

Mayor's Highlights



THIS MONTH'S HIGHLIGHTS:

- Handi-Van Improvements
- Affordable Housing Update
- State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund Update
- Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Update
- Wendy's Wall Groundbreaking

HANDI-VAN IMPROVEMENTS

On January 12, 2023, the City Department of Transportation Services (DTS) announced the purchase of 48 new Handi-Vans to replace older vans, improve operational reliability, add new technologies and help operators with high rider demand. Electronic passenger doors and reverse docking lights are but some of the improved safety features benefiting both riders and operators.

The contract price for the 48 vans was \$9,607,375 through Soderholm Bus & Mobility, a local fully licensed and full-service paratransit dealer. All 48 vans are scheduled for manufacture and delivery by the end of 2023. With the additional 48 vans, TheHandi-Van fleet will total 207 vehicles.

One of the most operationally challenging transit programs on O'ahu, the Blangiardi administration is committed to improved technologies, additional staffing and performance metrics to serve the paratransit community. O'ahu Transit Services (OTS), the nonprofit organization that operates TheBus and TheHandi-Van under DTS, plans to hire more reservations and call center staff, expand alternative work opportunities to improve staff coverage and use federal funds to acquire new scheduling software that will empower users to reserve trips using their smartphones and computers.

Finally, TheHandi-Van is increasing the number of trips it provides through third-party contractors, such as taxis and privately operated accessible van service, to help with one-time and overflow reservations.

If you are interested in high-quality work serving O'ahu's paratransit community, reach out to O'ahu Transit Services at (808) 768-9490 or visit thebus.org/career.asp.

BY THE NUMBERS

48 NEW HANDI-VANS

Will replace older models in the fleet with updated technology for safety/comfort.

\$9,607,375

Leveraging federal funds to improve service for O'ahu paratransit riders.

Affordable Housing Update

The Blangiardi administration is committed to more affordable housing to meet community demand. From the beginning, Mayor Blangiardi charged his cabinet to understand the City's role and potential as a partner and facilitator versus a regulator. This has been the administration's overarching goal from day one. The administration's first bill in 2021 was Bill 1, a program providing grant assistance to builders only after privately financed and constructed small affordable housing projects on small lots achieve certificate of occupancy. In 2021, the City also established a Private Activity Bond (PAB), the City's first program in 20+ years, through public rulemaking in late 2021, program formation in 2022 with evaluation criteria, public notice and acceptance of applications, followed by the City's award of PABs to two affordable housing projects at the end of 2022.

In early 2021, the Blangiardi administration also established a cross-sector Affordable Housing Working Group that meets bimonthly and brings all the departments and agencies involved in affordable housing together to learn, problem solve, prioritize, innovate and execute on affordable housing initiatives. Mayor Blangiardi attends and leads these meetings with Managing Director Formby.

The Blangiardi administration is now working closely with Governor Josh Green and his affordable housing team to align City and State affordable housing programs and resources to make the systemic changes necessary to significantly increase the construction of affordable housing on O'ahu.

Highlight on: Affordable Housing Projects

- **Waikīkī Vista:** City acquisition of 100+ units for affordable housing
- **Halewai'olu:** Chinatown senior housing project scheduled for opening Fall 2023
- **West Loch Modular:** Construction finalized and fully rented
- **1615 Ala Wai:** Property in condemnation for senior/elderly affordable housing
- **Varona Village:** Preconditions to affordable housing development near completion
- **Mōhala Mai:** Permanent, safe, supportive affordable housing in partnership with the Women's Prisoner Project
- **Kunia Box Car Lot:** Planning and design for an affordable housing project with a child care center
- **Affordable Housing Fund Solicitations:** \$31 million in 2022; mixed fund \$40 million in 2023
- And more: TOD Development and additional acquisitions/planning and design studies

In case you missed it, three projects with affordable housing recently received approval from the Honolulu City Council:

- **Kahoapili Affordable Rental or Affordable and Market Rate For-Sale (Salt Lake)**
 - 190 units with at least 60% affordable rental or for-sale units
 - Solar PV canopy over parking structure
- **Keawalau Affordable Housing Community Project (Waipahu)**
 - 531 affordable rental units (476 units at 60% or below area median income [AMI] and 55 units at 30% or below AMI)
 - Ground floor commercial spaces
- **Ku'ulei Place Mix Use Affordable and Market Rate Housing (Mō'ili'iili)**
 - 603 affordable for-sale units, 402 market rate for-sale units
 - Ground floor commercial spaces

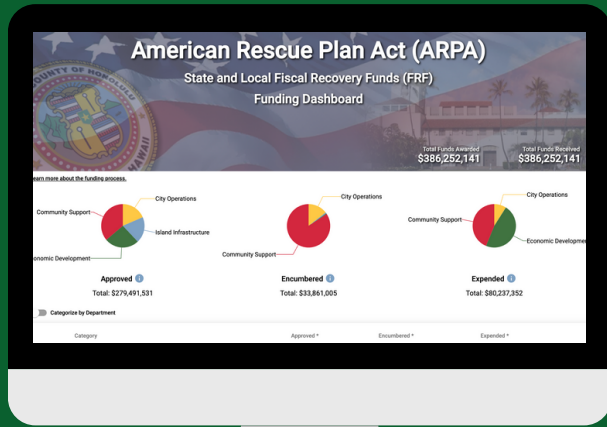


West Loch Modular affordable housing project

State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

AN UPDATE ON THE CITY'S PROGRESS AND VISION

The City and County of Honolulu received \$386 million from the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF) as part of the federal government's \$1.3 trillion American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) package. An overview of ARPA is available at oneoahu.org/frf. Together, the City administration and Honolulu City Council have sought input from City departments, residents, local businesses, and nonprofits on the best way to seek and invest ARPA – including SLFRF - funds.



