevor Ozawa

Shoreline change is real, and pretending otherwise serves no one. But how we respond matters as much as whether we respond. I would start from science and honesty: give owners accurate, parcel-level information about risk so they can make informed decisions, rather than learning about it after they have already invested.

Where setbacks or shoreline hardening are warranted, the standards should be clear, consistent, and grounded in real data, not decided case by case. Managed retreat should be the last tool, not the first. And if the City ever asks a private owner to give up the use of their land, that has to come with due process and fair treatment, not an unfunded mandate dressed up as adaptation. My goal is to protect two things at once: the public's right to its beaches and shoreline, and the legitimate, constitutionally protected expectations of the people who own along it. Those interests are not as opposed as they are often made to sound, and the job is to keep them in balance.



With sea-level and shoreline changes occurring, how should the city balance shoreline adaptation strategies (e.g., setbacks, managed retreat, infrastructure relocation) with the rights and expectations of private property owners?



Tommy Waters

As sea levels and shorelines change, how should the city balance shoreline adaptation strategies (e.g., setbacks, managed retreat, infrastructure relocation) with the rights and expectations of private property owners?

Hawai'i's shoreline is one of our greatest public resources, but it is also on the front lines of climate change. Rising sea levels, increased coastal erosion, and more frequent flooding present challenges that require thoughtful long-term planning.

We must balance two equally important responsibilities: protecting public safety and respecting private property rights.

Property owners deserve clear rules, transparency, and reasonable expectations when making investments in their homes and properties. At the same time, the government has a responsibility to ensure that development decisions do not increase risks to neighboring properties, public infrastructure, or future generations.

As shoreline conditions evolve, adaptation strategies should be science-based, phased, and developed in partnership with affected communities and property owners. Wherever possible, we should prioritize planning, infrastructure investments, and voluntary solutions before considering more restrictive approaches.

The reality is that there is no one-size-fits-all answer. Different coastlines face different risks and timelines. Our role is to provide predictability, use the best available science, and work collaboratively to protect both the public interest and property owners' rights.

Ultimately, successful shoreline policy requires balance: safeguarding Hawai'i's coastlines for future generations while treating property owners fairly and respectfully throughout the process.

CANDIDATE PROFILES - DISTRICT 6



DISTRICT 6 - Portions of Kaka'ako, Downtown Honolulu, Punchbowl, Papakolea, Pauoa Valley, Nu'uano, Iwilei, Liliha, 'Ālewa Heights, Kalihi and Kalihi Valley



Tyler Dos Santos-Tam

YEARS LIVED IN DISTRICT: 38

CURRENT POSITION/OCCUPATION: Honolulu City Councilmember, District 6

PREVIOUS PUBLIC OFFICES/APPOINTMENTS HELD: None

CURRENT & PREVIOUS COMMUNITY, CIVIC OR POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT: Chair of Democratic Party of Hawai'i, Chair of Neighborhood Commission, Member of Liliha Neighborhood Board



Corey Morihara

YEARS LIVED IN DISTRICT: 6 continuous, and 3 off and on

CURRENT POSITION/OCCUPATION: Building Inspector, City & County of Honolulu

PREVIOUS PUBLIC OFFICES/APPOINTMENTS HELD: None

CURRENT & PREVIOUS COMMUNITY, CIVIC OR POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT: Community volunteer and advocate for practical government, infrastructure improvements, environmental stewardship, and small business growth. Candidate for Honolulu City Council District 6.



HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Honolulu continues to face a structural housing shortage. Given the City's authority over zoning, permitting, infrastructure, and adaptive reuse, what specific policy changes or process improvements would you champion to meaningfully increase housing production – particularly for kama'āina homebuyers and workforce households?



