HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL

KE KANIHELA O KE KALANA O HONOLULU

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

No. 26-259

RESOLUTION

ADOPTING THE FIRST-EVER O'AHU FOOD SYSTEMS ACTION PLAN AS A GUIDING POLICY DOCUMENT FOR THE CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU.

WHEREAS, access to nutritious, affordable food is essential to the health, economic well-being, cultural vitality, environmental sustainability, and resilience of O'ahu's communities; and

WHEREAS, the Hawai'i Food Bank Hui's The State of Food Insecurity in Hawai'i 2024–2025 report estimates approximately 25 percent of O'ahu households, representing approximately 245,000 residents, experience food insecurity, meaning they could not consistently access enough food, demonstrating the significant need to improve access to nutritious, affordable, and locally available food; and

WHEREAS, Hawai'i's geographic isolation and dependence on imported food leave O'ahu vulnerable to disruptions in shipping and distribution that can threaten food availability and affordability, underscoring the need to strengthen local food production and distribution and ensure reliable access to food, particularly in the face of current and projected impacts of climate change; and

WHEREAS, many City and County of Honolulu ("City") departments and agencies influence the food system through land use, City purchasing, food access programs, waste management, community gardens, support for local producers and market access, emergency preparedness and response, and water resource management, in coordination with state and federal agencies and community partners that share responsibilities within O'ahu's food system; and

WHEREAS, Ordinance 20-47 established the Food Security and Sustainability Program within the Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency (CCSR); and

WHEREAS, Revised Ordinances of Honolulu (ROH) Section 2-10.8 directs CCSR to coordinate City actions and policies related to food security and sustainability, develop and implement a Citywide food system development plan and report on its objectives, and advance partnerships, funding, and technical assistance to address issues in the food system; and

WHEREAS, through Resolution 24-243, CD1, the Honolulu City Council ("Council") reconvened the Agricultural Development Task Force to recommend strategies and City policies to support agricultural development, including food security,

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EES

market access and procurement, economic incentives, and workforce development, which align with the priorities and actions of the O'ahu Food Systems Action Plan; and

WHEREAS, the O'ahu Food Systems Action Plan builds on the City's established resilience priorities, including the O'ahu Resilience Strategy adopted through Resolution 19-233, Climate Ready O'ahu climate adaptation strategy adopted through Resolution 24-16, and the 2025-2030 Climate Action Plan adopted through Resolution 26-206; and

WHEREAS, the O'ahu Food Systems Action Plan provides the City's first-ever coordinated framework for City departments and community partners to strengthen O'ahu's food system, coordinate existing efforts, identify opportunities for collaboration, address gaps, and align City actions and investments with community-identified priorities; and

WHEREAS, the plan was developed through engagement with community organizations, agricultural and food system practitioners, businesses, and government agencies, including direct engagement with more than 1,000 residents and an outreach campaign with a combined reach of approximately 37,000 individuals across community events, webinars, surveys, and digital platforms, followed by public review of the draft plan, during which over 300 comments were received and informed the plan's revision; and

WHEREAS, the plan identifies ten strategies and 74 actions designed to expand food access, support local producers and food businesses, reduce food waste, protect water resources, strengthen community food growing and cultural practices, and improve emergency preparedness; and

WHEREAS, the strategies and actions contained in plan are grounded in five guiding values and corresponding food system dimensions, including:

- Pono, advancing food and nutrition security;
- Mālama 'Āina, advancing ecological sustainability;
- 'Āina Aloha Economics, strengthening local food economies;
- Ea, supporting food sovereignty; and
- Ola Loa, building long-term resilience,

which situate actions within O'ahu's cultural, ecological, and historical context, align with expressed community needs, priorities, and values, and acknowledge the shared responsibility to the Indigenous people of Hawai'i and the well-being of this 'āina; and

WHEREAS, the O'ahu Food Systems Action Plan represents the first time the City has formally and comprehensively determined and communicated its role in shaping a food system that reflects the needs, values, and priorities of O'ahu's communities; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City and County of Honolulu that it hereby adopts the O'ahu Food Systems Action Plan, dated October 2026, and attached as Exhibit A, as a guiding policy framework for the City and County of Honolulu's efforts to advance a sustainable, prosperous, resilient, equitable, and community-based food system for O'ahu; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency is requested to coordinate City-wide implementation of the O'ahu Food Systems Action Plan consistent with applicable law, available resources, and the respective authorities and responsibilities of City departments and agencies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that City departments and agencies named in the plan are requested to participate in an Interdepartmental Food Systems Working Group facilitated by the Office to Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency to coordinate efforts and advance the plan's strategies and actions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency, in coordination with City departments and agencies, is requested to track implementation of the O'ahu Food Systems Action Plan and regularly report the City's progress through the City's Annual Sustainability Report or other appropriate reporting mechanisms; and

HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL

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CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Mayor, the Managing Director, the Chief Resilience Officer and Executive Director of the Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency, the director or executive of each City department and agency identified in the O'ahu Food Systems Action Plan, and the Chair of the Agricultural Development Task Force.

INTRODUCED BY:

(br)

DATE OF INTRODUCTION:

NOV 5 2026

Honolulu, Hawai'i

Councilmembers

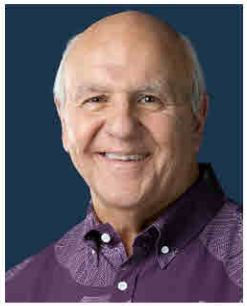
EXHIBIT A

Oʻahu Food Systems Action Plan

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU



Mayor's Message



We all eat—and that means we are all part of the food system.

Yet today, too many of our residents are struggling. On Oʻahu, 25% of residents are food insecure and 37% are ALICE households—working families who still struggle to afford basic needs.

This Plan is about changing that reality. It is about building a stronger, more resilient Oʻahu—one where families can afford to stay and raise a family, ʻāina is cared for, farmers grow food to nourish us, and communities are prepared for disruptions and rising costs.

Mahalo to the many residents, community organizations, and partners who shared their ideas, experiences, and manaʻo. Your voices helped shape this Plan and ensure it reflects the needs of our communities.

The Oʻahu Food Systems Plan is not just a vision—it's a commitment to action. Now, it's time to get to work.

Rick Blangiardi
Mayor
City and County of Honolulu

CCSR Director's Message



Once sustained by a thriving circular economy of abundance, Oʻahu's food system flourished for generations in our not-so-distant past. Healthy forests and reefs, fertile valleys, Native Hawaiian stewardship, canoe plants, global exchange, traditions carried across oceans, and strong community values together created a unique food culture that sustained life on the island.

The conditions we face today are not a reflection of this island's true potential. While Oʻahu is often described as a "melting pot," I prefer to imagine it as a pāʻina—a gathering where everyone brings something to share. We celebrate the poi of Waiāhole, the kale of Waiʻanae, the microgreens of Waimānalo, the tomatoes of Hōʻaeʻae, the watercress of Pearl Ridge, the cassava of Waipahu, the ʻulu of Kalihi, the heʻe of Kāneʻohe, the shrimp of Kahuku, and the ʻahi off Kaʻena. We gather in the markets of Chinatown, at food trucks along the North Shore, in neighborhood kitchens, around family tables, at the pier for fresh fish, and in restaurants across Kaimukī. Together, these places, foods, and traditions tell a story of Oʻahu—not as isolated communities, but as one island connected.

The Oʻahu Food Systems Action Plan builds on this shared spirit. It presents a vision for transforming aspiration into immediate action and provides a framework that honors Oʻahu's past while guiding practical investments, partnerships, and policies for its future.

Above all, this Plan is a statement of possibility. Our hope is that the statistics documented in these pages will one day be viewed as history–a record not of conditions we accepted but of challenges we chose to overcome together. Through collaboration, innovation, and a shared commitment to one another, Oʻahu can once again become a place where abundant local food, healthy ecosystems, and thriving communities are not aspirations, but everyday realities.

Dr. Kealoha Fox
Chief Resilience Officer & Executive Director
Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency (CCSR)

Mahalo a Nui Loa

The Oʻahu Food Systems Action Plan is the result of many hands, minds, and hearts coming together in shared purpose. We extend our deepest mahalo to the community members, practitioners, cultural leaders, farmers, advocates, government agencies and staff, and partners across Oʻahu who shared their ʻike, time, and manaʻo throughout the development of this Plan. Your guidance, lived experience, and commitment to caring for ʻāina and community are the foundation of this work.

Appreciation is also extended to

- Hawaiʻi Department of Health, SNAP-Ed Program for their support of Food Access Coordinators and food systems planning at the county level;
- The local artists who contributed artwork and design elements through the ʻIke ʻAi Art Contest. Their creativity and cultural expression help bring this Plan to life and reflect the vibrant diversity of Oʻahu's food system;
- The graduate students from the University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Community-Based Planning (PLAN 616) course (Fall 2025), whose research, analysis, and recommendations helped inform this Plan: Maizie Anders, Angelo Ian Bella, Sarah Benimana, Alma Hartman, Kaitlyn Judd, J. Kawika Kahiapo, Ratu Paula Kulanikoro, Byeonghun Kang, Tyler Law, Holden Linville, Rakhi Mahato, Jiwoo Nam, Malia Rivera, Iokepa Seward, Noah Tabar, Emily Uhrinak, and Dr. Subhashni Raj;
- Kamanani Conklin, Kara Martin, and the New Venture Advisors team for their thought partnership, policy and technical expertise, and contributions to drafting and refining the Plan;
- Sheryl Nicolas and the City's Design and Print Center for designing graphic elements and developing the Plan's overall visual presentation; and
- Staff of the Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency, especially Miya DeVoogd, Communications and Outreach Manager, and Samantha Guinto, Poʻokela Intern, for their contributions to outreach, communications, design, and coordination during the development of the Plan; Tricia Dang, Deputy Director, and Hayley Cook, Senior Manager of Policy and Impact, for their policy leadership; Kaitlyn Judd, Food Systems Fellow, for her critical contributions throughout the drafting, design, public outreach, revision, and council adoption process; and Jason Shon, Food Security and Sustainability Program Manager, for his leadership to enliven the first-ever position to help Oʻahu take on this unprecedented opportunity and challenge.



PHOTO: CCSR

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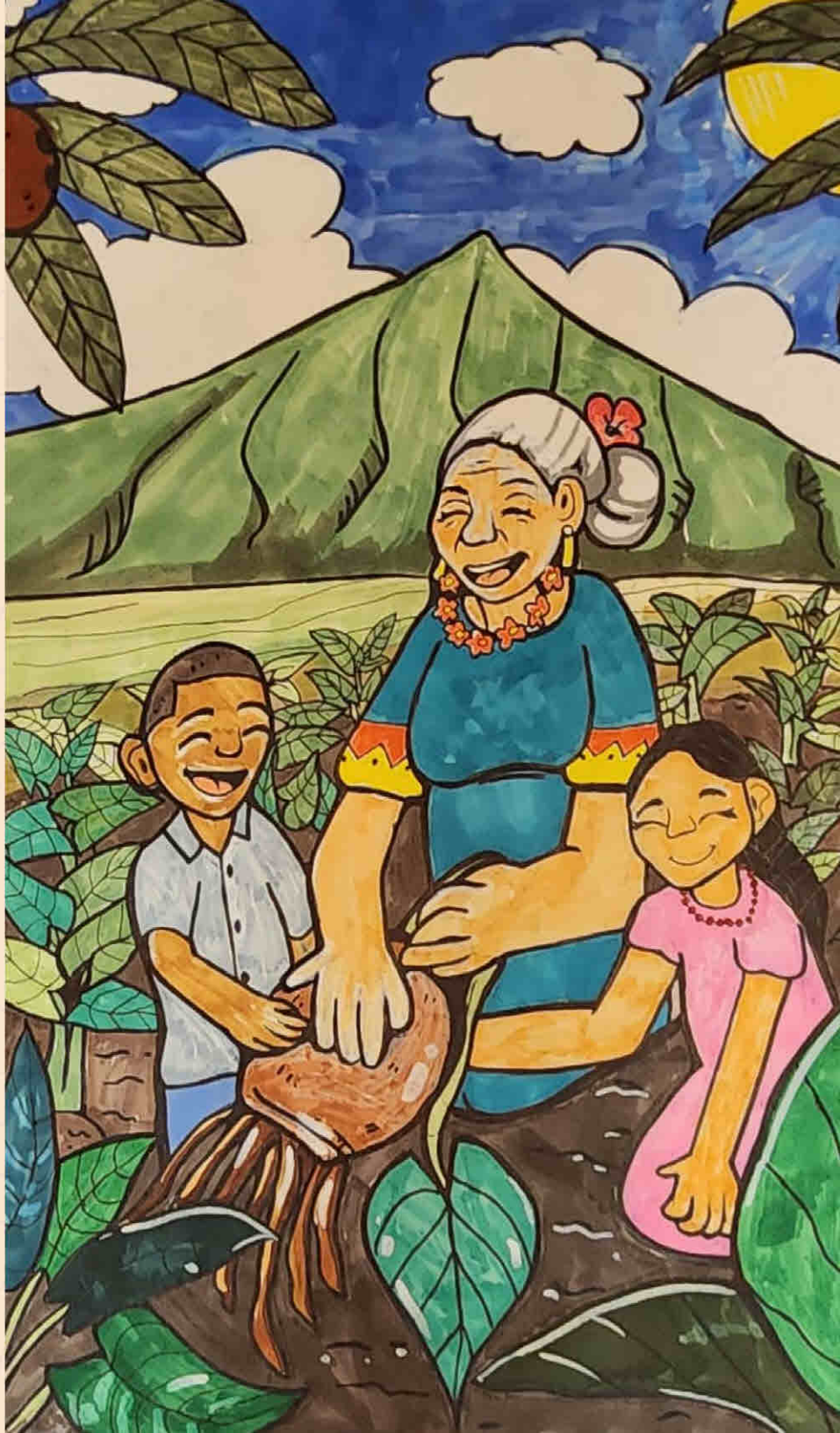
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Hands of the Ancestors, by Elsa Alexander (Nimitz Elementary School), 'Ike 'Ai Art Contest Mayor's Choice Award winner. Medium: marker, pencil, pen/ink. Inspired by the 'ōlelo no'eau "He ali'i ka 'āina; He kauā ke kanaka" ("The land is chief; people are its servants").



Food Is Pilina

Food is pilina: it connects people to place, to culture, and to one another. Building a sustainable, equitable food system for Oʻahu requires investing in those connections: our pilina with ʻāina, communities, and the traditions that nourish us. The word "pili", meaning "to join" or "to bond," forms the root of "pilina" ("relationship" or "connection"), a value that reflects our interdependence and shared kuleana (privilege, responsibility). The food on our plates, the landscapes we steward, and the cultural practices we carry forward all express the quality of our relationships–and our commitment to care for them.

He aliʻi ka ʻāina; he kauā ke kanaka.
The land is chief; people are its servants.

This guiding principle affirms that a thriving food system must be rooted in practices and pilina that prioritize the well-being of ʻāina. When we care for land, water, and seas as the foundation of our well-being, we create the conditions for communities to flourish.

The Oʻahu Food Systems Action Plan is grounded in this conviction. It seeks to weave together the strengths, capacities, and responsibilities of the City in ways that honor our shared pilina and kuleana–especially by uplifting Native Hawaiian knowledge, practices, and foodways. This Plan recognizes that Native Hawaiian communities are not simply sources of inspiration or cultural knowledge, but they continue to lead and steward many of the food practices, relationships, and institutions that sustain Oʻahu. Accordingly, implementation of this Plan will depend on ongoing partnership, shared learning, and accountability to the communities whose generations of stewardship have shaped this place. At the same time, the City and County of Honolulu recognizes that past City actions and policies have at times been at odds with these principles. Moving forward requires both transformation and repair, grounded in transparency.

With humility, a deep commitment to building and strengthening pilina, and recognition of its distinct history and kuleana, the City and County of Honolulu is committed to fostering a just, environmentally sustainable, prosperous, equitable, and resilient community-based food system for Oʻahu.

This commitment is grounded in five Guiding Values, and each value is paired with an essential dimension of a thriving food system:


Pono: Food & Nutrition Security


Mālama ʻĀina: Ecological Sustainability


ʻĀina Aloha Economics: Local Food Economies


Ea: Food Sovereignty


Ola Loa: Long-Term Resilience

Together, these values will guide the City in its work to strengthen our communities and build a food system that nourishes all people and places of Oʻahu, now and for generations to come.

Plan Purpose

The Oʻahu Food Systems Action Plan represents the first time the City has formally determined and communicated its role in shaping a food system that reflects the needs, values, and priorities of Oʻahu's communities. By creating the Plan, the City aims to 1) advance actionable solutions, 2) support strategic coordination, and 3) foster community trust. These three objectives have guided both the planning process and the structure of the Plan.

Actionable Solutions

- **Prioritize practical, feasible actions:** Rather than outlining a limited number of broad recommendations for a wide array of stakeholders, the Plan identifies a robust set of concrete actions focused on City government—many already underway—that reflect current capacity and operational realities.
- **Focus on near-term progress:** By focusing on actions that are feasible and within the City's current authorities and capacities, the Plan is designed to make meaningful progress over the next five years. Continuous coordination among City agencies will support effective implementation.

Strategic Coordination

- **Establish a clear framework:** The Plan organizes guiding values, strategies, and actions to reflect the breadth and interconnected nature of the food system.
- **Clarify the City's role:** Key City agencies are identified throughout the Plan, and a SWOT analysis helps define the City's unique role within the broader food systems landscape. Furthermore, each action lists lead and collaborating departments and has been coordinated with department staff to support implementation readiness.
- **Align priorities and investments:** By articulating shared goals, roles, and outcomes, the Plan supports interdepartmental alignment, strengthens the case for external funding, and positions Oʻahu to advance food systems initiatives at county, state, and federal levels. The Plan also aligns with broader sustainability efforts such as the Aloha+ Challenge and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

Community Trust

- **Center community voices and leadership and strengthen partnerships:** The Plan is grounded in community priorities and seeks to strengthen and complement community-led efforts across O‘ahu, with a focus on frontline communities to achieve fair and just outcomes. The Plan acknowledges that many of O‘ahu’s food system innovations and cultural food practices have been sustained through community leadership and stewardship. The City’s role is not to replace or direct these efforts but to support, coordinate, and invest in ways that help communities advance their own goals and visions for the future.
- **Respect community time and input:** The Plan’s hybrid engagement approach–combining targeted outreach and consultation with review of existing plans and literature–honors prior community contributions while minimizing engagement fatigue (see Planning Process section).
- **Provide transparency and accessibility:** The Plan serves as a one-stop, accessible resource outlining the City’s food system efforts across departments.
- **Commit to accountability:** Progress will be tracked, publicly shared through an implementation dashboard, and reported annually in the City’s Annual Sustainability Report.

What This Plan Is Not

- **The Plan is not a long-term vision for all stakeholders:** Rather, it is an implementation-focused action plan that outlines concrete actions the City can take in the short- to mid-term. Actions are grounded in the operational realities of municipal government and are therefore shaped by the capacities–as well as the limitations—of local government. While it highlights the need for collaboration and cross-sector partnership, it does not prescribe specific roles or responsibilities for businesses, nonprofits, foundations, or state agencies.
- **The Plan is not a comprehensive literature review, assessment, or analysis of O‘ahu’s food system:** While it references relevant research to provide context and inform proposed actions, it is not intended to serve as a formal research report.
- **The Plan is not a legally binding commitment:** Rather, it serves as a strategic guide to articulate the City’s food system priorities, strengthen mission-aligned partnerships, and promote transparency and accountability.

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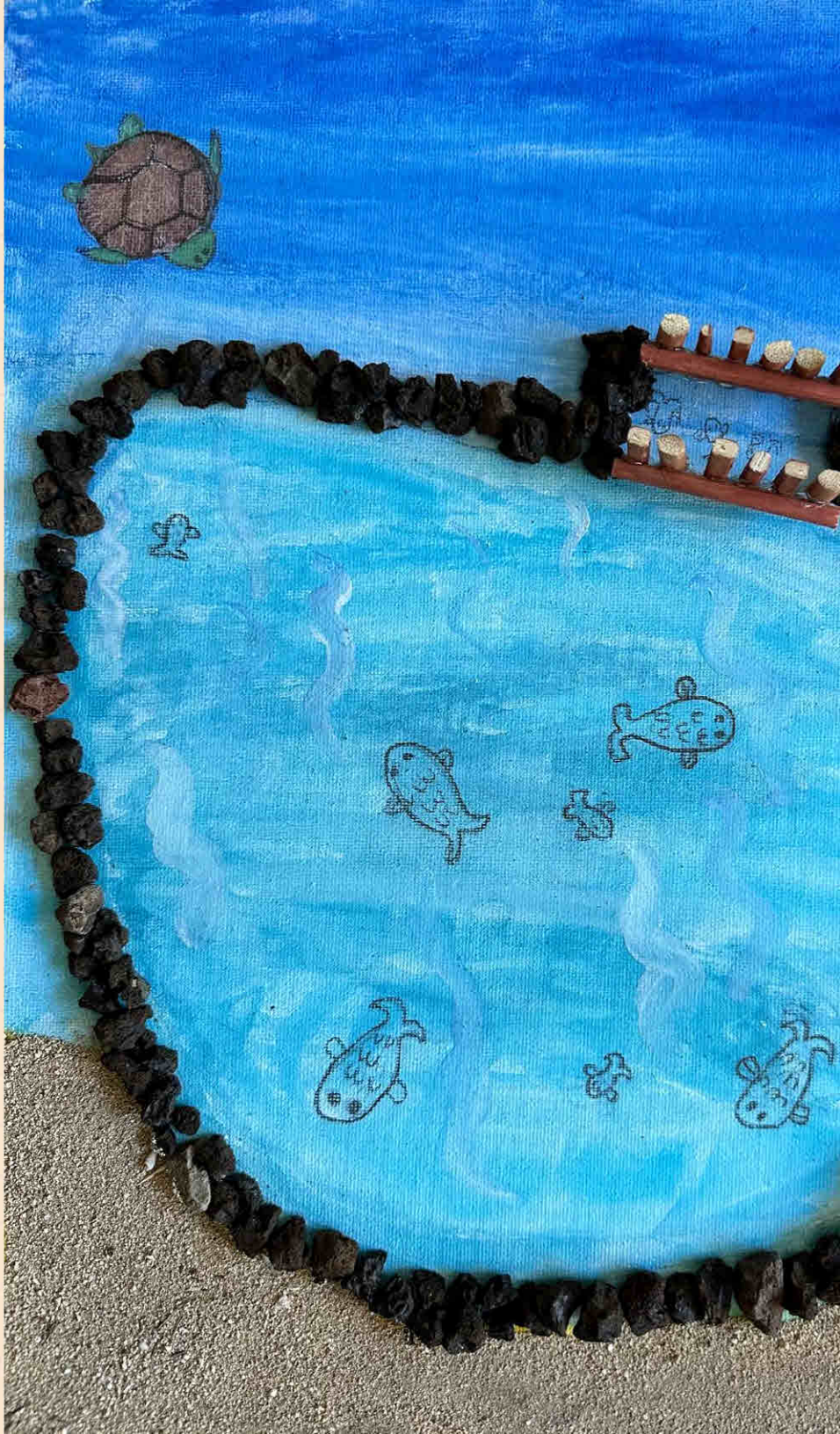
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School, by Pihahau'oli Ciotti (Kamehameha Schools), winner of the 'Ike 'Ai Art Contest OER Food Systems Award. Medium: watercolor paint, pencil, multimedia painting. Inspired by the 'ōlelo no'eau "Holo i'a ka papa, kau 'ia e ka manu" ("When the shoals are full of fish, the birds gather over them." Interpretation: Where there is food, people will gather).

What Is a Food System?

A food system is the complex, interconnected network of activities, people, relationships, and processes that shape—and are shaped by—the journey food takes from land and sea to table and beyond. It includes

- All **activities across the food supply chain,** from production, harvesting, processing, distribution, marketing, and consumption to waste recovery and disposal;
- The **drivers** that shape these activities and the **outcomes** they produce, including but not limited to the environment, education, funding, the economy, research, equity, policy, governance, social connections, culture, and health;[1]
- The **individuals, communities, businesses, agencies, and organizations** directly or indirectly involved in these processes; and
- The **dynamic relationships** among these components, which together determine how food is grown, accessed, valued, and experienced.[2]



Multiple Scales

Food systems operate simultaneously at multiple scales. Oʻahu's food system is not a single entity but a network of diverse, overlapping systems, ranging from subsistence practices at the ahupuaʻa and ʻili level, to community-based production, to large commercial operations. These systems are also deeply embedded within and shaped by larger state, national, regional, and global food systems. Events like the COVID-19 pandemic have demonstrated how supply chain disruptions thousands of miles away can quickly affect food availability, costs, and household **food security** on Oʻahu. For this reason, we refer to this document as the Oʻahu Food *Systems* Action Plan.

A Systems Approach

Given the interconnectedness of food systems, challenges and solutions rarely exist in isolation. Adopting a systems approach calls for a holistic view that considers relationships, root causes, and ripple effects. Food Systems, for example, are deeply connected with other essential systems such as transportation and housing. Meaningful change therefore requires shared vision, coordinated action, and collective stewardship, both within City government and with communities and external partners. This approach acknowledges our shared pilina and kuleana: everyone—from keiki (children) to kūpuna (elders), from kuahiwi (mountains) to kahakai (shoreline), and from every way of thinking and walk of life—has a role in shaping the future of our food systems.





PHOTO: CCSR

Why Plan for Food Systems?

A food systems plan is a strategic framework that outlines a community’s vision for its food systems and maps out the steps and stakeholders needed to achieve that vision. Food systems plans often include strategies to support agriculture and **food security**, but may also focus on issues as diverse as housing, composting, fisheries, and **workforce development** in the agricultural and restaurant and grocery industries. Public transportation systems, for instance, are critical to ensuring frontline communities can access and afford food in their neighborhood. Just as many governments create multi-year plans for land use, transportation, and economic development, we can create food systems plans that take a long-term view of community needs and priorities and help us coordinate efforts that support them in the immediacy.

Food systems planning has not always received the attention it deserves, in part because there is no dedicated “Department of Food” to lead these efforts across all the government agencies and sectors that impact food systems at the state or local levels in Hawai‘i. Yet, food is deeply connected to many critical aspects of community well-being and how agencies influence food systems. If we do not intentionally plan for food systems, we are likely to miss opportunities to support local people, economies, and ecosystems and may even perpetuate practices that harm them. Recognizing this, more local governments and community-led groups are beginning to integrate food systems planning into their broader strategic efforts, with a focus on developing sustainable and resilient food systems.

Why Does Oʻahu Need a Food Systems Action Plan?

The global food system—which includes Oʻahu—is both a remarkable achievement and a profound challenge. Enough food is produced to feed every person on the planet—more than 8.2 billion people as of 2026—yet hundreds of millions still experience hunger and food insecurity each year. On this island alone, approximately 244,000 people are food insecure (25% of the population),[3] underscoring our current challenges and the need to be prepared at the local level when global supply chain disruptions affect food availability and affordability.

At the same time, the food system is a leading driver of environmental change, responsible for a significant share of greenhouse gas emissions and the degradation of air, water, soils, and biodiversity. It is also a major driver of public health, contributing to rising rates of chronic disease and inequities in access to nutritious food. These ecological and human impacts are deeply interconnected.

On Oʻahu, these global dynamics are further shaped by a distinct set of local conditions and history. Since the beginning of Western colonization, land management practices have shifted away from the ahupuaʻa system of shared stewardship to privatized property relations. This transition enabled plantation-era monocropping to reorient land, water, and economic priorities away from Indigenous systems and toward outside interests.[4,5] These impacts continue to shape food, agriculture, and society today. Any local government plan must consider these historical legacies as it works to cultivate a more just, resilient, and locally rooted food system.

