

# MAYOR'S Highlights



MARCH 2024

*Rick Blangiardi*



## This Month's Highlights

- Mayor Blangiardi's town hall meetings return!
- Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg visits O'ahu
- The City's first climate adaptation strategy is adopted by the City Council
- Mayor Blangiardi commemorates Black History Month in Honolulu

## Mark Your Calendars!

### Mayor's Town Halls Return for 2024

In early 2023, Mayor Rick Blangiardi embarked on what he often described as a "journey of learning" — an 11-week tour of town hall meetings that featured stops in every City Council district across the island, allowing the mayor to answer questions and listen to concerns from residents in different neighborhoods.

On more than one occasion, an issue that came to the mayor's attention during a town hall meeting resulted in meaningful action. Last fall, after hearing from residents at the town hall in

Lā'ie, Mayor Blangiardi released \$1.5 million funds to begin the long-overdue planning and design of a swimming pool and recreation center at Kahuku District Park. And this month, the City is preparing to announce a historic partnership that will allow a local non-profit to revitalize the area along the Pearl Harbor Historic Trail, with a focus on generating community involvement — the direct result of feedback from the town halls.

Given the success of the meetings last year, and how important they proved to be for Mayor Blangiardi and his team, we are thrilled to announce that our town hall meetings are returning for 2024!

The town hall calendar for 2024 makes a concerted effort to reach different neighborhoods than were reached a year ago — if the 2023 meetings were held in 'Ewa Beach or Kāne'ohe, the meetings in those regions this year are being held in Kapolei and Kailua. And each meeting also features members of the mayor's leadership team, so if you have questions about things like City parks and playgrounds or the Department of Planning and Permitting, your answers can be answered right there on the spot!

Take a look at the calendar of meetings below, and sign up for more information about each meeting by scanning the QR code!



### Town Hall Meeting Calendar



- 1. Kapolei, 'Ewa Beach, Makakilo**  
Date: Thursday, March 21, 2024  
Time: 6:30 p.m.  
Location: Kapolei High School
- 2. Kailua, Kāne'ohe, Waimānalo**  
Date: Thursday, March 28, 2024  
Time: 6:30 p.m.  
Location: Kailua Intermediate School
- 3. Salt Lake, 'Aiea, Pearl City**  
Date: Thursday, April 4, 2024  
Time: 6:30 p.m.  
Location: Salt Lake District Park Gymnasium
- 4. Wahiawa, Mililani, Mililani Mauka**  
Date: Thursday, April 11, 2024  
Time: 7:00 p.m.  
Location: Wahiawa Elementary
- 5. Downtown, Chinatown, Kalihi**  
Date: Thursday, April 18, 2024  
Time: 6:30 p.m.  
Location: Ke'elikōlani Middle School
- 6. Mānoa, Urban Honolulu, Waikīki**  
Date: Thursday, April 25, 2024  
Time: 6:30 p.m.  
Location: Mānoa District Park Gymnasium
- 7. Nānākuli, Wai'anae, Mākaha**  
Date: Thursday, May 2, 2024  
Time: 7:00 p.m.  
Location: Nānāikapono Elementary
- 8. Waiāluā, Hale'iwa, Pūpūkeā**  
Date: Thursday, May 16, 2024  
Time: 7:00 p.m.  
Location: Waiāluā Elementary School
- 9. Hawai'i Kai, Kahala, East Honolulu**  
Date: Thursday, May 23, 2024  
Time: 6:30 p.m.  
Location: Koko Head District Park Gymnasium
- 10. Hau'ula, Kahuku, Lā'ie, Kahalu'u**  
Date: Thursday, May 30, 2024  
Time: 7:00 p.m.  
Location: Hau'ula Elementary School
- 11. Waipi'o, Waikele, Waipahū**  
Date: Thursday, June 6, 2024  
Time: 6:30 p.m.  
Location: Kanoelani Elementary School





## Secretary Buttigieg Heads To Honolulu

Honolulu Mayor Rick Blangiardi met with the nation’s top transit leader, US Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, alongside HART CEO and Executive Director Lori Kahikina and Department of Transportation Services Director Roger Morton. The group embarked on a tour that included the Rail Operation Center (ROC) in Pearl City, to see the state-of-the-art technology used to operate the only automated rail line in the country, followed by a ride on Skyline from Leeward Community College to Aloha Stadium.

Mayor Blangiardi’s ride with Secretary Buttigieg along the elevated rail route’s 11-mile western half occurred two weeks after City and federal officials signed the project’s amended Full Funding Grant Agreement, a milestone that will help unlock approximately \$744 million in long-withheld Federal Transit Administration funds for the Skyline. The funds are crucial for the completion of the current phase of the rail project.