Tyler Dos Santos-Tam

I'm going to continue leading the way on housing policy at the City Council and coming up with policies that deliver results on our housing shortage. Over the past four years, my legislation has created a pre-construction financing program for Bill 7 projects, increased the dollar amounts for post-construction grants for Bill 7 projects, created an Oahu resident preference for housing projects with City involvement, expanded the allowable FAR in apartment zones and soon in the Downtown Honolulu BMX-4 zone, created a pathway for office to residential conversions, extended the waivers for ADU fees by five years, and modified the building code to allow alternate fire-rated piping materials to be used in certain affordable rental housing projects. I've also fought back against efforts to make it more difficult to build housing in our urban core.

I've also proposed several ideas which are still in the works, including increasing the number of units allowed in Bill 7 projects that are in/around high-frequency bus lines and simplifying the loading and parking requirements for Bill 7 projects.

In my next term, I look forward to continuing this work. Later this year, I plan to introduce a proposal to allow for more density in our B- and BMX-zones, which will result in more housing in neighborhoods that already have adequate infrastructure. I will also continue pushing DPP to implement their TOD plans sooner than their anticipated 2031 deadline, and also push DPP to continue improvements to facilitate faster permitting.



Corey Morihara

Honolulu's housing shortage cannot be solved with one policy alone. We need to make it easier, faster, and more predictable to build housing while maintaining safety and protecting our communities.

As a City & County Building Inspector, I see firsthand where unnecessary delays occur. I support streamlining permit review, improving coordination between departments, expanding electronic plan review, and setting measurable timelines for permit approvals.

I also support encouraging adaptive reuse of underutilized commercial buildings, expanding workforce housing incentives, and updating zoning where appropriate to allow more housing near existing infrastructure and transit.

Most importantly, we must prioritize housing for local residents—not speculation. Our goal should be helping working families purchase homes and remain in Hawaii'i rather than forcing them to leave because of rising costs.



REAL PROPERTY TAX

Real Property Tax policy affects affordability, buyer behavior, and the City's fiscal stability. What principles, such as equity, predictability, economic impact, or housing outcomes, would guide your approach to setting rates and classifications for owner-occupants, long-term rentals, and investment properties?



Tyler Dos Santos-Tam

In order to spare local residents, including owner-occupants, from the burden of increasing rates, we need to be much more willing to make sure that those at the highest end who aren't providing housing for locals are paying their fair share. As such, I have repeatedly called for the formation of a PIG to explore modifications to our Residential A structure to create a more progressive approach, which includes additional tiers at the higher end. I also believe that we need to review the tiers within the Transient Vacation Unit rate, since these units function more similarly to hotel rooms and should be paying a rate closer to that of actual hotels.

I also think we need to reexamine how income-restricted affordable housing projects are taxed and look at how we can use our tax policy to help incentivize the further construction of affordable units. This year, I've introduced Bill 29, which seeks to reduce burdensome reporting requirements for projects that have regulatory agreements with the state, and Bill 40, which seeks to allow a developer of a fully owner-occupied project to apply for the owner-occupant exemption on behalf of their buyers to avoid the "sticker shock" that purchasers at Ulana recently experienced.



Corey Morihara

Real Property Tax policy should be fair, predictable, and encourage long-term housing stability.

Owner-occupied homes deserve protection because they represent families and community stability. Long-term rental housing should also be treated in a way that encourages property owners to keep units available for local residents.

Investment properties should contribute fairly to city services, but tax policy should avoid unintended consequences that reduce housing supply or dramatically increase rents.

Home owners living on property shouldn't be paying as high property tax.

I believe taxpayers deserve transparency. Rate changes should be carefully analyzed, publicly explained, and implemented in a predictable manner so homeowners and businesses can plan accordingly.



SHORT-TERM RENTALS

Given recent legal challenges, enforcement limitations, and the growing need for mid-term rentals to support local residents (e.g., during renovations or emergency displacement), should the City revisit its short-term rental regulations – including minimum rental periods, zoning, or enforcement tools? Why or why not?



