

Matt Weyer
Candidate for Council District 2

5/9/22 Note: Please refer to the Community Network WhoWeAre, Mission Statement, and District 2 Map below as context for reviewing Candidate Matt Weyer's response to questions from the Network.

District 2 Community Hui
Questions for City Council District 2 Candidates

1. Why are you running to represent District 2? What is your vision for District 2?

As a city planner working in housing and homeless services, I have seen firsthand that it's become increasingly challenging for our local families to survive here. Like most, as our housing crisis grows, I have seen friends and family move away because they cannot afford the high cost of living in Hawai'i. I also see the strain on our natural resources and the crumbling and lacking infrastructure in our community. I hear frustration from neighbors about how the government is perceived as only serving a select few. It is clear to me that the government must become more responsive to the needs of our community. My heart is in public service, having worked in all three branches of City government and serving in my third term on the Neighborhood Board. If elected, I will use my experience to benefit our community by navigating conversations at the City Council and further elevating our community's voices and needs through direct community engagement. By engaging with the community directly, I hope to ensure that all voices in our community are heard. Together, we can then implement policies to make our community more affordable, protect our natural resources and agricultural lands, and dramatically improve the quality of life for our local families in District 2.

2. Please explain your commitment to, or disagreement with, the values that are expressed in our mission statement.

I am committed to the values expressed in your mission statement. I believe that sharing a little more about me can give you a window into my values.

I spent my teenage years in Waikele, and I owe who I am to my family. Prior to that, my mother was a single mom well into my elementary school years. She instilled in me an appreciation for hard work and commitment to family, and our experience as a working family shaped who I am today. She married my stepfather, who served in the military for 30 years, so public service was always very much a part of our family growing up.

After graduating from Mid-Pacific, I went to UH Mānoa for undergrad, graduate school in public administration, and law school, earning environmental and Native Hawaiian law certificates. While attending the William S. Richardson School of Law, I worked to protect our water resources and served as a board member for Law for Youth Empowerment, mentoring incarcerated youth.

After becoming an attorney, I served as a domestic violence prosecutor for the City, which gave me the opportunity to directly see the true impact crime has on our community and the lack of available mental health and substance abuse treatment. I

then transitioned into private practice at Goodsill as a civil litigator, and I later returned to the City to be a policy advisor at the City Council due to my heart for public service and passion for good public policy.

1

Matt Weyer
Candidate for Council District 2

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, I knew I wanted to use my skill sets to uplift our community. I was asked to join the Department of Community Services, where I currently serve as a planner, helping implement contracts for homeless services and maximizing funds to support affordable housing projects.

My work reflects my values, and I believe that those values align with your mission statement. As a Councilmember, I would be committed to supporting our local families, environmental justice, and more sustainable practices.

3. Who is your campaign manager, who is on your campaign team/staff, and what was your thought process in developing your leadership group?

My Chair is Shaun Keola Fisher, and my Vice Chair is Danicole Ramos. My campaign team is composed of hard-working residents throughout District 2, as representing the interests of the entire community is required to fulfill the responsibilities that come along with serving in elected office.

4. How do you propose obtaining greater infrastructure investment in District 2? Give specific examples of areas in District 2 that need infrastructure improvement and how you would address these.

I would support greater infrastructure investment by:

1. Advocating for Bipartisan Infrastructure Act funds to be used to benefit our district directly;
2. Working with the various City departments to prioritize infrastructure that is in poor condition;
3. Fighting to ensure that projects in our district are part of the City's Capital Improvement Project Budget; and
4. Working to budget a position for a planner responsible for seeking out and applying for federal grants to cover the multiple sources of untapped federal funds the City does not pursue.

Our local families deserve the basic infrastructure needed to keep their families safe and maintain their quality of life, including:

1. Increased parking and sidewalks, particularly in Hale'iwa and Wahiawā; 2. Further speed assessments like the proposed roundabout in Kahalu'u, to dive deeper into how we can reduce speeding to make our roads safer; 3. Increased scheduled maintenance and cleaning of our streams, roads, and bridges from Waialua to areas

along the coastline in Ko'olauloa where portions of Kamehameha Highway are being washed away by the ocean to avoid a repeat of the devastating flood that occurred last year in our district;

4. An evaluation of private roads and bridges that the City could take over to reduce the risk to public safety;

2

Matt Weyer

Candidate for Council District 2

5. The repair of the bike path along the North Shore beach roads of Ke Nui, Ke Waena, and Ke Iki; and,

6. Increased spaces to support recreation and public safety, including a recreation center and resiliency HUB in the district.