The City's four (4) priorities for use of these federal relief funds are as follows:

- Provide community support and address economic impacts
- Support equitable economic recovery
- Modernize City operations
- Invest in critical island infrastructure

The City's goal for the allocation and distribution of SLFRF funds is to not only meet the critical needs of our communities, but to also make equitable investments in O'ahu's future and continue to leverage opportunities beyond SLFRF to maximize the value of our investments. Learn more at oneoahu.org/frf.

- **Relief for Non-Profits** - \$30 million: Provide financial assistance to non-profits to mitigate hardships brought on by the pandemic.
- **Funding Affordable Housing on O'ahu** - \$20 million: Additional funding to compliment City affordable housing investments through rehabilitation of existing properties and/or new construction.
- **O'ahu Business Recovery Grants** - \$10 million: These grants will help small businesses recover from pandemic losses.
- **Handi-Van Dispatchers** - \$737,341: Additional dispatchers will assist riders more easily and quickly access Handi-Van services.
- **Rental and Utility Relief Program** – additional \$7 million; net \$38 million in SLFRF funds: This program is vital in keeping our most vulnerable neighbors safely housed.
- **Chinatown Taskforce** - \$1,145,252: Increased police presence to help keep Chinatown safe. This is the continuation of the pandemic Chinatown taskforce.
- **Park Facility Improvements** - \$8 million: Funding for various park facility improvements, youth programs and a park ranger pilot project.
- **Board of Water Supply Kalaeloa Seawater Desalination Facility** - \$25 million: This project will help BWS prepare our freshwater system for the effects of climate change.
- **BWS System improvements** - \$26 million: Funding for a variety of system and security improvements to keep our water system up-to-date and functioning well.



Mayor's Message:

A few words from Rick Blangiardi
The adverse economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our country, state and city and county was unprecedented and far reaching! Consequently, it triggered Federal Financial Aid unlike anything we have ever experienced before in our lifetime, much of it aimed at feeding families, keeping people in their homes, and preventing businesses from closing their doors to curb the soaring unemployment numbers.

The American Rescue Plan Act was a broad and aggressive plan to mitigate financial collapse. The state's allocation of the funds from this plan was received under the banner State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. While the financial impact was experienced differently across all demographics, we targeted the most needy families that were harmed through unemployment, reduction in wages, and an increase in their basic household expenses. We are very proud of the fact that based on national metrics, the City and County of Honolulu was ranked #3 among all US cities in the successful distribution of these funds, and we continue to distribute much needed money to those most in need.



Important Date:

SECTION 8 HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM OPEN WAIT LIST

The City and County of Honolulu is announcing that the **Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program will open its wait list from Monday, February 6 through Friday, February 10.**

If you or someone you know is having difficulty paying rent, the Section 8 program may be able to help. Qualifying individuals or families will see a portion of their rent subsidized by vouchers. Due to the significant demand for Section 8 vouchers, submitted pre-applications will be randomized and 3,000 will be selected through a lottery for placement on the waiting list. Applying for this program is completely free. Applications will be accepted from Monday, February 6 to Friday, February 10. To learn more, visit: www.honolulu.gov/dcs/section-8.html

Report an Issue in Your Community

You can report anything from a pothole to graffiti to a parking violation using the City's **HNL 311** app or website. Visit your phone's app store or honoluluhi.citysourced.com to learn more!

Get Emergency Notifications and City Services Updates

HNL.info is a one stop site for City services from emergency alerts to registering for City activities. Visit the website or download the app today!

Wendy's Wall

On January 24, 2023, Mayor Blangiardi was joined by Councilmember Esther Kia'aina, District 3, members of the Pōhākupu residential neighborhood and representatives of Cotti Foods, the owner of Wendy's Kailua, to break ground on a community requested six-foot concrete wall separating Wendy's Kailua from the adjacent residential community. Cotti Foods started construction of the wall immediately and the neighbors are anticipating the wall will help restore peace and quiet in their residential neighborhood.



THE CITY WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU!

MAYOR'S OFFICE	HONOLULU.GOV/MAYOR	(808)768-4141
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES	HONOLULU.GOV/ENV	(808)768-3486
PARKS DEPARTMENT	HONOLULU.GOV/PARKS	(808)768-3003
COVID-19 INFORMATION	ONEOAHU.ORG	(808)768-2489
SATELLITE CITY HALLS	HONOLULU.GOV/CSD	(808)768-4325
NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION	HONOLULU.GOV/NCO	(808)768-3710
GOLF COURSE & ZOO INFORMATION	HONOLULU.GOV/DES	(808)768-5400