

**RES24-017**  
**Testimony**

**MISC. COMM. 165**

COUNCIL

## **COUNCIL Meeting**

Meeting Date: Apr 17, 2024 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 0

Oppose: 12

I wish to comment: 2

Name: Seth Kamemoto	Email: skamemoto@gmail.com	Zip: 96822
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Apr 12, 2024 @ 01:48 PM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>I am a Honolulu resident opposed to the city selling Piikoi mini-park to a developer, especially with no strings attached. The developer stands to profit handsomely from this transaction, with only a tiny contribution to a park fund, and the development itself could easily reduce the urban green space currently being provided by this park.</p> <p>The only reason this property is not worth more than \$1M is that it's zoned P-2 and being used as a park. I can only assume that this developer will use 201H to exempt zoning and allow residential apartments. This will reduce urban green space in an area that's already extremely lacking in green space.</p> <p>The city shouldn't just sell it for \$112k "as-is"; the city should attach a covenant so that they would either: 1) share in any appreciation the developer would realize if converting to an apartment complex, and/or 2) demand that equivalent (at least publicly-visible) urban green space be provided if the property were developed.</p> <p>What is the carbon (and other air pollution) absorption and cooling provided by that one single large tree? I bet it would be surprising, especially compared to the concrete building that will probably replace it.</p> <p>For only \$112k, the city might be able to find another organization willing to buy the property and maintain it as urban green space. Please don't be in such a rush to vote for something that probably would destroy desperately needed urban green space.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration, Seth Kamemoto</p>		
Name: Patti Choy	Email: halamango@gmail.com	Zip: 96821
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Apr 14, 2024 @ 07:59 AM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>I oppose this resolution.</p>		
Name: Amanda Kirby	Email: kirby.a.elizabeth@gmail.com	Zip: 96822
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Apr 14, 2024 @ 08:55 AM
Name: Adam Strubeck	Email: adam.strubeck@gmail.com	Zip: 96822
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Apr 14, 2024 @ 02:02 PM
Name: Lahela Mattos	Email: lahelakm@hawaii.edu	Zip: 96814
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Apr 15, 2024 @ 11:14 AM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>Pi'ikoi mini park was an essential greenspace for me during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the park is one of the only open greenspaces left in the area. Living in a one-bedroom unit on Laula way, I received little to no sunlight due to the surrounding structures and density of space. Pi'ikoi mini park was within a walkable distance from me and allowed me to connect with nature which is essential as a Native Hawaiian. I oppose the sale of Pi'ikoi mini park because it is an essential greenspace for nearby urban residents. The park allows nearby residents to have recreational and environmental space which is essential due to the density of the area. The proposed sale significantly undervalues the space and takes valuable resources away from residents.</p>		

Name: Mark Van Horne	Email: mrvh49@yahoo.com	Zip: 96822
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Apr 15, 2024 @ 03:49 PM
Testimony: Let's not destroy Pi'ikoi Street Mini Park, that welcome patch of greenery in the Makiki neighborhood near the freeway for the benefit of but a single profit-seeking entity. And for only \$112,000? What a loss to the community it would be. That 5,000 square feet of unpaved-over soil absorbs 50% of the rain that falls on it, and half of that infiltrates deep to help replenish our underground water supply. If that land were built upon, 55% of rain would be lost to runoff and only 15% would find its way below the surface.  I live on the 1500 block of Pi'ikoi Street; when I walk by the park on my way to and from my job I am both uplifted by the sight of that magnificent tree and saddened that we have failed our unhoused brothers and sisters in that area. But "developing" that parcel will not help the homeless; let us address that problem head-on. And let us preserve, cherish, and improve that bit of valuable green space called Pi'ikoi Street Mini Park.		
Name: Van Wishingrad	Email: vanjoshua@gmail.com	Zip: 96822
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Apr 16, 2024 @ 07:34 AM
Testimony: Please do not sell our parks. We have very little green space left in Makiki. Another high cost development isn't going to solve the housing crisis.		
Name: Nikhil Khurana	Email: ninjanikhil@gmail.com	Zip: 96814
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Apr 16, 2024 @ 08:19 AM
Testimony: Dear Council Members,  I heavily oppose the sale of pi'ikoi mini park. This is an essential green space within the city and up the street from my house.  The park houses trees, brings retreat from the hot sun in an increasingly concrete neighborhood, and provides a space for our Houseless neighbors to retreat to.  The city should not be seeking public land to private developers, public land, especially park space that is a valuable and finite resource in Honolulu, on an island.  And for what reason? The profit of a single developer to add yet another high rise to that crowded neighborhood. I oppose this bill because the people in the neighborhood need this space, not to lose the only sunlight and green space they have access to, the Houseless folk need more support, not to be kicked out and struggle to find other places for respite.  Absolutely under no circumstance should this sale go through!  Sincerely, Nikhil Khurana		
Name: Peter Koulogeorge	Email: pkoulogeorge@gmail.com	Zip: 96825
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Apr 16, 2024 @ 09:07 AM
Testimony: I am opposed to the city selling Piikoi mini-park. The decision to sell this park to a private developer will sacrifice valuable land that is an asset to the public. Green space is essential for our community, environmentally and socially, and it should be retained		