If we get food right—how we grow it, share it, and value it—we can improve climate resilience, community health, economic vitality, and cultural well-being together. [6]



PHOTO: CCSR

Local Food System Challenges

Household Food Insecurity as of 2026

- 25% of O‘ahu residents are food insecure (approximately 244,000 people), which means they cannot reliably access enough food for an active, healthy life.[7]
- 11% of Hawai‘i households go a full day without food during some or most months.[8]
- 22% of households with children in Hawai‘i report that they sometimes or often do not have enough to eat because they cannot afford food.[9]
- The Hawai‘i Foodbank serves more than 160,000 people each month[10]—similar to the number of people served during the COVID-19 pandemic, when need nearly doubled.[11]

Economic Insecurity

- Hawai‘i has the highest cost of living in the nation when factoring in housing, healthcare, transportation, and food.[12]
- The living wage for one adult with one child on O‘ahu is over $56/hour,[13] while the average wage residents actually receive is $32/hour. [14]
- Honolulu households spent 47% more on food than the U.S. average in 2022.[15]
- 37% of O‘ahu households live below the ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) threshold, meaning they struggle to afford basic necessities despite being employed. Among these households, 46% experience food insecurity. [16]
- Statewide, 58% of Native Hawaiian and 52% of Filipino residents fall below the ALICE threshold.[17]



PHOTO: CCSR

Climate Resilience & Disaster Preparedness

- Rising temperatures, drought, changing rainfall patterns, and more frequent extreme weather events threaten food production, public health, and economic stability.[18]
- Key food infrastructure, including the Port of Honolulu—which is uniquely capable of handling many of the large barges that transport food—as well as coastal lo‘i kalo, are located in low-lying areas vulnerable to sea level rise and storm surge.[19, 20, 21]
- Hawai‘i’s critical food import systems lack redundancy, increasing risk during disruptions.[22]
- Only 12% of households have the recommended 14-day emergency supply of food, water, and medicine.[23]
- 80% of O‘ahu’s food is imported and stocked using a ‘just-in-time’ model. Without constant shipments, our commercial food supply would be exhausted in only five to seven days.[24, 25]
- The 2026 Kona Low storms resulted in a federal disaster declaration and widespread agricultural damage, with estimated losses ranging from $40 million across more than 600 farms to approximately $50 million affecting ~2,000 farms statewide, including over $27 million in losses on O‘ahu alone.[26, 27]

Food Waste & Resource Depletion

- Food waste makes up 20% of O‘ahu’s overall waste stream, or 160,000 tons per year.[28]
- Up to 40% of produce in Hawai‘i is left unharvested or discarded as “unsellable.” There is a missed opportunity to divert edible food from landfills and expand food access through gleaning.[29, 30]
- Industrial agriculture has degraded soils and contributed to biodiversity loss and greenhouse gas emissions across the islands.[31, 32, 33, 34, 35]

Underutilized Agricultural Lands & Limited Food Production

- Between 2017 and 2022, the number of farms decreased by 7,328 to 6,569 farms statewide and the amount of land in farms decreased over 82,000 acres.[36]
- Only 46% of total cropland on O‘ahu was in production and harvested in 2022.[37]
- Most of Hawai‘i’s top 15 agricultural commodities by value do not directly contribute to residents’ food security. These include seed crops, coffee, basil, macadamia nuts, orchids, foliage, lei flowers, and other ornamental plants.[38]
- The seed industry remains the most valuable commodity produced in Hawai‘i,[39] utilizing 33% of crop land on O‘ahu while not directly contributing to the local food supply.[40]

Nutrition Imbalance

- Only 14% of adults and high school students on O‘ahu eat the recommended five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day.[41, 42]
- 38% of children on O‘ahu aged 0-17 years drank a sugar-sweetened beverage the previous day.[43]

Chronic Disease

- Five of the top ten causes of death in Hawai‘i—heart disease, cancer, stroke, diabetes, and kidney disease—are diet-related.[44]
- Historically marginalized groups—including Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Filipinos—as well as populations with low-income, lower levels of educational attainment, and those living in rural areas are disproportionately affected by chronic diseases and the social determinants of health. [45, 46, 47, 48]
- By 2030, chronic disease costs in Hawai‘i could reach $12.2 billion annually.[49]

Barriers to Agricultural & Agrifood Business Success

- Only 8.8% of Hawai‘i farms were considered both financially profitable and operationally efficient in 2022, highlighting the economic challenges facing the agricultural sector. Profit margins often range from 5% to negative returns.[50, 51]
- Access to affordable agricultural land, labor, and capital are consistently identified as the top barriers affecting the viability and growth of local agricultural businesses.[52, 53, 54]
- High production costs—including labor, equipment, inputs, utilities, transportation, and other operating expenses—limit profitability and the ability of producers to scale operations.[55]
- Invasive species, pests, and plant diseases continue to threaten agricultural productivity, increase operating costs, and undermine farm profitability.[56]
- Agricultural theft and related crimes resulted in an estimated $12.8 million in losses statewide in 2024, with 21% of O‘ahu farms reporting theft incidents.[57]
- Regulatory and permitting requirements can create challenges for farmers and food entrepreneurs seeking to establish, diversify, innovate, or expand their operations.[58]
- Hawai‘i’s commercial agricultural landscape evolved from large-scale plantation monocultures that relied on intensive farming practices, leaving a legacy of degraded soils, erosion, and diminished ecosystem health that farmers must contend with today.[59, 60]
- Limited data on agriculture, consumption, and economic activity—combined with outdated data collection and analysis systems, reduced federal statistical staffing, and gaps in timely, actionable information on production, distribution, and intra- and inter-island agricultural flows—constrains effective policy decision-making.[61]

Agricultural Workforce Limitations

- 44% of farmers on O‘ahu were over the age of 65 in 2022,[62] highlighting an aging agricultural workforce and uncertain generational transition.
- Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting account for only 1.3% of Hawai‘i’s workforce, employing approximately 5,000 workers statewide (including 1,875 producers on O‘ahu).[63] In contrast, 126,000 workers are employed in the government sector (City, state, and federal combined).[64, 65, 66]



PHOTO: CCSR

Disruption of Indigenous Knowledge & Practices

- Over the last two and a half centuries, colonization, the privatization of land and water, and the dismantling of Indigenous governance systems contributed to the decline of the ahupuaʻa system, in which land and resources were stewarded through reciprocal relationships and responsibilities. We now have an economic system that focuses on short-term profits, which can lead to overuse and depletion of land and natural resources.[67]
- Imported foods and refined grains have largely replaced traditional, culturally meaningful foods rich in micronutrients such as kalo (taro), ʻuala (sweet potato), and ʻulu (breadfruit).[68] Many traditional food production methods, including loʻi kalo, loko iʻa, agroforestry systems, and community food-sharing practices, have been altered, degraded, or face barriers to restoration despite growing community efforts to revitalize them.
- As agricultural landscapes change, both the physical and cultural connections to ʻāina (land and waterways that provide food) are undermined.[69] The loss of access to culturally significant lands and food practices has contributed to declines in intergenerational knowledge transfer, language, cultural practices, and opportunities for communities to steward and shape their own food systems.
- The shift away from Indigenous knowledge and practices represents not only a cultural loss but also the devaluing of food systems knowledge that can support climate resilience, biodiversity, community health, and long-term food security.
- Despite these disruptions, Native Hawaiian communities and many partners have continued to protect, restore, and perpetuate Indigenous food systems and cultural practices. Efforts such as the restoration of loʻi and loko iʻa, the revitalization of traditional food cultivation and preparation, and policies such as Act 107 (2011) that support Native Hawaiian customary practices demonstrate the ongoing resilience of these systems and their continued relevance for building a more sustainable and equitable food future.

Barriers to Restoring & Scaling Loko Iʻa & Aquaculture Systems

- Although approximately 449 historic loko iʻa once existed across Hawaiʻi, many have been lost or degraded due to invasive species, deteriorated infrastructure, fragmented ownership, and underinvestment. Significant barriers to restoration remain, including water access, stewardship capacity, and sustained funding.[70, 71, 72]
- Most actively managed loko iʻa are not yet ready for regular harvest or commercial production, as restoration efforts remain focused on rebuilding native species populations, restoring ecosystem function, and strengthening biocultural landscapes.[73]
- Despite opportunities for growth, Hawaiʻi's aquaculture sector—including both loko iʻa restoration and commercial aquaculture—faces key barriers, including complex permitting and leasing processes, high energy and feed costs, limited processing and cold-chain infrastructure, workforce and housing constraints, and gaps in technical assistance, access to resources, and market demand that limit the scalability of local production.[74]

Dependence on Food Imports & Tourism

- 85–90% of Hawaiʻi's food is imported. Replacing just 10% with local food could keep $313 million in Hawaiʻi's economy.[75, 76]
- Hawaiʻi's economy is highly vulnerable due to its heavy reliance on tourism. This dependence can lead to significant job losses during economic downturns and crises, place strain on public services, and limit opportunities for economic diversification.[77, 78] Additionally, a substantial portion of tourism spending leaves Hawaiʻi through businesses and supply chains based outside the islands, limiting how much visitor spending actually circulates within local communities.

Supply Chain Infrastructure Gaps

- Much of Hawai‘i’s existing food system infrastructure was designed to support plantation-era monocropping and large-scale commodity production, rather than today’s diversified local food economy.[79] As a result, gaps in critical infrastructure—including cold storage, aggregation facilities, commercial kitchens, processing facilities, renewable energy systems, and transportation logistics—limit the efficiency, scalability, self-sufficiency, and, resilience of Hawai‘i’s food system.[80, 81]
- Food hubs—which help small and mid-sized producers access larger and more stable markets by aggregating, processing, marketing, and distributing locally produced food—face a range of challenges, including limited staffing capacity; inadequate cold storage, processing, transportation, warehouse, and commercial kitchen infrastructure; and the need for technical assistance related to fundraising, business operations, marketing, infrastructure development, and producer engagement.[82]
- Slaughter and processing facilities for smaller animals such as sheep, goats, and axis deer remain limited, as much of Hawai‘i’s existing infrastructure is tailored toward beef production. As a result, livestock are often sent off-island for harvesting and processing, and limited refrigerated storage capacity continues to constrain local food distribution efforts.[83]

Lack of Integrated Food Systems Planning

- Food system actors, sectors, and stakeholders frequently operate independently rather than collaboratively, resulting in fragmented efforts and missed opportunities for alignment.[84]
- Zoning, permitting and land-use rules, while important for safety and environmental protection, can unintentionally slow innovation in agriculture, food distribution, and community stewardship projects. Navigating these systems can be especially challenging for small farmers and community-based organizations.[85, 86]
- The lack of recent agriculture, consumption, and economic data makes it more challenging to identify gaps in real time, track progress, and make informed, data-driven policy decisions.[87]



PHOTO: CCSR

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Pōʻai, by Alston Albarado (Jefferson Elementary School), ʻIke ʻAi Art Contest submission. Medium: marker, colored pencil. Inspired by the ʻōlelo noʻeau "Huli ka lima i lalo, piha ka ʻōpū" ("When the hands are turned down, the stomach is full." Interpretation: In turning one's hands down to do work, one is also able to feed oneself").

Core City Agencies & Responsibilities

It is important to situate the City within the broader landscape of food systems actors. While the City plays an important and unique role in food systems, it cannot address every issue at every scale. A central question guiding this Plan is,

What is the City's role in strengthening O‘ahu's food system?

The City's role—and the actions proposed in this Plan—must be grounded in the realities of City operations and accurately reflect current and anticipated work of its agencies. At the same time, the Plan incorporates thoughtful "stretch" goals informed by community input and explores opportunities for the City to evolve, innovate, and respond to emerging food systems challenges.

This section highlights key City agencies, their core responsibilities, their role within food systems, and the primary plans or guiding documents that shape their work. It is not exhaustive, but focuses on agencies most directly connected to food systems.

Finally, a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis provides a candid assessment of the role the City plays in food systems, highlighting key internal and external factors that may influence future efforts. It is included to promote transparency and to ground this Plan in a realistic understanding of what the City can advance in the short to medium term.

Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency (CCSR)

Core Responsibilities: Citywide food systems planning and resilience

Food System Functions:

- Leads the development and coordinated implementation of the O‘ahu Food Systems Action Plan.
- CCSR's Food Security and Sustainability Program coordinates food-related work across City agencies, advancing food security, sustainability, climate resilience, and community stewardship initiatives.
- Manages the Climate Resiliency Fund, which advances City and community-wide climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience initiatives.

Key Plans Relevant to Food Systems: Ola: O‘ahu Resilience Strategy; Climate Action Plan; Climate Ready O‘ahu (climate adaptation strategy); Long-Term Disaster Recovery Plan

For a complete list of department acronyms, see page 136.

Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP)

Core Responsibilities: Land use planning, zoning, and permitting

Food System Functions:

- Regulates where and how agriculture and food-related activities may occur.
- Issues permits for agricultural and food facilities.
- Enforces land-use regulations affecting farming, markets, and food enterprises.

Key Plans Relevant to Food Systems: Oʻahu General Plan; Development Plans and Sustainable Communities Plans; Neighborhood Transit-Oriented Development Plans; Special Area Plans; Urban Design Plans; Important Agricultural Lands

Department of Community Services (DCS)

Core Responsibilities: Social services and food access for vulnerable populations

Food System Functions:

- Provides congregate and home-delivered meals for elderly adults through the Kūpuna Care Program.
- Manages contracts with some City-affiliated public housing sites.
- Supports early childhood nutrition through the Early Child Education (ECE) Program.

Key Plans Relevant to Food Systems: Four-Year Area Plan on Aging; Childcare Action Plan

Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR)

Core Responsibilities: Public spaces, recreation, and food access programs

Food System Functions:

- Operates People's Open Markets as of 2026.
- Runs the Recreational Community Gardening Program.
- Provides meals to keiki through Summer Fun.
- Expands urban forestry and tree canopy through the Community Forestry Program.

Key Plans Relevant to Food Systems: Urban Tree Plan

Department of Housing and Land Management (DHLM)

Core Responsibilities: Housing, land stewardship and conservation funding

Food System Functions:

- Delivers affordable, senior, workforce, and mixed-income housing.
- Manages the Clean Water and Natural Lands (CWNL) Fund, which supports conservation of agricultural lands.
- Manages the Housing Development Special Fund to support the development, preservation, and financing of affordable housing projects.
- Oversees City land purchases and leasing.

Key Plans Relevant to Food Systems: Strategic Housing Plan (2025-2028)

Department of Emergency Management (DEM)

Core Responsibilities: Disaster preparedness and response

Food System Functions:

- Coordinates mass care and feeding with state, federal, and community partners before, during, and after an emergency.
- Convenes and activates the Oʻahu Disaster Feeding Task Force.

Key Plans Relevant to Food Systems: Local Hazard Mitigation Plan; Long-Term Disaster Recovery Plan

Board of Water Supply (BWS)

Core Responsibilities: Water access and conservation

Food System Functions:

- Leads water conservation efforts.
- Supports watershed protection initiatives.
- Oversees agricultural water rates for farmers.

Key Plans Relevant to Food Systems: BWS Strategic Plan 2023-2027; Watershed Management Plans; One Water Honolulu

Department of Environmental Services (ENV)

Core Responsibilities: Waste management

Food System Functions:

- Leads efforts to reduce food waste and organics in the waste stream.
- Supports composting and diversion initiatives.

Key Plans Relevant to Food Systems: 2024 Interim Status Report for the Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan (2019); 2019 Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan Update; 2017 Waste Composition Study

Department of Transportation Services (DTS)

Core Responsibilities: Public transportation

Food System Functions:

- Operates Skyline, TheBus, and TheHandi-Van, and plans and manages Oʻahu's multimodal transportation system, including streets, sidewalks, bikeways, Safe Routes to School Program, and Complete Streets Program (in collaboration with DPP, DDC, DFM, and DPR).
- Plays a key role in improving access to healthy food by connecting residents to grocery stores, farmers markets, and other food destinations while supporting the safe and efficient movement of people and goods across the island.

Key Plans Relevant to Food Systems: Oʻahu Pedestrian Plan, 2019 Oʻahu Bike Plan Update

Department of Enterprise Services (DES)

Core Responsibilities: City facilities, concessions, and contracts

Food System Functions:

- Establishes and manages concessions contracts with food vendors at City facilities such as the Neal S. Blaisdell Center, the Honolulu Zoo, all six of the municipal golf courses, and the Tom Moffat Waikīkī Shell.

Key Plans Relevant to Food Systems: N/A

Department of Facility Maintenance (DFM)

Core Responsibilities: Municipal stormwater systems, stream maintenance, and water quality.

Food System Functions:

- Supports watershed health through the Storm Water Quality Division's efforts to improve stormwater quality and promote green stormwater infrastructure.

Key Plans Relevant to Food Systems: Storm Water Strategic Plan, Storm Water Management Program Plan

Department of Budget and Fiscal Services (BFS)

Core Responsibilities: Finance and property assessment

Food System Functions:

- The Real Property Assessment Division manages property tax assessments for agricultural lands, including agricultural land dedications.

Key Plans Relevant to Food Systems: N/A



PHOTO: OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Threats

Strengths

Multiple Touchpoints Across the Food System
As shown in the previous pages, City agencies already operate a wide range of programs and services that directly influence the food system. These existing programs provide a strong foundation to advance food security, support local agriculture, strengthen resilience, and increase sustainability.

Dedicated Food Systems Capacity
The City has dedicated staff focused on food systems within the Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency's Food Security and Sustainability Program, providing an important foundation for coordinating, advancing, and strengthening food systems initiatives across City government.

Weaknesses

Fragmented Authority
Food system responsibilities are spread across multiple departments, which can slow decision-making and complicate coordination without strong leadership and structure. One example is public health: while many City programs strongly influence public health outcomes—including transportation, food access, housing, and parks—the City does not have a single department charged with overseeing public health in the way a health department would. This can make it challenging to center health outcomes consistently across food system initiatives and to measure impact through a unified public health lens.

Limited Institutional Purchasing Influence
Unlike the State, the City does not directly oversee major food-purchasing institutions such as public schools, hospitals, universities, correctional facilities, or other large-scale institutional meal programs. As a result, the City has fewer opportunities to leverage its own purchasing power to increase demand for locally produced food at scale. While the City can influence food procurement through contracts for programs such as Summer Fun meals, concessions, and other venues, many of the largest institutional purchasing decisions affecting Hawai'i's food system occur outside of City government.

Limited Agricultural Infrastructure and Operational Capacity
Unlike the State, the City has not developed the physical infrastructure, administrative systems, or staffing needed to directly support or operate commercial agricultural activities such as agricultural parks, food hubs, processing facilities, or cold storage infrastructure. City-owned lands are not optimized for the long-term agricultural leases that require substantial capital investment and operational certainty. As a result, the City's role is primarily to coordinate across agencies, create enabling conditions, support market development, and leverage partnerships while collaborating with key community stakeholders and government agencies that lead these efforts—including the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (DAB) and the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC)—rather than directly managing commercial agriculture or core food supply chain functions.

Limited Scale
City food system programs operate at a smaller scale than state and federal efforts, which limits the City's ability to drive system-wide change on its own. Food security is one example: while City initiatives like the Kūpuna Care Program and meals for Summer Fun students play an important role in supporting frontline communities, the largest nutrition assistance programs, including SNAP, are federally funded and administered by the State.

Opportunities

Build on Existing Initiatives
The City does not need to start from scratch. Critical programs, partnerships, and initiatives are already underway across government, nonprofit, and private sectors that can be strengthened, aligned, and scaled to advance food system goals. Rather than duplicating efforts, the City can amplify what is already working, improve coordination across programs and jurisdictions, and strategically fill gaps where needed. For example, while the City does not administer federal nutrition assistance programs such as SNAP and WIC, the Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency completed a pilot project to expand SNAP and WIC acceptance and utilization at farmers markets across Oʻahu. This effort demonstrates how the City can play a catalytic role in strengthening partnerships and community-led initiatives to maximize the effectiveness of critical food security programs already in existence.

Integrate Food Systems Planning
With strong leadership and growing interagency coordination, the City has an opportunity to more intentionally integrate food systems goals into core government functions. Rather than being treated as stand-alone initiatives, food systems priorities can be embedded within housing, transportation, waste management, land stewardship, emergency management, public health, and economic development efforts. The presence of CCSR's Food Security and Sustainability Program within the Mayor's Office provides a strong foundation for aligning priorities, advancing food systems planning, and coordinating implementation across City agencies.

Catalyze Cross-Sector Partnerships
The City's role in the food system can be best understood as that of a facilitator and catalyst. While it may not have the resources or capacity to directly operate certain functions (such as agricultural parks), the City can leverage its assets, policies, services, regulatory authority, and convening power to align policies, streamline processes, build long-term partnerships with key stakeholders, and catalyze meaningful, system-wide impact.

Threats

Dependence on Short-Term Funding
Many City food system initiatives rely on grants, philanthropic support, or time-limited pilot funding rather than stable, long-term operating budgets. Shifts in political priorities or economic downturns can reduce grant and philanthropic funding and limit the City's ability to sustain successful efforts over time.

Political Vulnerability
CCSR is housed within the Mayor's Office, and leadership, staffing, and funding depend on the priorities of each administration and City Council.

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The Local Fish Pond, by Mahealani Moses (Waiʻanae High School), ʻIke ʻAi Art Contest Excellence in Hand-Drawn Art award winner. Medium: colored pencil, pencil. Inspired by the ʻōlelo noʻeau "Holo iʻa ka papa, kau ʻia e ka manu" ("When the shoals are full of fish, the birds gather over them." Interpretation: Where there is food, people will gather).

Our Approach to Community Engagement

It is essential that this Plan be shaped by a diverse spectrum of community voices. At the same time, residents across Oʻahu are frequently asked to participate in meetings, workshops, and surveys—often with limited visibility into how their input is used and actually makes an impact. This can lead to engagement fatigue, particularly when participation feels extractive and disconnected from tangible outcomes rather than reciprocal. To respect community time and avoid overburdening residents and frontline communities, a hybrid approach was adopted. By combining targeted community engagement, expert consultation, and a careful review of existing plans and local food systems literature, this approach balances meaningful participation with a recognition of the many ways that Oʻahu residents have already shared their time, knowledge, and manaʻo.

Planning Timeline

Public Input: Phase 1 May 2022 – October 2025	Agency Discussions, Drafting & Design October 2025 – April 2026	Public Input: Phase 2 May 2026 – June 2026	Revision & Approvals July 2026 – August 2026	Council Adoption September 2026 – December 2026
• Review of existing City plans & key documents • Targeted stakeholder outreach • Community events • Mini food summits • Online survey • ʻIke ʻAi Art Contest	• Writing • Agency discussions • Design • ***Milestone:*** Draft Plan completed (April 2026)	• Public comment period • News release, social media, newsletter, webinars & events • Climate Change Commission workshop • Agency discussions (continued) • Targeted stakeholder outreach	• Revisions • ***Milestone:*** Final Plan completed and approved by City Administration (September 2026)	• Council review process • ***Projected Milestone:*** Final Plan adopted by City Council (target December 2026)

Public Input: Phase 1

The planning process included two phases of public input. Phase 1 focused on listening, learning, and synthesizing community priorities. The planning team conducted a comprehensive review of 64 City plans and documents and 31 food systems plans from other local governments to identify best practices and opportunities for alignment. Community engagement included targeted outreach at 27 community events, three mini food summits, a public survey that received 52 responses between December 2024 and December 2025, and 27 submissions through the ʻIke ʻAi Art Contest. Together, these activities helped shape the Plan's guiding values, strategies, and actions.

Agency Discussions, Drafting & Design

Agency discussions focused on translating community priorities into actions that reflect the operational realities, authority, and capacity of City departments. Coordinating closely with departmental staff helped ensure the proposed actions are practical, implementable, and achievable over the next five years. A draft Plan was then prepared for public review.

Public Input: Phase 2

Phase 2 of the public input process provided an opportunity for residents, organizations, agencies, and elected officials to respond to the draft Plan and help refine its content. During the public comment period from May 1 through June 30, 2026, the City received more than 300 comments and points of feedback. The review process was supported by two public webinars, presentations at community events, and targeted discussions with community members, City agencies, the City's Climate Change Commission, and elected officials to encourage broad participation and constructive feedback. By sharing a complete draft, participants could respond to concrete proposals, identify gaps and unintended impacts, and suggest specific revisions. This helped generate thoughtful, actionable feedback while building shared understanding around the Plan's priorities and implementation.

Revisions, Approvals & Council Adoption

The final stages of the planning process focused on building alignment across City government. After incorporating public comments, the Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency sought approval from the City Administration and formal adoption by the Honolulu City Council to demonstrate support across both the executive and legislative branches. This shared commitment strengthens the City's mandate to advance the actions outlined in the Plan and signals a transition from planning to implementation as the City's primary focus.



PHOTO: CCSR

Plan Development in Numbers

64 City plans reviewed

27 art submissions received through the ʻIke ʻAi Art Contest

2 public webinars held

31 food plans reviewed

1,000+ people directly engaged through outreach

5 Guiding Values

3 Mini Food Summits held

321 public comments received on the draft Plan

10 Strategies

27 outreach events attended

52 responses to the online public input survey

74 Actions

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Makana, by Sophia Tung (Hawaii Baptist Academy), ʻIke ʻAi Art Contest submission. Medium: digital. Inspired by the ʻōlelo noʻeau "I ulu nō ka lālā i ke kumu" ("The branches grow because of the trunk." Interpretation: Without our ancestors we would not be here).



"I wanted to portray a girl receiving a lei from one of her ancestors [and] capture the feeling of respecting and acknowledging those who came before you. It's important for us living in the modern world to know what our family members before us had to do to give us the opportunity to be here today. Everyone's family is rooted in culture and possesses unique stories."

Guiding Values

The City and County of Honolulu is committed to fostering a just, environmentally sustainable, prosperous, equitable, and resilient community-based food system for Oʻahu.

This commitment is grounded in five Guiding Values that reflect the characteristics of a place-based food system the community envisions for Oʻahu. Food systems do not exist apart from place, history, or culture. Because Oʻahu's food system is shaped by the histories, values, and relationships of this ʻāina and its people, the City sought to ground this Plan in a values-based framework that better reflects the context in which it operates and the communities it serves.

The Guiding Values were developed through an iterative process informed by community engagement, conversations with Native Hawaiian cultural practitioners and organizations, City staff, and food system stakeholders, as well as a review of existing plans, literature, and local food systems approaches. They reflect recurring themes and priorities that emerged throughout the planning process and seek to ground the City's role in Oʻahu's food system within the cultural and ecological context of this place.

The Guiding Values are aspirational. They are intended to shape how the City approaches its role in the food system and guide City agencies to make decisions that are more place-based, collaborative, and responsive to community priorities. Their inclusion should not be interpreted as a claim that the City can fully achieve or embody Indigenous values; historical and structural realities make this impossible. Nor is it appropriate for the City to define, commodify, claim ownership over, brand, appropriate, or otherwise misuse Native Hawaiian values.

Rather, the **Guiding Values are included as part of a good-faith effort to situate City actions within the cultural, ecological, and historical context of this place and to align government operations more closely with the needs, priorities, and values expressed by communities across Oʻahu, while acknowledging the responsibility we share to the Indigenous people and well-being of this ʻāina.** These values acknowledge that food systems are expressions of relationships between people and ʻāina, among communities, and across generations. Grounding the Plan in values rooted in place is one way the City seeks to better honor and respond to these relationships.

This approach has guided the Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency since its establishment in 2016. Beginning with the Ola: Oʻahu Resilience Strategy, which centers Ola—resilience—as a Guiding Value, and continuing through Climate Ready Oʻahu, the City's climate adaptation strategy grounded in Mālama ʻĀina, the City has sought to incorporate values-based frameworks into its resilience and sustainability work. This Plan builds on that foundation, recognizing Pono, ʻĀina Aloha Economics, and Ea as additional Guiding Values essential to a thriving and resilient food system.



Pono



Mālama ʻĀina



ʻĀina Aloha Economics



Ea



Ola Loa

Food System Dimensions

Each Guiding Value is paired with an essential dimension of a thriving food system. The dimensions are not direct translations of the Guiding Values but instead describe the primary food system focus area framed under each value. Each food system dimension also articulates an overarching goal.



Plan Structure

The 10 Strategies and 74 Actions organized under the Guiding Values and Food System Dimensions outline what the City believes its agencies can contribute meaningfully and in good faith. They are grounded in the operational realities of municipal government and are therefore shaped by the capacities—as well as the limitations—of local government. While the City cannot transform the food system alone, implementing the Strategies and Actions is an important step the City can take to contribute to these Guiding Values and strengthen various dimensions of our island's food system.

Guiding Value:

Pono

Pono refers to righteousness, moral integrity, or balance. Pono embodies the idea of doing what is fair and just—not only for oneself, but also for the broader community. It conveys a sense of something one must do and a deep sense of responsibility toward others, the land, and future generations.

In practice, pono embodies our collective imperative to help ensure good food for all. A pono food system is one that eliminates food and nutrition insecurity and demonstrates food equity in all its forms—procedural, distributional, structural, intergenerational, and cultural.[88]

Food System Dimension:

Food & Nutrition Security

Goal: All households have consistent and equitable access to healthy, safe, affordable, and culturally appropriate foods essential to optimal health and well-being.

Key Strategies

Strategy 1: Increase access to nutritious, affordable food by strengthening the systems that support food and economic security

Strategy 2: Expand culturally meaningful food and nutrition education



Icon Description

The icon for Pono is represented by a pōhaku kuʻi ʻai (poi pounder), an essential tool for making poi and paʻiʻai. The distinctive, rounded form of the pōhaku is widely recognizable and carries strong cultural associations with nourishment, care, and the transformation of food. The pōhaku is used to pound the cooked corm of kalo (taro) with water, activating its texture and transforming it into poi—an essential staple of the Native Hawaiian diet.

In this way, the pōhaku kuʻi ʻai symbolizes energy, effort, and agency. Its use requires rhythm, focus, and strength, representing the intentional and active work required to cultivate, prepare, and share food in ways that sustain communities and uphold food and nutrition security.

The pōhaku kuʻi ʻai also reflects the importance of protecting and restoring cultural food practices. Until 2011, the sale of hand-pounded poi and paʻiʻai was restricted under state food safety regulations. The efforts of Native Hawaiian practitioners and allies who worked to lift these restrictions illustrate how food systems can —and should—evolve in ways that better support cultural continuity, community well-being, and food sovereignty.

The icon is shown in a gray-purple color inspired by the look of some types of poi.

Guiding Value:

Mālama ʻĀina

Mālama means to care for and protect. While "ʻāina" is often translated as "land", its deeper meaning comes from the word "ʻai", meaning "food" or "to eat." Thus, ʻāina signifies "that which feeds," encompassing not only land but also the resources, relationships, and cultural heritage that nourish us.

Although mālama ʻāina can be simply understood as caring for the land, its significance extends beyond physical actions. As noted in the City's climate adaptation strategy, Climate Ready Oʻahu, mālama ʻāina is deeply rooted in a worldview that recognizes the environment as kin. It is a system of values passed on through generations that recognizes our shared kuleana (responsibility) to enrich and sustain Hawaiʻi's natural resources for both present and future generations.

Food System Dimension:

Ecological Sustainability

Goal: Food system activities safeguard Hawaiʻi's natural resources for both present and future generations.

Key Strategies

Strategy 3: Reduce waste from the food chain

Strategy 4: Strengthen fresh water security by sustainably managing water resources and protecting water quality



Icon Description

The icon for Mālama ʻĀina is represented by two mountains with a waterfall and river flowing between them, evoking the natural movement of wai (water) from the uplands to the sea. The shape of these mountains references the Koʻolau and Waiʻanae Ranges, grounding the symbol in the landscapes that shape Oʻahu and sustain life across the island. Water flowing down the mountains represents the vital pathways that connect ecosystems, communities, and food systems from mauka to makai.

This imagery also reflects the principles of the ahupuaʻa system, a traditional Native Hawaiian land management framework that recognizes the interdependence of resources across an entire watershed—from mountain forests and streams to coastal fisheries. The cascading lines of the waterfall and river symbolize the flow of water that nourishes crops, replenishes ecosystems, and sustains human communities. By placing water within the context of the mountains and landscape, the icon highlights the importance of stewarding land and water together.

Together, these elements reflect the meaning of mālama ʻāina: caring for the land and waters that sustain life. The icon is shown in a gray-blue color inspired by wai.