Secretary Buttigieg shared his strong support for the project and praised Mayor Blangiardi’s proactive engagement with federal authorities, signifying a renewed commitment to advancing Honolulu’s transit infrastructure and addressing long-standing challenges.

## Welcome Aboard, Andy!



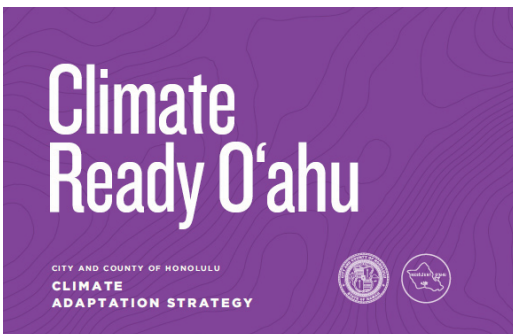
Last month, Mayor Blangiardi appointed Andy Sugg as his new Chief of Staff. With an extensive background in local media, Sugg brings a wealth of experience to his new role and will help the administration operate with an increased sense of urgency to deliver on behalf of the people of O’ahu.

Sugg’s background in the news industry and his familiarity with the intricacies of City affairs make him well-suited to navigate the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

Originally hailing from Buffalo, New York, Sugg is a St. Lawrence University graduate with a bachelor’s degree in English.

### Three Things About Andy:

- 1 Andy is a diehard fan of the Buffalo Bills and Manchester City.
- 2 He has run an impressive seven marathons, including five in Boston plus one each in Honolulu and Chicago.
- 3 His wife, Lisa, loves playing tennis and is looking forward to doing that outdoors year-round in Hawai’i, and his two children, Ben and Sam, are both looking forward to visiting the islands once again after doing internships here during their college years.



## City Council Adopts Climate Ready O’ahu

Late last month, the Honolulu City Council unanimously passed Resolution 24-16, adopting the City and County of Honolulu’s first-ever climate adaptation strategy, Climate Ready O’ahu, as a guiding policy document for the City. Climate adaptation is about proactively preparing for — and finding ways to avoid — the impacts of our changing climate.

The strategy focuses on O’ahu’s most pressing climate hazards: sea level rise and coastal erosion, rising temperatures and extreme heat, flash flooding, drought and wildfire, and hurricanes.

It outlines a vision for a climate-ready future and features dozens of actions we can

implement now to prepare, safeguard, and support our island community.

“This essential strategy affirms our commitment to keep our people, land, and infrastructure safe, and for future generations,” said Mayor Rick Blangiardi. “Climate change is increasingly impacting every facet of life, which is why we made adaptation a priority. Through the actions laid out in this strategy, we now have a clear path as to how the City, community and individuals can work together to address climate equity and protect what we love.”

Read the strategy and discover actions you can take at [climateredyoahu.org](https://climateredyoahu.org)







## Black History Month (Honolulu Hale) February 6, 2024

Mayor Blangiardi proudly issued a proclamation celebrating Black History Month at a ceremony held in the Honolulu Hale courtyard. Several Black American leaders from our community spoke at the event, highlighting the key contributions of Black Americans to Hawai'i's history and culture.



## Ehime Maru Memorial Ceremony, 23rd Anniversary (Kaka'ako) February 9, 2024

Mayor Blangiardi attended the 23rd anniversary of the Ehime Maru tragedy on O'ahu, honoring the lives lost in the maritime collision between a Japanese fisheries training vessel and the USS Greeneville submarine. The ceremony served as a poignant reminder of the importance of maritime safety and strengthening international relations between Japan and the United States.



## Manila Sister City (Mayor's Office) February 15, 2024

Mayor Blangiardi was delighted to sign a declaration renewing sister city relations between the City of Manila and the City and County of Honolulu. The relationship has been going strong since being established March 19, 1980, and has since fostered cultural, educational and economic exchanges.



## 53rd Senior Valentine Dance (Honolulu) Feb. 6, 2024

A sea of red filled the Blaisdell Exhibition Hall for the 53rd Senior Valentine Dance put on by the City's Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). Members from DPR's 32 Senior Clubs from across the island turned out to enjoy great music, fellowship, and the opportunity to show-off their dance moves!



## 40th Great Aloha Run (Honolulu) Feb. 19, 2024

Mayor Blangiardi led the countdown to start the 40th Great Aloha Run. Thousands made their way through the 8.15-mile course from Aloha Tower to Aloha Stadium in what has become a fun and rewarding tradition for runners, walkers, and wheelchair racers alike. Congratulations to all of this year's finishers! Bravo!