whenever possible.

Name: Ian Ross	Email: ianross@wcchc.com	Zip: 96826
Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Apr 16, 2024 @ 03:40 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Councilmembers,

My name is Ian Ross, and I serve as the Chair of the Makiki/Lower Punchbowl/Tantalus Neighborhood Board. I submit comments on RES24-017 regarding the proposed sale of Pi'ikoi Mini Park, a crucial matter for our neighbors.

Pi'ikoi Mini Park, though small at nearly 5,000 sq ft, has long been a center of community discussion due to persistent nuisance and crime issues. However, the proposed sale to RV Ventures for \$112,000 raises significant concerns among our residents about both the preservation of public green spaces in our community and proper use of city resources.

While the park has challenges, selling public land to private interests, especially at a price that might be perceived as below market value given the scarcity of green spaces in town, deserves thorough the opportunity for discussion at our Neighborhood Board. As such, I respectfully request that the City Council defer voting on this matter at this time to allow for more comprehensive community discussion and feedback.

We are addressing this topic at our Neighborhood Board meeting tomorrow, April 18th, at 6 PM. I encourage a deferral to post this date, allowing us to gather and consider community perspectives effectively and provide feedback from the community most affected by this proposed sale.

Thank you for considering the voices and concerns of the community.

Mahalo,

Ian Ross

Chair, Makiki/Lower Punchbowl/Tantalus Neighborhood Board

Name: Winston Welch	Email: winston@outdoorcircle.org	Zip: 96815
Representing: The Outdoor Circle	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Apr 16, 2024 @ 09:30 PM

Name: Makana Hicks	Email: m.makana.h@gmail.com	Zip: 96822
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Apr 16, 2024 @ 10:15 PM

Testimony:

While there's nothing wrong with the sale of this park per se, the manner and price at which it is done smack of favoritism if not outright corruption. The sale should be conducted on the open market.

Name: Jen Li	Email: jmima808@outlook.com	Zip: 96822
Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Apr 17, 2024 @ 01:56 AM

Testimony:

I am a longtime resident of Makiki, having lived on the block where Piikoi Street Mini Park is located for over 30 years. I have witnessed firsthand the evolution of this green space from a neglected area to a site marred by illegal activities and neglect.

As a child, I have vivid memories of walking past this park daily on my way to school and can attest to its historical underutilization and the decline it has faced over time. The lack of amenities has rendered it inconvenient for most residents, leading to minimal

community use. Over the years, it has unfortunately devolved into a site for illicit activities, becoming a concern for public safety and well-being.

One of the most troubling aspects of this park's current state is the nighttime disturbances. I, along with my neighbors, frequently hear loud fights and screaming coming from the park, which creates an atmosphere of fear and unease. It's disheartening to witness the deterioration of what was once a quiet and peaceful area.