Guiding Value:

ʻĀina Aloha Economics

ʻĀina Aloha Economics is a framework rooted in Native Hawaiian cultural values, emphasizing abundance, reciprocity, and stewardship of the land. It envisions an economy that nurtures both people and the environment by prioritizing community well-being, environmental sustainability, and equitable resource distribution.[89]

Applied to food systems, this approach supports small- and medium-sized producers who utilize agroecological farming methods and Indigenous and traditional ecological knowledge (I/TEK). It also fosters supply chains that prioritize making locally produced food accessible to residents, rather than focusing solely on scaling for export. Ultimately, economic prosperity should align with our collective values of food sovereignty, environmental sustainability, and the resilience of the local food system to enhance food and nutrition security for all.

Food System Dimension:

Local Food Economies

Goal: Robust local food economies create good jobs and regenerate both communities and ʻāina.

Key Strategies

Strategy 5: Enhance market opportunities and value chain coordination for local food

Strategy 6: Create conditions for small- and mid-sized local producers and food businesses to thrive

Icon Description

The icon for ʻĀina Aloha Economics is inspired by a traditional kapa pattern that abstractly represents a person. The design features a central circle symbolizing the piko—the spiritual and physical center of a person—from which lines extend to suggest the arms, legs, and neck. In this context, the pattern reflects the idea that an economy is fundamentally created and sustained by people working together in relationship with one another and with the places that support them.

Drawing from kapa design traditions also highlights the concept of value-added production rooted in ʻāina. Kapa itself is made from wauke (paper mulberry tree) fibers that are carefully cultivated, harvested, processed, and transformed into a finished product through skilled labor, patience, and cultural knowledge. As such, the pattern reflects an economy grounded in stewardship, creativity, and the responsible use of natural resources—principles that align with the values of ʻāina aloha.

The icon is presented in a warm orange-yellow color inspired by ʻōlena (turmeric). In Hawaiʻi, ʻōlena has long been used in cooking, healing practices, and as a natural dye for kapa. It symbolizes vitality, abundance, and the regenerative potential of an economy rooted in ʻāina aloha values.

Guiding Value:

Ea

Ea embodies life, the breath itself, and the conditions that allow people and communities to flourish. For many Native Hawaiians, ea is also closely connected to independence, sovereignty, and self-determination.

In a food systems context, ea emphasizes food sovereignty: the ability of communities to meaningfully participate in, influence, and help shape food systems according to their needs, priorities, and cultural practices. This approach moves beyond charity-based food aid to foster equitable systems, participatory decision-making, and long-term resilience. Food sovereignty prioritizes self-determination, ensuring access to culturally valued foods and livelihoods while upholding dignity and agency.

Food System Dimension:

Food Sovereignty

Goal: Communities practice food sovereignty by participating in and shaping food systems in ways that align with community goals and cultural practices.

Key Strategies

Strategy 7: Increase access to food gardens in all forms

Strategy 8: Restore cultural connections to ʻāina (biocultural revitalization)



Icon Description

The icon for Ea draws inspiration from the distinctive skin pattern of ʻulu (breadfruit). The design features several of the fruit's geometric "scales" pieced together to form a unified pattern. Each individual shape represents a distinct unit, but together they interlock to create a larger, cohesive form. This visual pattern evokes how individuals, households, and communities come together to form a resilient social fabric, reflecting the idea that ea emerges through cooperation, shared responsibility, and the collective effort required to sustain abundance and well-being.

The icon also honors ʻulu as a powerful kūpuna crop that reminds us that food sovereignty involves looking to the past and uplifting traditional practices. ʻUlu has long been associated with abundance, nourishment, and community resilience. As a highly productive food crop capable of feeding generations, it serves as a reminder that thriving food systems depend on long-term stewardship, intergenerational knowledge, and the capacity of communities to help shape their own food futures.

The icon uses a soft yellow-green color inspired by ripe ʻulu, evoking vitality, nourishment, and the promise of abundance.

Guiding Value:

Ola Loa

The word "ola" means "well-being," "living," "thriving," and "healthy"—but it also relates to salvation, healing, and survival. It is the namesake of the City's Ola: Oʻahu Resilience Strategy, which outlines how the City can uplift community, take responsibility for safeguarding our island home, and pave the way for ola loa, an idea that revered kupuna Mary Kawena Pukuʻi defined as a state of being "completely cured and recovered." [90]

Food System Dimension:

Long-Term Resilience

Goal: Oʻahu embraces a thoughtful and planned approach to food system transformation that safeguards against future shocks and stresses and ensures long-term food system resilience.

Key Strategies

Strategy 9: Strengthen emergency food preparedness

Strategy 10: Bolster food systems planning, collaboration, data collection, research, and funding to advance Plan actions



Icon Description

The icon for Ola Loa is represented by a germinating niu (coconut). The design features a coconut with an emerging shoot and two small leaves unfurling from the sprout. This early stage of growth conveys a sense of potential, renewal, and the deliberate, ongoing process of nurturing life toward the future.

The icon honors niu as a tree of life and powerful symbol of resilience in island communities, recognizing its cultural, ecological, and practical significance beyond ornamental use. Historically carried on ocean voyages and planted across islands, coconuts provide food, water, materials, and medicine. Because nearly every part of the niu can be used, it symbolizes resourcefulness, sustainability, and the ability of communities to thrive across generations— even in challenging conditions—making it a fitting representation for ola loa.

Today, efforts to protect niu from threats such as the coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) have brought together expertise and coordinated action from stakeholders across the food system, exemplifying both the need for—and the community's commitment to—ola loa. These collaborative efforts reflect a shared responsibility to steward vital resources and ensure their survival for future generations, making niu a fitting symbol of ola loa.

The icon is shown in a warm tan color, inspired by the natural color of the coconut's husk and fibers, reinforcing themes of groundedness, resilience, and enduring vitality.

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Casting Together: Old Ways, New Hands, by Hyejeong Jang, *'Ike 'Ai Art* Contest Best in Show – Adult Division award winner. Medium: pen/ink. Inspired by the 'ōlelo no'eau *"*Holo i'a ka papa, kau 'ia e ka manu*"* ("When the shoals are full of fish, the birds gather over them." Interpretation: Where there is food, people will gather).

Navigating Strategies & Actions

74 actions are organized into 10 strategies, which are nestled into five Guiding Values and their corresponding food system dimensions



Pono: Food & Nutrition Security

Strategy 1: Increase access to nutritious, affordable food by strengthening the systems that support food and economic security

Strategy 2: Expand culturally meaningful food and nutrition education



Mālama ʻĀina: Ecological Sustainability

Strategy 3: Reduce waste from the food chain

Strategy 4: Strengthen fresh water security by sustainably managing water resources and protecting water quality



Āina Aloha Economics: Local Food Economies

Strategy 5: Enhance market opportunities and value chain coordination for local food

Strategy 6: Create conditions for small- and mid-sized local producers and food businesses to thrive



Ea: Food Sovereignty

Strategy 7: Increase access to food gardens in all forms

Strategy 8: Restore cultural connections to ʻāina (biocultural revitalization)



Ola Loa: Long-Term Resilience

Strategy 9: Strengthen emergency food preparedness

Strategy 10: Bolster food systems planning, collaboration, data collection, research, and funding to advance Plan actions

How to Read an Action

Each Action includes the following components:

- **Action Number & Name**
- **Aligned Values & Dimensions:** The food system is highly interconnected. Icons representing relevant Guiding Values and associated Food System Dimensions highlight the cross-cutting connections between each Action and other aspects of the food system.
- **Why This Action?** A brief explanation of why the Action is important and the food system need, opportunity, or challenge it is intended to address.
- **Current & Future Work:** A succinct description of what the City has already done, is currently doing, or intends to do to advance the Action.
- **Departments:** City departments and agencies supporting implementation. The lead agency is listed first, followed by supporting agencies.

STRATEGY 1

Increase access to nutritious, affordable food by strengthening the systems that support food and economic security

Action 1.1
Strengthen food access as a citywide strategic initiative

Action 1.2
Address housing insecurity as a foundation for food security and health

Action 1.3
Advocate to protect and expand state and federal programs that address poverty, food and nutrition insecurity, and health inequities

Action 1.4
Strengthen and expand kūpuna nutrition services and food access programs

Action 1.5
Pilot a food distribution program for family childcare providers

Action 1.6
Expand access to nutrition assistance programs at farmers markets and food hubs

Action 1.7
Advance community food and health initiatives through Food Is Medicine partnerships

Action 1.8
Integrate food access into Skyline stations

Action 1.9
Integrate food access into transit-oriented development (TOD) planning

Action 1.10
Improve multimodal access to food

Action 1.11
Continue annual City food drives

BACKGROUND PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 1.1

Strengthen food access as a citywide strategic initiative

Why This Action?

Supporting reliable access to nutritious, affordable, and culturally preferred food for all residents is fundamental to O‘ahu’s resilience and well-being. Food access is deeply connected to public health and well-being, household financial security, disaster preparedness and response, and community and cultural identity. Strengthening food access and further integrating it into the City’s strategic initiatives will help institutionalize long-term commitments, improve coordination across departments and partners, and ensure food and nutrition security are integrated into how the City plans, budgets, and delivers services.

Current & Future Work

The City is advancing a range of cross-departmental initiatives to improve access to healthy, locally produced food through programs, planning, and partnerships. Building on efforts such as Stations of Abundance (see Action 1.8) and the Kūpuna Care Program (see Action 1.4), the City will further integrate food access into policies, land use and transit-oriented development, and broader community development processes. This includes building community-wide support to secure internal and external funding for dedicated staffing to strengthen interdepartmental coordination and advance equitable, islandwide food access initiatives that benefit O‘ahu residents.

Departments: All



PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 1.2

Address housing insecurity as a foundation for food security and health

Why This Action?

Stable, safe housing is a fundamental social determinant of health and a critical precondition for food security. On O‘ahu, high housing costs, overcrowding, and houselessness force many households to prioritize rent over food. This can limit access to cooking and food storage and disrupt participation in nutrition assistance, employment, and education. Residents experiencing houselessness or housing instability—including low-income households, youth, families with children, kūpuna, and people exiting houselessness—often face compounded barriers to accessing nutritious food. Integrating food access, nutrition education, and supportive services into housing and shelter strategies helps address root causes of food insecurity while promoting dignity, stability, and long-term health.

Current & Future Work

The City will advance a coordinated, cross-departmental approach to housing insecurity that intentionally links housing stability, food access, and health outcomes. The Department of Housing and Land Management (DHLM) will lead efforts to expand affordable housing through the development of housing and mixed-use projects on City lands, transit-orientated communities, creative financing strategies, and streamlined policies to accelerate delivery. The Honolulu Emergency Services Department’s (HESD) Crisis Outreach Response and Engagement (CORE) teams will continue to provide critical support to people experiencing houselessness. The Department of Community Services (DCS) will continue delivering essential housing assistance, homeless services, youth services, occupational training, workforce development, and other supportive services for vulnerable populations.

Building on these efforts, the City will explore opportunities to support the planning and development of affordable housing and, where appropriate, collaborate with partner agencies on housing shelters and transitional living environments in ways that promote food access and nutrition. This could look like incorporating, where feasible, shared or in-unit kitchens, adequate food storage, culturally responsive nutrition education, cooking and life-skills training, food growing spaces, and connections by partner agencies to food assistance programs and community food resources.

Departments: DHLM, DCS, HESD

ACTION 1.3

Advocate to protect and expand state and federal programs that address poverty, food and nutrition insecurity, and health inequities



Why This Action?

The City cannot tackle the connected problems of food insecurity, poverty, and health disparities alone—state and federal programs and policies play a critical role in addressing these challenges and their root causes. Beyond food and nutrition assistance programs, efforts to increase economic opportunity and reduce cost of living are also essential to long-term food security and good health for all. The City has a responsibility to advocate for aligned state and federal policies, such as those that reduce poverty, strengthen local food systems, and improve health equity.

Current & Future Work

The City will continue to testify in support of and advocate for key state and federal programs that address food and nutrition insecurity.

Departments: CCSR, DCS, DHLM

Key State & Federal Programs Supporting Food & Nutrition Security

Nutrition Assistance & Emergency Support:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- SNAP for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- Double Up Food Bucks (DA BUX)
- SUN Bucks (Summer EBT)
- The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)
- Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)
- Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)
- Commodity Supplemental Food Plan (CSFP)
- Food Is Medicine programs that leverage Hawai‘i’s Medicaid 1115 waiver

Child & School Nutrition:

- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
- National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
- School Breakfast Program (SBP)
- Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) including Kaukau 4 Keiki
- The Patrick Leahy Farm to School Program

ACTION 1.4

Strengthen and expand kūpuna nutrition services and food access programs



Why This Action?

The City's Department of Community Services' (DCS) Elderly Affairs Division (EAD), provides essential nutrition services for older adults in need. The Kūpuna Care Program, established under Hawai‘i state law and administered in coordination with the State's Executive Office on Aging, supports services that help frail older adults remain in their homes and communities, including nutrition services. Home-delivered meals ensure that homebound kūpuna receive daily nourishment, while congregate dining sites foster social connection and access to nutritious food. However, demand for these services currently exceeds available resources. Additionally, 50% of eligible seniors and 12% of eligible people overall do not participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) nationwide due to barriers like enrollment and recertification challenges, awareness gaps, stigma, and time constraints.[91] Billions in federal cuts have eliminated millions of dollars in SNAP funding that supported food access and nutrition education in Hawai‘i, imposed work requirements on some older adults, and, if continued as planned, will severely reduce food access across the state.[92, 93, 94, 95] As state efforts to support SNAP access—such as the enactment of Act 193 (2026) and initiatives to address gaps left by federal funding cuts—move forward, the City can contribute by securing additional funding, expanding services, and strengthening partnerships to ensure more kūpuna receive the support they need.

Current & Future Work

The City will continue to strengthen and expand nutrition services for kūpuna by pursuing sustainable funding, supporting service providers, and improving access to available food assistance programs. In Fiscal Year 2027, $1 million of the City's general funds were appropriated to EAD to expand kūpuna nutrition and social support programs. The City will continue pursuing state, federal, philanthropic, and other funding opportunities to expand home-delivered meals, congregate dining, and other nutrition services. The City will also explore opportunities to work with partners to increase participation in nutrition assistance programs among eligible older adults by expanding outreach and enrollment support for SNAP and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). These efforts can help connect more kūpuna with monthly food benefits and supplemental food boxes while reducing barriers to accessing available resources. In addition, the City will continue exploring opportunities to incorporate locally grown foods into kūpuna nutrition programs and develop innovative initiatives that improve food access, health, and social connectedness for O‘ahu's older adults.

Departments: DCS, CCSR

ACTION 1.5

Pilot a food distribution program for family childcare providers

Why This Action?

Access to affordable, high-quality childcare is essential for family economic stability, workforce participation, and healthy child development. Many O‘ahu families face barriers to reliable care due to high costs and limited availability, particularly for infants and toddlers. Family childcare providers—licensed childcare professionals who care for children in their own homes—are often among the most affordable childcare options, yet they shoulder significant administrative and operational burdens. Supporting these providers with resources for nutritious meal purchasing, planning, and preparation reduces operational strain, strengthens business sustainability, and ensures children receive healthy, nutritious meals on a consistent basis.

Current & Future Work

The City will pilot a food distribution program for family childcare providers to support food purchasing, meal planning, and preparation in accordance with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) nutrition guidelines. Building on lessons learned from previous pilot efforts, the City will work with partners to explore scalable models that address transportation and meal distribution challenges unique to family childcare providers, particularly those serving small numbers of children. This may include leveraging shared food preparation facilities, volunteer and community distribution networks, and other approaches that improve efficiency while expanding access. Lessons learned from pilot implementation will inform broader strategies to strengthen food access within family childcare settings across O‘ahu, particularly in areas with limited early learning options.

Departments: DCS



PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 1.6

Expand access to nutrition assistance programs at farmers markets and food hubs

Why This Action?

Ensuring all eligible residents can participate in nutrition support programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), SNAP for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Double Up Food Bucks (DA BUX), and the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) directs more federal dollars to O‘ahu, supports local farmers, and increases access to fresh, locally grown, nutritious foods, particularly for frontline communities. These programs are crucial and help more than 140,000 people in Hawai‘i afford food.[96] However, 50% of eligible seniors and 12% of eligible people overall do not participate in SNAP due to barriers like enrollment and recertification challenges, awareness gaps, stigma, and time constraints.[97] Farmers markets and food hubs are key community spaces for expanding participation in these programs and strengthening local food systems.

Current & Future Work

The Office of Economic Revitalization (OER) developed an O‘ahu Farmers Markets Directory to help residents find local markets that meet their needs and worked with ‘Elepaio Social Services to ensure farmers markets at Skyline stations are SNAP- and WIC-accessible, affordable, and welcoming to all residents. In 2026, the Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency (CCSR), in partnership with the Hawai‘i Good Food Alliance, completed two multi-year initiatives aimed at expanding access to SNAP and WIC benefits at farmers markets and food hubs across O‘ahu through hands-on technical assistance, vendor onboarding, outreach, and close coordination with state agencies. By leveraging federal, state, city, and local resources, these efforts helped connect Hawai‘i families with fresh, locally grown food while also supporting the local agricultural economy.

Building on this foundation, the City will continue identifying and addressing service gaps to improve access to nutrition assistance programs at farmers markets and food hubs for eligible residents. Findings and recommendations highlight opportunities to further strengthen this work by simplifying vendor enrollment and authorization processes, expanding technical assistance and training for farmers and market operators, and deepening funding and community partnerships to support outreach and implementation. Improving participant awareness through WIC clinics, community organizations, and culturally relevant digital communications can further increase benefit utilization. Finally, investments in technology infrastructure, payment systems, and ongoing administrative support are critical to reducing operational burdens and ensuring the long-term sustainability and expansion of SNAP and WIC participation at farmers markets.

Departments: CCSR

ACTION 1.7

Advance community food and health initiatives through Food Is Medicine partnerships



Why This Action?

In January 2025, the Hawai‘i State Department of Human Services received federal approval for a Medicaid Section 1115 demonstration waiver, allowing the State to use Medicaid funds through Med-QUEST to test innovative nutrition interventions over a five-year period. These services—including home-delivered meals, pantry stocking, produce prescriptions, protein boxes, medically tailored meals, and nutrition education—are designed to improve health outcomes for Medicaid beneficiaries while addressing food insecurity and diet-related chronic disease. Often referred to as Food Is Medicine or Food as Medicine, these approaches recognize the important role that nutritious food plays in preventing and managing disease. The waiver also emphasizes local food sourcing, creating opportunities to strengthen local agriculture and value chains while improving community health.

Current & Future Work

A broad network of healthcare providers, food system organizations, producers, and community partners is working to ensure that Hawai‘i’s emerging food and health initiatives benefit both local residents and the local food system. The City will monitor the implementation of food and health programs supported through the Medicaid waiver, identify service and infrastructure gaps, and explore opportunities to support ongoing initiatives and pilot projects. While the City’s direct role in implementing the waiver will be limited, it can help strengthen the broader ecosystem that supports community food and health initiatives. The City will elevate Food Is Medicine as a local health policy priority and work with healthcare providers, community organizations, food system partners, farmers markets, food hubs, and local producers to advance place-based, community-led initiatives. Potential efforts include supporting partnerships that integrate nutrition assistance with nutrition education, aligning initiatives with complementary programs and other federal nutrition programs where appropriate, strengthening connections between healthcare and local food systems, and supporting the evaluation of program outcomes, including impacts on food security and patient health.

Departments: CCSR, DCS

ACTION 1.8

Integrate food access into Skyline stations

Why This Action?

Skyline stations are more than clean transportation infrastructure—they offer a unique opportunity to create place-based hubs of food access, community resilience, and cultural connection. By prototyping new ideas, processes, and partnerships, Skyline stations can serve as visible demonstrations of sustainable food practices, community stewardship, and shared pilina to ‘āina.

Current & Future Work

In 2025, the City received global recognition as one of 50 cities awarded $50,000 through the Bloomberg Philanthropies Mayor’s Challenge to transform Skyline stations into hubs of food access, public health, and community resilience. Six prototype events—including farmers markets, food distribution events, and community planting days—were held at Honouliuli Station and Hō‘ae‘ae Station, launching the City’s Stations of Abundance initiative. Building on community feedback and these early pilots, an interdepartmental team will continue to identify funding opportunities for advancing this work by

- Partnering with local communities to host farmers markets, pop-up food distribution events, and cultural and food-based educational workshops and stewardship activities at Skyline stations;
- Piloting and refining processes for the production, harvest, and distribution of food and culturally significant plants on City-owned land at station sites; and
- Evaluating how these models can be sustained, scaled, and adapted across additional stations.

Departments: CCSR, DTS, DPR, DPP, HART



PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 1.9

Integrate food access into transit-oriented development (TOD) planning



Why This Action?

New development around transit stations presents a unique opportunity to make food access a core component of how communities grow. Residents have consistently identified food access as a priority, and it has already been incorporated into several neighborhood TOD plans. By embedding food access into TOD planning, the City can ensure that future projects support urban agriculture, local food markets, and culturally significant planting initiatives in alignment with community visions and values.

Current & Future Work

The City will strengthen coordination across agencies to ensure that food access is integrated into TOD planning, zoning, and implementation across both existing and future TOD areas, rather than being addressed only after infrastructure and land use patterns are established. This work may include

- Sharing direct feedback from residents on food access priorities gathered through the Stations of Abundance initiative (see Action 1.8);
- Reviewing and, where appropriate, updating zoning and land use regulations in TOD areas to better support fresh food access, including grocery stores, farmers markets, local food businesses, urban agriculture, and community food spaces. Strategies may include expanding commercial and mixed-use opportunities that support grocery stores in underserved neighborhoods and increasing urban agriculture spaces, community growing areas, rooftop gardens, and other types of green infrastructure;
- Coordinating with City Council to identify and address zoning provisions or regulatory barriers that may limit the availability of fresh food retail or food production in TOD and surrounding neighborhoods;
- Exploring approaches to assess and improve geographic food access in TOD areas, including evaluating walkability to grocery stores and identifying opportunities to strengthen the goal of convenient, equitable access to healthy food within a 15-minute walk for residents; and
- Ensuring equitable community benefits by prioritizing support for local producers, small businesses, community organizations, culturally grounded food practices, and affordable food access while reducing displacement risks.

Departments: CCSR, DTS, DPP, DHLM, DPR

ACTION 1.10

Improve multimodal access to food



Why This Action?

Expanding multimodal and active transportation—such as walking, biking, and public transit—with food access in mind is essential for residents who choose not to drive, households with zero vehicles or those who share one vehicle, individuals with mobility challenges, kūpuna, and families in underserved communities. Thoughtful transportation design can reduce greenhouse gas emissions while improving equitable access to grocery stores, farmers markets, food distribution sites, and urban agriculture spaces across O‘ahu.

Current & Future Work

The City is investing in public and active transportation infrastructure that supports connected, walkable communities where essential services like food are accessible without a car. Moving forward, the City will seek to

- Enhance pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure and connections (including delivery services) to and from grocery stores, farmers markets, food hubs, and community gardens;
- Pilot a mapping and data initiative to identify gaps in pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access to healthy, locally produced food and use those findings to help prioritize future transportation investments;
- Explore how the City can incentivize or facilitate last-mile delivery and mobility options for kūpuna and people with disabilities in areas with limited transit access, including through partnerships with community organizations, the private sector, or pop-up market initiatives;
- Prioritize rural and underserved neighborhoods in transportation investments to expand equitable access to food; and
- Coordinate across City departments and, where appropriate, with state and regional transportation partners to integrate food access considerations into broader transportation planning and decision-making.

Departments: CCSR, DTS, DPR, DPP, HART

ACTION 1.11

Continue annual City food drives

Why This Action?

While food drives cannot address the root causes of food insecurity, they play an important role in providing immediate relief to those in need. This action leverages the collective power of the City's approximately 10,000 employees and their community ties, supporting organizations like the Hawai'i Foodbank and its extensive network of partner agencies.

Current & Future Work

The City held employee food drives annually from 2006 to 2019. In 2024, the City resumed its employee food drive following a pause during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2026, the effort exceeded its goal of 110,000 meals, generating the equivalent of 171,513 donated meals through donated food and cash contributions. The City will continue to build on this momentum by holding annual food drives that prioritize high-demand items and complement broader, long-term strategies to address the root causes of food insecurity.

Departments: All



PHOTO: CCSR

STRATEGY 2

Expand culturally meaningful food and nutrition education

Action 2.1

Promote healthy, sustainable, and culturally grounded food choices

Action 2.2

Incorporate food systems education into Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) programming

Action 2.3

Integrate outdoor learning gardens and natural play spaces into City-affiliated childcare facilities

Action 2.4

Integrate food, health, and climate education into Early Childhood Education (ECE) recertification training

Action 2.5

Support City-affiliated community resource centers to enhance food security, learning, and well-being for kūpuna and parents with keiki

Action 2.6

Expand City support for Farm to School initiatives in O‘ahu schools

BACKGROUND PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 2.1

Promote healthy, sustainable, and culturally grounded food choices



Why This Action?

While financial and logistical barriers remain the primary barriers to food access, education also plays an important role. Even when food is physically and financially available, people need knowledge, skills, and confidence to make healthy and sustainable food choices. Expanding culturally relevant food education can encourage the consumption of more fresh and whole foods—including Indigenous and kūpuna crops—while reducing reliance on processed foods. Potential benefits include improved health outcomes, reduced environmental impacts through the adoption of plant-forward diets, strengthened demand for locally grown foods, and the preservation and celebration of diverse cultural food traditions.

Current & Future Work

The City will support the development of a strong public narrative and create a community education strategy that champions the value of fresh, healthy, locally grown, and culturally meaningful food that includes Native Hawaiian traditional food and practices. Partnering with public health institutions, educators, chefs, community-based organizations, producers, food hubs, and other key actors in the local value chain will be critical to this work. Activities may include holding community-led talk-story sessions, developing place-based cooking and gardening workshops, developing language-accessible resources for frontline communities such as kūpuna, creating and sharing recipes that center kūpuna crops, and finding creative ways to honor and support local farmers and food practitioners. The City can also integrate food and nutrition education into existing health and wellness programs (see Action 1.7). Together, these efforts will build practical skills, increase awareness, strengthen community connection to local food systems, and empower residents to adopt healthy and sustainable diets when means allow.

Departments: CCSR, DCS, DPR

ACTION 2.2

Incorporate food systems education into Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) programming

Why This Action?

Parks are trusted, accessible community spaces that reach residents of all ages, making them ideal venues for food systems education. Integrating food systems concepts into DPR programming helps build food literacy, strengthen connections between people, place, and food, and support healthier, more resilient communities. Early and ongoing exposure, especially for youth, can foster lifelong understanding of where food comes from, how food choices impact health and the environment, and how local food systems contribute to community well-being.

Current & Future Work

In 2026, DPR and the Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency (CCSR) are collaborating to incorporate food systems lessons into the Summer Fun curriculum, piloting age-appropriate education on food, agriculture, and sustainability for approximately 10,000 keiki. Building on this foundation, the City will continue to expand food systems education across DPR parks programming for youth and the general public, including through seasonal programs, community workshops, and partnerships with local educators and organizations. This work will leverage existing park spaces and affordable programs to deepen public engagement with food systems over time.

Departments: DPR, CCSR



PHOTO: DPR

ACTION 2.3

Integrate outdoor learning gardens and natural play spaces into City-affiliated childcare facilities

Why This Action?

Childcare facilities offer a unique opportunity to introduce young children to new foods, plants, and healthy eating habits during the most foundational stages of development. Incorporating outdoor learning gardens and natural play spaces into childcare facilities supports hands-on food education, physical activity, and social-emotional learning, while fostering connections to ʻāina that help children build respect for natural resources and support long-term climate resiliency. Together, these elements create healthier, more engaging environments for children, families, and educators.

Current & Future Work

The City is advancing the development of childcare facilities that incorporate outdoor learning spaces, natural play areas, and, where feasible, on-site food preparation capacity on two City-owned parcels in Kunia and ʻEwa. Design work has already begun, including plans developed in coordination with the State School Facilities Authority that integrate nature-based play and learning opportunities. The City will complete these projects and continue to work with the State and key partners to expand childcare services that incorporate outdoor learning, gardens, and natural play spaces.

Departments: DCS



PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 2.4

Integrate food, health, and climate education into Early Childhood Education (ECE) recertification training

Why This Action?

Early childhood educators play a critical role in shaping lifelong health and learning outcomes. Integrating food systems, climate awareness, and developmentally appropriate approaches to environmental stewardship into required annual training equips ECE providers with tools to support children’s well-being while simultaneously meeting federal professional development requirements. Embedding these topics within existing training frameworks strengthens educator capacity without adding new certification burdens.

Current & Future Work

The City will work with the Hawai‘i Department of Human Services (DHS), PATCH Hawai‘i, ECE training providers, and relevant agencies to align food, health, and climate content for ECE annual licensing training requirements. Training modules will be designed to meet federal compliance requirements while offering practical, place-based, and developmentally appropriate strategies that educators can apply in classroom and home-based settings. Future work includes piloting integrated trainings, evaluating effectiveness, and scaling successful modules across City-supported and partner ECE programs.

Departments: DCS, CCSR



PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 2.5

Support City-affiliated community resource centers to enhance food security, learning, and well-being for kūpuna and parents with keiki



Why This Action?

Food security, health, and well-being are influenced by more than access to food alone. Families, children, caregivers, and kūpuna benefit from access to resources, educational opportunities, and community spaces that foster social connection and support their needs. City-affiliated community resource centers that serve both kūpuna and parents with keiki provide an opportunity to integrate food access, nutrition education, gardening, and other food-related activities that strengthen community well-being and foster connections across generations.

Current & Future Work

The Department of Community Services (DCS) is exploring opportunities to expand food access-related services and resources for kūpuna, parents, and caregivers at its City-owned facility on North School Street. This effort builds on existing models of support for kūpuna, including programs that combine congregate meal services with gardening activities. DCS will continue to explore opportunities to improve and utilize City-affiliated facilities serving kūpuna and families with young children to better support food security, health, and well-being. Depending on community needs, these efforts could include helping residents access information about food, nutrition, healthcare, and financial assistance programs including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), SNAP for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Med-QUEST; obtain information about childcare services, subsidies, and tuition assistance opportunities; and receive technical assistance and access to technology needed to apply for programs and services. Community resource centers will also provide opportunities to participate in community activities, educational programming, and learning experiences that promote health, well-being, and social connection.

Departments: DCS

ACTION 2.6

Expand City support for Farm to School initiatives in O‘ahu schools



Why This Action?