Tyler Dos Santos-Tam

I have been very vocal about the need for the City to crack down hard on those who operate illegal short-term rentals (STR). A very visible example of this was the illegal short-term rental in 'Ālewa Heights that racked up over a million dollars in fines and is now being foreclosed upon because of my advocacy. It is my hope that this will become an example of a strong deterrent for others who continue to illegally do short-term vacation rentals in our residential neighborhoods. I also believe the City and State need to enter into an Memorandum of Understanding to better regulate illegal short-term rentals in Kaka'ako, where illegal short term rentals continue to pop up in HCDA-regulated buildings. In order to do this, however, DPP will need more support, especially in their STR enforcement branch. I have continued to work to strengthen DPP's ability to investigate and enforce on STR violations.



Corey Morihara

The City should continually evaluate its short-term rental policies to ensure they reflect current housing needs, legal requirements, and enforcement realities.

My priority is preserving housing for local residents while recognizing there are legitimate situations where mid-term rentals serve an important role, such as displaced families, traveling medical professionals, military personnel, and residents whose homes are under repair.

Rather than relying solely on stricter regulations, I support improving enforcement against illegal operations while simplifying compliance for lawful rentals. Clear rules, consistent enforcement, and modern technology can produce better outcomes than constantly changing regulations.



With sea-level and shoreline changes occurring, how should the city balance shoreline adaptation strategies (e.g., setbacks, managed retreat, infrastructure relocation) with the rights and expectations of private property owners?



Tyler Dos Santos-Tam

With regard to new development proposed near the shoreline, the Special Management Area (SMA) permit and shoreline setback policies set by the state and administered by the City Council seem to provide a reasonable structure that sets expectations and allows for some degree of flexibility. As such, over the past several years, the City Council has generally approved most, if not all, of the SMAs that have come before us for new construction.

One important change that I have advocated for is for DPP to set out clearer guidelines up front for SMA applications. Oftentimes, the City Council will add numerous conditions for approvals via a committee draft relating to things like treatment of endangered species, archaeological findings, native landscaping, etc. Having these conditions set up front by the department would help the process to be clearer and more dependable.



Corey Morihara

Sea level rise presents one of Honolulu's greatest long-term challenges.

We must protect public beaches and prepare infrastructure for future shoreline changes while also respecting private property rights. Property owners deserve clear regulations, consistent permitting, and adequate notice when adaptation strategies affect their property.

As someone who works within the permitting system, I believe decisions should be science-based, transparent, and made through collaboration rather than uncertainty.

Infrastructure planning should occur years in advance, allowing homeowners, businesses, and government to prepare together instead of reacting during emergencies.

My goal is practical, balanced solutions that protect both our environment and the people who call Honolulu home.

Overall, I believe a well thought out plan for infrastructure will ultimately lead to a better situation and a different outcome for a lot of these issues. My focus will be infrastructure that will bleed into a lot of various aspects of our lives.

CANDIDATE PROFILES - DISTRICT 8



DISTRICT 8 - Portions of 'Aiea, Waimalu, Newtown, Pearl City, Seaview, Crestview, Waipi'o Gentry, Koa Ridge, Mililani Town, and Mililani Mauka



Val Okimoto

YEARS LIVED IN DISTRICT: 20+

CURRENT POSITION/OCCUPATION: Honolulu City Councilmember, District 8; Chair, Committee on Budget, Honolulu City Council

PREVIOUS PUBLIC OFFICES/APPOINTMENTS HELD: Minority Leader, Hawai'i House of Representatives

CURRENT & PREVIOUS COMMUNITY, CIVIC OR POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT: Former Department of Education Special Education Teacher



HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Honolulu continues to face a structural housing shortage. Given the City's authority over zoning, permitting, infrastructure, and adaptive reuse, what specific policy changes or process improvements would you champion to meaningfully increase housing production – particularly for kama'āina homebuyers and workforce households?

