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Introduction to the Downtown Honolulu Business Improvement District Bill 51 (25)

July 28, 2025

Submitted by Tradewind Capital for Bill 51 (2025)
Committee on Zoning & Planning | July 28, 2025

MISC. COM. 385
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Genesis of the Movement

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Over a Year in the Making

- In May of 2024, a meeting was organized with 40 major landowners Downtown to discuss the state of the district; there was overwhelming consensus that the future of Downtown was in jeopardy and something needed to be done
- Issues identified include the persistent homeless presence, assaults/crime, filthy sidewalks and public spaces, growing retail and office vacancies, effects from COVID
- It was determined that the "status quo" wasn't going to fix itself unless the neighborhood took action; the City & County is short short-staffed and underfunded
- From May through December 2024, a group of the major landowners collaborated and conducted extensive research on a possible solution to uplift the community

Organized into Working Groups

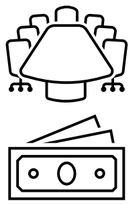
We moved into working groups to focus on certain topics:

1. **Safety & Security** – Propose a plan for enhancing general safety and security in the area and improving police presence.

2. **Clean Streets & Hygiene** – Propose a plan for improving street, sidewalk, and public space appearance and hygiene, including graffiti control.

3. **Activating Public Spaces** – Propose a plan for activating public spaces to draw out residents and workers.

4. **Civic Relations** – Identify opportunities to improve the relationship and role of government agencies with jurisdiction in the area, including regulatory restrictions on the adaptive reuse of commercial facilities and governance of Fort Street Mall.



5. **Governance, Membership & Finance** – Establish a non-profit entity as the administering entity for any programs and identify criteria for membership and a plan for generating financial support.

Conclusion

- The creation of a Downtown Honolulu Business Improvement District ("BID") was determined to be an effective solution to provide supplemental services for the district as a whole, with all businesses participating and all businesses benefiting

Town Hall Held at the YWCA on January 15th 2025 for Public Input

- On January 15, 2025, a town hall and panel were hosted at the YWCA Downtown to discuss the concept of a BID; over 200 people attended, representing building owners, business owners, residents, government representatives, non-profits, and other stakeholders in the neighborhood

Downtown Honolulu business improvement district proposed

By Leila Fujimori

Jan. 21, 2025

JAMM AQUINO / JAQUINO@STARADVERTISER.COM

Followed by Active Community Outreach and Media Attention

- Over the last year, we've continued active outreach to the broader neighborhood, including extensive media coverage, neighborhood board presentations, outreach to large property owners and smaller AOAO boards, businesses, property managers, and a growing email distribution list with monthly updates on the process

HONOLULU CIVIL BEAT

Business

Executives Hope A New Fee Can Save Downtown Honolulu

A new generation of business people want a "vibrant downtown."

By Stewart Yerton / January 15, 2025 Share Article 63

Downtown Honolulu business improvement district proposed

HawaiiBusiness magazine

Can Waikīkī's Business Improvement District Be a Model for Downtown?

Businesses agreed to increase property taxes for hospitality, cleaning and landscaping, and more security. Many say the extra cost is worth it.

NOVEMBER 22, 2024 BY RYANN COULES

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LOCAL NEWS

New plan to tackle crime, cleanliness in Downtown Honolulu

by: Bryce Moore
Posted: Jul 1, 2025 / 08:42 PM HST
Updated: Jul 1, 2025 / 10:08 PM HST