Farm to School initiatives provide O‘ahu’s keiki with hands-on food literacy, ‘āina-based learning, and meaningful engagement with Hawai‘i’s food system, ultimately supporting healthier eating, environmental stewardship, and future career pathways. While the Department of Education (DOE) oversees public and charter schools, the City can play a complementary role by convening partners, securing resources, piloting innovative approaches, and aligning Farm to School goals across agencies. Expanding City support for Farm to School efforts can help scale successful models, strengthen local food procurement, and ensure these initiatives are responsive to community priorities.

Current & Future Work

The City secured federal funding to assist the DOE in developing a Farm to School Action Plan, which was released in 2025 and focused on the Leilehua-Mililani-Waialua complex area and the DOE’s plans for a regional kitchen. Building on this foundation, community members have identified various ways the City can further support Farm to School efforts:

- Strengthen school garden infrastructure and education by investing in tools, materials, teacher training, and partnerships with local organizations for mentorship and technical assistance;
- Develop and advance complex-area Farm to School planning by collaborating with DOE leadership, school staff, farmers, food hubs, and community partners to develop complex-area-level Farm to School plans for each of O‘ahu’s nine DOE complex areas that align with statewide Farm to School (30% local by 2030) and Farm to State (50% local by 2050) targets;
- Strengthen Garden to Cafeteria programs, which offer students the opportunity to grow, harvest, and contribute fresh produce to their school meal programs, by developing clear Garden to Cafeteria protocols that address food safety, regulatory compliance, and successful integration into school cafeteria operations;
- Support student entrepreneurship and workforce development by enabling interested schools to sell school-grown produce and value-added products at farmers markets, building on success; and

Moving forward, the City will evaluate opportunities and prioritize appropriately scaled, place-based projects that complement existing efforts and advance O‘ahu’s broader Farm to School goals.

Departments: CCSR

STRATEGY 3

Reduce waste from the food chain

Action 3.1
Establish an islandwide program for the curbside collection of residential food waste and manufactured compostable materials

Action 3.2
Reduce residential food waste through public education

Action 3.3
Expand curbside recycling to residential homes along refuse-only collection routes

Action 3.4
Reduce commercial food waste

Action 3.5
Explore ways to further reduce solid waste generated by disposable plastic food ware

Action 3.6
Create an islandwide organic waste sustainability plan

Action 3.7
Strengthen food recovery infrastructure and partnerships to divert surplus edible food to food pantries and community organizations

Action 3.8
Explore opportunities to support community-led composting initiatives

Action 3.9
Strengthen and scale gleaning systems to harvest local food and increase community food access

BACKGROUND PHOTO: ALOHA HARVEST

ACTION 3.1

Establish an islandwide program for the curbside collection of residential food waste and manufactured compostable materials

Why This Action?

The City currently collects green waste—such as yard trimmings, leaves, grass clippings, and Christmas trees—from single-family homes participating in the three-cart curbside recycling program. This material is transported to a central composting facility and processed into compost for community use. Expanding the program to include residential food waste alongside green waste presents a significant opportunity to divert additional organic material from the landfill, reduce methane emissions, and increase local compost production to support landscaping and agriculture.

Current & Future Work

In accordance with Ordinance 25-24, the City began collecting residential food waste alongside green waste on April 1, 2026. As part of the Green Recycling Organic Waste (G.R.O.W.) pilot program, residents participating in the City’s three-cart curbside recycling program at select sites in Waipahu, Nānākuli, Hawai‘i Kai, Mililani, Kailua, and Kalihi may now place food scraps in their green carts. The purpose of the pilot is to test collection logistics, outreach strategies, and measures to reduce contamination. Lessons learned from these pilot sites are informing islandwide expansion, with full implementation anticipated in October 2026. The City is also evaluating the feasibility of accepting manufactured, commercially compostable materials (e.g., certified compostable food containers) in green carts. This assessment includes additional research and coordination to address potential contamination from PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances)—often referred to as “forever chemicals” because of their persistence in the environment and the human body—and their potential impacts on compost quality and public health.

Departments: ENV



PHOTO: ALOHA HARVEST

ACTION 3.2

Reduce residential food waste through public education



Why This Action?

Approximately 26% of available edible food is wasted in Hawai‘i.[98] Preventing food waste is one of the most effective things individuals can do to reduce their impact on the environment and climate. Yet, food waste accounts for approximately 19% of all residential solid waste on O‘ahu, amounting to approximately 60,000 tons each year.[99] Reducing food waste not only benefits the environment but also saves households money. The average Hawai‘i resident discards 356 pounds of food annually, representing approximately $698 in wasted food.[100]

Current & Future Work

As part of the Green Recycling Organic Waste (G.R.O.W.) initiative launching residential food waste collection in 2026, the City has implemented an outreach and engagement effort to prepare residents for participation in the curbside program (see Action 3.1). This includes raising awareness about the environmental and economic impacts of food waste and providing clear guidance on how to properly separate and place food scraps in green carts. Outreach activities include public workshops, social media engagement, accessible educational materials, and a dedicated webpage with program information and participation instructions.

In parallel, the City will launch a complementary food waste prevention initiative focused on reducing residential food waste at its source by helping residents avoid discarding edible food in the first place. This effort will emphasize upstream behavior change strategies such as meal planning, smart shopping, proper food storage, understanding date labels, and using leftovers. Together, these actions aim to reduce overall food waste by combining prevention at the household level with improved diversion through the G.R.O.W. Program.

Departments: ENV, CCSR

ACTION 3.3

Expand curbside recycling to residential homes along refuse-only collection routes

Why This Action?

While approximately 160,000 single-family homes participate in the City’s three-cart curbside recycling program, about 20,000 homes remain on manual, refuse-only collection routes due to narrow streets and accessibility constraints for automated trucks. These households are located in pockets across O‘ahu and currently do not have access to City-provided recycling and green waste carts. Expanding service to these areas would divert a significant amount of recyclable and compostable material—particularly organic food waste—from the solid waste stream.

Current & Future Work

The Department of Environmental Services (ENV) is advancing a semi-automated collection approach that would enable homes on manual routes to participate in the three-cart system. This model would outfit smaller trucks that can navigate tight roadways with tippers, allowing crews to service standardized recycling and green carts. ENV has already procured trucks and tippers capable of this approach and successfully uses similar collection methods in areas such as Chinatown, demonstrating operational feasibility. The City will continue pursuing funding and implementation pathways to expand the semi-automated model to the remaining single-family homes, with the goal of significantly reducing landfill-bound waste and increasing access to recycling and composting programs across O‘ahu. Beyond residential collection, ENV is also working to revitalize recycling receptacles in Waikīkī and continues efforts to ensure recycling receptacles are available at all City facilities for public use.

Departments: ENV

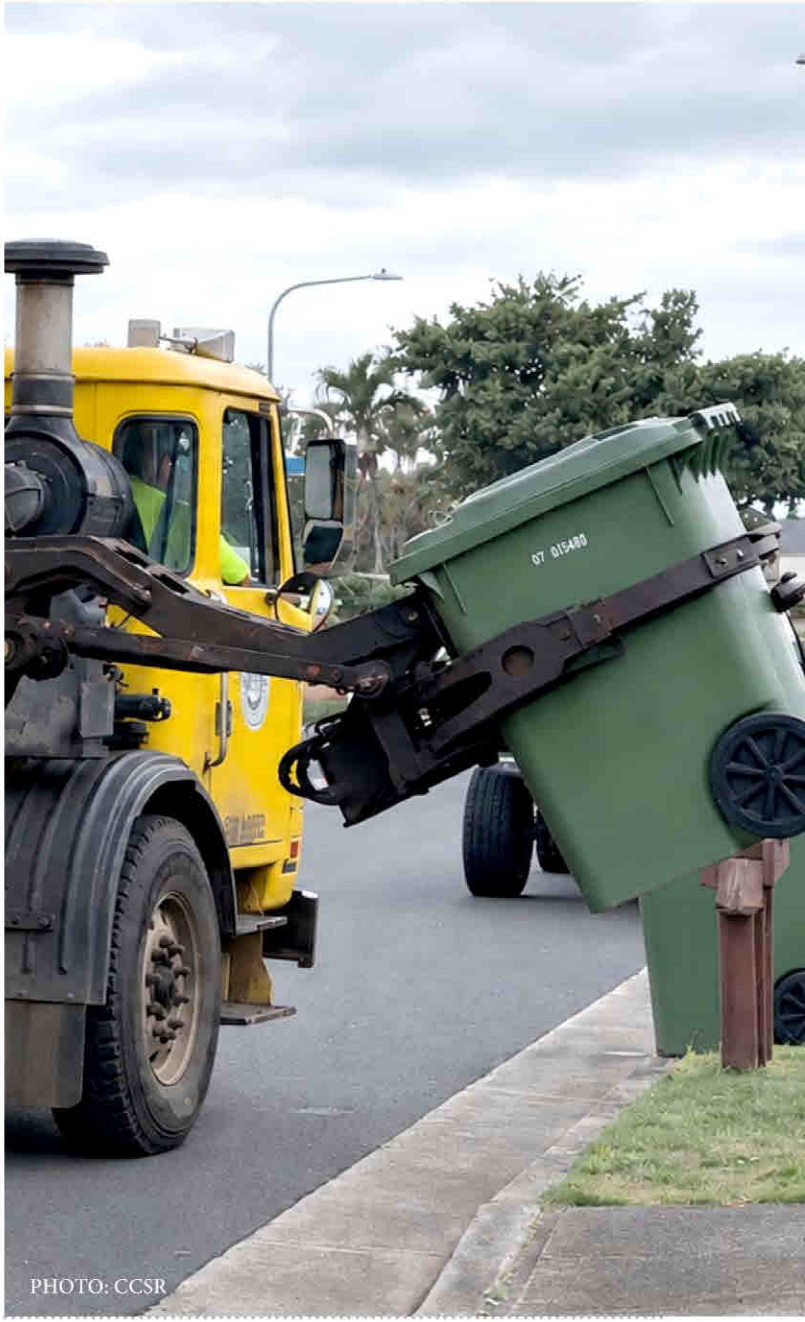


PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 3.4

Reduce commercial food waste



Why This Action?

Since 1997, large food waste generators such as restaurants, hotels, hospitals, grocery stores, food courts, and food manufacturers have been required by City ordinance to recycle food waste. In 2017, approximately 43,000 tons of food waste were recycled or diverted from disposal through hog farms, commercial composting operations, and food pantries and community organizations. Despite these efforts, food waste remains a significant portion of O‘ahu’s waste stream, accounting for more than 20% of commercial solid waste, or roughly 98,000 tons annually. [101]

Smaller businesses, restaurants, and community institutions also generate substantial amounts of food waste but are not covered by current regulations or may lack the resources and infrastructure to participate in recycling or prevention efforts. Expanding requirements and support to include these smaller generators would help reduce methane emissions, extend landfill life, and strengthen systems for edible food donation and local compost production.

Current & Future Work

In 2024, the City completed the O‘ahu Compost Project, a pilot initiative designed to demonstrate the feasibility of diverting food waste from smaller commercial generators. Through partnerships with community organizations, more than 30,000 pounds of food waste were diverted from Chinatown restaurants to Hawai‘i’s first in-vessel composting unit in Waimānalo, generating valuable insights to inform future program expansion.

Building on this foundation, the City will conduct a waste characterization or audit study to better understand the composition of municipal food waste and identify barriers to diversion. Findings would inform policy and program design improvements, which may include amending existing ordinances to require smaller and medium-sized commercial food waste generators to recycle food waste; supporting phased implementation; strengthening compliance, reporting, and enforcement of existing requirements; supporting community-led composting initiatives (see Action 3.8); and expanding education, technical assistance, and on-site support to improve food waste separation and increase edible food donation (see Action 3.7). The City will also evaluate regulatory and incentive-based approaches—including landfill disposal restrictions, financial incentives, and recognition-based strategies—to support an equitable and scalable transition across the commercial sector.

Departments: ENV

ACTION 3.5

Explore ways to further reduce solid waste generated by disposable plastic food ware



Why This Action?

Plastic waste accounts for 9.8% of O‘ahu’s solid waste. The City’s Disposable Food Ware Ordinance (DFWO) (Ordinance 19-30), which took effect in 2021, restricted the use of certain disposable plastic food ware and service ware. However, plastic food and service ware remains widely used, as some types fall outside the ordinance’s current definition of prohibited materials. At the same time, emerging concerns about PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances)—often referred to as “forever chemicals” due to their persistence in the environment and human body—have complicated efforts to transition fully to compostable alternatives, particularly where packaging may contaminate finished compost. Clarifying standards and strengthening reduction strategies will help decrease landfill-bound plastic, reduce environmental contamination, and advance safer, more sustainable food ware solutions.

Current & Future Work

The Department of Environmental Services (ENV) will evaluate potential amendments to the DFWO to address gaps in the current law, including the continued use of reusable food ware. Options under consideration include requiring all disposable food ware to be compostable materials or expanding recycling programs to include polypropylene. Any transition toward compostable-only standards must align with evolving federal and state guidance on allowable PFAS thresholds in compost, as determinations by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Hawai‘i Department of Health will shape what materials can be safely processed locally.

In parallel, through periodic waste stream audits, ENV will work to better quantify the prevalence of plastic food ware and other food-related packaging in the waste stream to inform future policy decisions. The City will also explore opportunities to support innovative pilot initiatives such as reusable container and mobile washing programs.

Departments: ENV, CCSR

ACTION 3.6

Create an islandwide organic waste sustainability plan

Why This Action?

While preventing wasted food is a priority, some level of food waste is unavoidable. It is therefore important for the City to explore options for diverting commercial food waste from the solid waste stream. One potential pathway is to recover value from organic waste by converting it into renewable energy or useful by-products, such as biogas or biosolids. Before pursuing any specific approach, however, the City must carefully evaluate the technical, economic, and environmental opportunities and challenges associated with these options. Decision-making processes will include meaningful engagement with affected communities and consider cumulative community impacts.

Current & Future Work

The City is developing an Organic Waste Sustainability Plan (OWSP) to assess opportunities for managing commercial food waste, including fats, oils, and grease (FOG), as well as other organic materials. The OWSP will serve as a comprehensive, islandwide plan that aligns with the City's sustainability and carbon neutrality goals. It will evaluate options for collecting and processing organic waste, recovering energy and resources, and improving long-term operations. As part of this effort, the City will explore the technical and economic feasibility of technologies such as anaerobic digestion and other processes that can convert organic waste into biogas, biosolids, and other useful by-products. Based on these findings, the City will evaluate potential pathways for improving how organic waste is managed and recycled on Oʻahu. These efforts are not intended to incentivize increased food waste to generate revenue. Rather, they are intended to help complement broader and holistic strategies to prevent wasted food, donate edible food, compost organic materials, and support other approaches that advance a more circular economy.

Departments: ENV



PHOTO: ALOHA HARVEST

ACTION 3.7

Strengthen food recovery infrastructure and partnerships to divert surplus edible food to food pantries and community organizations



Why This Action?

Diverting surplus edible food from restaurants, retailers, distributors, wholesalers, and farms to food pantries and community organizations helps reduce food waste while supporting emergency food assistance programs. By leveraging its unique role in the food system, the City can help address food insecurity and lower greenhouse gas emissions associated with wasted food.

Current & Future Work

The City will strengthen edible food recovery by serving as a convener and facilitator that helps connect food donors directly with food pantries, community organizations, and other recovery partners, while avoiding unnecessary intermediary roles that could slow or complicate food distribution. Efforts will focus on building a scalable, safe, and efficient community-led recovery network by strengthening critical infrastructure—including cold storage, aggregation and collection capacity, and transportation—and expanding partnerships with restaurants, retailers, distributors, wholesalers, farms, and other food businesses to increase participation in edible food donation.

To support these efforts, the Department of Environmental Services (ENV) will integrate edible food donation questions into its annual business recycling survey, administered ahead of required inspections. The survey will ask whether businesses donate surplus food and to which organizations, while providing educational resources and referral pathways to local recovery partners. The City will also work with food recovery organizations and community partners to increase public awareness of available food assistance and food recovery programs, helping ensure that residents in need are aware of and able to access these resources. Together, these efforts will strengthen direct connections between food donors and recovery organizations, increase participation in edible food recovery, and generate data to inform future improvements across Oʻahu.

Departments: CCSR, ENV

ACTION 3.8

Explore opportunities to support community-led composting initiatives

Why This Action?

While existing City programs help reduce food waste, fully eliminating food waste from the solid waste stream requires a collaborative approach. Community-led, neighborhood- and regional-scale composting initiatives can complement City efforts by diverting food waste, producing high-quality compost for local gardeners and farmers, educating families on food waste reduction, and fostering stronger community ties through shared environmental stewardship.

Current & Future Work

The now-completed O‘ahu Compost Project—during which the City partnered with multiple community organizations—diverted over 30,000 pounds of commercial food waste from restaurants in Chinatown to Hawai‘i’s first in-vessel composting unit. Building on this success, the City will explore opportunities to support composting initiatives at the community scale—including in urban settings—that empower residents, schools, and businesses, and other organizations to turn food waste into a valuable resource, advance waste diversion goals, and cultivate stronger, more resilient communities.

Departments: CSSR, ENV



PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 3.9

Strengthen and scale gleaning systems to harvest local food and increase community food access



Why This Action?

Gleaning—the recovery of surplus crops from farms, orchards, and backyards—reduces food waste and increases access to fresh, locally grown food for communities. On O‘ahu, gleaning organizations, food banks, producers, and volunteers already collaborate to harvest food, but efforts remain constrained by limited funding, staffing, transportation, equipment, cold storage, and coordination infrastructure. Many programs operate independently, rely heavily on volunteers, and lack resources for logistics, communications, and data tracking, which reduces efficiency and limits scale. The City is well positioned to leverage functions related to solid waste, long-term resilience, land use, and community partnerships to help coordinate, resource, and institutionalize gleaning as an important component of O‘ahu’s food system.

Current & Future Work

The City will support the expansion, coordination, and long-term sustainability of gleaning efforts through strategic partnerships, targeted investments, and enabling policies. This may include

- Pursuing or offering funding opportunities to support gleaning organizations and food access partners, including through grants and flexible funding mechanisms that can cover staffing, transportation, equipment, refrigeration, and facility improvements needed to safely handle perishable local foods;
- Providing in-kind support to gleaning organizations, such as regularly loaning harvest equipment and trained cherry picker operators on harvest days;
- Planting more food-producing trees on City land (see Action 8.5) and helping to install food trees at food pantries and partner agencies, then supporting regular maintenance;
- Expanding workforce and volunteer capacity through training, stipends, and partnerships—including opportunities for City staff to volunteer with gleaning programs—to support harvesting, sorting, packing, and distribution;
- Improving communication and public awareness of gleaning opportunities through outreach campaigns and partnerships that connect farmers, residents, and organizations to gleaning programs; and
- Integrating gleaning into City planning and resilience strategies, including food system, climate action and adaptation, long-term resilience, and waste reduction initiatives, and developing shared metrics to track impact and guide continuous improvement.

Departments: CCSR, ENV, DPR

STRATEGY 4

Strengthen fresh water security by sustainably managing water resources and protecting water quality

Action 4.1
Expand support of conservation, maintenance, and reforestation across all priority watersheds

Action 4.2
Establish and work toward wetland protection and restoration goals

Action 4.3
Increase partnerships and investments to support cesspool conversions islandwide

Action 4.4
Complete and begin operation of the Kalaeloa Seawater Desalination Facility

Action 4.5
Preserve and expand rebates for water-efficient upgrades in homes and businesses

Action 4.6
Adopt a plumbing "reach code" to incentivize water efficiency

Action 4.7
Expand use of recycled and non-potable water

Action 4.8
Coordinate resilient infrastructure investment through the City's One Water Panel

BACKGROUND PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 4.1

Expand support of conservation, maintenance, and reforestation across all priority watersheds

Why This Action?

Healthy watersheds are essential to preserving Oʻahu's groundwater and surface water resources, mitigating flooding, and protecting biodiversity. Invasive species such as miconia, albizia, and strawberry guava destabilize soils, increase erosion, and reduce water infiltration, threatening both water quality and quantity. Removing invasive species and restoring native vegetation—particularly in Board of Water Supply (BWS) priority watersheds—helps to strengthen long-term water security.

Current & Future Work

BWS will continue to develop and implement watershed management plans for each of Oʻahu's eight planning districts through a community-informed, ahupuaʻa-based planning process that emphasizes holistic watershed management, alignment with City and State policies, and action-oriented implementation. While BWS provides dedicated annual funding to support watershed protection through partnerships such as the Koʻolau Mountain Watershed Partnership, the Waiʻanae Mountain Watershed Partnership, the Oʻahu Invasive Species Committee, and the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) Division of Forestry and Wildlife, additional capacity is needed to meet growing conservation demands. The City will explore a wide range of funding opportunities to increase support for partner organizations to expand invasive species removal, native species restoration, watershed monitoring, and long-term maintenance.

Departments: BWS, CCSR

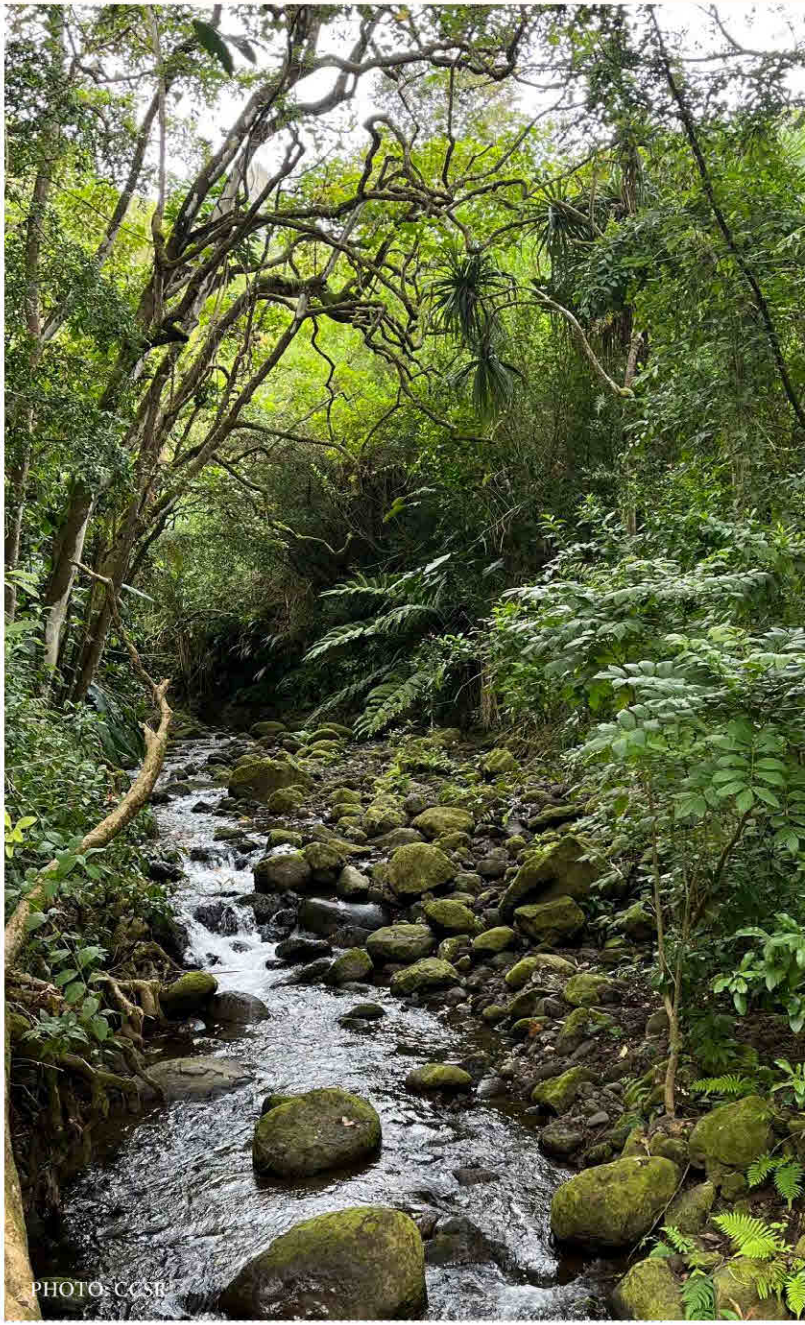


PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 4.2

Establish and work toward wetland protection and restoration goals

Why This Action?

Setting a target for wetland protection and restoration is a critical step in addressing wetland loss and safeguarding the vital role wetlands play in protecting coastlines, ecosystems, and communities. Healthy wetlands and upland watersheds work together to reduce flooding, improve water quality, recharge groundwater, support native biodiversity, and buffer the impacts of sea level rise and extreme weather. With sea level rise threatening to permanently submerge wetlands that lack adequate upland space to migrate, many states have adopted "net increase" or "no net loss" goals to strengthen wetland resilience. While the State manages many wetlands in Hawaiʻi, the City plays a key role in regulating areas where wetlands need to migrate, making it essential for the City to establish and work toward clear protection targets.

Current & Future Work

Honolulu is currently the only county in Hawaiʻi with wetland protection policies incorporated into its Special Management Area ordinances. Moving forward, the City will collaborate with ongoing wetland restoration projects at Kawainui Marsh, Hāmākua Marsh, Puʻuloa, and Heʻeia wetlands to identify best practices, set clear targets, and leverage community-led protection efforts. While Hawaiʻi does not currently have a single statewide "net increase" or "no net loss" wetland target, the City, through the Clean Water and Natural Lands Program, will continue to coordinate with the Hawaiʻi Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to align with and support state, federal, and community initiatives while developing effective strategies to ensure the long-term health and resilience of wetland ecosystems, which provide critical natural defenses against climate impacts.

Departments: DHLM, BWS, CCSR



PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 4.3

Increase partnerships and investments to support cesspool conversions islandwide

Why This Action?

O‘ahu has approximately 8,000 cesspools that pose significant risks to public health and the environment by contaminating groundwater, streams, and coastal waters. In 2017, the State of Hawai‘i mandated the conversion of all cesspools by 2050 (Act 125), with high-priority cesspools targeted for conversion by 2030. Rising sea levels and increased flooding further underscore the urgency of replacing cesspools; however, transitioning to modern wastewater treatment solutions can be expensive.

Current & Future Work

In 2026, the City committed $625,000 from the Climate Resiliency Fund to support cesspool conversion efforts in partnership with the Hawai‘i Green Infrastructure Authority, establishing a Cesspool Conversion Revolving Loan Fund in accordance with Act 204 (2026). Looking ahead, the City aims to maintain support for the Cesspool Conversion Revolving Loan Fund in accordance with Ordinance 25-23 (2025), including by committing an additional $900,000 in Fiscal Year 2027. Funds will help homeowners transition to safer, more resilient wastewater systems, including modern septic systems or connections to centralized wastewater treatment infrastructure. Properties in flood-prone areas and frontline communities will be prioritized, ensuring equitable access to critical sanitation upgrades while advancing public health and environmental protection across O‘ahu.

Departments: CCSR, ENV



PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 4.4

Complete and begin operation of the Kalaeloa Seawater Desalination Facility

Why This Action?

As population and economic activity continue to grow in the ‘Ewa District, so does the need for a reliable, climate-resilient water supply. The Kalaeloa Seawater Desalination Facility will provide a drought-proof, locally controlled source of high-quality potable water for the Campbell Industrial Area and surrounding employment centers, saving up to 2.55 million gallons of potable groundwater per day, diversifying O‘ahu’s water portfolio and reducing reliance on Central O‘ahu groundwater sources.

Current & Future Work

Board of Water Supply (BWS), in partnership with Kalaeloa Desalco LLC, is advancing the design, permitting, and development of the Kalaeloa Seawater Desalination Facility, with construction completion targeted for 2028. Regulatory and enhanced water quality pilot testing was completed in 2025, demonstrating that the proposed reverse osmosis and post-treatment systems meet all applicable standards and are compatible with the existing distribution system. Ongoing work includes final design, permitting and regulatory approvals, construction, and start-up of the facility, along with implementation of environmental safeguards and energy recovery systems to minimize environmental and energy impacts. The City will continue to coordinate with federal partners to leverage grant funding and ensure long-term, cost-effective operation.

Departments: BWS

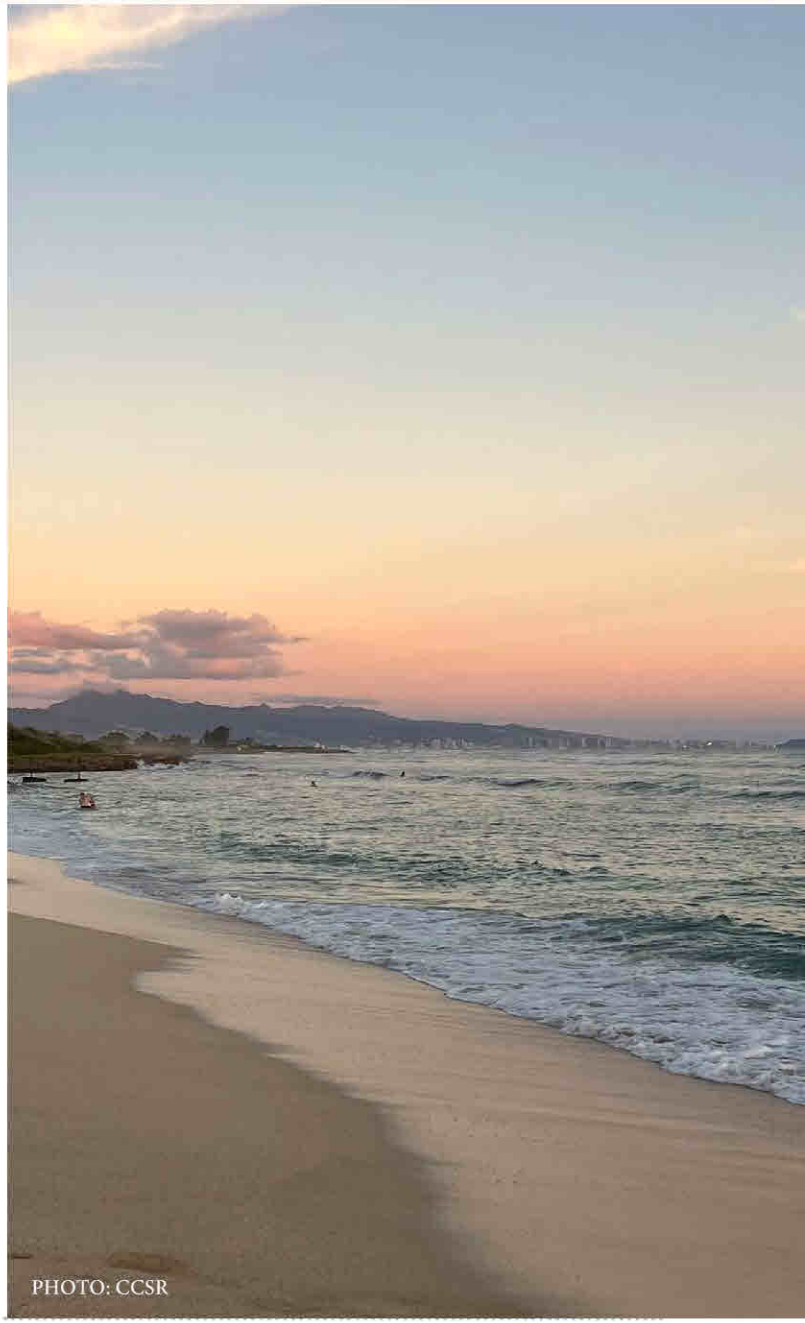


PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 4.5

Preserve and expand rebates for water-efficient upgrades in homes and businesses



Why This Action?

