

Aloha e Friends,

Please mark your calendar for this **Saturday, Aug. 20, 9-10am** when I'll be hosting my Virtual Listen Story community meeting with **Special Guest Roger Morton, Director, Department of Transportation Services for the City and County of Honolulu.** [Send me an email](#) and I'll send you the link. My last Listen Story was on July 9th, with Lori Kahikina, Executive Director and CEO of the Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation (HART). Mahalo to everyone who came to the event and helped to make it a success! If you missed it, [visit my YouTube page](#) to view a recording of the meeting. Please don't hesitate to contact me at (808) 586-6830 or sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov if I can help you or your family in any way. I also invite you to follow me on social media: [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#). Best wishes to you and your 'ohana.

COMMITTEE CHAIR

AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

MEMBER

- ◆ Judiciary
- ◆ Government Operations

DISTRICT 20

Kapolei, Makakilo and portions of Ewa, Kalaeloa, and Waipahu



Jhanavi Pomerantz

Office Updates

I'm happy to announce we have a new Community Liaison! Her name is Jhanavi Pomerantz. Meg is moving up to be my full-time, permanent Office Manager and will oversee all operations. Jhanavi has a BA from UH West O'ahu in Business Administration and Marketing. She's been teaching keiki and adult Taekwondo classes for the past 6 years, as well as running her own jewelry design business. Having grown up in Hawai'i, Jhanavi has a deep appreciation for the environment. She's looking forward to helping serve the WestSide community and putting her business and creative skills to use. We're pleased to welcome her to my office. Former Office Manager, Corinne Gallardo, resigned to spend more time helping her mom as she faces continued challenges with dementia. Aloha and mahalo nui, Corinne, for your dedication and service to our community and state.

Mike



Meg Turner

Aloha Animal Sanctuary

On July 17, I toured the Aloha Animal Sanctuary in Kaneohe, arranged by the Vegan Society of Hawai'i. Aloha Animal Sanctuary is O'ahu's first 501(c)(3) non-profit sanctuary for farmed animals, founded in January 2019, by animal rights activists who wanted to help people form personal connections with animals that are killed by the billions every year. The sanctuary is a safe haven for animals who've been abused, abandoned, and /or neglected and have nowhere else to go. They can live out their days in peace at Aloha Animal Sanctuary, without being used or exploited. Visit <https://www.alohasanctuary.org> to learn more about this amazing farm of aloha.



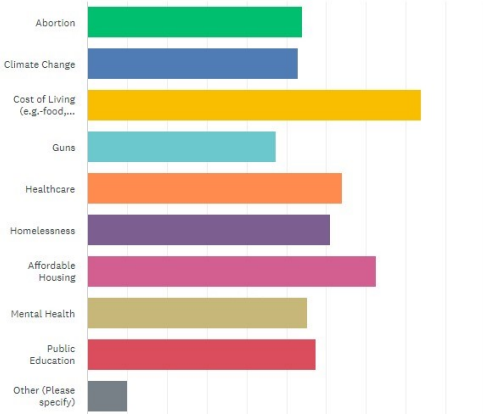
(Pictured L-R: Jessica Palomino-Cofounder & Dir. of Public Relations, Sen. Gabbard, Lolita Ayala-Exe. Dir., and Korie Mijo-Dir. of Development.)

COMMUNITY UPDATES

Survey Results: Concerns, Issues, and Interests

What are the top issues most important to you today in order of priority?

Answered: 66 Skipped: 2



You may have seen my survey questionnaire recently asking for your input on community-related issues and concerns. A big mahalo to everyone who took the time to answer! As our WestSide continues to expand, many of you brought up the need for more affordable housing, as well as the importance of additional health and education facilities. There's also a strong consensus that high-rise condominiums and hotels lead to unwanted traffic congestion and population density. The cost of living, affordable housing, healthcare, and public education are issues that affect everyone in our community. I'd love to continue hearing from you about specific ways I can address your concerns.

