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Honolulu City Council
Agricultural Development Task Force

July 24, 2026

The Honorable Tommy Waters, Chair
and Members of the Honolulu City Council
530 S. King Street, Room 202
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair Waters,

On behalf of the Honolulu City Council Agricultural Development Task Force, we would like to submit our 2026 Interim Report covering Task Force activities from its reconvening in August 2025 through June 2026.

Resolution 24-243, CD1, which reconvened the Task Force to foster the growth and enhancement of agricultural activities on O'ahu, called for a report no later than one year from the date of adoption of the resolution, which was December 11, 2024.

Because the Task Force did not reconvene until August 2025, this Interim Report is to provide an update to the members of the Honolulu City Council of our activities since that time. The Task Force has met nine times within the past year on August 25, 2025; October 24, 2025; December 5, 2025; January 9, 2026; February 6, 2026; April 17, 2026; May 29, 2026; June 26, 2026; and July 24, 2026.

We look forward to continuing the mission of the Task Force and look forward to updating Councilmembers on recommended strategies and approaches by which City policy can support agricultural development on O'ahu.

Sincerely,

Taylor Kellerman, Co-Chair
Honolulu City Council Agricultural
Development Task Force

Davis Price, Co-Chair
Honolulu City Council Agricultural
Development Task Force

HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

2026 Interim Report

Covering Task Force activities from its reconvening in August 2025 through June 2026

July 2026

Introduction

By adoption of Resolution 24-243, CD1, the Agricultural Development Task Force was reconvened in 2025 to advise the Honolulu City Council on strategies and approaches by which City policy can support agricultural development on Oʻahu. This 2026 Interim Report summarizes the Task Force's work from its reconvening in August 2025 through June 2026 and identifies initial areas for continued examination.

The Task Force's directive spans seven focus areas: food security, economic incentives, support for operations, land use policy, workforce development, demand-side improvements, and research and education. Given the breadth and complexity of these issues, the Task Force has focused its initial efforts on understanding the conditions that most directly influence the long-term viability of agriculture on Oʻahu.

This interim report is intended to provide Councilmembers, City departments, and partners with an overview of the Task Force's efforts and work to date. The findings below are not final recommendations. Rather, they identify areas that the Task Force believes warrant deeper examination, stakeholder engagement, and policy consideration.

The Task Force also recognizes the importance of coordination across City departments, agricultural stakeholders, and related initiatives. Recent engagement with the draft Oʻahu Food Systems Plan is one example of this coordination in practice. The plan provides a useful framework for understanding how agriculture connects with food security, land use, procurement, infrastructure, resilience, and community well-being. The Task Force's work can help ensure that agricultural perspectives inform and strengthen these broader City efforts.

Mission, Values, and Prioritization Process

As part of its initial work, the Task Force developed a mission statement, a set of operating values, and a prioritization framework to help guide its activities and ensure that its work remains focused, practical, and aligned with its directive.

Mission Statement

To identify and recommend practical City actions that strengthen the long-term viability of agriculture on Oʻahu.

Values

Farmer Viability
Recommendations should improve the real-world ability of farmers and ranchers to operate, earn income, invest, and remain on the land.

ʻĀina Stewardship
Agricultural development should protect land, water, and the long-term productivity of Oʻahu's agricultural resources.

Practical Implementation
Recommendations should be realistic, enforceable, and actionable by City agencies.

Food Security and Resilience
The Task Force should support local food production, emergency preparedness, and long-term resilience.

Coordination Over Duplication
The Task Force should identify gaps, align efforts, and complement existing initiatives rather than recreate them.

Transparency and Fairness
Policies and incentives should be clear, equitable, and accountable, particularly where public benefits are involved.

Approach

The Task Force's directive includes seven broad focus areas. Recognizing that these areas could not all be addressed equally at the same time, the Task Force adopted a prioritization framework to help focus its efforts on issues where City policy has meaningful leverage and where recommendations can have the greatest impact on the long-term viability of agriculture on Oʻahu.