Since I was first elected in 2022, the Honolulu City Council has approved numerous affordable housing projects that have placed many people and families into new homes in my district and throughout O'ahu. While many of these homes are rental units, we must be mindful that the cost of developing for-sale homes, given the current market economy, does not pencil out when it comes to financing. The Council should continue to work with the Legislature to ensure that their proposals do not conflict with the city's LUO. One conflicting example was Act 39, SLH 2024, which would have placed a huge burden on the city with regard to existing infrastructure. Additional ADUs are not appropriate in older neighborhoods with limited infrastructure. If the question is specific to for-sale homes, then Community Facilities Districts (CFDs), when it relates to financing for-sale projects, might be a positive path forward.



REAL PROPERTY TAX

Real Property Tax policy affects affordability, buyer behavior, and the City's fiscal stability. What principles, such as equity, predictability, economic impact, or housing outcomes, would guide your approach to setting rates and classifications for owner-occupants, long-term rentals, and investment properties?

Real Property Tax (RPT) rates are set by the Mayor, based on legislation passed by the Council and signed by the Mayor into Ordinance. Further, it is the Mayor who proposes RPT rates to the Council. Since I was elected in 2022, the Council has not raised RPT. The Council provided RPT relief to taxpayers via Ordinances 25-42 and 43, while creating a new Residential A tier 3 via Ordinance 25-44, all of which take effect on July 1, 2027. This gives the Mayor and his Department of Budget Fiscal Services sufficient time to present a balanced FY28 budget to the Council in March 2027. I believe the bills that we have passed, and the bills that we are currently considering, provide RPT relief to Hawai'i residents at the expense of those who do not call Hawai'i home.



SHORT-TERM RENTALS

Given recent legal challenges, enforcement limitations, and the growing need for mid-term rentals to support local residents (e.g., during renovations or emergency displacement), should the City revisit its short-term rental regulations – including minimum rental periods, zoning, or enforcement tools? Why or why not?

We can all agree that this is a touchy subject considering recent legislative actions by the Maui County Council. I don't think we should revisit STVR regulations in Honolulu at this time. This is not an issue that affects my district directly, except for a very small handful of my constituents. I believe the Council should hold DPP accountable to ensure that bad actors are held accountable. The question references "enforcement limitations." That statement is spot-on because I don't think there are "enforcement limitations." I believe DPP has very clear authority to enforce but does not have the will or capacity to do so. I am not sure what the solution will be during my second term, but their unwillingness to enforce is something to be considered.



SHORELINE

With sea-level and shoreline changes occurring, how should the city balance shoreline adaptation strategies (e.g., setbacks, managed retreat, infrastructure relocation) with the rights and expectations of private property owners?

The Council addressed this matter via Ordinance 23-3.

City Council Members Not Up for Re-election

DISTRICT 1: Andria Tupola

Portions of `Ewa Beach, Kapolei, Ho`opili, Makakilo, Kalaeloa, Honokai Hale, Ko `Olina, Nānākuli, Mā`ili, Wai`anae, Mākaha, Kea`au, and Mākua

DISTRICT 3: Esther Kia`āina

`Āhuimanu, He`eia, Ha`ikū, Kāne`ohe, Maunawili, Kailua, Olomana, Enchanted Lake, and Waimānalo

DISTRICT 5: Scott Nishimoto

Palolo Valley, St. Louis Heights, Mānoa, Mō`ili`ili, McCully, Ala Moana, Makiki, and portions of Kaka`ako

DISTRICT 7: Radiant Cordero

Kalihi Kai, Māpunapuna, Fort Shafter, Moanalua, Salt Lake, Airport, Hickam, Āliamanu, Foster Village, Pearl Harbor, Hālawa, `Aiea, Pearlridge, Moku`ume`ume, and Sand Island

DISTRICT 9: Augie Tulba

Waipahū, Iroquois Point, West Loch, `Ewa Villages and portions of `Ewa Beach

2026 CITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE PURPOSE: To advocate for issues important to the Honolulu Board of REALTORS® and influence legislative and regulatory policies that protect private property rights, which impact the real estate industry on O`ahu.

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- Real Property Tax
- Short-Term Rentals
- Shoreline

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