



Hawai'i Community
Development
Authority

January 2026

Community Connection



Board Calendar

February 4

The next HCDA Board meetings will be held. Agendas are post on the website the Thursday before the scheduled Board Meeting.

For more information about HCDA, the public hearings or board meetings visit <https://dbedt.hawaii.gov/hcda/>.



HCDA at the Half-Century Mark

In 1976, amid broad changes in Hawai'i's urban landscape, the Hawai'i State Legislature created the Hawai'i Community Development Authority (HCDA), a forward-looking agency tasked with redevelopment through public-private partnerships. As HCDA marks its 50th anniversary, it is an opportunity to reflect on how far this unique state agency has come and how its work continues to shape communities across the islands.

From Vision to Reality: How HCDA Began

Back in the mid-1970s, lawmakers viewed neglected areas of Hawai'i, particularly in central urban Honolulu, not as liabilities, but as opportunities for meaningful renewal. One of HCDA's earliest missions was to breathe new life into the then-underutilized Kaka'ako area. By designating Kaka'ako as the first "Community Development District," the Legislature empowered HCDA to plan for housing, parks, open spaces and commercial growth in ways that had not previously been possible.

Over the ensuing decades, HCDA's role expanded well beyond Kaka'ako. In 2002, HCDA took on the redevelopment of the Kalaeloa Community Development District, a 3,700-acre former naval base with significant potential for new homes and jobs. The Legislature later added He'eia, transit-oriented development zones and Pūlehunui on Maui, transforming what began as a singular mission into a multifaceted statewide effort.

Building Blocks of Better Communities

Infrastructure: The Foundation Beneath Growth

HCDA's work often begins long before construction crews arrive, with careful planning and investment in infrastructure needed to support vibrant, well-functioning communities.

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Infrastructure

To support future housing and mixed-use areas near transit, HCDA is advancing major TOD infrastructure efforts on O'ahu, including:

- East Kapolei infrastructure master planning
- University of Hawai'i West O'ahu road and utility installation, supporting approximately 500 initial housing units, with capacity to serve up to 1,500 units.
- Electrical infrastructure improvements in Iwilei-Kapālama, supporting thousands of potential homes in planned nearby public and private developments.

Kalaeloa Electrical Upgrades

In the Kalaeloa Community Development District, a long-awaited electrical modernization project launched in 2025, backed by over \$39 million in combined funding from the U.S. Navy and state appropriations. This critical investment lays the groundwork for future housing, job creation and economic development.

Together, these projects illustrate how HCDA's work is often least visible, but absolutely essential. Providing the modern roads, utilities and services that make housing and commerce possible.



50 Years of Community

(Continued)

Parks, Open Space and Quality of Life

HCDA's influence extends beyond housing and infrastructure. A dramatic example comes from Kaka'ako's transformation over the years.

Parks and Public Space Growth

When HCDA's first plans for Kaka'ako were developed, the area had just 1.7 acres of parks. Today, that has grown to over 47 acres of public parkland, offering residents and visitors space to gather, play and enjoy Hawai'i's outdoors.

Building Homes for Hawai'i's Families

At its core, HCDA's work is about creating places where people can live, work and thrive. While HCDA is not a housing agency, it serves as the state's redevelopment authority, crafting community-driven plans and rules that guide community building from underground up.

Affordable Housing Where There Was None

In the early decades of redevelopment, HCDA helped create over 1,300 affordable housing units in Kaka'ako, demonstrating the power of long-term planning and public-private partnerships. By 2025, the district included more than 10 times that number of residential units overall.



Kaka'ako Housing Growth

Over the past decade, the residential units in the Kaka'ako Community Development District more than doubled to over 13,300 units, with approximately one in three designated as affordable under HCDA's reserved housing requirements.

HCDA is advancing future initiatives such as supportive senior housing, mixed-use community space with affordable housing and a 99-year leasehold pilot program designed to make homeownership more attainable for Hawai'i residents.

These efforts reflect a long-term commitment to mixed-income communities, where affordable housing is integrated into complete, walkable neighborhoods.

Looking Ahead: Planning for Future Generations

As HCDA looks to the future, its planning continues to evolve alongside Hawai'i's needs.



Collaborative planning

Across its districts, HCDA works closely with community members, developers, state and county agencies and regulatory partners as part of a long-range approach to building resilient, people-centered neighborhoods.

Strategic Focus on Resilient Communities

HCDA has facilitated both market-rate and affordable housing in Kaka'ako - between the Capitol District and Waikīki - helping limit urban sprawl by building upward rather than outward. Updated strategic plans emphasize resilient infrastructure, long-range planning and transit-focused development that supports walkable, connected and equitable communities.

HCDA's embrace of transit-oriented development reflects a broader mission: moving beyond revitalizing underutilized industrial areas to supporting infrastructure that anchors sustainable growth around future transit corridors.

Cultural and Environmental Stewardship

Integral to HCDA's planning and decision-making are cultural and environmental stewardship.

Across its community development districts, the authority works to balance development with respect for Hawai'i's natural resources, cultural practices and Native Hawaiian rights. In He'ea, HCDA supports initiatives that incorporate cultural restoration and sustainable agriculture. In Kalaeloa and Kaka'ako, HCDA has conducted Ka Pa'akai analyses to identify and consider potential impacts on traditional and customary practices, cultural resources and the environment. Together, these efforts reflect a commitment to thoughtful, place-based planning rooted in Hawai'i's history, values and long-term resilience.



A Shared Legacy

Fifty years on, HCDA's story is not just about buildings and roads, but communities that grow together. From affordable homes that help residents stay in Hawai'i, to essential infrastructure enabling future growth, to parks and public spaces that enrich daily life, HCDA's impact is woven into the fabric of Hawai'i's urban and suburban landscapes.

Here's to the future - to planning thoughtfully, building sustainably and keeping Hawai'i's people at the heart of community development.