I was initially supportive upon learning of the city's decision to sell this property, seeing it as an opportunity to revitalize a space that has sadly become more of a liability than a community asset. However, my enthusiasm was tempered upon reviewing the terms of the proposed sale. I was surprised to discover that the park is slated to be sold for a modest sum of \$112,000 to the potential buyer, who also owns the adjacent property. It is my understanding that the accompanying terms of the resolution could allow for future rezoning and redevelopment. While I acknowledge the need for revitalization, I am troubled by the potential for the new owner to profit substantially from these changes.

My concern lies in the transparency and equity of this process. While I fully endorse the repurposing of this space for a more beneficial community use, such as affordable housing, I believe the terms of the sale should be revisited. I firmly believe that the sale of public assets, especially those with potential for significant redevelopment, should be conducted through a competitive bidding process. This would ensure fair market value for the property and offer an opportunity for a range of community stakeholders and developers to contribute their vision for the space.

In summary, while I support the sale of Piikoi Street Mini Park, I urge the City Council to reconsider the terms of the sale. Thank you for your time and consideration of my concerns regarding this important matter.

Name: Barryn Chun	Email: barryn.chun@gmail.com	Zip: 96744
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: Apr 17, 2024 @ 09:36 AM

Testimony:  
I am strongly opposed to selling out land that is currently a public resource for our community, to a private entity whose main line of business is investment/rental properties.

4/14/24

ATTN: Honolulu City Council

Aloha,

Please find attached my letter of disagreement for the approval of sale of Piikoi Street Mini Park (RES24-017).

Mahalo,

Amanda Kirby

PH:+1 214 714 7077

[kirby.a.elizabeth@gmail.com](mailto:kirby.a.elizabeth@gmail.com)

I am writing to voice my concern and disagreement with the potential sale of the Piikoi Mini Park.

I am a resident of Makiki and live at 1011 Prospect St, Honolulu HI 96822. I work in Makiki as a social services Case Manager at a local nonprofit. I am the Vice President of Makiki Community Garden, and Vice President of the Honolulu Community Garden Council. I have a bachelors of science degree from Washington State University in Agricultural Economics. I spent 2 years in the Peace Corps in Sustainable Agricultural work in rural Senegal, West Africa.

The proposed selling of Piikoi Mini Park is not in the best interest of the community for multiple reasons;

The park is currently zoned P-2. In 2024 it was tax assessed at \$15,200 under Property Class "Preservation", found by the TMK # 24020056. The proposed selling price of \$112,000 is estimating land value assuming a zoning change, likely residential after seeing the history of RV ventures LTD.

RV Ventures LTD is not a responsible land owner. RV Venture's mauka properties both are over the 75% impervious surface area limit due to cementing over both lots. As show on Department of Planning and Permitting website, "What does impervious surface area of the lot must not exceed 75% of the zoning lot area mean? The total paved area including driveways shall not cover more than 75% of the lot." Impervious surface area restricts ground water infiltration and increase the local heat index.

The removal of the Piikoi Mini Park will increase the heat index. As shown on the Oahu Community Heat Map created by The Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency, the Piikoi Mini Park during afternoon hours is a catalyst for lowering the temperate on average by 5-9 degrees.

The City's Budget and Fiscal Services Deputy Director Carrie Castle states "It's a remnant property, there is no use" per KHON2 interview posted April 3, 2024. This land has a use, which is why it is called Piikoi Mini Park. Mini Parks account for 33 of the 300 parks on Oahu. This land use, as seen in tax documents, google maps, City and County funding is a P-2 Preservation Mini Park. That is its use. Department of Parks and Recreation state on their homepage of their website "Everyone in our department is dedicated to keeping our island green, our residents and visitors happy and our facilities operating. Enjoy the outdoors and remember, "We Add Quality to Life!"' The Department of Parks and Recreation are going directly against their Government mandated responsibility if they believe selling a public park is in the community's best interest.



There is a large Monkey Pod tree on the Piikoi Mini Park Property. We have reached out to Trees for Honolulu's Future for comment and support in protecting this tree. Honolulu falls behind most major cities, as Honolulu only has 20% canopy cover. Canopy cover is the shade and temperature regulation that trees create.

