REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGY & ENTERTAINMENT

Voting Members:
Augie Tulba, Chair; Andria Tupola, Vice Chair;
Esther Kia'āina, Scott Y. Nishimoto, Val A. Okimoto

Committee Meeting Held
March 6, 2025

Honorable Tommy Waters
Chair, City Council
City and County of Honolulu

Mr. Chair:

Your Committee on Innovation, Technology & Entertainment, which considered Resolution 25-48 entitled:

"RESOLUTION URGING THE CITY ADMINISTRATION TO CREATE AN O'AHU TOURISM STRATEGIC PLAN,"

introduced on February 5, 2025, reports as follows:

The purpose of the Resolution is to urge the City Administration to create an O'ahu Tourism Strategic Plan.

Amy Asselbaye, Executive Director of the Office of Economic Revitalization, testified that OER is looking forward to working with the Council on the measure and next steps in the process. She further stated that OER was the first office to establish a Regenerative Tourism Program Manager position who focuses on this issue at the city. The Regenerative Tourism Program Manager has been working closely with stakeholders in the hospitality sector and previously worked on the O'ahu Destination Management Action Plan.

ADOPTED ON MAR 19 2025

COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 95

Your Committee considered and approved a CD1 version that makes the following amendments:

A. Amends the resolution title to read as follows:

URGING THE CITY ADMINISTRATION TO CREATE AN O'AHU TOURISM STRATEGIC PLAN THAT PRIORITIZES REGENERATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM, RESPECT FOR NATIVE HAWAIIAN CULTURE AND VALUES, THE INTEGRATION OF EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES, AND FORWARD-THINKING ECONOMIC STRATEGIES.

B. Amends the first and fourth WHEREAS clauses to emphasize the importance of O'ahu's cultural heritage (including traditional Native Hawaiian knowledge) and clarify that the tourism industry must be strategically managed to ensure that its economic benefits do not come at the cost of environmental degradation, cultural exploitation, and declining community quality of life.

C. Deletes the sixth and final WHEREAS clause, and adds six new WHEREAS clauses (now the fifth, seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh clauses) to expand upon the impacts of high tourism traffic on O'ahu's ecosystems, neighborhoods, and communities; highlight the opportunity for O'ahu to lead in the global shift toward regenerative tourism; acknowledge the need for the City and County of Honolulu to continue to support local businesses; and emphasize the importance of aligning the proposed O'ahu Tourism Strategic Plan with community values.

D. Amends the BE IT RESOLVED clause to urge that the O'ahu Tourism Strategic Plan prioritize regenerative and sustainable tourism, respect for Native Hawaiian culture and values, the integration of emerging technologies, and forwardthinking economic strategies.

E. Amends the first, second, and third BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED clauses to urge that the O'ahu Tourism Strategic Plan establish a clear vision for the future of tourism on O'ahu; include a globally informed analysis of innovative tourism trends and technologies; and be developed in full collaboration with diverse stakeholders, including Native Hawaiians and non-profit organizations.

F. Amends the fourth BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED clause to amend the date by which the City Administration is requested to present a written update on its efforts to create the O'ahu Tourism Strategic Plan to 18 months (from six months).

G. Amends the BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED clause to add the Director of Enterprise Services and the Director of the State of Hawai'i Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to the list of individuals who will receive a copy of the resolution.

H. Makes miscellaneous technical and nonsubstantive amendments.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGY & ENTERTAINMENT

Voting Members:
Augie Tulba, Chair; Andria Tupola, Vice Chair;
Esther Kia'āina, Scott Y. Nishimoto, Val A. Okimoto

Your Committee on Innovation, Technology & Entertainment is in accord with the intent and purpose of Resolution 25-48, as amended herein, and recommends its adoption in the form attached hereto as Resolution 25-48, CD1. (Ayes: Kia'āina, Nishimoto, Okimoto, Tulba, Tupola – 5; Noes: None.)

Respectfully submitted,

Committee Chair

HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL
Ke Kanihela o ke Kalana o Honolulu
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

ADOPTED ON MAR 19 2025

COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 95

HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL

KE KANIHELA O KE KALANA O HONOLULU

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

No. 25-48, CD1

RESOLUTION

URGING THE CITY ADMINISTRATION TO CREATE AN O'AHU TOURISM STRATEGIC PLAN THAT PRIORITIZES REGENERATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM, RESPECT FOR NATIVE HAWAIIAN CULTURE AND VALUES, THE INTEGRATION OF EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES, AND FORWARD-THINKING ECONOMIC STRATEGIES.