Improving water efficiency is one of the most effective strategies for conserving O‘ahu’s limited freshwater resources while protecting drinking water supplies and aquatic ecosystems. Water-efficient fixtures and appliances reduce overall demand, help detect leaks early, and optimize water use—all while helping households and businesses lower their water bills.

Current & Future Work

In 2026, the Board of Water Supply’s (BWS) WaterSensible rebate program, with support from the City’s Department of Environmental Services (ENV), doubled many residential and commercial rebate amounts. The program provides financial incentives for a range of water-saving upgrades and supports broader efforts to improve water efficiency across O‘ahu. For food service and commercial customers, rebates include high-efficiency pre-rinse spray valves and faucet aerators; water-efficient dipper wells; ENERGY STAR®-rated commercial dishwashers, ice machines, and clothes washers; WaterSense®-labeled toilets and urinals; cooling towers; rain totes; submeters; and water-efficient irrigation and monitoring equipment. Residential rebates support the purchase of WaterSense®-labeled toilets, washing machines, irrigation controllers, soil moisture sensors, rain barrels, and smart water monitors. Free home water audit kits are also available through BWS’s WaterWisdom Program.

The City will continue to coordinate with Hawai‘i Energy to offer these rebates and seek opportunities to expand rebate amounts, eligible technologies, and complementary conservation programs. Future efforts will also focus on increasing public awareness through targeted outreach, including workshops, public service announcements, and social media campaigns, to ensure residents and businesses are aware of available incentives and the importance of water conservation.

Departments: BWS, ENV, CCSR

ACTION 4.6

Adopt a plumbing "reach code" to incentivize water efficiency

Why This Action?

A plumbing "reach code" would build on/go beyond state-mandated minimum water efficiency requirements to promote best practices in water conservation. By incorporating high-efficiency WaterSense-labeled fixtures and expanding options for recycled and graywater technology, the City can reduce demand on potable water supplies, keep more fresh water in our aquifers, and improve long-term water resilience while supporting modern, sustainable building practices.

Current & Future Work

The City will update the Uniform Plumbing Code to reflect advancements in water-efficient technologies and ensure new and retrofitted buildings use water more efficiently. This may include mandating WaterSense-certified fixtures; expanding opportunities for graywater, recycled water, and other alternate water systems; streamlining permitting where appropriate and consistent with public health requirements; and strengthening water efficiency standards in construction and renovation projects.

Departments: BWS, CCSR, DPP



PHOTO: BWS

ACTION 4.7

Expand use of recycled and non-potable water



Why This Action?

With water scarcity becoming an increasing concern, expanding the use of recycled and non-potable water is a vital strategy to stretch O‘ahu’s finite freshwater resources. The City’s two existing recycled water facilities (Honouliuli and Lā‘ie) have successfully provided R-1 recycled water for irrigation and demineralized recycled water for industrial use for power generation and oil refining. Increasing access to recycled water and other non-potable water sources—such as brackish groundwater, stream water, collected rainwater, and on-site graywater reuse—can reduce reliance on potable water, support sustainable development, and improve long-term water resilience.

Current & Future Work

The City will look for opportunities to expand the use of recycled water by exploring potential locations for new facilities near existing wastewater treatment plants, with a focus on West O‘ahu, where drier conditions are expected. The City will also work to deliver recycled water to nearby communities, helping more people benefit from this sustainable water source.

In parallel, the City will research best practices for non-potable water use, aligning with state health guidelines to ensure safe and effective implementation. Based on these findings, the City will develop guidance and recommendations to support the responsible expansion of non-potable water use across the island, including in new transit-oriented development projects. The Board of Water Supply (BWS) will be providing Kalauao Spring non-potable water to flush toilets in the new Aloha Stadium as a conservation measure. Together, these efforts will help maximize alternative water sources while preserving potable water for essential needs.

Departments: BWS, ENV, CCSR

ACTION 4.8

Coordinate resilient infrastructure investment through the City’s One Water Panel



Why This Action?

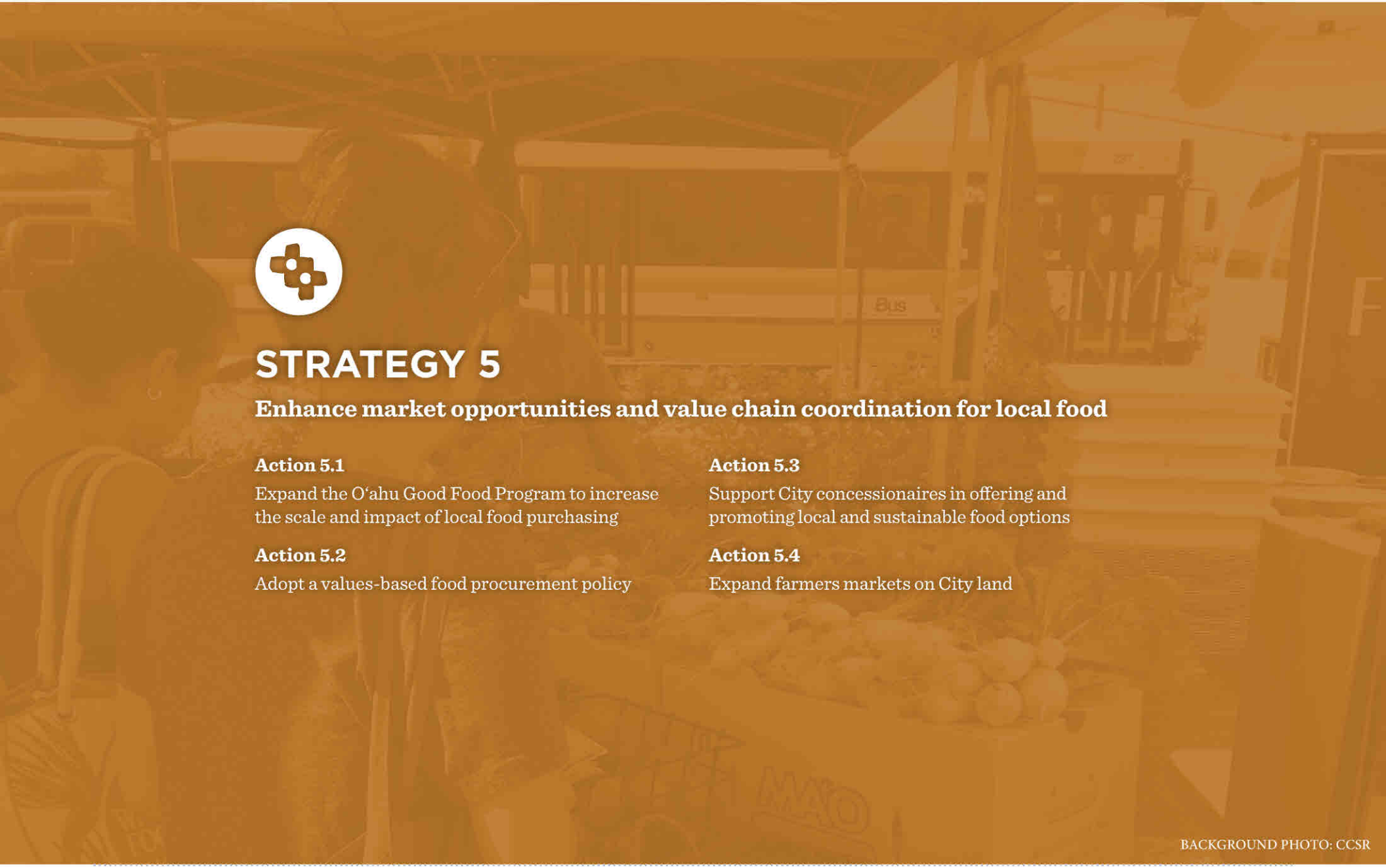
Climate hazards—including increasing temperatures, sea-level rise, increasing precipitation, drought and wildfire, and hurricanes—threaten the reliability of O‘ahu’s water infrastructure, public health, and long-term water security. For example, research shows that by 2050, large rain events combined with sea level rise could cause flooding severe enough to disrupt transportation and contaminate stormwater infrastructure across up to 70% of Waikīkī, as drainage systems become overwhelmed or experience backflow from the Ala Wai Canal.[102] At the same time, many coastal wastewater systems face increased risk as sea level rise elevates groundwater tables and threatens cesspools, which already release about 53 million gallons of untreated sewage into Hawai‘i’s waterways each day.[103]

A coordinated approach is essential to ensure the long-term resilience of stormwater, wastewater, and freshwater systems while maximizing efficiency and reducing costs. Integrating these systems as a single managed asset allows the City to improve resource allocation, strengthen climate adaptation efforts, and enhance water security for residents.

Current & Future Work

The Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency (CCSR) convenes the City’s eight-agency One Water Panel in accordance with Ordinance 20-47, with facilitation support provided by the Board of Water Supply (BWS), to coordinate cross-agency planning for O‘ahu’s water resources and infrastructure. Additionally, the City is developing a comprehensive One Water Plan, expected to be completed in September 2026, which will identify priority capital improvement projects that strengthen the resilience of stormwater, wastewater, and freshwater systems while preserving long-term water security. Building on this work, the City will continue coordinating infrastructure planning across agencies and maintain a multi-year investment strategy to proactively implement projects that improve resilience to climate change.

Departments: CCSR, BWS, ENV, DFM, DDC, DPP, DPR, DTS



STRATEGY 5

Enhance market opportunities and value chain coordination for local food

Action 5.1
Expand the Oʻahu Good Food Program to increase the scale and impact of local food purchasing

Action 5.2
Adopt a values-based food procurement policy

Action 5.3
Support City concessionaires in offering and promoting local and sustainable food options

Action 5.4
Expand farmers markets on City land

BACKGROUND PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 5.1

Expand the Oʻahu Good Food Program to increase the scale and impact of local food purchasing



Why This Action?

Institutional purchasing has significant potential to strengthen Oʻahu's local food system, but existing procurement practices often limit participation by small- and mid-sized producers and constrain the ability of institutions to reliably source local food at scale. Producers need greater market stability and clearer demand signals to plan, invest, and grow, while institutional buyers face challenges related to supply consistency, coordination, and consistent data collection. Building relationships among value chain actors and adopting innovative procurement approaches—such as forward contracting, standing orders, coordinated purchasing, and data sharing agreements—can help bridge these gaps, strengthen local value chains, and create more resilient markets for Hawaiʻi-grown food.

Since the launch of the Oʻahu Good Food Program (OGFP) in 2021, the City has held three Oʻahu Good Food Shows connecting buyers with local producers and suppliers, and 29 institutions (including the City) have pledged to adopt values-based food purchasing practices that support the healthy, affordable, and sustainably produced local food. However, the program was paused due to personnel changes and limited staff capacity, underscoring the need for sustained commitment and resources to scale this work.

Current & Future Work

Building on this foundation, the City will revitalize OGFP in the following ways

- Assess and strengthen City purchasing practices by conducting a baseline analysis of the City's food procurement and exploring revisions to vendor contracts and other mechanisms to increase the City's local food spend;
- Expand capacity and strengthen relationships providing training, networking, and peer-learning opportunities for producers, food hubs, suppliers, distributors, and institutional buyers, with a focus on small- and mid-sized operations and long-term, trust-based partnerships;
- Improve data consistency and transparency by supporting standardized operating procedures for collecting, sharing, and reporting local food purchasing data, including common definitions and data-sharing agreements that maintain confidentiality of proprietary information;
- Support implementation of innovative procurement models such as forward contracts, standing orders, and coordinated purchasing arrangements that offer greater predictability for farmers while meeting institutional needs; and
- Incentivize participation across the value chain by celebrating successes through marketing campaigns and other strategies that increase partner visibility.

Recognizing the need for sustained coordination, the City will also seek to leverage public, private, and philanthropic funding to support a dedicated market development specialist to advance OGFP over the long term.

Departments: CCSR, DCS, DES, DPR, BFS

ACTION 5.2

Adopt a values-based food procurement policy

Why This Action?

Public food procurement is a powerful tool for strengthening local food systems and improving community health. By aligning food purchasing with values such as nutrition, sustainability, local economic development, and social equity, the City can help shift demand toward more responsible and locally sourced food. At the same time, any approach must follow state and county procurement laws and be responsive to the operational realities of City agencies, vendors, contractors, and concessionaires.

Current & Future Work

As part of the O‘ahu Good Food Program, the City will work with the City Council and relevant state partners to explore pathways for adopting or implementing all or part of the Good Food Purchasing framework, a nationally recognized set of standards that encourages institutions to source food based on five core values: local economies, environmental sustainability, valued workforce, animal welfare, and nutrition. The framework serves as a set of guiding principles and best practices, rather than a mandate, allowing City agencies to incorporate these values in ways that are flexible and feasible. The City will work collaboratively with departments, vendors, contractors, and concessionaires to identify opportunities to gradually align purchasing practices with these principles while maintaining affordability, operational efficiency, and vendor participation. This effort may include advancing a City resolution and, if needed, supporting or aligning with state-level policy or procurement changes to enable implementation.

Departments: CCSR, DCS, DES, DPR



PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 5.3

Support City concessionaires in offering and promoting local and sustainable food options

Why This Action?

City facilities—including Neal S. Blaisdell Center, Tom Moffat Waikiki Shell, the Honolulu Zoo, golf courses, and certain park facilities—host concessionaires that serve residents, visitors, and community members every day. These venues present an opportunity to increase the visibility and availability of locally grown and produced foods while highlighting sustainable food choices. Doing so can support Hawai‘i’s agricultural economy, build more resilient local supply chains, and create dining experiences that reflect the islands’ culture, values, and commitment to sustainability.

Current & Future Work

As part of the O‘ahu Good Food Program, the City will explore opportunities to support City concessionaires in incorporating more local and sustainable food options into their offerings. This may include piloting incentives, partnerships, or educational resources that help concessionaires source local ingredients, highlight Hawai‘i-grown products, and share information with customers about the value of supporting local food systems. Efforts must also recognize the operational realities of concession businesses and support approaches that align with their financial sustainability.

Departments: CCSR, DES

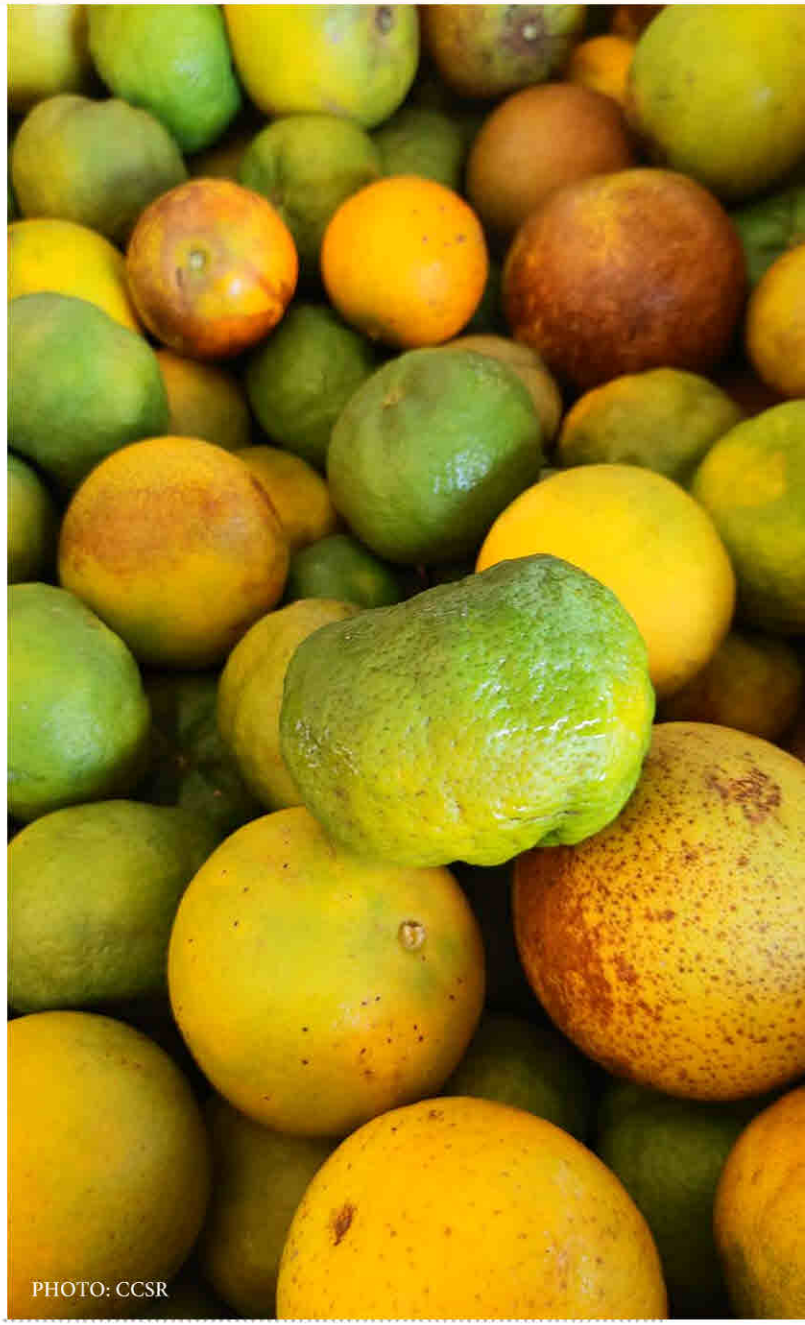


PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 5.4

Expand farmers markets on City land



Why This Action?

Farmers markets are a critical access point for fresh, locally grown food and play an important role in food security, community health, and support for local farmers. City parks are trusted, accessible public spaces that can serve as strong anchors for community-based food distribution and local food economies. In the past, the City has supported and helped catalyze place-based market models that demonstrated strong demand for locally produced food in public settings; this action builds on that legacy by creating a more durable framework for ongoing market access.

Currently, farmers markets are not a permitted use of City park lands. Enabling farmers markets at appropriate park locations—through partnerships with nonprofit farmers market operators—allows the City to better leverage its public spaces to advance food access, local agriculture, and community resilience goals.

Current & Future Work

The Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) will enable nonprofit organizations to host farmers markets at suitable park sites and times by clearly defining farmers markets as a permissible use of City park lands. Additionally, the Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency (CCSR) and Department of Transportation Services (DTS) are collaborating to bring farmers markets to Skyline stations through the Stations of Abundance initiative (see Action 1.8) in ways that increase affordable access to local food, support local producers, and create spaces for community connection. The City will continue to collaborate internally across agencies and externally with community food organizations and market operators to identify priority market locations, streamline permitting processes, and align farmers markets with broader food security, economic development, and sustainability goals.

Departments: DPR, CCSR, DTS

STRATEGY 6

Create conditions for small- and mid-sized local producers and food businesses to thrive

Action 6.1
Protect agricultural land and ensure it is used for meaningful agricultural production

Action 6.2
Administer the Clean Water and Natural Lands (CWNL) Fund to protect agricultural lands

Action 6.3
Strengthen coordinated support services for farmers

Action 6.4
Enhance food system infrastructure to support local production and value-added businesses

Action 6.5
Collaborate to strengthen biosecurity and combat invasive species

Action 6.6
Help farmers develop alternative revenue streams through educational programs, regenerative agritourism, and institutional markets

Action 6.7
Waive water system hook-up fees for farmers connecting to Board of Water Supply (BWS) infrastructure

Action 6.8
Collaborate to strengthen O‘ahu’s urban agriculture ecosystem

Action 6.9
Strengthen food system entrepreneurship and workforce pathways

BACKGROUND PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 6.1

Protect agricultural land and ensure it is used for meaningful agricultural production



Why This Action?

Agricultural land is a finite and critical resource for O‘ahu’s agricultural sector, rural economies, and long-term food resilience. The City’s Land Use Ordinance (LUO), Special Use Permit process, and the State Agricultural District are primary tools for protecting these lands by establishing what activities are allowed on agricultural parcels and by prioritizing bona fide farming and food production over incompatible or speculative uses. Recent LUO updates create important opportunities to support diversified agriculture, on-farm processing, farm worker housing, and complementary activities that improve farm viability. Protecting agricultural land means not only preserving acreage but also ensuring that these lands remain capable of supporting productive agriculture for current and future generations.

However, without clear guidance, consistent implementation, and effective enforcement, these provisions may be misapplied or exploited, enabling pseudo-agricultural uses, large residential development, luxury commercial uses that are incompatible with agricultural purposes, or other non-agricultural activities that undermine the intent of agricultural zoning, erode the agricultural land base, and diminish the long-term viability of O‘ahu’s rural working landscapes. Residents of rural and agricultural communities have consistently emphasized the importance of ensuring that agricultural lands are preserved for genuine agricultural purposes that strengthen local food production, rural livelihoods, and stewardship of working lands, while avoiding burdensome requirements for farmers who are already engaged in meaningful agricultural production.

Current & Future Work

To ensure agricultural lands are preserved and actively used for meaningful agricultural purposes, the City will

- Explore creative incentives that help farmers start, expand, and sustain viable operations on agricultural lands (e.g., see Action 6.8);
- Develop and implement application instructions that provide clear, consistent, and enforceable guidance for LUO provisions related to agricultural land use;
- Invest in enforcement and permitting capacity to ensure compliance with agricultural zoning, distinguish legitimate or ‘bona fide’ farming operations from non-agricultural uses, and prevent misuse of agricultural land for speculative or non-farming purposes;
- Engage cross-departmentally and with agricultural and community stakeholders to clarify permitted and accessory uses, refine key definitions, establish performance standards, and support farmer-friendly permitting processes; and
- As demand for renewable energy increases, support responsible agrivoltaics development through partnerships, research, and farmer pipeline initiatives that align renewable energy expansion with long-term agricultural viability on O‘ahu. This includes establishing clear parameters that ensure agrivoltaics projects integrate meaningful productive agricultural use and do not displace viable farmland.

Departments: DPP, CCSR

ACTION 6.2

Administer the Clean Water and Natural Lands (CWNL) Fund to protect agricultural lands



Why This Action?

Long-term access to affordable land remains one of the greatest barriers to expanding commercial agriculture and increasing local food production on O‘ahu. Agricultural lands continue to face pressure from development, speculation, and fragmentation. The City’s voter-approved CWNL fund dedicates one-half of one percent of estimated real property tax revenues to the preservation of significant forests, beaches, coastal areas, and agricultural lands. Strategically leveraging this dedicated funding source to protect high-value agricultural parcels—particularly those with prime soils, reliable water access, and long-term commercial production potential—can help ensure these lands remain in active agriculture for generations to come. Hakipu‘u Lo‘i Kalo (1.5 acres) and Turtle Bay Mauka (468.4 acres) are examples of agricultural lands preserved through CWNL, with additional projects underway.

At the same time, deploying CWNL funds for agricultural conservation can be complex and time-intensive, often requiring years of preparation, detailed due diligence, and coordination among landowners, brokers, and the City. Strengthening the City’s ability to strategically and efficiently utilize CWNL for agricultural preservation is essential to maximizing its impact.

Current & Future Work

The City will continue to administer the CWNL Fund to protect agricultural lands by

- Partnering with public agencies and land trusts—such as The Trust for Public Land and Hawai‘i Land Trust—to acquire conservation easements or fee simple interests that permanently protect farmland from non-agricultural development while keeping it available for active farming and ranching, with ownership, co-holding where appropriate, monitoring, and enforcement responsibilities clearly defined to ensure long-term stewardship and protection of the City’s investment;
- Exploring stewardship and management models that ensure conserved lands are actively and productively used for meaningful agricultural production;
- Collaborating with agencies and community partners to proactively identify priority properties suitable for agricultural preservation, including riparian corridors and lands with prime soils, irrigation potential, and proximity to existing agricultural infrastructure; and
- Exploring federal funding opportunities to secure additional resources that support the permanent protection and preservation of agricultural lands.

By strengthening coordination and partnerships around CWNL investments, the City can safeguard high-value agricultural lands, support working farmers and ranchers, and ensure conserved lands contribute to long-term local food production, environmental stewardship, and climate resilience, while maintaining appropriate public oversight and stewardship of conserved lands.

Departments: DHLM, CCSR

ACTION 6.3

Strengthen coordinated support services for farmers



Why This Action?

Farmers across Oʻahu face many technical, administrative, and financial challenges in running their operations. From meeting food safety and Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification requirements to navigating grant applications, business management software, and crop planning, managing a farming business is complex and time-consuming, particularly for small-scale and immigrant producers. Often, farmers must rely on multiple service providers with little coordination. Streamlining and coordinating farmer support services can reduce administrative burdens, close gaps or reduce overlaps in services, and build the skills, capacities, and infrastructure farmers need to access higher-value markets.

Current & Future Work

Building on past efforts to help farmers obtain GAP certification, develop tools such as the Climate Smart Agriculture Resource Database, and contribute to community-led initiatives to develop a coordinated farmer help desk, the City will continue partnering with service providers and agricultural stakeholders to create a more coordinated, accessible, and effective farmer support system. This may include increasing access to technical assistance; facilitating pathways to market-enabling credentials like GAP certification; connecting producers to capital and infrastructure investments; strengthening business planning and workforce development resources; improving access to resources that support soil health and the adoption of agroecological production practices; increasing familiarity with Hawaiʻi Compliance Express vendor platform and other institutional procurement procedures; leveraging the Keep Cool Oʻahu campaign to educate farmers and food system workers on reducing the risk the of heat-related illnesses; and bolstering statewide initiatives to coordinate service delivery to farmers.

Departments: CCSR

ACTION 6.4

Enhance food system infrastructure to support local production and value-added business

Why This Action?

Strong food system infrastructure—such as aggregation and distribution hubs, cold storage, commercial kitchens, and public market spaces—is essential to scaling local food production and supporting food entrepreneurs. These facilities enable farmers and producers to store, process, and distribute products more efficiently, while also creating opportunities for value-added production and small business growth. Expanding access to shared infrastructure can strengthen local supply chains, reduce barriers for small producers, strengthen community-led resilience efforts, and help more locally grown and produced food reach residents, institutions, and markets across O‘ahu.

Current & Future Work

The City will explore opportunities to strengthen food system infrastructure in both rural and urban areas that supports local producers, food entrepreneurs, and value-added businesses. This includes conducting an inventory of City-owned commercial assets, such as kitchen spaces, to better understand opportunities and constraints for supporting local food system activities.

Building on this effort, the City will work with community partners, producers, and other stakeholders to explore potential investments, partnerships, and funding opportunities to expand or improve shared-use food system infrastructure. These efforts may include supporting projects that evaluate and increase post-harvest facilities for cleaning and packing produce, enable value-added production, and create new market opportunities for locally grown and produced foods.

Departments: CCSR, DHLM



PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 6.5

Collaborate to strengthen biosecurity and combat invasive species



Why This Action?

Invasive species—such as coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB), little fire ants (LFA), and green rose-ringed parakeets—pose significant threats to O‘ahu’s ecosystems, agriculture, public health, and economy. Since its detection on O‘ahu, CRB has killed thousands of niu (coconut trees) and other host trees in residential areas, public parks, and agricultural lands, reducing the urban tree canopy and creating safety risks from weakened or collapsing trees.[104] LFA infestations damage crops and pose health and safety risks to agricultural workers and communities.[105] Parakeets—also widespread on O‘ahu—are causing significant crop losses elsewhere in the state.[106] Strengthening biosecurity is essential to protecting O‘ahu’s ecosystems, local economy, cultural resources, and public health.

Current & Future Work

To address CRB, the City is engaging departments, contractors, and community stakeholders to develop a coordinated citywide plan that assesses current green waste collection, handling, and processing practices and identifies improvements to reduce breeding and spread. This effort will clarify roles and responsibilities across agencies—particularly where green waste is collected by one department and processed or reused by another—to strengthen operational alignment and biosecurity safeguards. Implementation will include community workshops and a public-facing website with guidance on CRB identification, reporting, and safe green waste management.

Building on this work, the City will continue to strengthen biosecurity within its operations and collaborate with state agencies, community organizations, and other key stakeholders leading islandwide efforts to combat CRB and other invasive species, including the O‘ahu Invasive Species Committee (OISC), Hawai‘i Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (DAB), and the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program. This may include supporting detection, monitoring, and rapid response initiatives; establishing a practical network of key cross-sector stakeholders to ensure consistent and coordinated action across O‘ahu; and planning, designing, and ultimately implementing a City resource center to support community engagement, scientific research, education, and demonstration activities focused on preventing, detecting, and managing invasive species on O‘ahu.

Departments: ENV, DPR, CCSR

ACTION 6.6

Help farmers develop alternative revenue streams through educational programs, regenerative agritourism, and institutional markets

Why This Action?

Local farmers face financial and operational challenges that make sustaining and growing their operations difficult. Alternative revenue streams—such as farm-based education programs, hands-on learning experiences, regenerative agritourism, and institutional markets—provide additional income while increasing public awareness of local food production, environmental stewardship, and cultural practices. These opportunities allow farmers to diversify business models, reduce financial risk, and strengthen connections to the community and visitor industry in ways that respect agricultural operations and ‘āina.