The above information is environmental. Social Services and Homelessness is a big reason why this Mini-Park is trying to be sold.

Partners in Care coalition, the cornerstone nonprofit in helping homelessness on Oahu, list the 18 shelters on Oahu. Currently, 6 adult vacancies, and 5 youth vacancies across all of Oahu. The 2023 'Point In Time Count' (homeless persons census) shows 4028 individuals on Oahu. 2500 of those are currently unsheltered. 1500 are in some sort of shelter. Honolulu County is acting post-problem, by shutting down, removing, selling shelter land, and lowering contract amounts to nonprofits who use housing vouchers. Social service workers cannot house homeless persons with no housing options. Our hands are tied behind our backs with limited funding and a free-market rate skyrocketing out of control. My limit to find a single person housing in a studio is \$1473 a month. We are fighting against market rate increases as high as \$2300 for a studio, landlords requesting 3 times rent for income, and unlawful discrimination against vouchers. There will continue to be homeless on Oahu until Honolulu County wants to fix the problem. Closing the Piikoi Mini Park will not change the fact there are still 4028 people, neighbors, community like you and I, still homeless on Oahu. The City and County cannot use homelessness as an excuse to privately sell a public good when it is City and County's lack responsibility causing these problems.

There are 34,253 empty housing units on Oahu.

The increase in crime is not the Piikoi Mini-Park's fault. The community of Makiki sees HPD park in groups, 3-4 cars at a time, to socialize with each other each night. At local non profits, like the one on Keeaumoku. The ACLU vs HPD lawsuit is well known, as is the protest HPD is silently preforming by not interacting or pursuing crime involving homeless persons. It is hard working in social services, when people feel more comfortable calling us about homeless persons crime and violence, then leaving my office hearing 6+ cops showing each other TikToks and Facebook Videos. The issue of congregating police is widely known, seen, and when mentioned, community is retaliated against through lack of care and support by those officers.

To conclude;

The park is underutilized because the responsible party is underserving. I strongly ask to decline the sale of Piikoi Mini Park.

## Testimony Opposed to RES24-017

I am a resident of Makiki opposed to the city selling Pi'ikoi Mini-Park to the abutting landowner. Publicly accessible green space should be maintained in high-density urban neighborhoods, not sold off to private parties.

Res. 24-107 identifies the subject lot as both "Pi'ikoi Mini Park" and "Road Remnant Lot 46." A previous resolution pertaining to "Mini-Parks" defines them as follows;

**"WHEREAS, mini parks are small landscaped areas established to provide passive or pedestrian-oriented recreational needs in high-density neighborhoods." (RES. 19-250)**

Conveniently, this definition of Mini-Parks is left out of Res. 24-017.

The Pi'ikoi Mini-Park is located in census tract 34.06. Except for the Makiki Shopping Village (zoned B-1 commercial) and Pi'ikoi Mini-Park (zoned P-2 preservation), the entirety of census tract 34.06 is zoned A-2 (medium density apartment district). This census tract alone has 452 housing units without vehicles, suggesting there is a significant amount of pedestrian circulation in the area (Food Research Atlas, 2019). This statistic indicates a need for pedestrian-oriented, publicly accessible green spaces. Furthermore, the median household income (~\$66,000) is below the county average, while the poverty rate (11.7%) is above the county average (Food Research Atlas, 2019). Communities with these characteristics should be prioritized for publicly accessible green spaces, not viewed as candidates for the disposal of public property.

The high level of urbanization in the vicinity of Pi'ikoi Mini-Park presents a challenge of managing urban heat (Heat Watch Report, 2019). The O'ahu Community Heat Map shows the area occupied by Pi'ikoi Mini-Park as 5-7 degrees cooler than the surrounding area, which has a dangerously high Heat Index (see Figure 1). The coincidence of a highly developed neighborhood with a socially vulnerable population indicate the importance of Pi'ikoi Mini-Park as critical public infrastructure for managing urban heat.