5. Please describe your perspective on the priority issues in public safety (police, fire, EMS and ambulance service, lifeguards) and disaster preparedness facing District

I would push the City to release the emergency evacuation route list and increase evacuation route signage. I would also advocate for storm and hurricane shelters in our district, including a resiliency hub in Ko'olauloa. With only one road in and out of the area, limited options further put our residents at risk. We also need to fully fund our first responders and ensure that they receive adequate pay and benefits. By filling the hundreds of vacancies, we can increase first responder presence in our community, decrease crime, and increase access to lifesaving services. This includes supporting our lifeguards and having a police substation in Hale'iwa or Sunset Beach to ensure that no part of our district is neglected or receives subpar services.

6. Describe the steps you will take to increase and improve social services for mental health and houselessness in District 2.

My time working at the City in various roles has allowed me to better understand the steps needed to address homelessness in our community through dramatically expanding individualized services. A one size fits all approach will not meet the needs of our houseless families.

I support the continuing of the HONU project as a first step, low-barrier project to help folks immediately access wraparound services. It is not a permanent solution, however, for all shelters and housing must be habitable. With HONU serving as a triage facility, we must expand accessible shelter bed space and create affordable housing options for all income levels with access to support services. We also need to increase the number of stabilization beds offered to help those with mental illness, substance abuse, and dual diagnosis needs.

7. What existing City housing programs do you support and what role can you play in providing more truly affordable quality housing opportunities for local residents?

The City can leverage federal funds, including Community Development Block Grant and HOME funds, and City Affordable Housing Fund monies to support low- and

moderate-income households. By better engaging the various City departments, we can identify what options are on the table. After having community conversations, we can determine what type of projects fit a particular community.

During my time with the Department of Community Services, I have programmed funds and contracted projects to provide shelter space, including youth programs that are culturally-based and those that provide shelter for sex-trafficking survivors; projects that

3

Matt Weyer
Candidate for Council District 2

provide low- and moderate-income housing options that low-income families can actually afford; and stabilization beds for those experiencing homelessness that have substance abuse or mental health needs. There are resources and solutions available; we simply need to make it a priority.

The City also needs to create a Department of Housing. Housing policy is currently split amongst multiple departments and offices. This slows down the conversation and creates barriers to actually implementing good policy. By bringing the various experts under one roof, we can streamline processes and ensure that the community knows which department to engage when it comes to housing.

There are also approximately 70,000 vacant units that could be rented or owned by local families. If the City were to impose a vacant home tax, this would help push a portion of those homes back into the housing market, reduce demand, and in turn reduce costs. With more options, local families will be able to find a home to rent or own more easily.

8. What is your position on transient accommodations, the current proposed City regulation of vacation rentals, and what is your track record on this issue?

I support regulating vacation rentals. Vacation rentals remove units from our island's housing inventory that could otherwise be available for local families to rent, in turn driving up costs and negatively impacting the quality of life in our neighborhoods. Regulating vacation rentals encourages property owners to rent their second home or room to local families, which increases the number of available units; reduces costs; would allow us to better manage tourism and our natural resources; and reduces foot and vehicular traffic in our residential communities.

My desire to return to public service pushed me to leave private practice to return to the City. I currently work as a city planner for the Department of Community Services' Community Based Development Division, and my work focuses on providing housing that is actually affordable and decreasing homelessness. From this work experience, I recognize that vacation rentals reduce the number of available units in our island's housing inventory, and I believe this speaks to my track record.

9. Please describe ways the City and County of Honolulu can help maintain equitable wage scales and working conditions for both public and private sector

workers. Do you support the concept of a living wage?

I support a living wage, and the conversation around a living wage has been lacking. There has not been much discussion about wage subsidies or other methods to alleviate burdens on small businesses, possibly based on the number of employees or revenue. Advancing policies that raise wages and support small, local businesses over the interests of large corporations can unify local families and businesses. Our local families can't wait any longer.

4

Matt Weyer
Candidate for Council District 2

In terms of what the City can do, a living wage can be implemented through the budgeting process to ensure that all workers receive what they need to thrive. The City can also utilize Community Workforce Agreements and Public Labor Agreements to ensure that workers on City projects receive the pay and benefits they are entitled to.