The intent of this framework is not to narrow the Task Force's scope. Rather, it is to create a practical process for sequencing work, identifying priorities, and developing recommendations that are realistic and actionable.

The Task Force is prioritizing its focus on issues that:

- Represent significant barriers or opportunities for agricultural development;
- Are foundational to the long-term viability of agriculture on Oʻahu;
- Involve areas where the City has meaningful policy, regulatory, funding, procurement, or coordination leverage; and
- Can reasonably lead to practical findings or recommendations.

The Task Force also recognizes that the seven focus areas are interconnected and that many agricultural challenges span multiple categories. As a result, the Task Force intends to organize its work around cross-cutting issues that influence multiple parts of the agricultural system rather than treating each focus area as a separate workstream.

Initial Areas for Continued Examination

The following findings reflect the Task Force's work to date and identify the first set of issues that warrant continued examination. They are not intended to serve as final recommendations. Rather, they highlight cross-cutting areas where members see significant barriers and opportunities for agricultural development on Oʻahu.

These areas were selected because they connect directly to the Task Force's directive, touch multiple focus areas, and appear foundational to the long-term viability of agriculture. As the Task Force continues its work, these findings can guide further learning, stakeholder engagement, and development of practical City policy recommendations.

Finding #1: Agricultural Use Incentives Should Be Tied to Meaningful Agricultural Production

The Task Force has spent considerable time discussing agricultural use dedication and related incentives, including reduced property tax assessments and utility rate benefits.

Members generally agree that public incentives intended to support agriculture should be aligned with meaningful agricultural activity and production outcomes. The Task Force continues to explore how incentives can be structured in ways that are practical, fair, enforceable, and supportive of legitimate agricultural operations.

The Task Force recognizes that this issue involves multiple perspectives and requires careful consideration of implementation, administration, and unintended consequences.

Finding #2: Long-Term Agricultural Land Access and Protection Remain Foundational Challenges

The availability, affordability, and long-term protection of agricultural land remain among the most significant issues affecting agricultural development on Oʻahu.

Task Force discussions have included agricultural land preservation tools, agricultural land trust concepts, land stewardship models, and approaches that can help maintain agricultural lands in productive use over time.

Members generally agree that addressing land access and protection is foundational to many other agricultural goals, including food security, local production, workforce development, infrastructure investment, and economic viability.

Finding #3: Stronger Local Markets Are Essential for Agricultural Viability

Agricultural production and agricultural profitability are closely linked to the availability of stable and reliable markets.

The Task Force has discussed opportunities to strengthen demand for locally produced agricultural products through institutional purchasing, procurement practices, buyer coordination, and other market development strategies.

Members recognize that many market-related challenges involve stakeholders beyond City government. As a result, future work should focus on identifying the specific areas where City policy, purchasing practices, convening power, and infrastructure investments can help strengthen local agricultural markets.

Coordination and Alignment

The Task Force's work is taking place alongside several related City efforts, including the Department of Planning and Permitting's land use and permitting responsibilities, the Department of Budget and Fiscal Services and its Real Property Assessment Division's work related to real property tax and agricultural dedication, the Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency's food system and resilience planning, and initiatives supported through the Clean Water and Natural Lands Fund.

This creates an important opportunity for the Task Force to serve as a bridge between agricultural stakeholders and City policy. By helping identify gaps, clarify priorities, and surface practical recommendations, the Task Force can support better coordination across departments and reduce duplication across related initiatives.

The Task Force should continue to use its meetings to learn from City departments, agricultural practitioners, and community partners in ways that help translate broad food system goals into practical City actions that support agriculture.

Next Steps

As the Task Force continues its work, members anticipate further examination of agricultural infrastructure, operational barriers, market development opportunities, and other issues identified in its directive.

The Task Force will continue engaging with farmers, ranchers, agricultural organizations, City departments, and community partners to better understand these issues and develop practical recommendations for Council consideration.

The Task Force will use its mission, values, and prioritization process to guide future work and ensure that its recommendations are focused, practical, and aligned with the long-term viability of agriculture on Oʻahu.

HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL

KE KANIHELA O KE KALANA O HONOLULU

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

No. **24-243, CD1**

RESOLUTION

RECONVENING THE HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL'S AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE TO FOSTER THE GROWTH AND ENHANCEMENT OF AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES ON O'AHU.

WHEREAS, agriculture is an important component of the economy, culture, and history, of the State of Hawai'i ("State") and the City and County of Honolulu ("City") and it merits focused and informed attention in policymaking and implementation; and

WHEREAS, the Honolulu City Council ("Council") has consistently recognized the need to support ongoing agricultural activities and enhance the profitability and viability of agricultural businesses on O'ahu through resolutions such as:

- Resolution 98-55, CD1, which requested that the Mayor establish an agricultural advisory committee;
- Resolution 02-100, CD1, which supported the establishment of an agricultural industry development task force as described in State of Hawai'i ("State") House Concurrent Resolution 94, HD1, Regular Session 2002;
- Resolution 03-125, CD1, which urged the City Administration to designate an agricultural development officer to foster the growth and enhancement of agricultural activities on O'ahu;
- Resolution 04-45, which urged the State Legislature to enact legislation that would identify, conserve, and protect important agricultural lands;
- Resolution 04-218, CD1, FD1, which created a task force to recommend long-term solutions to problems related to the real property taxation of agricultural land;
- Resolution 04-288, CD1, which established an agricultural development task force for the City and County of Honolulu ("City") to foster the growth and enhancement of agricultural activities on O'ahu;
- Resolution 18-233, CD1, FD1, identifying Important Agricultural Lands on O'ahu;

- Resolution 20-044, adopting the Revised General Plan of the City, which included among its objectives: "To ensure the long-term viability and continued productivity of agriculture on O'ahu," and established 17 policies in support of that objective; and

- Resolution 21-79, CD1, FD1, urging the City Administration to establish and expend funds for a grant program to support local agriculture through the Office of Economic Revitalization, which resulted in the formation of the O'ahu Agriculture Grant Program to support local agriculture with $3 million in grants to small farmers, ranchers, and growers on O'ahu, with 66 grants ranging from $10,000 to $49,000 issued to date; and

WHEREAS, the Agricultural Development Task Force ("Task Force") was initially convened by Resolution 04-288, CD1, and began its service on January 10, 2005; and

WHEREAS, the Council found that the Task Force meetings were productive, and it extended the work of the Task Force twice through:

- Resolution 05-407, which extended the Task Force for a year and amended its membership to be comosed of seven persons selected by the Council Chair; and

- Resolution 07-52, which extended the Task Force indefinitely, until terminated by the Council, and required the Task Force to report its findings and recommendations to the Council on a semi-annual basis; and

WHEREAS, Resolution 08-31 further amended the membership of the Task Force to require not more than nine and not less than five members, and to authorize the Task Force to appoint new members by a majority vote of the task force, subject to the final approval of the Council Chair; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force continued to operate actively through the issuance of its latest semi-annual report, Council Communication 35 (2019), on February 5, 2019, but it has been inactive since that date; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force provided the Council with important policy recommendations regarding key agricultural matters such as zoning, restricting gentleman farming, re-evaluating requirements for roads and utilities, examining the real property tax rate for agricultural lands, and developing incentives, and it most recently

submitted recommendations regarding the Important Agricultural Land Designation and related possible incentives; and

WHEREAS, the members of the agricultural community who served on the Task Force brought significant industry expertise, knowledge, motivation, and commitment to guide and implement the policymaking of the Council; and

WHEREAS, Council Rule 9A provides for the establishment of Council advisory committees, such as the Task Force, by resolution; and