Current & Future Work

Building on prior initiatives—including a 2023 chocolate and honey agritourism event hosted by the Office of Economic Revitalization—the City will collaborate with farmers, agricultural stakeholders, education networks, and hospitality partners to expand sustainable on-farm programming. Efforts may include piloting farm-based education and regenerative agritourism models that align with community values, seeking funding to support transportation, educator stipends, on-farm infrastructure improvements, and connecting small- and mid-sized farmers to institutional markets through the O‘ahu Good Food Program (see Action 5.1). It is critical that these efforts enable and not replace meaningful agricultural production on agricultural lands (see Action 6.1).

Departments: CCSR



PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 6.7

Waive water system hook-up fees for farmers connecting to Board of Water Supply (BWS) infrastructure

Why This Action?

BWS currently maintains reduced water rate classifications for agricultural users to help keep operating costs manageable for farmers. However, upfront water system hook-up fees (referred to as "facilities charges") can be a significant financial barrier for farmers seeking reliable access to potable or irrigation water. For example, the facilities charge for a one-inch service connection costs over $15,000, with fees increasing based on meter size, service capacity, and other system requirements. Waiving these fees can lower start-up and expansion costs, support the viability of local agricultural operations, and help bring more land into active food production.

Current & Future Work

In addition to preserving reduced water rate classifications, BWS will adopt a policy to waive water system facilities charges and meter installation charges for qualified new agricultural users. Implementation work will include establishing clear eligibility criteria, defining application and approval processes, and coordinating internally to operationalize the policy. BWS will also conduct outreach to farmers, landowners, and agricultural partners to ensure awareness of the program.

Departments: BWS



PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 6.8

Collaborate to strengthen O‘ahu’s urban agriculture ecosystem

Why This Action?

Innovative food production systems—including urban agriculture, climate controlled methods like vertical and containerized farming, rooftop gardens, and aeroponic, hydroponic, and aquaculture systems—offer multiple benefits. Environmentally, these approaches can reduce water use, recycle urban waste, expand green spaces, and, where appropriately designed, create habitat for pollinators and other beneficial species. Socially and economically, they create jobs, diversify the local economy, and reduce pressure on rural land. However, challenges remain, including high energy demands, infrastructure and administrative barriers, workforce limitations, and limited public knowledge of these practices.

Current & Future Work

The City will seek opportunities to partner with community-led initiatives to expand innovative food production systems across O‘ahu. Efforts may include supporting pilot projects, research, workforce, education programs that advance innovative, sustainable food production in urban settings, as well as exploring opportunities to integrate urban agriculture into City spaces, including areas near Skyline stations (see Action 1.8), while addressing the unique challenges of operating in urban environments.

Departments: CCSR



PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 6.9

Strengthen food system entrepreneurship and workforce pathways



Why This Action?

A resilient food system depends on thriving local businesses and a skilled, diverse workforce. Expanding support for agricultural and food entrepreneurs while creating clear education and career pathways for students, young people, and job seekers can strengthen O‘ahu’s economy, increase local food production, and prepare the next generation of food system leaders. By leveraging existing business support programs, workforce initiatives, educational partnerships, and hands-on learning opportunities, the City can help residents develop the skills, experience, and connections needed to launch businesses, build careers, and contribute to a more resilient local food system.

Current & Future Work

The City supports entrepreneurship and workforce development through initiatives such as the O‘ahu Business Connector (OBC), which provides technical assistance, mentorship, and business development resources to small businesses, including local food and agricultural enterprises. In 2025, OBC launched Idea2Biz, a small business incubator that helps aspiring entrepreneurs transform ideas into viable businesses through mentorship, education, and technical support, beginning with a pilot focused on the Wai‘anae Coast.

Building on these efforts, the City will continue expanding entrepreneurship and workforce pathways across the food system. This includes providing access to capital through the O‘ahu Small Business Loan Fund for small businesses, including agricultural and value-added producers; leveraging Good Jobs O‘ahu to connect residents with training opportunities for high-demand food and agriculture careers; and strengthening partnerships with K–12 schools, institutions of higher education, and community organizations to expand internships, apprenticeships, fellowships, mentorship, career exploration, and service-learning opportunities. Programs such as the City’s paid Po‘okela Internship Program will continue providing students with hands-on working experience—including in food systems initiatives—while enabling students to contribute directly to their communities. Together, these efforts will cultivate entrepreneurs, strengthen the food system workforce, and prepare the next generation of food system leaders.

Departments: MDO, All

STRATEGY 7

Increase access to food gardens in all forms

Action 7.1
Expand and modernize the City’s Recreational Community Gardening Program

Action 7.2
Promote accessibility, inclusion, and safety in City-run community gardens

Action 7.3
Expand gardening education and technical assistance

Action 7.4
Expand access to food growing spaces at City public housing sites

Action 7.5
Expand community growing and ‘āina stewardship models across O‘ahu

Action 7.6
Utilize City-generated compost to support community gardening

Action 7.7
Expand the City’s Community Forestry Program, including tree giveaway efforts

BACKGROUND PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 7.1

Expand and modernize the City's Recreational Community Gardening Program



Why This Action?

The Honolulu Recreational Community Gardening Program (HRCGP), established in 1975, has successfully provided residents with opportunities to grow food and build community, but demand continues to far exceed availability. Long waitlists, limited sites, and uneven access highlight the need to both expand the number of City-run community gardens and modernize the systems that support them. Current manual, paper-based processes make it difficult to efficiently manage plot assignments, waitlists, maintenance, and communication with gardeners.

Current & Future Work

The City will identify and develop new community garden sites in alignment with Ordinance 20-45 (2020), prioritizing underserved neighborhoods with limited access to fresh produce and green space. This includes assessing City-owned lands for suitability, partnering with local communities to design and establish new garden spaces, and pursuing funding opportunities to support long-term maintenance and programming.

To strengthen program administration and participant experience, the City will establish a digital management system to support online plot applications, automated waitlist management, digital communications, and improved tracking of maintenance needs. The City will also strengthen volunteer engagement by clarifying volunteer roles and expectations, offering more flexible leadership and governance models, developing volunteer recognition opportunities, and updating officer training and governance materials to include conflict resolution tools and clearer operational guidance. Together, these improvements will enhance transparency, accessibility, efficiency, and the long-term sustainability of the program.

Departments: DPR

ACTION 7.2

Promote accessibility, inclusion, and safety in City-run community gardens

Why This Action

Community gardens are shared public spaces that should be safe, welcoming, and accessible to people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. Feedback from gardeners participating in the City's Recreational Community Gardening Program has highlighted challenges related to safety and cleanliness—such as roaming feral animals, poorly maintained areas, and occasional illegal activity—as well as barriers to participation for non-English speakers, kūpuna, and gardeners with disabilities or mobility issues. Addressing these issues together is essential to fostering inclusive, respectful environments where all residents can fully participate and benefit from City-run community gardens.

Current & Future Work

The City will take steps to improve safety and cleanliness in City-run community gardens by identifying sites with recurring animal feeding or safety issues, installing clear signage, and updating orientation and training materials to reinforce garden expectations. Where appropriate, the City will explore perimeter fencing and collaborate with the Honolulu Police Department's (HPD) Community Policing Team to support conflict resolution and promote safer garden environments. Ongoing and future work includes translating key materials into the most commonly spoken languages on O‘ahu, reviewing program and website content for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and piloting universal garden bed designs based on successful examples.

Departments: DPR, HPD

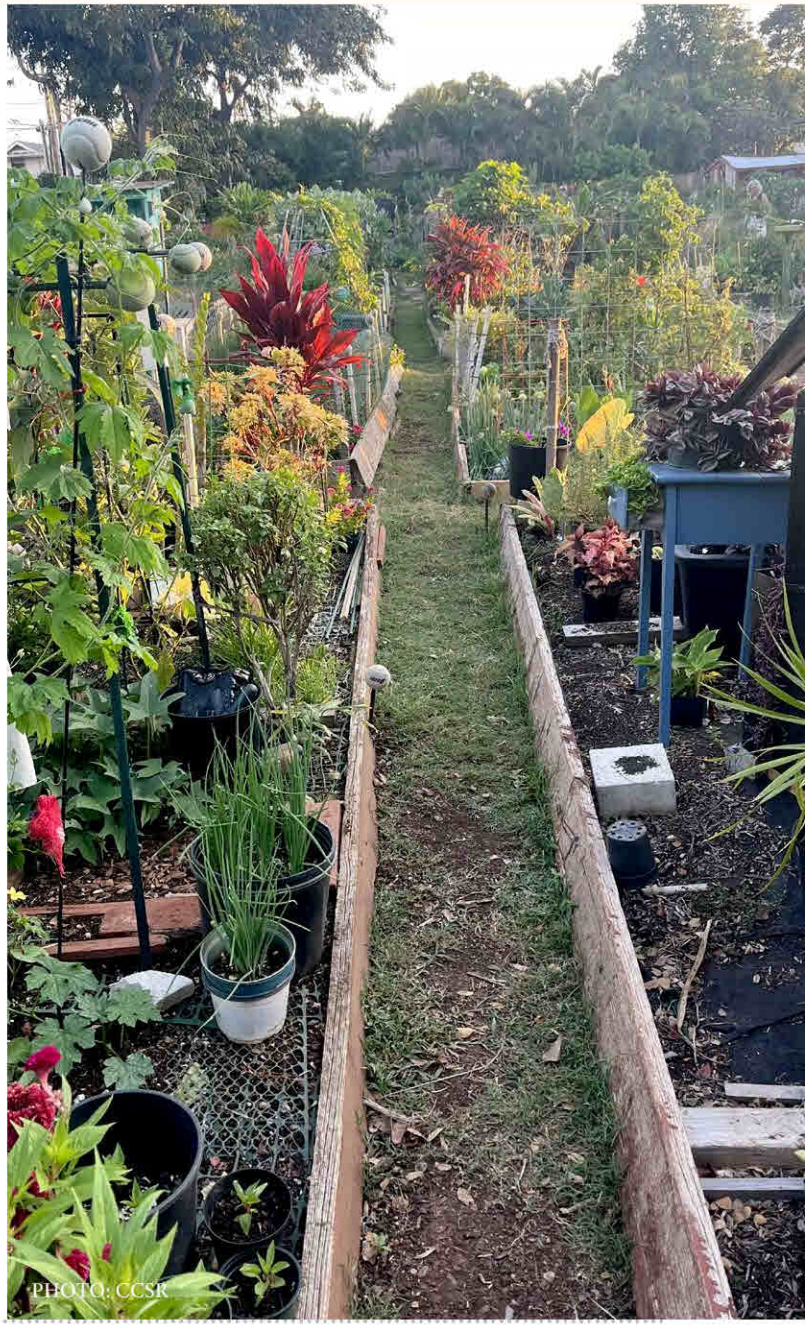


PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 7.3

Expand gardening education and technical assistance

Why This Action?

Expanding access to gardening education can empower more Oʻahu residents to grow their own food, support active and healthy lifestyles, and strengthen community resilience. While many residents express interest in gardening, barriers such as limited experience and knowledge can prevent them from getting started or achieving success.

Current & Future Work

The City will explore opportunities to partner with existing organizations or offer in-house training to provide hands-on education to Oʻahu residents, including participants in the Honolulu Recreational Community Gardening Program (HRCGP). Future efforts may include workshops, mentorship programs, or collaborations with schools, nonprofits, universities, and community centers to expand reach and cultivate gardening knowledge across diverse communities. The City will review staff responsibilities to ensure capacity for education and continue to hold the Annual Officer Retreat—an important leadership training event for volunteer officers in the HRCGP.

Departments: DPR, CCSR



PHOTO: DPR

ACTION 7.4

Expand access to food growing spaces at City public housing sites

Why This Action?

Community gardens support healthier diets, reduce the financial burden of purchasing food, build practical skills, and contribute to physical and mental well-being while strengthening community connections. The City administers a significant housing portfolio that serves many frontline communities, including low-income households, kūpuna, families with children, survivors of domestic violence, formerly unhoused residents, and individuals with disabilities or chronic health conditions. In 2020, the City partnered with public and private organizations to install 160 garden beds across seven affordable housing sites on Oʻahu using federal funds. A 2025 assessment of these installations identified clear opportunities to build on this initial investment and expand both access to food-growing spaces and their benefits for public housing residents.

Current & Future Work

The City will expand equitable access to food-growing spaces at public housing sites, informed by lessons learned from the 2020–2025 garden pilots. Future efforts may include pursuing federal, state, and private funding to support the expansion, maintenance, and long-term sustainability of community gardens; planting and maintaining food trees where appropriate; improving infrastructure design and governance models; and supporting partnerships that provide education, orientation, and ongoing workshops to increase participation and success. These efforts will prioritize resident participation, accessibility, and community-building outcomes alongside food production where feasible and consistent with site conditions and property management practices.

Departments: CCSR, DHLM, DCS, DPR



PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 7.5

Expand community growing and ʻāina stewardship models across Oʻahu



Why This Action?

Community gardens across Oʻahu provide important opportunities for food production, education, cultural practice, and community building. Some community gardens—including the City's existing Recreational Community Gardening Program—operate an allotment-based model in which individual gardeners are assigned plots to cultivate. While effective for many residents, this approach does not fully reflect other place-based and culturally grounded food-growing practices—such as agroforestry, loʻi kalo, and communal stewardship models—that often emphasize shared responsibility, cultural knowledge, and long-term land care. Expanding the diversity of community garden models can better align with Indigenous practices and values, increase equitable access to growing spaces, and strengthen long-term stewardship of ʻāina.

Current & Future Work

The City will pilot and support a broader range of community growing and stewardship models on both City and non-City lands in partnership with community-based organizations. This includes exploring alternative governance and land stewardship approaches—such as cooperative gardens, agroforestry systems, community orchards, loʻi kalo, and cultural kīpuka models that integrate urban tree canopy, native and food-producing plants, and shared community stewardship to provide multiple environmental, cultural, and food system benefits. The City will identify one or more pilot sites on City land to co-develop, implement, and evaluate these approaches. At the same time, the City will strengthen partnerships to expand and diversify community growing spaces islandwide, including through the development of garden support services (e.g., "garden consultants") to assist organizations and communities in establishing and sustaining gardens, orchards, and other community food landscapes. Lessons learned from these pilots and partnerships will inform future program design and expansion.

Departments: CCSR, DTS, DHLM, DFM, DES, DPR

ACTION 7.6

Utilize City-generated compost to support community gardening

Why This Action?

Compost is a vital resource for healthy soil and productive gardens, but many community gardeners face limited access to it. With the City's upcoming transition to accept food waste in green bins in 2026, (see Action 3.1) there is a growing opportunity to redirect compost produced by the City to support community gardening and local agricultural initiatives.

Current & Future Work

The City will strengthen internal collaboration—particularly between the Department of Environmental Services (ENV), Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), and other relevant departments—to explore safe and effective ways to make compost available to community gardening users. This includes assessing protocols to prevent the spread of pests such as the coconut rhinoceros beetle.

Departments: ENV, DPR



PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 7.7

Expand the City’s Community Forestry Program, including tree giveaway efforts

Why This Action?

O‘ahu is experiencing rising temperatures and a shrinking urban tree canopy, both of which threaten public health, environmental resilience, and quality of life. Expanding and maintaining a healthy urban forest is a critical climate adaptation strategy that reduces heat, improves air and water quality, supports stormwater management, and creates more livable communities. The City’s Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), through its Community Forestry Program, administers the Tree Giveaway Program, which provides residents with free trees—including shade, native, canoe, and select food-producing species—along with guidance on planting and care.

Current & Future Work

The City will continue to expand and strengthen its community forestry efforts, including the Tree Giveaway Program, to support widespread tree planting, establishment, and long-term stewardship across O‘ahu. This includes seeking funding to expand tree distribution and improve outreach and education on tree care, including fruit trees, while prioritizing planting in areas that maximize canopy growth, heat mitigation, and other ecological benefits. While the program focuses primarily on expanding O‘ahu’s overall urban forest—including shade, native, and canoe trees—to meet the City’s goal of 35% canopy coverage by 2035, food-producing trees remain an important component of the program.

Departments: DPR

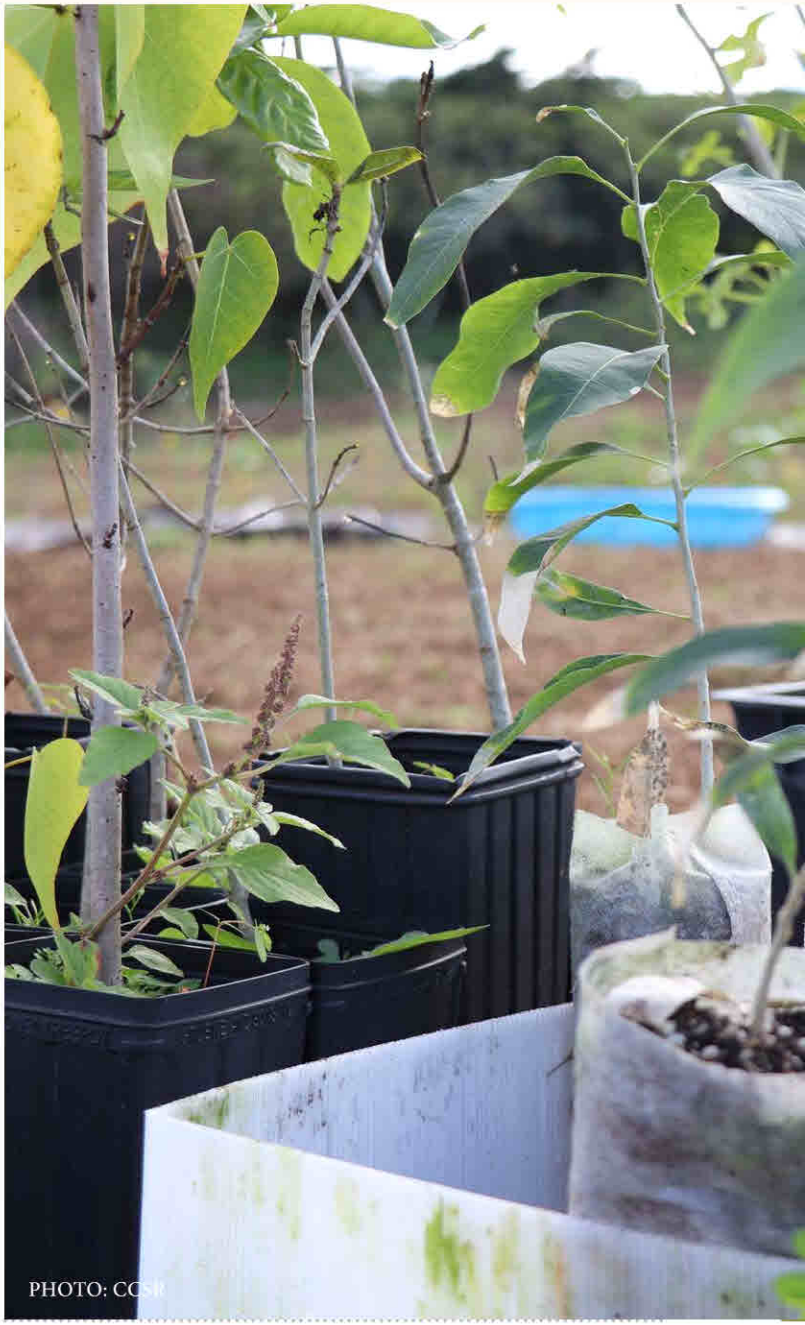


PHOTO: CC

STRATEGY 8

Restore cultural connections to ʻāina (biocultural revitalization)

Action 8.1

Streamline partnerships for community-based stewardship of underutilized City lands and assets

Action 8.2

Strengthen the capacity of ʻāina-based organizations to advance community and food system resilience

Action 8.3

Activate community spaces with food-focused placemaking

Action 8.4

Expand the Climate Champions Program to support community-led food system initiatives

Action 8.5

Plant more food-producing trees on City lands

Action 8.6

Strengthen Indigenous Native Hawaiian food system infrastructure and practices

BACKGROUND PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 8.1

Streamline partnerships for community-based stewardship of underutilized City lands and assets



Why This Action?

Underutilized City lands and assets (e.g., buildings, community kitchens) offer a valuable opportunity to advance food security, ecological and biocultural restoration, hazard mitigation, climate adaptation, and community empowerment through collaborative stewardship. However, complex permitting processes, unclear roles among City agencies and community-based organizations (CBOs), and a lack of standardized agreements create barriers to effective partnerships. By streamlining processes and establishing clear frameworks, the City can foster scalable, community-driven initiatives that enhance food system resilience, restore ecosystems, and strengthen local communities, while maintaining appropriate public oversight and compliance with applicable land management authorities and regulations.

Current & Future Work

The City will identify pilot sites for community stewardship and work with CBOs to develop long-term stewardship plans for underutilized City lands and assets that are currently being inventoried and assessed. Through this process, the City will work to make collaboration with CBOs easier and more efficient. This may include developing standard agreement templates where possible, reducing unnecessary administrative barriers while maintaining appropriate safeguards, and creating clear guidelines to help departments coordinate and support community-led stewardship efforts. All efforts will follow applicable City Charter provisions, ordinances, and departmental responsibilities. When City lands are involved, stewardship proposals will be coordinated with the department responsible for managing the land to ensure they align with long-term land use, housing, conservation, and other public purposes. The recent enactment of Act 203 (2026) also presents an important opportunity to learn from and collaborate with the State in developing co-stewardship models.

Departments: CCSR, DHLM, DPR, DFM, DPP, COR

ACTION 8.2

Strengthen the capacity of ‘āina-based organizations to advance community and food system resilience



Why This Action?

‘Āina-based organizations—those rooted in mālama ‘āina, food production, and community stewardship—play a critical role in strengthening O‘ahu’s food system in both everyday conditions and times of disruption. These organizations often serve as trusted community anchors, supporting food access, cultural knowledge, and local production while also stepping up as mutual aid networks during and after emergencies. Investing in their long-term capacity helps ensure communities are stronger and better resourced on a day-to-day basis and are also more resilient in the face of extreme weather, supply chain disruptions, economic stress, and other shocks. This work also advances Action 15 of the Ola: O‘ahu Resilience Strategy by strengthening community-led resilience capacity and supporting coordinated, place-based approaches to preparedness and response.

Current & Future Work

The City will seek opportunities to expand the capacity and programming of ‘āina-based organizations through funding, investments, resources, partnerships, and other forms of support to strengthen community well-being and the resilience of O‘ahu’s food system. Efforts may include

- Supporting ‘āina-based organizations in pursuing public and private funding opportunities;
- Strengthening infrastructure such as cold and shelf-stable storage, shared-use kitchens and processing space, and facilities for value-added production;
- Providing equipment and supplies such as dehydrators, freeze dryers, food preservation kits, generators, and backup power systems;
- Expanding training, education, and technical assistance in food production, harvesting, gleaning, preparation, preservation, and storage, as well as organizational skills such as grant writing, budgeting, communications, reporting, leadership, and network facilitation;
- Supporting programs that prioritize and serve frontline communities; and
- Strengthening coordination, where appropriate, with formal emergency response systems and partners.

Departments: CCSR

ACTION 8.3

Activate community spaces with food-focused placemaking



Why This Action?

Food can be a catalyst for community pride, cultural expression, and local economic vitality. By activating streets, parks, and public spaces with food-focused events and regional food festivals, the City can highlight local farmers, producers, and value-added businesses while strengthening social connections and cultural identity. Community food celebrations like the Waiʻanae Eat Local Challenge and Taste the Town: Wahiawā Market Day and Food Crawl have demonstrated that these gatherings can increase purchases of locally grown food, boost revenue for farmers, and deepen residents' connection to the food and traditions of their neighborhoods. Expanding these initiatives across Oʻahu helps foster stronger community cohesion, awareness of Hawaiʻi-grown food, and a sense of place rooted in cultural and culinary heritage.

Current & Future Work

The City will continue to partner with community-based organizations, business associations, and neighborhood groups to use food as a central tool for placemaking, economic development, and community resilience. Efforts may include

- Hosting, supporting, or expanding street festivals, regional food festivals, pop-up markets, farmers markets, and cultural food events that showcase highlight Hawaiʻi's diverse culinary traditions; promote local agriculture, value-added products, and small businesses; and promote community pride;
- Designing public spaces and pedestrian streets to facilitate gatherings that celebrate food, culture, and community;
- Coordinating across City departments to use food as a complementary placemaking tool that enhances other City-led cultural, arts, and community programming—such as performances, public art, music, storytelling, and neighborhood events—by drawing people together, animating public spaces, and deepening engagement with place; and
- Capturing social, economic, and cultural outcomes from these events to guide future planning and programming.

Departments: DTS, CCSR, DPP, MOCA

ACTION 8.4

Expand the Climate Champions Program to support community-led food system initiatives

Why This Action?

The City’s Climate Champions Program pairs community-based organizations (CBOs) with individuals from their communities to implement climate adaptation projects with training and support from the City and local partners. Expanding this program to include food system initiatives will empower community leaders to drive projects that enhance food security, improve local food production, strengthen grassroots leadership, and build a more climate-resilient food system.

Current & Future Work

The City will collaborate with CBOs to recruit and train Climate Champions who will implement food system resilience projects within their communities. This includes providing guidance on project development, hosting professional development workshops, and facilitating connections between Climate Champions, local organizations, and government agencies.

Departments: CCSR



PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 8.5

Plant more food-producing trees on City lands

Why This Action?

Integrating food-producing trees into the landscape—in both rural and urban areas—can improve local food access, strengthen cultural practices, enhance ecological diversity, and contribute to community resilience. Beyond their role in food production, food trees can provide shade, support biodiversity, and enhance the functionality and value of public spaces when intentionally incorporated into City landscapes and facilities as part of green infrastructure strategies.

Current & Future Work

The City will identify and pursue opportunities to incorporate food-producing trees into City-owned lands through innovative approaches and projects that integrate food production with shade, habitat, and stormwater benefits. The City will also coordinate internally with relevant agencies and externally with communities and partners to identify suitable locations, select appropriate species, and develop maintenance approaches that reflect cultural practices, long-term stewardship goals, and opportunities for harvesting and utilizing the food produced, as feasible and consistent with applicable land use, operational, and maintenance constraints.

The City is also undertaking a comprehensive review of its urban forestry policies, standards, and planning guidance to support the expansion and long-term stewardship of O‘ahu’s tree canopy. The project presents an opportunity to modernize tree-related standards and policies that can serve as a foundation for innovative projects that expand food tree planting on City lands.

Departments: CCSR, DTS, DES, DHLM, DPR, DPP



PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 8.6

Strengthen Indigenous Native Hawaiian food system infrastructure and practices

Why This Action?

Traditional infrastructure—such as lo‘i kalo, loko i‘a, and ahupua‘a-based land and water management systems—reflects generations of Indigenous and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (I/TEK) that sustained Hawai‘i for centuries. These systems nourish communities while stewarding soil, water, and marine resources in ways uniquely adapted to place. Supporting their restoration, expansion, and ongoing practice strengthens ensures that Indigenous knowledge, stewardship, and food-producing practices flourish for generations to come.

Current & Future Work

The City will seek appropriate opportunities to partner with cultural practitioners, community organizations, and nonprofit groups to invest in and uplift Indigenous food system infrastructure and stewardship. This includes supporting efforts to restore and expand lo‘i, loko i‘a, and other culturally significant sites; pursuing funding and technical resources; integrating climate resilience considerations into long-term planning; ensuring Native Hawaiian community organizations can access and steward City land (see Action 8.1); and aligning policies and processes in ways that affirm and enable the continued vitality of Indigenous food systems across O‘ahu.

Departments: CCSR, DHLM, BWS, DPR



PHOTO: CCSR

STRATEGY 9

Strengthen emergency food preparedness

Action 9.1

Develop and pilot a comprehensive strategy to increase on-hand food supply and storage capacity across O‘ahu

Action 9.2

Develop emergency food provision strategies for kūpuna

Action 9.3

Conduct targeted community research and develop tailored emergency preparedness messaging related to food

Action 9.4

Strengthen City planning efforts to assess, track, and communicate the impacts of disasters on agriculture

BACKGROUND PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 9.1

Develop and pilot a comprehensive strategy to increase on-hand food supply and storage capacity across O‘ahu

Why This Action?

Maintaining a reliable, readily available food supply is essential for effective emergency response. While pre-positioning food is one approach, it requires coordination and logistics capacity the City cannot manage alone and limits the type of food that can be utilized. Partnering with organizations and businesses that already have established supply chains and distribution networks allows the City to build on existing strengths rather than recreate them. A coordinated strategy—exploring options such as vendor-managed inventory, expanded storage at existing food pantries, and partnerships with retailers and distributors—can ensure food is available when and where it is needed while strengthening local supply chain relationships.

Current & Future Work

In 2024, the Department of Emergency Management (DEM) first convened the O‘ahu Disaster Feeding Task Force to coordinate feeding operations during emergencies and disasters. Composed of City agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private-sector partners, the Task Force provides a forum to identify needs, challenges, and opportunities to strengthen emergency feeding response. The City will continue to convene this group to guide planning, coordinate mass feeding, and identify additional emergency food strategies. Priority activities include

- Developing standard operating procedures for coordinated feeding operations;
- Identifying and testing strategies to support vulnerable communities;
- Exploring ways to distribute emergency food supplies before an anticipated emergency;
- Strengthening partnerships with retailers, distributors, and food providers;
- Establishing mechanisms for rapid, reliable financial support to emergency food providers ;
- Exploring shared or discounted warehouse space and facility improvements in coordination with relevant departments;
- Coordinating Community Points of Distribution planning; and
- Planning for hydration and provision of safe drinking water during emergencies.

Departments: DEM, DCS, CCSR, BWS

ACTION 9.2

Develop emergency food provision strategies for kūpuna

Why This Action?

The City's Kūpuna Care Program provides home-delivered meals that are a critical source of daily nutrition for many homebound kūpuna. (see Action 1.4) However, these services can be disrupted during disasters and emergencies. Providing shelf-stable supplemental food items, increased prepared meals, or additional frozen prepared meals helps ensure that vulnerable older adults continue to have access to food during these periods, strengthening food security and continuity of care.