10. How can the City Council support the City Administration in providing better and safer roadways? What are some ways the City can support Hawai'i's clean energy transformation through its transportation policies?

The Council can work with the City Administration to identify federal funding sources and work with the various departments to pursue those opportunities. This includes utilizing the budgeted position I mentioned earlier. The Council can ensure that adequate funding is in the budget to provide for the infrastructure needs of our community. This includes funding for multimodal transportation and complete streets to make our transportation cleaner, safer, and more affordable. Through legislation and budgeting, the Council can also support increased access to EV charging, the installation of photovoltaics on all City-owned properties, and invest in systems that provide renewable energy access to renters and those who otherwise cannot install solar on their rooftops. We should also speed up the electrification of our bus fleet as we transition away from buses powered by fossil fuels. We must manage our waste more responsibly, including by increasing composting and recycling, whether at the commercial level by curbside pickup or at the community level, and decreasing our reliance on landfills. Finally, I support continuing the litigation against the fossil fuel industry to recover costs for their role in hiding the science and misleading the public, just like big tobacco, about climate change.

11. What other Counties in Hawaii seem to be doing a better job for their residents' quality of life? What are some examples of things they are doing you would like to see on O'ahu?

I am open to learning about what other Counties are doing to improve the quality of life for their residents. Maui County has demonstrated its commitment to preserving our natural resources by not appealing the decision in the injection well lawsuit. O'ahu's current water crisis speaks to how quickly poor resource management can disrupt our way of life. As a Councilmember I would proactively engage in the Hawaii Association

of Counties' work, learn from other Councilmembers, and implement best practices.

12. Are you accepting contributions from donors who live outside the district or developers/companies that work for developers? What is your position on the proven history of "pay-to-play" politics in Honolulu and how will you avoid being beholden to major private donors and political insiders?

I am open to accepting contributions from those who believe I have the experience needed to navigate City systems and fairly evaluate every situation while committing to do what is best for our community. I think my background speaks to this commitment. I also support fully publicly funded elections to eliminate the need for candidates to

5

Matt Weyer
Candidate for Council District 2

pursue private contributions. Until then, however, we cannot leave election decisions up to private donors and those that are independently wealthy.

Running for public office has allowed me the opportunity to engage individuals from all areas of our community, including the private, public, and nonprofit sectors. I am committed to supporting housing opportunities that our local families can actually afford. I also believe that we must preserve our natural resources and agricultural lands and respond to climate change. This requires us to develop smarter utilizing existing footprints, especially in our urban core, while ensuring that we protect what makes Hawai'i so special.

As a prior domestic violence prosecutor, I am acutely aware that you cannot make everyone happy all of the time. That being said, I have the skill set and conviction necessary to assess policies and proposed projects and decide in favor of the best interest of our families, community, and island. I will be relying on our community for guidance, so I hope that you will continue to share your expertise and knowledge with me through this process.

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District 2 Community Network

Who We Are

The District 2 Community Network is a collection of community residents and leaders in or associated with Honolulu City Council District 2 who have long been engaged in civic discourse and governance in our area and statewide. We have organized to gather direct information about the candidates running to represent District 2 on the Honolulu City Council, to share that information and our views with our community friends and neighbors, and to consider public endorsements of positions or candidate(s).

The members of the network include: Denise Antolini, John Reppun, Blake McElheny, Tēvita Ka'ili, Elizabeth Rago, Margaret Primacio, Larry McElheny, Joli Tokusato, Angela Huntmer,

Raynae Fonoimoana, Kealoha Domingo, Corey Asano, Joe Wilson, Jessica Dos Santos, Dotty Kelly Paddock, Mike Biechler, Amy Perruso, Steve Holmes, Gary Hooser, Amy Luersen.