Hawai'i Public Radio

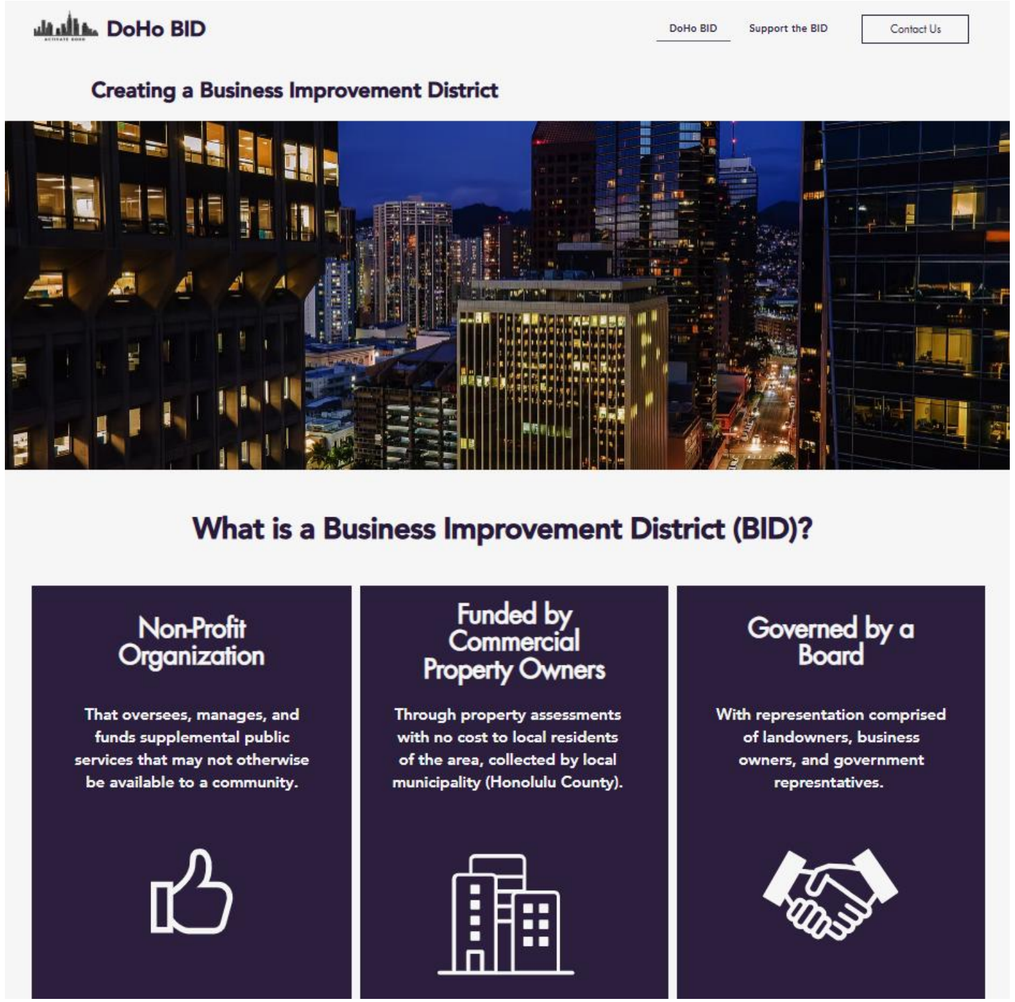
UH graduate students explore how to improve Chinatown, Downtown Honolulu