*Figure 1 – Afternoon Heat Index in Vicinity of Pi'ikoi Mini-Park*

While the trees larger than 6-inches in diameter are protected via the Punchbowl Special District Section (Sec. 21-9.50) of the Land Use Ordinance, the trees could still be removed if “Appropriate development of the site cannot be achieved without removal of the tree.” (Sec. 21-9.50-4(E)(8)(b)).

The City and County of Honolulu Urban Tree Plan (2019) highlights the myriad benefits of municipal trees, from environmental to social and economic benefits. Environmental benefits include improved water quality, improved air quality, stabilized temperatures, and wildlife habitat. Social benefits include aesthetics, active and passive recreation opportunities, educational opportunities, and physical/mental health. Notably, the plan states:

“Trees reduce mental fatigue, help people relax, and reduce aggression. They also bring people together outdoors, increasing surveillance, and discouraging criminals. Trees also provide educational opportunities and value. Parks with trees and other environmental features can function as an open classroom where children and adults can learn about different plant and animal species, ecosystems, and the natural environment (p.8).” Even if the trees are preserved, removing public access to this green space will limit the public benefits received.

In summary, the Pi‘ikoi Mini-Park provides a multitude of environmental and social benefits to the community as a publicly accessible greenspace. These greenspaces are critical pieces of public infrastructure and should be valued as such. It would not be in the best interests of residents or the county to sell the park to a private landowner, whose motivations for the future of the park are unclear.

Thank You,

Adam Strubeck

## References

City and County of Honolulu Urban Tree Plan (2019) Department of Parks and Recreation Division of Urban Forestry.

[https://www.honolulu.gov/rep/site/dpr/duf\\_docs/Urban\\_Tree\\_Plan\\_Final\\_Draft.pdf](https://www.honolulu.gov/rep/site/dpr/duf_docs/Urban_Tree_Plan_Final_Draft.pdf)

Food Access Research Atlas. USDA ERS - Food Access Research Atlas. (2019).

<https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/>

Heat Watch Report, Honolulu, Hawaii. (2019) CAPA Strategies, LLC

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tHSMOETsOv-\\_PAb10OYtAv7iIer8StLu/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tHSMOETsOv-_PAb10OYtAv7iIer8StLu/view)

O‘ahu Community Heat Map. (2019) City & County of Honolulu Office of Climate Change, Sustainability & Resiliency

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=ff1b73d836074cf6b2aca420ffbd930>

Resolution 19-250 Requesting Adoption of Alternative Uses for Kamalii Mini Park and Removal of This Site from the City’s Parks Inventory. (2019)

[https://honolulu.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view\\_id=3&clip\\_id=1184&meta\\_id=115481](https://honolulu.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=3&clip_id=1184&meta_id=115481)

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May 16, 2024

RE: Opposition to sale of Pi'ikoi Mini Park, Agenda Item RES24-017

Dear Chair Waters and City Council Members,

The Outdoor Circle has worked tirelessly advocating for open and green spaces in our crowded city for 112 years and we wish to express our opposition to selling a green space respite P-2 zoned public asset that should simply remain public and used as a park as it has been for decades.

Before you now is a resolution to sell a “remnant” piece of property which is currently a park to the adjoining developer. How does the public benefit from this in any way? While we understand that the lot has not always been properly cared for in certain ways, but the solution is better outreach to homeless people, better policing and further activating the park, such as a mini dog-park or some such use.

Furthermore, the sale price is a fraction of what the property is worth, and will become a private park (at best) under this scenario, but perhaps developed in other ways that we cannot envision now.

This is the only green space in the area, tiny as it is. Written testimony you have received on this has been unanimous in opposition to the sale, including from the Neighborhood Board chair asking you to halt this sale. This mini-park absolutely has a use and is a vital piece of this neighborhood's infrastructure. A sale like this would also set a horrible precedent for the future and just says that we cannot or will not maintain our public spaces, especially those designed for respite and green.

Please do not approve the sale of this mini-park.

Thank you for your consideration,

Winston Welch, Executive Director