Current & Future Work

The City's Department of Community Services' (DCS) Elderly Affairs Division (EAD) will explore supplemental food strategies to strengthen disaster preparedness for vulnerable kūpuna, including annual distribution of shelf-stable meals to existing home-delivered meal clients to ensure emergency food supplies are available during disasters or other emergencies. These emergency meals would provide short-term nutrition in preparation for natural disasters or other emergencies when normal meal delivery services may be disrupted. DCS will work in close collaboration with the Department of Emergency Management (DEM) and Oʻahu Disaster Feeding Task Force partners to ensure alignment with islandwide emergency response efforts. Feeding Task Force partners also will increase planning to support kūpuna with additional food distributions or other methods to ensure kūpuna have access to food.

Departments: DCS, DEM



PHOTO: ALOHA HARVEST

ACTION 9.3

Conduct targeted community research and develop tailored emergency preparedness messaging related to food

Why This Action?

Ensuring that all residents on O‘ahu can maintain a recommended 14-day supply of food, water, and essential medicines is critical to collective emergency preparedness. Currently, only 11.5% of O‘ahu households meet this benchmark. While awareness is important, many households face real constraints—such as cost, storage space, time, and access—that make preparedness challenging. To be effective, the City must better understand how these barriers vary across communities and what types of messages resonate with different audiences, enabling outreach that is practical, culturally relevant, and empowering.

Current & Future Work

The City will seek funding to convene resident focus groups and stakeholder sessions to better understand barriers, motivations, and perceptions related to emergency preparedness specific to food and water preparedness. These insights will inform the development of targeted, audience-specific messaging and materials that emphasize achievable, step-by-step actions and avoid stigmatizing or blame-based framing. The City will test and refine messages with different demographic groups and work across agencies to prioritize the most vulnerable communities and use the most effective communication channels. In partnership with community-based organizations, trusted messengers, and local media, the City will scale a coordinated campaign that supports households in building and maintaining a 14-day emergency supply.

Departments: DEM, DCS, CCSR, BWS



PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 9.4

Strengthen City planning efforts to assess, track, and communicate the impacts of disasters on agriculture

Why this Action?

Climate-related and natural disasters such as flooding, storms, and landslides can cause widespread disruptions to O‘ahu’s agricultural sector. The 2026 Kona Low storms, which resulted in significant impacts and a federal disaster declaration, underscored both the importance and the challenges of accurately understanding agricultural impacts. Strengthening the City’s capacity to assess, track, and communicate these impacts will improve situational awareness, enable faster and more informed decision-making, and support more effective coordination across City, State, and federal agencies and community partners.

Current & Future Work

Building on the experience of the 2026 Kona Low storms, the Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency (CCSR) in partnership with the Department of Emergency Management (DEM), and other agencies, will explore opportunities to improve how the City coordinates internally and with community partners to support the assessment, tracking, and communication of agricultural impact data collection following a disaster. This work includes identifying and implementing strategies to improve communication with key stakeholders, coordinate data collection and reporting, improve decision-making processes, and integrate agricultural impact assessment into City and State recovery frameworks and planning strategies.

Departments: CCSR, DEM, DCS, DFM, ENV



PHOTO: HONOLULU FIRE DEPARTMENT

STRATEGY 10

Bolster food systems planning, collaboration, data collection, research, and funding to advance Plan actions

Action 10.1
Establish a City interdepartmental working group to coordinate food system efforts and integrate shared food system policy priorities across departments

Action 10.2
Leverage the Climate Resiliency Fund to advance City and community-wide food system priorities

Action 10.3
Develop a comprehensive inventory of City-owned lands to support strategic stewardship and food systems planning

Action 10.4
Coordinate with the Agricultural Development Task Force to advance food system goals

Action 10.5
Hire an Agriculture Planner

Action 10.6
Expand volunteer opportunities for City employees with food systems and ʻāina-based organizations

Action 10.7
Improve public communication about City food system initiatives, regulations, and policies

Action 10.8
Strengthen food system data collection, reporting, and accountability

Action 10.9
Strengthen knowledge partnerships to advance food systems decision-making

Action 10.10
Participate in aligned regional, national, and global food systems movements and communities of practice

BACKGROUND PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 10.1

Establish a City interdepartmental working group to coordinate food system efforts and integrate shared food system policy priorities across departments



Why This Action?

While the development of the City’s first O‘ahu Food Systems Action Plan is an important milestone, sustained progress and implementation will require stronger coordination across City departments and with external partners. Food system priorities intersect with land use, housing, climate adaptation, economic development, emergency management, transportation, and public health, yet efforts to address these issues are often siloed. Without coordinated communication and alignment, policy decisions in one area of the food system can unintentionally undermine progress in others, and opportunities to embed food systems considerations into major City and State initiatives may be missed. Institutionalizing interdepartmental coordination will help align City and State policy priorities, strengthen intergovernmental and community partnerships, reduce duplication, and lessen administrative burdens on community partners who often engage with multiple City departments simultaneously.

Current & Future Work

The City will establish an interdepartmental working group led by the Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency (CCSR) to improve internal coordination, align departmental roles and responsibilities, and integrate food system priorities into relevant City plans, programs, and policies. The working group will serve as a forum for information-sharing, project collaboration, joint problem-solving, and strategic alignment across departments. A key function of the working group will be to help identify how the actions in this plan can be carried out in practice and which departments are best positioned to lead or support specific initiatives. This includes developing a resource strategy to support implementation, including, but not limited to, identifying potential funding sources and staffing needs; aligning existing programs and budgets where possible; and exploring opportunities to pursue grants, partnerships, federal earmarks, sponsorships, and other investments. Ensuring that actions are supported by realistic staffing, funding, and partnerships will be critical to effective implementation.

Departments: CCSR, All

ACTION 10.2

Leverage the Climate Resiliency Fund to advance City and community-wide food system priorities



Why This Action?

Established through a Honolulu Charter Amendment approved by O‘ahu voters in the 2024 General Election, the Climate Resiliency Fund (CRF) dedicates one-half of one percent of estimated real property tax revenues to support projects and initiatives that advance citywide and community-based climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience goals (Ordinance 25-23). As a recurring funding source—estimated at approximately $9 million in 2026—CRF provides a significant opportunity to advance food system priorities both within City operations and in partnership with community organizations. Recent CRF-supported investments demonstrate this potential, including

- Increasing farmers markets at Skyline stations (aligns with Actions 1.6, 1.8, and 1.9);
- Expanding the City’s Recreational Community Gardening Program to Asing Community Park in Honouliuli (aligns with Action 7.1);
- Expanding food-growing spaces at City-affiliated public housing sites (aligns with Action 7.4); and
- Building community capacity for emergency food preparedness (aligns with Action 8.2).

Current & Future Work

The City will continue to leverage CRF to strengthen coordination across City agencies and advance food system projects and priorities identified in the O‘ahu Food Systems Action Plan. Consistent with the fund’s original intent, the City will also work to make CRF resources available to support community-led efforts that advance climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience outcomes. As these funding pathways are developed, the City will proactively connect food system stakeholders to CRF opportunities and ensure equitable access through clear guidance, standardized templates, and streamlined application processes, ensuring food system initiatives remain a central component of the City’s broader climate resilience investments.

Departments: CCSR, All

ACTION 10.3

Develop a comprehensive inventory of City-owned lands to support strategic stewardship and food systems planning

Why This Action?

The City owns and manages a significant amount of land across O‘ahu, yet there is no single, consolidated inventory that integrates ownership, managing department, acquisition history, funding sources, and use restrictions. Without a reliable and centralized dataset, it is difficult to assess which parcels may be suitable for agriculture, food production, or other community-serving uses. Many properties carry legal or financial constraints—such as bond covenants, deed restrictions, or subsidy requirements—that limit allowable uses. Developing a comprehensive and accurate inventory is a foundational step toward informed land stewardship, interdepartmental coordination, and identifying realistic opportunities to support food production and community benefit.

Current & Future Work

The City’s Chief Data Officer is currently developing a consolidated inventory of City-owned lands. This initial phase will focus on gathering and reconciling data from multiple sources, verifying accuracy, identifying managing departments, and documenting known legal and financial restrictions associated with each parcel. Over the coming months, the City will refine and expand this inventory to include additional layers to better understand long-term land use opportunities. As the inventory matures, it may serve as a strategic tool to evaluate parcels that could support food production, agricultural leasing, or other community-based stewardship uses where legally and operationally feasible.

Departments: MDO, DHLM, DPR, DFM, DTS, BWS, DPP, CCSR, DIT



PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 10.4

Coordinate with the Agricultural Development Task Force to advance food system goals

Why This Action?

The reestablishment of the City Council’s Agricultural Development Task Force through Resolution 24-243 (2024) presents a timely opportunity to strengthen coordination among City departments, agricultural stakeholders, and community partners. The Task Force’s focus areas—including food security, land use policy, workforce development, market access, institutional purchasing, and support for value chain actors—closely align with the priorities outlined in the O‘ahu Food Systems Action Plan and offer a valuable forum for advancing shared objectives.

Current & Future Work

The City will actively coordinate with the Agricultural Development Task Force to align priorities, share data and insights, and support the implementation of cross-sector strategies that leverage the City’s unique role in the food system. Task Force recommendations will inform City planning, policy, and investment decisions and strengthen the City’s ability to translate shared food system goals into coordinated, actionable programs.

Departments: All



PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 10.5

Hire an Agriculture Planner

Why This Action?

Strengthening the productive use and stewardship of agricultural lands requires dedicated staff capacity and expertise within City government. Establishing a dedicated Agriculture Planner within the Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP) will enhance the City's ability to align land use planning, permitting, and policy decisions with agricultural and food system goals. The position will help build the institutional capacity needed to implement agricultural actions identified in this Plan, including efforts to ensure activities on agricultural lands contribute meaningfully to local food production (see Action 6.1).

Current & Future Work:

DPP is in the process of hiring an Agriculture Planner. Responsibilities may include reviewing land use proposals affecting agricultural areas, aligning goals and policies with the long range regional plans, supporting enforcement and compliance related to inappropriate uses, identifying opportunities to activate underutilized agricultural lands, improving permitting pathways for agricultural operations and infrastructure, and coordinating with farmers, landowners, and partner agencies.

Departments: DPP



PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 10.6

Expand volunteer opportunities for City employees with food systems and ʻāina-based organizations

Why This Action?

Many of the organizations and workers who feed Oʻahu, steward ʻāina, and strengthen community resilience operate with limited resources while delivering essential public benefits. Creating more opportunities for City employees to volunteer alongside these community partners can deepen understanding of on-the-ground challenges and solutions; foster trust, stronger relationships, and shared purpose between the City and community organizations; and enhance alignment and coordination with City policies and programs.

Current & Future Work:

City agencies already participate in select volunteer activities, including a Mālama ʻĀina Day at Hāwea Heiau and Keawāwa Wetland with multiple City agencies and community partners on Earth Day 2026. Building on these types of interagency efforts, the City will work to expand voluntary opportunities for employees to participate in service activities with approved food systems and ʻāina-based organizations, at the discretion of department leadership and City administration and as operationally feasible. Opportunities may include volunteering with local farms, food hubs, farmers markets, school meal programs, conservation and stewardship organizations, food distribution efforts, and other partners critical to food system resilience.

Departments: All

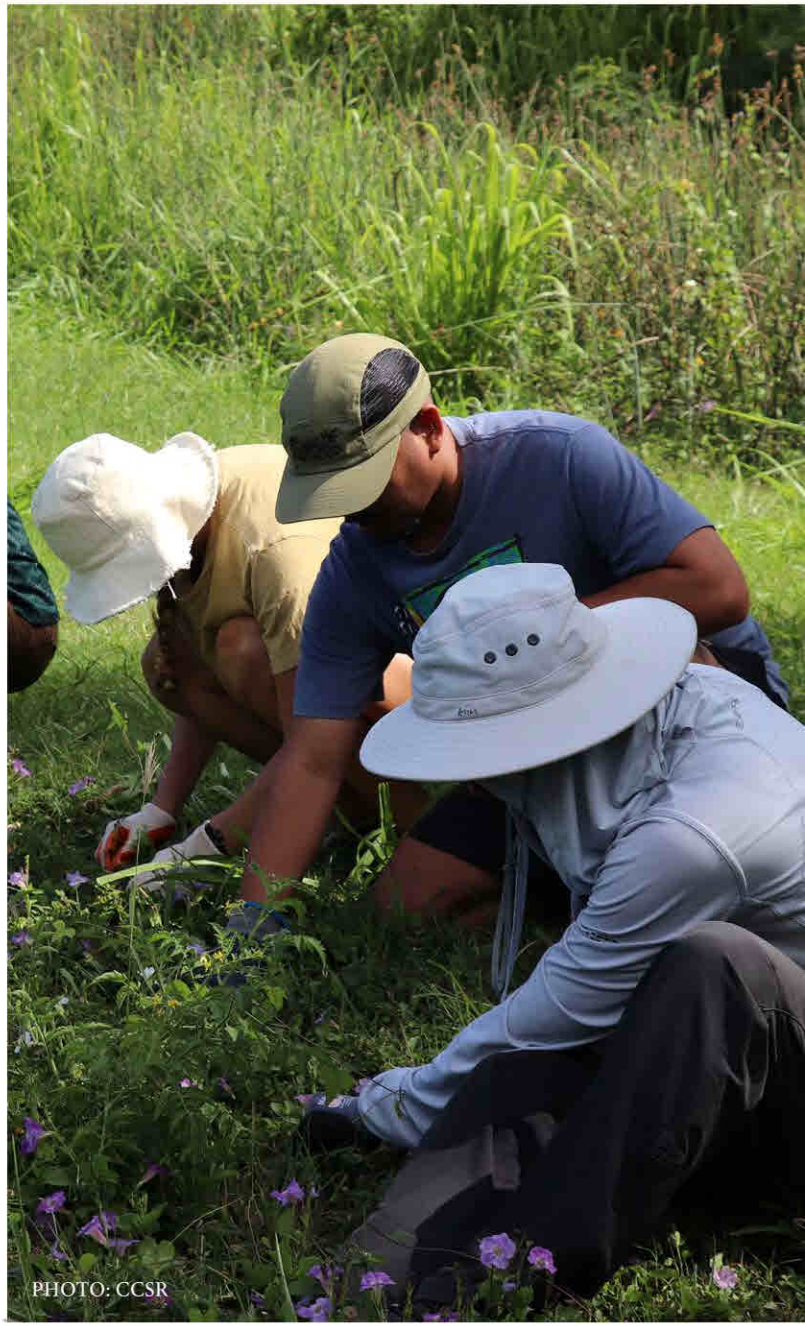


PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 10.7

Improve public communication about City food system initiatives, regulations, and policies

Why This Action?

Clear, accessible, in-language communication is essential to building trust, increasing participation, and strengthening O‘ahu’s food system. Many residents remain unaware of City food system resources or face barriers to understanding regulations related to farming, fishing, and gathering. This is particularly the case within immigrant, frontline, and culturally diverse communities. Without intentional and inclusive communication, opportunities for participation and compliance are limited and inequities can be reinforced.

Current & Future Work

The City will strengthen and coordinate public communication about food system initiatives, funding opportunities, and regulatory requirements. This will include translating key materials into multiple languages, using culturally relevant and plain-language messaging, and partnering with trusted community organizations to ensure information reaches diverse audiences through the right channels.

Departments: CCSR, DPP, DPR



PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 10.8

Strengthen food system data collection, reporting, and accountability

Why This Action?

Reliable, timely, and consistent data is essential to understanding food system challenges, guiding effective action, and building public accountability. While some food system indicators are currently reported through the City's Annual Sustainability Report, significant gaps remain—particularly for O‘ahu-specific data that reflects local conditions, inequities, and community priorities. Strengthening and aligning these metrics, including those related to implementation of the O‘ahu Food Systems Action Plan, will improve the City's ability to track progress, identify emerging needs, and respond strategically over time.

Current & Future Work

The City will continue to report on key food system metrics through the City's Annual Sustainability Report to ensure public visibility, cross-departmental coordination, and consistent progress tracking. The City will also expand reporting capacity to include updates on implementation of the O‘ahu Food Systems Action Plan, helping to track action status, identify gaps, and inform future priorities.

The City will simultaneously explore opportunities to develop and refine food system metrics that better reflect O‘ahu-specific conditions, including indicators related to food access, local food production, emergency preparedness, and equity, and contribute to community and state efforts to improve food system data collection that support data-informed decision-making at the county level. To support this work, the City will strengthen relationships with academic institutions, research organizations, and community partners that can meaningfully support data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

Departments: CCSR, All



PHOTO: CCSR

ACTION 10.9

Strengthen knowledge partnerships to advance food systems decision-making



Why This Action?

A resilient and equitable food system requires timely, place-based research that informs policy, investment, and implementation. Universities, colleges, research organizations, and other knowledge partners bring expertise in data analysis, modeling, evaluation, and innovation that can help the City better understand complex food system challenges, measure progress, and identify effective solutions. Strengthening these partnerships ensures that City decisions are informed by both scientific evidence and community knowledge while supporting innovation tailored to Hawai‘i’s unique environmental, cultural, and economic context.

Current & Future Work

The City will continue partnering with universities, colleges, and research institutions to co-develop research priorities and conduct applied, community-informed studies that support implementation of the O‘ahu Food Systems Action Plan. Areas of research may include assessing cold storage and processing infrastructure, mapping seasonal production and distribution gaps, evaluating emissions associated with local diets, developing food system performance metrics, studying culturally relevant and climate-resilient crops, piloting innovative production models, and conducting community-led food system assessments. Findings from these efforts will help inform practical policies, programs, and investments that strengthen food system resilience and outcomes across O‘ahu.

The development of this Plan reflects this collaborative approach, having been supported by graduate students in the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Department of Urban and Regional Planning Food Systems Planning course (PLAN 616).

Departments: CCSR

ACTION 10.10

Participate in aligned regional, national, and global food systems movements and communities of practice

Why This Action?

O‘ahu’s food system challenges—climate change, economic inequity, biodiversity loss, chronic disease, and more—are shared by cities around the world. By aligning with national, regional, and global efforts to transform food systems, O‘ahu can learn from and contribute to broader movements while elevating local priorities and solutions. Participating in frameworks, communities of practice, and learning networks like the Food for Public Good Collaborative (led by Partners for Public Good) allows O‘ahu to benchmark progress, access technical assistance, and connect with peer cities advancing just and sustainable food systems.

Current & Future Work

The City will explore joining additional networks and continue to leverage connections with regional alliances and national partners working on institutional procurement, food justice, and climate-resilient agriculture. Participation in these coalitions will help Honolulu adopt best practices, co-create tools, and advocate for policy change at the state, federal, and global levels. The City will also seek funding and capacity-building opportunities through these partnerships to strengthen local implementation efforts.

Departments: CCSR



PHOTO: CCSR

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A Feast of Gratitude, by Isabel Galdores (Waiʻanae High School), ʻIke ʻAi Art Contest High School Voice Award winner. Medium: colored pencil. Inspired by the ʻōlelo noʻeau "E pū paʻakai kākou" ("Let us share this salt together." Interpretation: A gesture of gratitude before eating a meal together).

Coordinating Implementation

The Oʻahu Food Systems Action Plan serves as the City's first comprehensive framework for coordinated food system action and will guide the City's efforts to foster a more sustainable, equitable, and healthy food system over the next five years.

Implementation is intended to be iterative and adaptive. As actions are completed, the City will evaluate progress, identify barriers and enabling factors, and refine implementation approaches as needed. Because food systems are influenced by changing economic conditions, climate impacts, funding availability, community priorities, and state and federal policy, implementation will emphasize continuous learning, cross-departmental coordination, and ongoing review and adjustment to maximize long-term impact.

The Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency (CCSR) will serve as the central coordinating body for Plan implementation, helping align efforts across departments, facilitating communication among partners, and supporting strategic problem-solving. Individual City departments will lead or co-lead implementation of specific actions, including executing programs, advancing policies, and coordinating with community partners. This distributed implementation model reflects the cross-cutting nature of the food system, which intersects with the functions of nearly every City department.

The City's interdepartmental food systems working group (established in Action 10.1 of this Plan) will support implementation by serving as a standing forum for collaboration, information-sharing, joint decision-making, and resource development. The group will help ensure that actions implemented across departments reinforce one another and remain aligned with shared food system priorities. It will also provide a space to surface emerging challenges, share lessons learned, and coordinate departmental initiatives in support of broader City goals.

Prioritizing Frontline Communities

Equitable implementation requires prioritizing the needs of frontline communities. Frontline communities include individuals and groups disproportionately impacted by environmental, economic, and social inequities and are therefore more vulnerable to crises such as climate change, public health threats, and economic instability. These communities often face fewer resources, weaker safety nets, and limited political power, reducing their ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from these challenges.

Frontline communities[107] include, but are not limited to

- Native Hawaiian communities;
- ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) households;
- Shift workers, long-distance commuters, and single parents working multiple jobs;
- Immigrant and refugee communities;
- Compact of Free Association (COFA) and Pacific Islander communities;
- Communities of color that have historically faced structural inequities and continue to experience social, economic, and political marginalization;
- People with disabilities;
- People experiencing houselessness or housing insecurity;
- LGBTQ+ individuals;
- Keiki and kūpuna; and
- Zero car households.

Community Partnerships

The City recognizes that a resilient food system depends on strong partnerships with community organizations, producers, businesses, educators, cultural practitioners, and residents. The actions in this Plan are designed to support and scale community-led efforts, rather than replace them. Many of Oʻahu's most important food system initiatives—including efforts to steward ʻāina, restore loʻi and loko iʻa, increase food access, revitalize cultural food practices, and strengthen local agriculture—have long been led by communities, practitioners, and organizations outside of government. The City's role is therefore not solely to lead, but also to listen, convene, invest, remove barriers, and support work already taking place across the island.

Implementation will therefore prioritize collaborative, place-based partnerships that respond to the unique needs and priorities of each moku across Oʻahu, leveraging the strengths of community and industry leaders alongside municipal resources. Implementation will also seek to elevate community leadership, particularly among Native Hawaiian communities and other frontline communities that have historically experienced exclusion from decision-making processes yet continue to steward many of the island's food and cultural resources.

A Living Framework

This Plan is a dynamic, evolving resource—not a fixed blueprint. As conditions change, new partnerships emerge, and lessons are learned, the City's role within Oʻahu's food system will adapt accordingly. Continued implementation should therefore be informed by ongoing engagement, partnership, and feedback from communities, recognizing that the knowledge and priorities needed to steward Oʻahu's food systems reside both within and beyond government. While the Plan reflects the City's current best understanding of actionable steps in the next five years, the City may refine or add actions to ensure the Plan remains responsive to community needs and priorities.



PHOTO: CCSR

Funding Strategy

As of 2026, the City does not have the resources or capacity to complete all the actions within five years but this Plan establishes a clear and compelling roadmap for future investment. A key function of the interdepartmental food systems working group (see Action 10.1) will be to develop and advance a coordinated funding strategy to support implementation. This includes identifying and pursuing diverse funding opportunities such as City general and special funds, state and federal grants, congressionally directed spending, private and philanthropic funding, sponsorships, and partnerships with community organizations and institutions. The working group will also explore opportunities to leverage City funds as matching resources to unlock additional investment and encourage cross-departmental collaboration on funding proposals.

Securing funding—particularly in today's fiscal climate—often requires assembling resources from multiple sources over the life of a project, from early planning and development to implementation, evaluation, and scaling. The level of coordination required to advance the actions in this Plan cannot be achieved by departments working independently. The interdepartmental food systems working group will therefore play a critical role in aligning funding strategies, coordinating grant applications, and ensuring that actions in this Plan are well-resourced and implemented effectively.

Key Internal City Funding Sources

General Fund

With sufficient planning and capacity, departments can include funding requests for projects outlined in the Plan through the City's annual budgeting process.

Climate Resiliency Fund (CRF)

As outlined in Action 10.2, CRF was established through a Honolulu Charter Amendment approved by Oʻahu voters in the 2024 General Election. It dedicates one-half of one percent of estimated real property tax revenues to support projects and initiatives that advance citywide and community-based climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience goals (Ordinance 25-23). As a recurring funding source—estimated at approximately $9 million in 2026—CRF provides a significant opportunity to advance food system priorities both within City operations and in partnership with community organizations. Recent CRF-supported investments demonstrate this potential, including

- Increasing farmers markets at Skyline stations (aligns with Actions 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, and 1.9);
- Expanding the City's Recreational Community Gardening Program to Asing Community Park in Honouliuli (aligns with Action 7.1);
- Expanding food-growing spaces at City-affiliated public housing sites (aligns with Action 7.5); and
- Building community capacity for emergency food preparedness (aligns with Action 8.2).

Potential External Funding Sources

Federal and State Funds

Federal and state funds have historically brought millions of dollars to support food system initiatives and related programs and will remain a critical component of the City’s funding strategy. At the state level, the City has benefited from partnerships with state agencies like the Hawai‘i Department of Health’s SNAP-Ed Program, which has consistently supported food system priorities at the county and community levels on O‘ahu. At the federal level, the Office of Economic Revitalization distributed over $2.4 million to O‘ahu farmers from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) Program authorized by the American Rescue Act. The City has also received or sought funding from key programs within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), including

- Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production (OUAIP): Composting and Food Waste Reduction (CFWR) Cooperative Agreements;
- USDA Rural Development: Funding for Food Waste Reduction Projects and Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI);
- Agricultural Marketing Service: Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP) such as the Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP), Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP), and Regional Food System Partnerships (RFSP) Program;
- National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA): Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI); and
- Food and Nutrition Service (FNS): Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant Program.

Congressional Appropriations

Congressional appropriations requests generally fall into three categories: programmatic requests, language requests, and Community Project Funding (earmarks). Programmatic requests seek to increase funding for specific federal programs, which can improve Hawai‘i’s ability to compete for and secure these funds. Bill or report language requests provide congressional direction on how funding should be prioritized or administered, helping position Hawai‘i more favorably for future funding opportunities. Community Project Funding allows members of Congress to request direct federal funding for projects that benefit their constituents. The City will work closely with Hawai‘i’s congressional delegation to communicate City priorities and advocate for food system initiatives to be considered in congressional appropriations.

Philanthropic Funds

Foundations and philanthropic organizations can be important partners in supporting innovative programs, pilot projects, research, and community-based initiatives that may not yet qualify for public funding. The City’s food system initiatives have already benefited from partnerships with organizations such as Ulupono Initiative, the Harold K.L. Castle Foundation, and Bloomberg Philanthropies.

Sponsorship and Other Gifts

Partnerships with businesses, nonprofits, philanthropies, academia, and community organizations may provide opportunities for sponsorships, donations, or in-kind contributions to support specific programs, events, or educational initiatives.

Networks and Associations

Participating in regional, national, and international networks and professional associations can provide access to a wide range of resources, including technical assistance, peer learning, collaborative funding opportunities, and strategic partnerships. Networks with which the City is already engaged include Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN), Hawai‘i’s 4-County Sustainability Network, ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, and the Values-Based Food Procurement Learning Network for local governments.

Progress Reporting, Accountability & Transparency

While we are confident that O‘ahu’s food system will be strengthened as the City implements the actions in this Plan, we also recognize that the food system is broad, interconnected, and influenced by many factors beyond the City’s control. Transforming O‘ahu’s food system into one that is just, environmentally sustainable, prosperous, equitable, and resilient is a long-term, collaborative effort. This Plan represents an important first step in acknowledging the City’s kuleana and advancing our role in partnership with all our communities.

Accordingly, our approach to measuring impact is grounded in what the City can directly influence. City agencies will track their respective actions using defined outputs, milestones, and status updates. The Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency (CCSR) will compile this information into a publicly accessible dashboard that is updated periodically and provide annual progress updates through the City’s Annual Sustainability Report (see Action 10.8). These updates will summarize action status and overall progress; highlight key outputs, partnerships, and investments; and identify challenges or areas that require additional support or coordination. To maintain momentum and accountability, the City will aim for consistent year-over-year progress, with the goal of completing or establishing sustained workflows across all actions by 2031.

By making implementation progress visible and consistent over time, the City will strengthen accountability to community priorities, support transparency in City programs, and create ongoing opportunities for partners and residents to stay engaged in advancing the Plan. CCSR will also seek regular opportunities to share progress, receive feedback, and identify emerging priorities with community partners, recognizing that accountability is strengthened through continued dialogue and relationship-building rather than one-time engagement alone.



PHOTO: CCSR

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Pāʻina on the Shore, by Kaitlyn Anderson. ʻIke ʻAi Art Contest submission. Medium: digital. Inspired by the ʻōlelo noʻeau "Holo iʻa ka papa, kau ʻia e ka manu" ("When the shoals are full of fish, the birds gather over them." Interpretation: Where there is food, people will gather).

Guiding Value:

Pono

Food System Dimension:

Food & Nutrition Security

Goal: All households have consistent and equitable access to healthy, safe, affordable, and culturally appropriate foods essential to optimal health and well-being.

Pono refers to righteousness, moral integrity, or balance. Pono embodies the idea of doing what is fair and just—not only for oneself, but also for the broader community. It conveys a sense of something one must do and a deep sense of responsibility toward others, the land, and future generations.

In practice, pono embodies our collective imperative to help ensure good food for all. A pono food system is one that eliminates food and nutrition insecurity and demonstrates food equity in all its forms—procedural, distributional, structural, intergenerational, and cultural.

Action #	Action Name	Departments
Strategy 1: Increase access to nutritious, affordable food by strengthening the systems that support food and economic security		
1.1	Strengthen food access as a citywide strategic initiative	All
1.2	Address housing insecurity as a foundation for food security and health	DHLM, DCS, HESD
1.3	Advocate to protect and expand state and federal programs that address poverty, food and nutrition insecurity, and health inequities	CCSR, DCS, DHLM
1.4	Strengthen and expand kūpuna nutrition services and food access programs	DCS, CCSR
1.5	Pilot a food distribution program for family childcare providers	DCS
1.6	Expand access to nutrition assistance programs at farmers markets and food hubs	CCSR
1.7	Advance community food and health initiatives through Food Is Medicine partnerships	CCSR, DCS
1.8	Integrate food access into Skyline stations	CCSR, DTS, DPR, DPP, HART
1.9	Integrate food access into transit-oriented development (TOD) planning	CCSR, DTS, DPP, DHLM, DPR
1.10	Improve multimodal access to food	CCSR, DTS, DPR, DPP, HART
1.11	Continue annual City food drives	All
Strategy 2: Expand culturally meaningful food and nutrition education		
2.1	Promote healthy, sustainable, and culturally grounded food choices	CCSR, DCS, DPR
2.2	Incorporate food systems education into DPR parks programming	DPR, CCSR
2.3	Integrate outdoor learning gardens and natural play spaces into City-affiliated childcare facilities	DCS
2.4	Integrate food, health, and climate education into Early Childhood Education (ECE) recertification training	DCS, CCSR
2.5	Support City-affiliated community resource centers to enhance food security, learning, and well-being for kūpuna and parents with keiki	DCS
2.6	Expand City support for Farm to School initiatives in Oʻahu schools	CCSR

Guiding Value:

Mālama ʻĀina

Food System Dimension:

Ecological Sustainability

Goal: Food system activities safeguard Hawaiʻi's natural resources for both present and future generations.