UrbanPlan Scholars

UrbanPlan is a realistic, hands-on project experience in which participants—high school students, university students, or public officials—learn the fundamentals of property development. I was honored to participate in an UrbanPlan presentation on August 11. For a month, twenty-two high school and college students worked in 4 teams to create the winning proposal for a simulated 6-acre parcel at UH West O'ahu. The design needed to be a combination of rental housing, dual-use office supported by a DOD contract, and high-tech farming in a greenhouse. Because

UHWO is in my district, I was invited to be one of the judges. The teams presented before a mock "City Council" of which I was part of... Student planning and design had to address various real-world aspects of a development project, including zoning, rail, agriculture, funding, community feedback, etc. After the presentations, the mock "City Council" selected the winners. Teams were made up of local high school students from Iolani, Kalani, LeJardin, MidPac, Punahou, and St. Andrews. The students conducted outreach to stakeholders and residents in West O'ahu and found affordable housing to be the number one community need. Proposals ranged from rooftop greenhouses and beekeeping to fully solar-powered facilities to integrating UHWO student and campus life.

The mock "City Council" included me, Duff Janus – Mayor, non-voting. Duff is the chair of the Hawai'i chapter of ULI and trained in UrbanPlan, Bob Harrison – CEO First Hawaiian Bank, Jim Houchens – Chief Engineer Indo-Pacific Regional Operations Mitre Corporation, and Brennon Morioka – Dean of the UH College of Engineering. I was thoroughly impressed with the students, the program, and the event. Mahalo nui to [Jon Wallenstrom](#) for the opportunity. I'd be happy to participate again next year. Once a teacher always a teacher. Fantastic project and so impressed with our young folks!



Sen. Gabbard participated in the UrbanPlan program on August 11. (Pictured L-R: Sen. Gabbard, Bob Harrison (FHB CEO), Jim Houchens (Mitre), Duff Janus (ASB), Brennon Morioka (UH Dean of Engineering School))

COMMUNITY UPDATES



A rendering of DreamHouse Center, a mixed-use building being developed in Kapolei Pacific Center. It will be anchored by the Ewa Beach charter school. (Courtesy: Design Partners, Inc.)

DreamHouse Center

With a waitlist in the hundreds, DreamHouse Center, Hawai'i's newest and fastest-growing public charter high school, can't come soon enough! For now, DreamHouse is temporarily located with 100 ninth graders in a renovated fitness studio in Kapolei Marketplace. I'm told by CEO, Alex Teece, that there's a waitlist of nearly 400 families.

Ten new jobs have been created this year and they're closing in on their financing. DREAMHOUSE INC. and Avalon Development Co. are developing a three-story, mix-use building in West O'ahu. The upper two floors will be occupied by the high school with the ground floor occupied by retail space. Construction is anticipated to begin in the spring of 2023, with completion by June 2024.

DreamHouse Center will be located on Avalon's 3-acre, master-planned Kapolei Pacific Center—a site that already includes the regional headquarters of the U.S. Social Security Administration and the Cole Academy preschool and will be anchored by public charter school DreamHouse Ewa Beach. DreamHouse will occupy 27,000 square feet and there will be an additional 10,700 square feet for retail space. They anticipate delays in the supply chain but have built that into the scheduling and budgeting for the project.

Current Business Issues on Oahu's WestSide

On July 28, I attended a breakfast meeting sponsored by the Salvation Army Kroc Center and Pacific Business News, with Panel Sponsors - Hawaiiiana; Hawaii Pacific Health; Hawaiian Humane Society and supporting organization - Kapolei Chamber of Commerce. Panel Experts featured [Jalene Kanani Bell, President & Creative Director, NOHO Home](#), [Eliza Talbot, Board Member, Kapolei Chamber of Commerce](#), [Anna Neubauer, President & CEO, Hawaiian Humane Society](#), and [Major Osei Stewart, Corps Officer/Administrator & Hawaii State Capitol Liason, The Salvation Army Kroc Center Hawaii](#). The thought-provoking event centered on topics, such as:

- ◆ Opportunities for growth on the WestSide
- ◆ Inflation and labor shortage impacts on businesses
- ◆ Current economic realities compared to pre-Covid
- ◆ Demand for nonprofit services and the fundraising environment



Sen. Gabbard attended a breakfast meeting on July 28 to hear from panel experts on current business issues on O'ahu's West Side. (Pictured with Major Osei Stewart, Corps Officer/Administrator & Hawaii State Capitol Liason, The Salvation Army Kroc Center Hawai'i.)