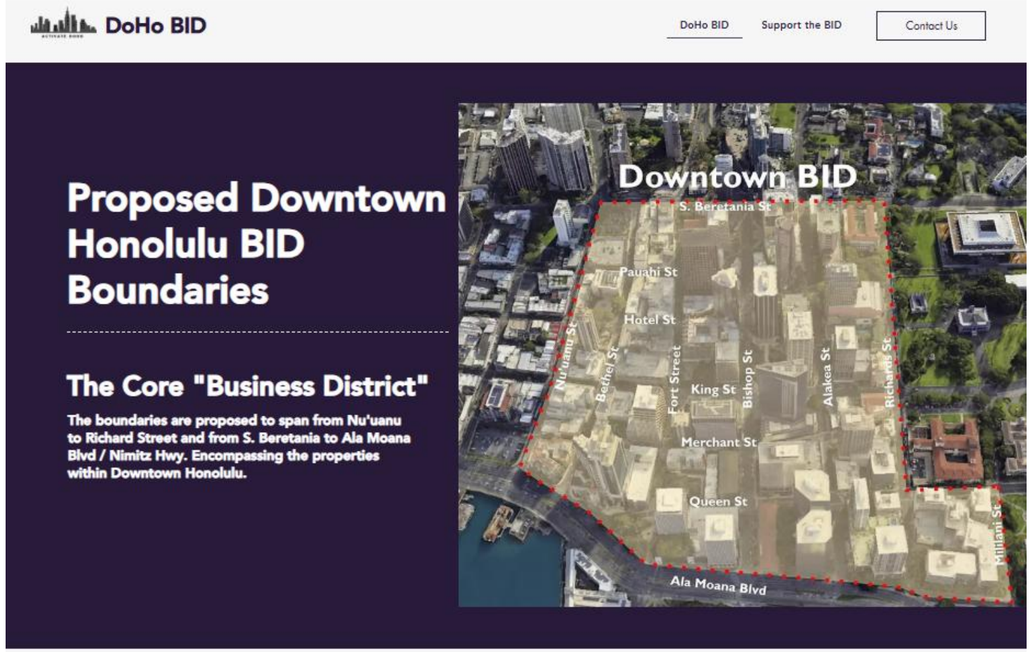
Hawai'i Public Radio | By Catherine Cruz
Published May 21, 2025 at 4:37 PM HST
Updated May 22, 2025 at 11:37 AM HST

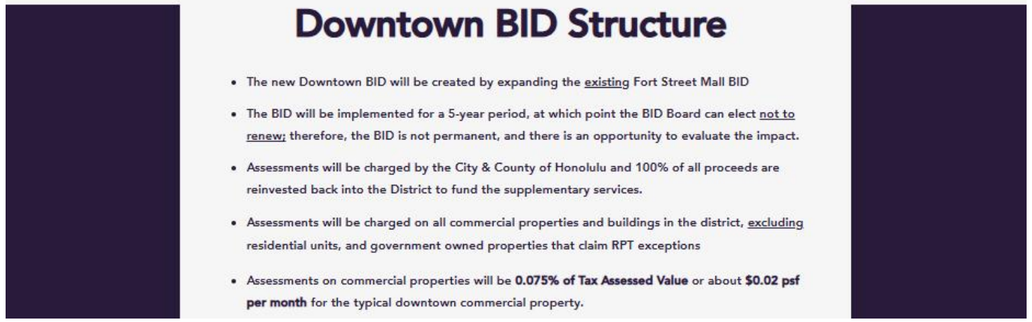
HAWAII NEWS NOW

Property owners willing to pay for sanitation, safety improvements in downtown Honolulu

Created a Website: https://www.dohobid.com/







Implementation Timeline

	Key Event	Date	
City Council Process (2 months)	Presentation to Downtown/Chinatown Neighborhood Board	July 1st, 2025	DONE
	First Reading at Full Council	July 9, 2025	DONE
	First Committee Hearing at Zoning Committee	July 28, 2025	NEXT
	Second Reading at Full Council	August 6, 2025	
	Second Committee Hearing	August 19, 2025	
	Public Hearing	September 3, 2025	
	Final Reading at Full Council	September 9, 2025	
Ordinance Passage to Implementation (11 months)	Department of B&FS Assigns Property Valuations	October 1, 2025	
	Assessment Notices Mailed	December 15, 2025	
	First-half Year Bills Mailed	Mid of June 2026	
	First-half Year Payments Due	July 20, 2026	
	New Operations Hit the Ground	July 2026	

APPENDIX

Investment Rationale

Summary: the BID will provide supplementary services in the public spaces focused on safety, security, and cleanliness, acting as one coordinated entity overseeing and managing the district as a whole, and governed by the landowners, lessees, and businesses based in the district