## Bill 40 Signing Ceremony (Kalihi) Feb. 16, 2024

Mayor Blangiardi participated in a signing ceremony for Bill 40, which provides \$10,000 in annual grant funding for eligible local businesses impacted by the construction of Skyline, the City's rail transit project.

Councilmembers Tyler Dos Santos-Tam and Radiant Cordero — who each represent portions of the Kalihi community — introduced the bill to alleviate the financial strain on businesses caused by traffic disruptions related to rail construction.

Bill 40 will provide yearly grants of up to \$10,000 to businesses that:

- Have fewer than 15 employees
- Generate less than \$750,000 in annual revenue
- Are located within one block of active construction
- Were open for business prior to January 1, 2022.

Grants will continue to be available for businesses along the rail line as construction continues toward Civic Center Station and, eventually, Ala Moana Center.



## Our Commitment to the City's LGBTQ+ Community

In an ongoing effort to be inclusive and understanding of all valuable community members of O'ahu, two key City departments who interact extensively with the public are undertaking LGBTQ+ sensitivity training.



The Honolulu Liquor Commission recently held in-person training sessions available for its entire staff, conducted by the Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (H3RC). The goal is to educate and inform liquor commission employees on how to treat everyone with respect and dignity in any and all circumstances.

Meanwhile, the Department of Customer Services is also collaborating with the LGBTQ+ community to begin training this month for employees at its driver's licensing centers, satellite city halls and public communication offices. The training will instruct staff to use an individual's chosen names and gender pronouns when renewing a driver's license or registration, and ensure those preferences are reflected with professionalism and courtesy during transactions — making sure that the department's motto of "Service with Aloha" extends to everyone.

## Working For You

Mahalo to the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Department of Facility Maintenance, who work tirelessly every day to improve our City facilities and public spaces. Left, the restriping of the Pensacola bike lane, and right, dugout improvements at Kilauea District Park by Gregory Hee. Thank you!



Before



After



Before



After

## The Pursuit of Happiness

Honolulu has been named one of the Happiest Cities in the U.S. by personal finance company WalletHub. WalletHub compared the 150 most populated American cities and examined key indicators of happiness in a number of different categories, including Emotional & Physical Well-Being, Income & Employment, and Community & Environment. Honolulu excelled in the Community & Environment category, ranking first, and also received strong marks for low depression rates and low separation and divorce rates.

## Introducing The O'ahu Business Connector

For the past several years, the City's Resource Connectors have been going door-to-door across the island to talk with more than 3,000 small business owners. They've heard about the frustrations and pitfalls of an unpredictable economy during and after the pandemic, and they've also seen the resilience and hope that drive small businesses to chase their dreams.

Inspired by those stories and using data from business sources, the Office of Economic Revitalization is launching the O'ahu Business Connector (OBC) this month. It's the City's first comprehensive program to help small businesses grow and create good jobs for our community.

One of the biggest innovations is [oahubusinessconnector.org](http://oahubusinessconnector.org), where companies can get referrals to more than 70 service organizations with specialties in digital marketing, business strategy, staffing, and more. The OBC program also includes the ongoing work of the Resource Connectors, who are also hosting resource hubs across O'ahu that provide in-person help for online entrepreneurs or at-home businesses. The OBC website includes how-to videos on topics like small business funding, an online calendar, and a weekly newsletter with workshops and classes.

To learn how the OBC will help small businesses visit [oahubusinessconnector.org](http://oahubusinessconnector.org), email [obc@honolulu.gov](mailto:obc@honolulu.gov), or call (808) 768-2622.

## Report An Issue

Have an issue in your community? Report anything, from potholes to graffiti, using the City's 311 program — available now via mobile app or <http://www.honoluluhi.citysourced.com>



## Sign Up For City Updates

**HNL.info** is your one-stop shop for updates from the City! Sign up today to receive emergency alerts, service notifications and information about registering for City activities.



## Get In Touch Today!

**Mayor's Office**  
[honolulu.gov/mayor](http://honolulu.gov/mayor)  
 (808) 768-4141

**Satellite City Halls**  
[honolulu.gov/csd](http://honolulu.gov/csd)  
 (808) 768-4325

**Trash Pick-Up Service**  
[honolulu.gov/env](http://honolulu.gov/env)  
 (808) 768-3486

**Golf Course & Zoo Information**  
[honolulu.gov/des](http://honolulu.gov/des)  
 (808) 768-5400

**Parks and Recreation**  
[honolulu.gov/parks](http://honolulu.gov/parks)  
 (808) 768-3003

**Neighborhood Boards**  
[honolulu.gov/nco](http://honolulu.gov/nco)  
 (808) 768-3710