WHEREAS, O'ahu's natural beauty and the unique cultural heritage of Hawai'i, including traditional Native Hawaiian knowledge, attracts visitors from around the world, making tourism a vital component of the local economy; and

WHEREAS, in 2023, O'ahu received 5.6 million visitors (or 58 percent of the total 9.6 million visitors statewide) and visitor spending was $9.0 billion (or 43 percent of the total $20.8 billion spent statewide), according to the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism; and

WHEREAS, in comparison, in 2023 Maui received 2.5 million visitors, and its total visitor spending was $5.7 billion; Kaua'i received 1.4 million visitors, and its total visitor spending was $2.8 billion; and Hawai'i Island received 1.8 million visitors, and its total visitor spending was $3.0 billion; and

WHEREAS, the tourism industry must be strategically managed to ensure that its economic benefits do not come at the cost of environmental degradation, cultural exploitation, and declining community quality of life, as the constant influx of visitors have been detrimental to O'ahu's natural resources, infrastructure, and local communities; and

WHEREAS, visitors to O'ahu have a tremendous impact on the island's ecosystems, natural resources, and wahi pana, and O'ahu has experienced the impacts of high tourism traffic on its ecosystems, neighborhoods, and communities; and

WHEREAS, the City and County of Honolulu ("City") is the only county in the State of Hawai'i that does not have a formal tourism strategic plan, relying instead on the *O'ahu Destination Management Action Plan 2021–2024* ("O'ahu DMAP"), a collaborative initiative led by the Hawai'i Tourism Authority; and

WHEREAS, many leading global destinations are adopting regenerative tourism frameworks that actively restore and improve natural and cultural resources, rather than simply sustaining them, and O'ahu has an opportunity to lead in this global shift by

embedding Hawaiian cultural values and frameworks such as mālama (care and stewardship), kuleana (responsibility), and pono (ethical balance) into tourism planning; and

WHEREAS, the City has an interest in supporting its local businesses, and ensuring that the dollars spent in Hawai'i go to support local businesses, good-paying jobs, and taxes that can support its infrastructural needs; and

WHEREAS, an opportunity for greater cross-agency collaboration at the county level would aid in ensuring that tourism-related decision-making on O'ahu more fully aligns with the needs of local communities; and

WHEREAS, the tourism industry is undergoing a significant shift toward more conscientious travelers, with increasing demand for cultural tourism, adventure tourism, wellness tourism, and digital nomad-friendly destinations, and O'ahu's strategic plan should incorporate a targeted visitor profile strategy that aligns with these high-value, low-impact market segments; and

WHEREAS, while tourism is a foundational pillar of O'ahu's economy, over-reliance on the industry poses long-term risks, and the City Council recognizes the need for a tourism strategic plan that aligns with broader economic diversification efforts, including technology, sustainable agriculture, cultural and other media production, and renewable energy; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City and County of Honolulu that the City Administration is urged to create an O'ahu Tourism Strategic Plan that prioritizes regenerative and sustainable tourism, respect for Native Hawaiian culture and values, the integration of emerging technologies, and forward-thinking economic strategies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the O'ahu Tourism Strategic Plan establish a clear vision for the future of tourism on O'ahu, incorporating measurable objectives, specific action plans, and enforceable accountability measures to balance economic benefits with environmental and cultural protections and community well-being; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the O'ahu Tourism Strategic Plan include a globally informed analysis of innovative tourism trends and technologies to position O'ahu as a leader in sustainable, regenerative, and culturally-aligned tourism practices; and

RESOLUTION

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the O'ahu Tourism Strategic Plan be developed in full collaboration with the island's diverse stakeholders, including Native Hawaiians, local communities, non-profit organizations, and government agencies, as well as the private sector; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Administration is requested to present a written update on its efforts to create the O'ahu Tourism Strategic Plan to the Council within 18 months after the adoption of this resolution; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Mayor; the Managing Director; the Executive Director of the Office of Economic Revitalization; the Director of Enterprise Services; the Executive Director of the O'ahu Visitors Bureau; and the Director of the State of Hawai'i Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism.

INTRODUCED BY:

Esther Kia'āina

DATE OF INTRODUCTION:

February 5, 2025
Honolulu, Hawai'i

Councilmembers

Report Title:
City Administration; O'ahu Tourism Strategic Plan; Oahu Tourism Strategic Plan; Tourism; Visitor Industry; Sustainability; Report

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.