Proposed services include…

- **Safety and Security:** 7 safety and security personnel patrolling the district from early in the morning to late at night. The security would enforce the "sit-lie" ban, and actively address individuals who pose security threats in the public areas. BID security would work in conjunction with security at each property so that security threats are not just pushed from one property to the next, and coordinated between landowners
- **Cleanliness:** 2 person pressure washing team will pressure wash all public spaces 8 hours per day, Monday through Friday, to ensure consistently clean street. This also serves as a form of security to deter loiterers.
- **Maintenance and Custodial:** 3 person team to address graffiti, street sweeps, trash pick up, spot cleaning, debris, wiping down fixtures, repairs, and landscaping Monday through Friday to ensure area looks and feels clean
- **Team Leader and Operations Manager:** team leader and operations manager also act as working security personnel and assist other scopes adding 2 more bodies to the street and ensuring effective implementation of services
- **Overall presence:** 14 personnel patrolling the entire district in bright colored vests and a visible presence
- **Advocacy:** the BID can advocate for funding and government support for the entire district as one coordinated entity

Preliminary Staffing Assumptions

- 14 personnel patrolling and servicing the district M-F in bright vests
- Reduced scope during the weekends

Recommended Deployment											
Each 8 represents 8 hours of service											
Position	**Zone**	**Task**	**Hours**	**Sun**	**Mon**	**Tues**	**Wed**	**Thurs**	**Fri**	**Sat**	**Total**
Custodial	All	Litter Abatement	6:00am-2:30pm	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	56
					8		8		8		24
Special Projects	All	Maintenance	6:00am-2:30pm	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	56
Pressure Washers	All	Pressure Washer	6:00am-2:30pm		8	8	8	8	8		40
					8	8	8	8	8		40
Safety Ambassadors	All	Bike/Walking Patrol	6:00am-2:30pm		8	8	8	8	8		40
				8	8	8	8	8	8	8	56
				8	8	8	8	8	8	8	56
			2:00pm-10:30pm		8	8	8	8	8		40
					8	8	8	8	8		40
				8	8	8	8	8	8	8	56
				8	8		8			8	32
Team Leader	All	Working Supervisor	6:00am-2:30pm	8						8	16
			2:00pm-10:30pm	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	56
Operations Manager	All	Working Manager/Special Projects/Power Washing	FLEX		8	8	8	8	8		40
					112	**96**	**112**	**96**	**104**		
Total Scheduled Weekly Hours											**648**

Implementation in Waikiki – The "Aloha Ambassadors" Can't be Missed

"That's why we do the power washing and the landscaping" in Waikīkī, says Abarzua. "If it looks nicer, people treat it nicer, right? So I think Downtown could totally use that face-lift."

Left: Brandon Lizardon power washes the sidewalk to help keep Waikīkī clean and beautiful. Right: Saul De La Rosa wipes down the newly installed trash bins, donated by JTB Hawaii, which are a major upgrade from the previous trash cans.

Waikīkī bid has hired about 60 Aloha ambassadors, seen in neon yellow shirts, who assist visitors, clean sidewalks, remove graffiti, report problems and handle other tasks that make the area attractive and safe. Top left: Josephine "Josie" Baird is a Hospitality Ambassador pictured handing out maps. Bottom left: Saul De La Rosa is another Aloha Ambassador.

Downtown BID Structure

- The new Downtown BID will be created by expanding the existing Fort Street Mall BID
- The BID will be implemented for a 5-year period, at which point the BID Board can elect not to renew; therefore, the BID is not permanent, and there is an opportunity to evaluate the impact
- Assessments will be charged by the City & County and 100% of all proceeds are reinvested back into the District to fund the supplementary services
- Assessments will be charged on all commercial properties and buildings in the district, excluding only residential units, and government-owned properties that claim RPT exemptions
- Assessment on commercial properties will be **0.075% of TAV** or about **$0.02 psf per month** for the typical downtown commercial property