LEGISLATIVE NEWS



Sen. Gabbard at Aina Ola Farm on Maui in 2016. (Pictured with: Simon Russell, Vincent Mina, President of Hawai'i Farmers Union United; and Bobby Pahia, world-class taro farmer)

National Farmworker Appreciation Day

August 6 was “National Farmworker Appreciation Day!” Coincidentally, as the Chair of the Senate Committee on Agriculture & Environment, I was also interviewed by Mark Ladao with the *Honolulu Star-Advertiser* for a story on the future of agriculture in Hawai'i. We covered a lot of ground during our discussion, including the best ways the new governor/administration can facilitate agricultural growth in Hawai'i; what the governor and state lawmakers should focus on in the next 2-4 years to best improve agriculture in Hawai'i; and how the governor and state Legislature did as far as improving agriculture in Hawai'i during the last 5-10 years or so. These questions aren't easily addressed.

Clearly, what's lacking and what the state needs is a “big picture” vision and plan for an integrated food policy framework. It's crucial that we have a long-term plan and vision, and, of course, long- and short-term action items along the way to ensure we have food security. My hope is that the new governor will support and fund the process of developing and implementing a [state level food system vision and plan](#) (as is being done all over the U.S.), and as proposed last session in [HB2431](#). This bill was introduced by Rep. Holt in collaboration with UHWO professor Albie Miles. It passed the House and WTL/AEN (Water Land /and Agriculture & Environment Committees, but died in WAM (Ways and Means Committee). The bill encourages producers, retailers, members of the community, non-governmental organizations, and government agencies to partner to create a vibrant and resilient local food economy that enhances and sustains the environmental, economic, and social health of the community. In other words, we need to get out of our silos and do the kākou thing

and work together... laulima—many hands... to get the job done!

Bill Signing Ceremony

I was stoked to be part of the bill signing on July 18 for two bills I introduced, along with my colleagues and partners who collaborated with me on the bills... first is the [Farmer Apprentice Mentoring Program \(SB 3197 ACT 304\)](#), which appropriates \$300,000 to the HDOA to establish and implement a farmer apprentice mentoring program to increase farming in the State. This new law will tap into the wisdom of our kupuna farmers in a big way. The average age of our farmers in Hawai'i is 61. We need young people to consider farming as a noble profession, no less noble than being a doctor, lawyer, or business person. And we need to do all we can to support young farmers. This bill is a step in the right direction. The Governor also signed [SB 3004 into law as ACT 302: the Compost Reimbursement Program](#). According to the USDA, 30-40% of the food in the U.S. is wasted. One way to reduce food waste is to compost it, which also leads to environmental benefits. With an operating budget of almost 17B\$ for FY23 and only ½ of 1% (\$49m) going to HDOA, we've got to put our money where our mouth is, if we're serious about doubling our local food production by 2030, and decreasing the 85-90% of the food we import each year, at a cost of about \$3B annually. I was also happy to see the Food Hub bill, [SB2218, ACT 313](#) pass this year. This bill establishes a five-year pilot program under the HDOA and appropriates \$1.5 million in funds for the program with the goal of increasing local food production in the state. I introduced the bill in 2020, ([SB2722](#)) but it died with the COVID shut-down in March.



Bill Signing on July 18 for bills that will help small farmers in Hawai'i. (Pictured L-R: Sen. Chang; Rep Perruso; Rep. Marten; Sen. Gabbard; Gov. Ige; Hunter Heavilin, HFUU; Morris Atta, HDOA; Brian Miyamoto, HFB; Saleh Azizi, HFUU.)