Mālama means to care for and protect. While "'āina" is often translated as "land," its deeper meaning comes from the word "'ai", meaning, "food" or "to eat." Thus, 'āina signifies "that which feeds," encompassing not only land but also the resources, relationships, and cultural heritage that nourish us.

Although mālama 'āina can be simply understood as caring for the land, its significance extends beyond physical actions. As noted in Climate Ready Oʻahu (the City's climate adaptation strategy), mālama 'āina is deeply rooted in a worldview that recognizes the environment as kin. It is a system of values passed on through generations that recognizes our shared kuleana (responsibility) to enrich and sustain Hawaiʻi's natural resources for both present and future generations.

Action #	Action Name	Departments
Strategy 3: Reduce waste from the food chain		
3.1	Establish an islandwide program for the curbside collection of residential food waste and manufactured compostable materials	ENV
3.2	Reduce residential food waste through public education	ENV, CCSR
3.3	Expand curbside recycling to residential homes along refuse-only collection routes	ENV
3.4	Reduce commercial food waste	ENV
3.5	Explore ways to further reduce solid waste generated by disposable plastic food ware	ENV, CCSR
3.6	Create an islandwide organic waste sustainability plan	ENV
3.7	Strengthen food recovery infrastructure and partnerships to divert surplus edible food to food pantries and community organizations	CCSR, ENV
3.8	Explore opportunities to support community-led composting initiatives	CCSR, ENV
3.9	Strengthen and scale gleaning systems to harvest local food and increase community food access	CCSR, ENV, DPR
Strategy 4: Strengthen fresh water security by sustainably managing water resources and protecting water quality		
4.1	Expand support of conservation, maintenance, and reforestation across all priority watersheds	BWS, CCSR
4.2	Establish and work toward wetland protection and restoration goals	DHLM, BWS, CCSR
4.3	Increase partnerships and investments to support cesspool conversions islandwide	CCSR, ENV
4.4	Complete and begin operation of the Kalaeloa Seawater Desalination Facility	BWS
4.5	Preserve and expand rebates for water-efficient upgrades in homes and businesses	BWS, ENV, CCSR
4.6	Adopt a plumbing "reach code" to incentivize water efficiency	BWS, CCSR, DPP
4.7	Expand use of recycled and non-potable water	BWS, ENV, CCSR
4.8	Coordinate resilient infrastructure investment through the City's One Water Panel	CCSR, BWS, ENV, DFM, DDC, DPP, DPR, DTS

Guiding Value:

ʻĀina Aloha Economics

Food System Dimension:

Local Food Economies

Goal: Robust local food economies create good jobs and regenerate both communities and ʻāina.

ʻĀina Aloha Economics is a framework rooted in Native Hawaiian cultural values, emphasizing abundance, reciprocity, and stewardship of the land. It envisions an economy that nurtures both people and the environment by prioritizing community well-being, environmental sustainability, and equitable resource distribution.

Applied to food systems, this approach supports small- and medium-sized producers who utilize agroecological farming methods and Indigenous and traditional ecological knowledge (I/TEK). It also fosters supply chains that prioritize making locally produced food accessible to residents, rather than focusing solely on scaling for export. Ultimately, economic prosperity should align with our collective values of food sovereignty, environmental sustainability, and the resilience of the local food system to enhance food and nutrition security for all.

Action #	Action Name	Departments
Strategy 5: Enhance market opportunities and value chain coordination for local food		
5.1	Expand the Oʻahu Good Food Program to increase the scale and impact of local food purchasing	CCSR, DCS, DES, DPR, BFS
5.2	Adopt a values-based food procurement policy	CCSR, DCS, DES, DPR
5.3	Support City concessionaires in offering and promoting local and sustainable food options	CCSR, DES
5.4	Expand farmers markets on City land	DPR, CCSR, DTS
Strategy 6: Create conditions for small- and mid-sized local producers and food businesses to thrive		
6.1	Protect agricultural land and ensure it is used for meaningful agricultural production	DPP, CCSR
6.2	Administer the Clean Water and Natural Lands (CWNL) Fund to protect agricultural lands	DHLM, CCSR
6.3	Strengthen coordinated support services for farmers	CCSR
6.4	Enhance food system infrastructure to support local production and value-added businesses	CCSR, DHLM
6.5	Collaborate to strengthen biosecurity and combat invasive species	ENV, DPR, CCSR
6.6	Help farmers develop alternative revenue streams through educational programs, regenerative agritourism, and institutional markets	CCSR
6.7	Waive water system hook-up fees for farmers connecting to Board of Water Supply (BWS) infrastructure	BWS
6.8	Collaborate to strengthen Oʻahu's urban agriculture ecosystem	CCSR
6.9	Strengthen food system entrepreneurship and workforce pathways	MDO, All

Guiding Value:

Ea

Food System Dimension:

Food Sovereignty

Goal: Communities practice food sovereignty by participating in and shaping food systems in ways that align with community goals and cultural practices.

Ea embodies life, the breath itself, and the conditions that allow people and communities to flourish. For many Native Hawaiians, ea is also closely connected to independence, sovereignty, and self-determination.

In a food systems context, ea emphasizes food sovereignty: the ability of communities to meaningfully participate in, influence, and help shape food systems according to their needs, priorities, and cultural practices. This approach moves beyond charity-based food aid to foster equitable systems, participatory decision-making, and long-term resilience. Food sovereignty prioritizes self-determination, ensuring access to culturally valued foods and livelihoods while upholding dignity and agency.

Action #	Action Name	Departments
Strategy 7: Increase access to food gardens in all forms		
7.1	Expand and modernize the City's Recreational Community Gardening Program	DPR
7.2	Promote accessibility, inclusion, and safety in City-run community gardens	DPR, HPD
7.3	Expand gardening education and technical assistance	DPR, CCSR
7.4	Expand access to food growing spaces at City public housing sites	CCSR, DHLM, DCS, DPR
7.5	Expand community growing and ʻāina stewardship models across Oʻahu	CCSR, DTS, DHLM, DFM, DES, DPR
7.6	Utilize City-generated compost to support community gardening	ENV, DPR
7.7	Expand the City's Community Forestry Program, including tree giveaway efforts	DPR
Strategy 8: Restore cultural connections to ʻāina (biocultural revitalization)		
8.1	Streamline partnerships for community-based stewardship of underutilized City lands and assets	CCSR, DHLM, DPR, DFM, DPP, COR
8.2	Strengthen the capacity of ʻāina-based organizations to advance community and food system resilience	CCSR
8.3	Activate community spaces with food-focused placemaking	DTS, CCSR, DPP, MOCA
8.4	Expand the Climate Champions Program to support community-led food system initiatives	CCSR
8.5	Plant more food-producing trees on City lands	CCSR, DTS, DES, DHLM, DPR, DPP
8.6	Strengthen Indigenous Native Hawaiian food system infrastructure and practices	CCSR, DHLM, BWS, DPR

Guiding Value:

Ola Loa

Food System Dimension:

Long-Term Resilience

Goal: O‘ahu embraces a thoughtful and planned approach to food system transformation that safeguards against future shocks and stresses and ensures long-term food system resilience.

The word “ola” means “well-being,” “living,” “thriving,” and “healthy”—but it also relates to salvation, healing, and survival. It is the namesake of the City’s Ola: O‘ahu Resilience Strategy, which outlines how the City can uplift community, take responsibility for safeguarding our island home, and pave the way for ola loa, an idea that revered kupuna Mary Kawena Puku‘i defined as a state of being “completely cured and recovered.”

Action #	Action Name	Departments
Strategy 9: Strengthen emergency food preparedness		
9.1	Develop and pilot a comprehensive strategy to increase on-hand food supply and storage capacity across O‘ahu	DEM, DCS, CCSR, BWS
9.2	Develop emergency food provision strategies for kūpuna	DEM, DCS, BWS, CCSR
9.3	Conduct targeted community research and develop tailored emergency preparedness messaging related to food	DEM, DCS
9.4	Strengthen City planning efforts to assess, track, and communicate the impacts of disasters on agriculture	CCSR, DEM, DCS, DFM, ENV
Strategy 10: Bolster food systems planning, collaboration, data collection, research, and funding to advance Plan actions		
10.1	Establish a City interdepartmental working group to coordinate food system efforts and integrate shared food system policy priorities across departments	CCSR, All
10.2	Leverage the Climate Resiliency Fund to advance City and community-wide food system priorities	CCSR, All
10.3	Develop a comprehensive inventory of City-owned lands to support strategic stewardship and food systems planning	MDO, DHLM, DPR, DFM, DTS, BWS, DPP, CCSR, DIT
10.4	Coordinate with the Agricultural Development Task Force to advance food system goals	All
10.5	Hire an Agriculture Planner	DPP
10.6	Expand volunteer opportunities for City employees with food systems and ‘āina-based organizations	All
10.7	Improve public communication about City food system initiatives, regulations, and policies	CCSR, DPP, DPR
10.8	Strengthen food system data collection, reporting, and accountability	CCSR, All
10.9	Strengthen knowledge partnerships to advance food systems decision-making	CCSR
10.10	Participate in aligned regional, national, and global food systems movements and communities of practice	CCSR

List of Acronyms

City and County of Honolulu Agencies

BFS Department of Budget and Fiscal Services

BWS Honolulu Board of Water Supply

CCSR Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency

COR Department of the Corporation Counsel

CSD Department of Customer Services

DCS Department of Community Services

DDC Department of Design and Construction

DEM Department of Emergency Management

DES Department of Enterprise Services

DFM Department of Facility Maintenance

DHLM Department of Housing and Land Management

DHR Department of Human Resources

DIT Department of Information Technology

DPP Department of Planning and Permitting

DPR Department of Parks and Recreation

DTS Department of Transportation Services

ENV Department of Environmental Services

HART Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation

HESD Honolulu Emergency Services Department

HFD Honolulu Fire Department

HOSD Honolulu Ocean Safety Department

HPD Honolulu Police Department

MAY Mayor's Office

MDO Managing Director's Office

MED Medical Examiner Department

MOCA Mayor's Office of Culture and the Arts

NCO Neighborhood Commission Office

OER Office of Economic Revitalization

PAT Department of the Prosecuting Attorney

RHB Royal Hawaiian Band

State of Hawaiʻi Agencies

CWRM Commission of Water Resource Management

DBEDT Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism

DLNR Department of Land and Natural Resources

DAB Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity

DOE Department of Education

HDOH Department of Health

HDOT Department of Transportation, Highways Division

HPHA Hawaiʻi Public Housing Authority

HSEO Hawaiʻi State Energy Office

HTA Hawaiʻi Tourism Authority

OPSD State of Hawaiʻi, Department of Planning and Sustainable Development

Literature Review

The following City and County of Honolulu plans and documents were reviewed and informed the development of the O‘ahu Food Systems Action Plan.

Document	City Agency / Group
O‘ahu General Plan	All Agencies
BWS Strategic Plan 2023-2027	BWS
Central O‘ahu Watershed Management Plan	BWS
East Honolulu Watershed Management Plan	BWS
‘Ewa Watershed Management Plan	BWS
Ko‘olau Loa Watershed Management Plan	BWS
Ko‘olau Poko Watershed Management Plan	BWS
North Shore Watershed Management Plan	BWS
One Water Honolulu	BWS
Primary Urban Center Watershed Management Plan	BWS
Wai‘anae Watershed Management Plan	BWS
Water Master Plan	BWS
CCSR Climate Action Plan 2020-2025	CCSR
Climate Ready O‘ahu	CCSR
Ola O‘ahu Resilience Strategy	CCSR
City and County of Honolulu Four-Year Area Plan on Aging	DCS
Public Housing Agency 5-year Plan	DCS
Public Housing Agency Annual Plan	DCS
Multi-Hazard Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan	DEM
Storm Water Management Program Plan	DFM
Storm Water Strategic Plan	DFM
2023 Housing Plan (Revised Edition: August 2024)	DHLM
Strategic Housing Plan	DHLM
‘Aiea-Pearl City Transit-Oriented Development Neighborhood Plan	DPP
Central O‘ahu Sustainable Communities Plan	DPP
Chinatown Action Plan	DPP
Downtown Neighborhood Transit-Oriented Development Plan	DPP
East Honolulu Sustainable Communities Plan	DPP
‘Aiea-Pearl City Livable Communities Plan	DPP
‘Ewa Sustainable Communities Plan	DPP
Iwilei/Kapālama Transit-Oriented Development Infrastructure Needs Assessment	DPP
Kalihi Neighborhood Transit-Oriented Development Plan	DPP
Kalihi-Pālama Action Plan	DPP
Kapālama Canal Catalytic Project	DPP
Koa Ridge Urban Design Plan	DPP
Ko‘olau Loa Sustainable Communities Plan	DPP
Ko‘olau Poko Sustainable Communities Plan	DPP
Mill Town Center - Business & Industrial Park Urban Design Plan	DPP
Mill Town Center - Commercial & Park Urban Design Plan	DPP
Neal S. Blaisdell Center Master Plan	DPP
North Shore Sustainable Communities Plan Update	DPP
Primary Urban Center Development Plan (O‘ahu)	DPP
Transit-Oriented Development Wayfinding Master Plan: Phase 1 Planning	DPP
Transit-Oriented Development Wayfinding Master Plan: Phase 2 Design and Documentation	DPP
Wahiawā Urban Design Plan	DPP
Wai‘anae Sustainable Communities Plan	DPP
Waikele Urban Design Plan	DPP
Waipahu Livable Communities Plan	DPP
Waipahu Neighborhood Transit-Oriented Development Plan	DPP
Waipahu Town Action Plan	DPP
Waipahu Town Plan	DPP
Waipahu Transit-Oriented Development Neighborhood Plan	DPP
Urban Reforestation Master Plan	DPR
Urban Tree Plan	DPR
2019 O‘ahu Bike Plan Update	DTS
O‘ahu Pedestrian Plan	DTS
2017 Waste Composition Study	ENV
2019 Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan Update	ENV
2024 Interim Status Report for the Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan (2019)	ENV
Storm Water Management Program Plan	HDOT
City & County of Honolulu (O‘ahu) 2022 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy	OEDB
O‘ahu Regional Transportation Plan	OMPO
Age-Friendly Honolulu 2022-2023 Annual Report	UH Center on Aging
Age-Friendly Honolulu Action Plan	UH Center on Aging

For a complete list of department acronyms, see page 136.

Other Food Plans Reviewed

The following food plans and documents were reviewed and informed the development of the O‘ahu Food Systems Action Plan.

Document	Jurisdiction, Year
A City of Detroit Policy on Food Security	City, 2008
Arlington County: Recommendations for a Food Action Plan	County, 2013
Baltimore Food System Resilience Advisory Report	City, 2017
Beaufort County Healthy Food Action Plan	County, 2013
City of Asheville Food Policy Goals and Action Plan	City, 2017
City of Columbus & Franklin County Ohio Local Food Action Plan	County, 2014
City of Seattle Food Action Plan	City, 2024
County of Hawai‘i 5 Year Agrifood System and Community Food Security Plan Draft	County, 2026
Denver Food Vision 2030	City, 2017
Denver Food Action Plan	City, 2018
Denver Food Vision Progress Report	City, 2024
Douglas County, KS Food System Plan	County, 2017
FoodWorks: A Vision to Improve NYC’s Food Systems	City, 2010
From Crisis to Connection- Maui Emergency Feeding Task Force Recommendation Report	County, 2024
Greensboro Fresh Food Access Plan	City, 2015
Kaua‘i Food Access Plan 2030	County, 2023
Kent County Food Systems Plan	County, 2025
King County’s Local Food Initiative	County, 2015
Maui County Food & Nutrition Security Plan 2025-2030	County, 2025
Mendocino County Food Action Plan	County, 2014
Montgomery County Food Equity Plan	County, 2019
Multnomah County Food Action Plan	County, 2010
Niagara Falls Food Action Plan	City, 2018
OurCounty Los Angeles Countywide Sustainability Plan	County, 2019
Planning for Santa Fe’s Food Future	County, 2014
Riverside Food & Agriculture Policy Action Plan	City, 2015
Santa Barbara County Food Action Plan	County, 2016
Sacramento Region Food System Action Plan	Region, 2021
Somerville Food Plan	City, 2019
Sonoma County Healthy and Sustainable Food Action Plan	County, 2012
The Local Food Action Plan Of The Vancouver Park Board	City, 2013

Glossary of Key Terms

Agroecology: Agroecology is a holistic, integrated approach to agriculture and food system management that combines science, agricultural practices, and social movements. As a scientific discipline, it draws from fields such as agronomy, ecology, sociology, and economics to create sustainable agrifood systems. Agroecological practices prioritize ecological processes and ecosystem services, incorporating techniques like no-till or reduced tillage, cover cropping, crop rotation, organic fertilization, agroforestry, and composting, as well as Indigenous Hawaiian methods and Korean natural farming.

What sets agroecology apart from other “alternative” agricultural movements like “climate-smart” agriculture or regenerative or organic farming is its strong emphasis on social justice and its goal of transforming power structures to benefit communities. Rooted in global peasant movements such as La Via Campesina that advocate for food sovereignty, agroecology builds on Indigenous and traditional ecological knowledge, integrating scientific research to support, not lead, this evolution. Over time, agroecology has broadened its scope from focusing on farms and fields to encompass the entire food system, from production to distribution and consumption. [108, 109, 110, 111]

This document embraces agroecology because meaningful food systems transformation must link agricultural practices to broader shifts in political structures, cultural norms, and economic models. [112, 113, 114, 115] Agroecology is not a one-size-fits-all solution: its principles and implementation must be tailored to the specific environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic conditions of each community. A participatory approach that empowers communities at every stage of food systems planning, design, and execution is essential. [116, 117]

Biocultural restoration: Biocultural restoration is an approach to restoration that recognizes the deep connections between ecosystems and the cultures that have stewarded them. It seeks to restore ecological health—such as biodiversity, soil stability, and habitat—while also revitalizing cultural relationships to place, including the return of culturally significant species, traditional food systems, and the knowledge and practices associated with them. By acknowledging that environmental and cultural well-being are interconnected, biocultural restoration supports both thriving ecosystems and thriving communities, strengthening cultural identity, stewardship, and long-term resilience. [118, 119, 120]

Cesspools: Large holes underground that store and discharge raw, untreated human waste.

Community gardens: The USDA describes community gardens as “collaborative projects on shared open spaces where participants share in the maintenance and products of the garden, including healthful and affordable fresh fruits and vegetables.”[121] Beyond providing nutritious, affordable food, these gardens foster community bonds and enhance local green spaces, contributing to physical well-being, environmental health, and social connectedness.

These gardens come in diverse forms: allotment gardens, where individuals rent and cultivate personal plots; communal gardens, where participants follow a shared planting plan; educational gardens, offering workshops and hands-on learning; and donation gardens, which supply fresh produce to local food banks. Other variations, such as pocket gardens in unused spaces, therapeutic gardens for healing and wellness, and rooftop gardens in urban areas, highlight their adaptability. Despite differences in structure, community gardens are unified by shared responsibility, collective maintenance, and community-oriented values, fostering sustainable spaces for food production, education, and social connection.

Farm to School: Farm to School programs encompass a range of activities that connect schools with local or regional food producers. These efforts aim to serve locally produced foods in school meals while providing students with educational experiences related to food, agriculture, and nutrition. Rather than a single standardized program, Farm to School initiatives can take many forms, including local food procurement for cafeterias, hands-on learning activities such as school gardens and farm visits, culinary education, and integrating food and agriculture topics into classroom curricula. [122]

Food assistance programs: Food assistance programs are public or community-based initiatives that help individuals and families access sufficient, safe, and nutritious food, particularly during times of financial hardship or food insecurity. These programs may provide direct food support—such as meals, groceries, or food boxes—or financial assistance that can be used to purchase food. Food assistance programs—sometimes referred to as nutrition assistance programs—are typically administered by government agencies, nonprofit organizations, or community groups and often aim to improve nutrition, reduce hunger, and support the health and well-being of vulnerable populations. Examples include the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and SNAP for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

Food hub: A business model that supports farmers by providing facilities to aggregate, store, process, and distribute locally grown produce to markets. Food hubs may also serve as spaces for farmer education and training, helping producers access and navigate the process of bringing their products to market. [123]

Food Is Medicine: Food Is Medicine (FIM) refers to programs and strategies that integrate nutritious food into healthcare to help prevent, manage, and treat diet-related diseases. These initiatives provide patients with medically appropriate foods, nutrition education, and supportive services. By addressing both health and nutrition needs, FIM programs improve health outcomes while strengthening connections between the healthcare system and the local food system. [124, 125]

Food security: The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) defines food security as existing “when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food.” It encompasses four key dimensions: availability, access (affordability), utilization (nutrition), and stability, all of which must be met simultaneously for an individual to be considered food secure. This framework underscores the importance of not only having adequate food supplies but also ensuring the consistent availability of healthy and culturally valued options. Recently, sustainability and agency have emerged as additional dimensions of food security. [126] Sustainability focuses on the long-term viability of the ecological and social foundations of food systems, while agency underscores the importance of social movements to food security and the need to empower individuals and communities with the ability to take informed actions that help to improve their own well-being and influence the broader food system. [127, 128]

Food security is similar to other terms, including “nutrition security” and “food and nutrition security”:

- **Nutrition security:** Nutrition security is determined by both food and non-food factors. Food naturally plays a key role in determining a person’s nutritional status and is often used interchangeably with the “utilization” dimension of food security. There is a high degree of overlap between food security and nutrition security. Non-food factors include health and sanitation, health services, care and feeding practices, disease, or unhealthy housing and environmental conditions. For this reason, nutrition security is often conceived as broader than food security, [129, 130] though one cannot be achieved without the other. [131]
- **Food and Nutrition Security:** Food and nutrition security integrates the overlapping concepts of food security and nutrition security in alignment with recommendations from the United Nations Committee on Food Security. [132]

Food system resilience: Food system resilience refers to the capacity of a food system to consistently provide sufficient, appropriate, and accessible food to all (i.e., ensuring food and nutrition security) even in the face of various biophysical, social, or economic disruptions. [133, 134, 135] Long-term resilience is about building a food system that can withstand and adapt to ongoing challenges such as climate change, economic shifts, and social inequalities. Investing in resilience ensures that our food system is adaptive, sustainable, and capable of supporting communities over time.

Gleaning: Gleaning is the practice of harvesting or collecting unharvested or surplus food from farms, backyard trees, and markets after the primary harvest. Food is often left behind due to cosmetic standards, labor shortages, or limited market demand, even though it remains safe and nutritious. The recovered food is then distributed to food banks, community organizations, and individuals in need. [136]

Good Agricultural Practices (GAP): A voluntary certification process that helps prevent microbial contamination of fresh produce during growing, harvesting, packing, and handling. The certification requires farmers and handlers to follow food safety standards and maintain regular documentation of their practices to ensure compliance and traceability. [137] In Hawai‘i, GAP certification is a key requirement for selling to institutional buyers such as the Department of Education (DOE), hospitals, and other public institutions.

Graywater: Non-potable water from showers, bathroom sinks, clothes washers, and bathtubs, unsafe for human consumption but potentially useful for other applications.

Healthy and sustainable diets (HSDs): Healthy and sustainable diets (HSDs) rich in plant-based foods such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains not only promote individual well-being and food security but also have a low environmental impact. HSDs should also be accessible, affordable, safe, equitable, and culturally appropriate [138] The Barilla Foundation's Double Health and Climate Pyramid illustrates the link between foods' health benefits and their environmental footprint, highlighting that diets rich in plant-based foods such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains are both healthier and more sustainable. [139]

Indigenous and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (I/TEK) and practices: Generational knowledge held by Indigenous peoples that is deeply rooted in place and developed through long-standing relationships with the natural environment. I/TEK emphasizes the interconnected relationships between people, land, water, and other natural elements, and is expressed through cultural values, stewardship practices, technical knowledge, and practical skills. [140] Native Hawaiian scholars emphasize that these approaches include principles such as aloha ‘āina,[141] place-based stewardship systems like the ahupua‘a and moku systems, and alternative economic models such as circular economy models that support balance and reciprocity between communities and the environment. [142, 143, 144]

Kīpuka: Literally, areas of older land or vegetation surrounded by a newer lava flow. Kīpuka serve as ecological refuges where native plants, animals, and cultural practices can persist and regenerate after disturbance.[145] More broadly, the term is used to describe places of resilience, renewal, and continuity that sustain both communities and ecosystems.

In urban contexts, the concept of a **cultural kīpuka** can also describe remaining pockets of undeveloped land and associated waterways that persist within an otherwise built environment. As landscapes become increasingly urbanized—not by lava, but by concrete—these places often provide some of the only opportunities for people to connect with ‘āina. Though limited in size, they can strengthen community identity, support food production and cultural practice, foster biodiversity, and enhance resilience and well-being.[146]

Kūpuna crops: Kūpuna crops refer to Native Hawaiian ancestral crops such as kalo, ʻuala, kō, and ʻulu. These crops are valued not only for their use as food but also for their deep cultural significance. They are embedded in Native Hawaiian cosmologies, genealogies, and kinship relationships that connect people to ʻāina. [147]

Non-potable water: Water that does not meet drinking water standards set by the Department of Health and not meant for human consumption.

Placemaking: A collaborative planning approach that engages the community in creating places where people want to live, work, and play. The design and function of these spaces reflect the values, needs, and aspirations of the people who are part of these spaces. [148]

Potable drinking water: Water that meets the drinking standards set by the Department of Health.

R-1 recycled water: R-1 recycled water is high-quality, non-potable recycled water that has been oxidized, filtered, and disinfected to meet treatment standards established in the Hawaiʻi Administrative Rules (Haw. Admin. R. § 11-62). Although not safe for drinking, R-1 recycled water can be used for a wide range of beneficial purposes, including irrigation, dust control, street and facility cleaning, toilet and urinal flushing (where permitted by county plumbing code), firefighting, concrete manufacturing, and certain construction activities.[149]

Recycled water: Recycled water is wastewater that has been treated to a level suitable for industrial processing, irrigation, and other non-drinking uses.



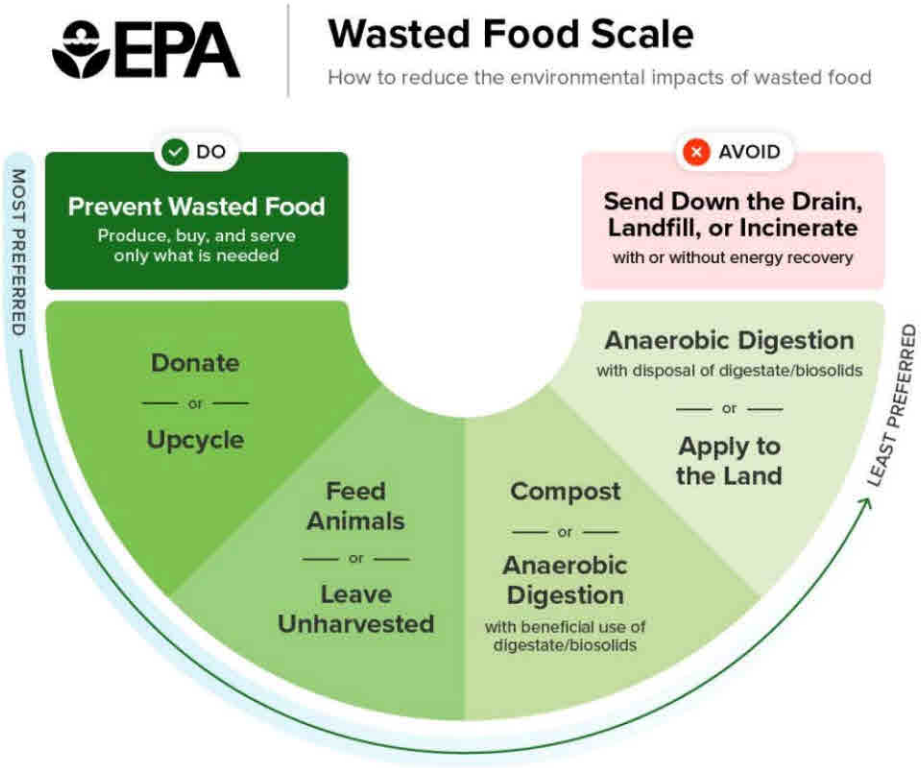
PHOTO: CCSR

Wasted Food Scale: The Environmental Protection Agency's Wasted Food Scale provides a framework for prioritizing actions that prevent and divert wasted food from disposal. Preventing wasted food (i.e., source reduction) is the top tier of the Wasted Food Scale and offers the most benefits to the environment and to a circular economy. Preventing food waste helps to

- Save money;
- Feed more people with the same amount of food;
- Save energy and resources required to grow, prepare, and transport food;
- Prevent pollution associated with food production such as the use of fertilizers and pesticides;
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with the food supply chain and waste disposal; and
- Save labor costs by making business operations more efficient. [150]

The next best options are donating and upcycling food, feeding animals, composting, and anaerobic digestion (with beneficial use of biosolids).

Workforce development: Workforce development is a comprehensive approach to equipping individuals with the tools, training, and resources needed to succeed in the workforce while also supporting employers in building and strengthening their teams. It includes education, job training, and career pathway programs that help people develop skills and access employment opportunities. [151] In the food system context, workforce development emphasizes creating pathways for youth and new job seekers to enter food- and agriculture-related careers and supports the growth of a skilled workforce across the food sector.



Source: Environmental Protection Agency, 2025

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