WHEREAS, the Council seeks to reconvene the Task Force to ensure that the Council's policy decisions continue to reflect and incorporate the expertise of relevant agricultural stakeholders and practitioners; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City and County of Honolulu that the Agricultural Development Task Force ("Task Force"), previously established by Resolution 04-288, CD1, as amended by Resolution 08-31, is hereby reconvened pursuant to Council Rule 9A with a membership consisting of not more than nine and not less than five members; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that within 60 days after the adoption of this resolution, the Council Chair shall appoint the members of the Task Force, which shall include at least one task force member with expertise in traditional Native Hawaiian agricultural practices and food systems; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all appointed members shall serve for staggered terms of five years, and shall serve until their successors have been appointed; and that initial appointments, depending on the size of the Task Force, will be as follows:

1. Five members: One member each to serve for five, four, three, two, and one year, respectively;

2. Six members: Two members to serve for five years, one member to serve for four years, one member for three years, one member for two years, and one member for one year;

3. Seven members: Two members to serve for five years, one member for four years, two members for three years, one member for two years, and one member for one year;

4. Eight members: Two members to serve for five years, two members for four years, two members for three years, one member for two years, and one member for one year; and

5. Nine members: Two members each to serve for five, four, three, and two years, respectively, and one member for one year; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that each succeeding appointment will be for a term ending five years after the date of the expiration of the term for which the appointee's predecessor had been appointed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that any vacancy occurring other than by expiration of the term of office will be filled for the remainder of the unexpired term in the same manner as for the original appointment; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the priority focus of the reconvened Task Force will be to recommend strategies and approaches by which City policy can support agricultural development in areas such as:

1. Food Security (including access to locally grown foods, long-term food system resilience, and emergency food preparedness);

2. Economic Incentives (including taxes, grant programs, and other funding sources);

3. Support for Operations (including workforce housing, infrastructure coordination, biosecurity, invasive species and pest mitigation, theft prevention, supply chain coordination, and other operational needs);

4. Land Use Policy (including planning, zoning, land use, subdivision, permitting, and infrastructure requirements);

5. Workforce Development (including educational pipelines, training programs, and other labor and employment matters);

6. Demand-Side Improvements (including market access, institutional purchasing, and procurement policies); and

7. Research and Education (including data gathering, analysis, and reporting); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force shall report its findings and recommendations in writing no later than one year from the date of adoption of this resolution and annually thereafter to the Council; Mayor; Managing Director; Executive Director of the Office of Economic Revitalization; Director of Planning and Permitting; and Executive Director of the Office of Climate Change, Sustainability, and Resiliency; provided that nothing herein is intended to restrict open, ongoing communication between the Task Force and these parties, which is hereby encouraged; and

HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL

KE KANIHELA O KE KALANA O HONOLULU

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

No. 24-243, CD1

RESOLUTION

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to each Councilmember.

INTRODUCED BY:

Esther Kia'āina

Andria Tupola

DATE OF INTRODUCTION:

September 25, 2024
Honolulu, Hawai'i

Councilmembers

CITY COUNCIL
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
HONOLULU, HAWAII

CERTIFICATE

RESOLUTION 24-243, CD1

Introduced:	09/25/24	By:	ESTHER KIA'ĀINA ANDRIA TUPOLA	Committee:	PLANNING AND THE ECONOMY (P&E)

Title: RECONVENING THE HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL'S AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE TO FOSTER THE GROWTH AND ENHANCEMENT OF AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES ON O'AHU.

Voting Legend: * = Aye w/Reservations

09/25/24	INTRO	Introduced.
11/21/24	P&E	Reported out for adoption as amended in CD1 form. CR-353 5 AYES: CORDERO, KIA'ĀINA, OKIMOTO, SAY, WEYER
12/11/24	CCL	Committee report and Resolution as amended were adopted. 6 AYES: KIA'ĀINA, OKIMOTO, SAY, TULBA, WATERS, WEYER 3 ABSENT: CORDERO, DOS SANTOS-TAM, TUPOLA

I hereby certify that the above is a true record of action by the Council of the City and County of Honolulu on this RESOLUTION.

GLEN I. TAKAHASHI, CITY CLERK

TOMMY WATERS, CHAIR AND PRESIDING OFFICER