Mission Statement

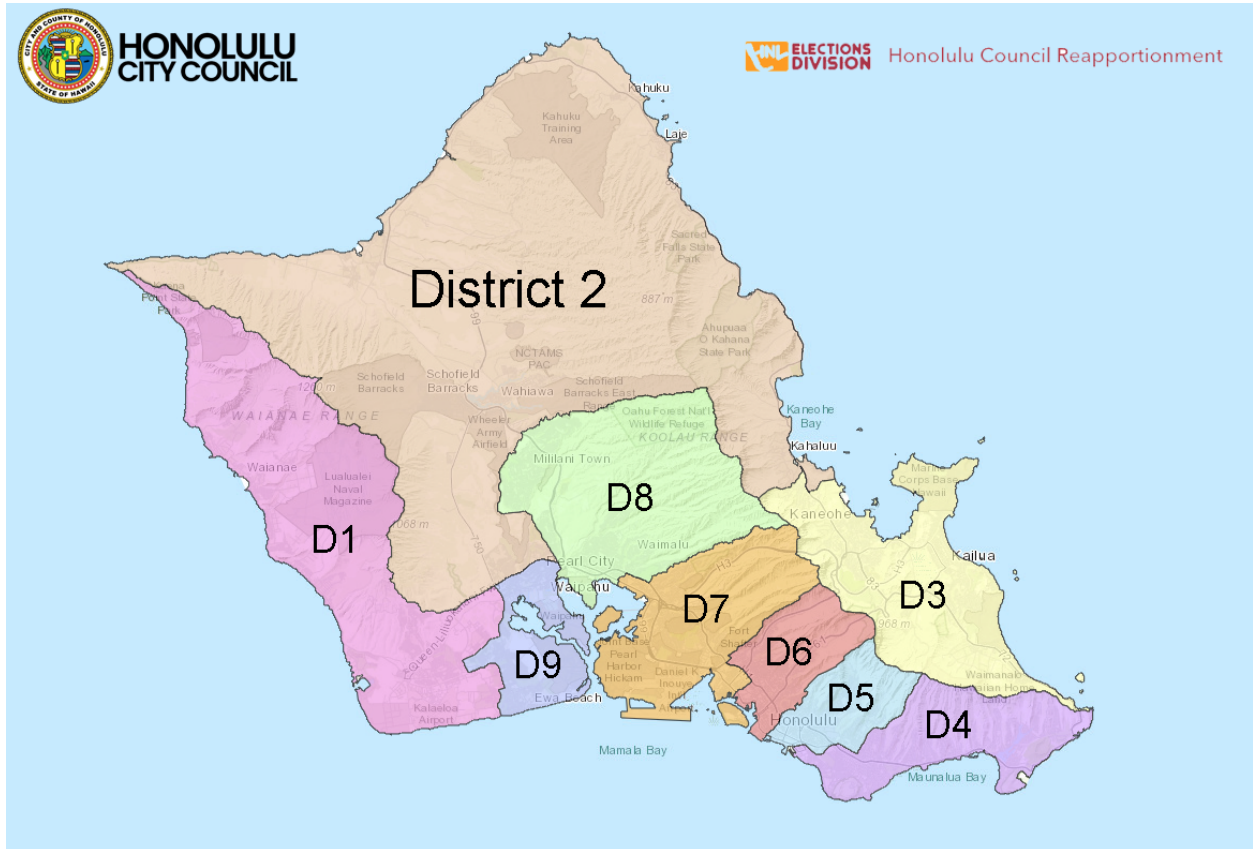
We envision leadership for Honolulu City Council District 2 that recognizes residents, local families, and future generations as the highest priority in developing and implementing City laws, policies, and services for our extraordinary and unique region.

We will support leadership for our region that:

- promotes sustainable, resilient, inclusive, self-reliant communities;
- is rooted in Hawai'i's indigenous wisdom and ahupua'a practices, and preserves and revitalizes cultural resources, traditions, and practices;
- acknowledges the carrying capacity and limits of our infrastructure and natural resources, and promotes nature over development;
- understands that sustainability focuses on meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs, that sustainability implies equilibrium and limits, and that never-ending growth is not sustainable, especially on an island;
- protects and enhances a clean, beautiful, and healthful environment;
- protects and enhances public land, open spaces, parks, and public access;
- promotes environmental and social justice, prioritizing public over private economic interests;
- solves inter-agency coordination challenges to respond to urgent community needs on climate issues such as flooding, erosion, sea level rise, ecological impacts, and acts immediately on the climate emergency;
- promotes disaster preparedness, distributed energy, and emergency services;
- advances locally owned sustainable agriculture, cooperative food processing enterprises, and neighborhood food security;
- supports housing that is attainable for local families and working residents;
- can advance concrete solutions to mental health, houselessness, public health, and criminal justice issues in our community;
- embraces social justice issues, understands the challenges facing sexual and gender minority communities, recognizes the civil rights of LGBTQIA individuals, and commits to a safe and inclusive community for all;
- promotes a diversified economy based on liveable wages for workers and that promotes locally owned businesses that primarily serve the needs of the local community, substantially reduces reliance on tourism, and prohibits commercialization of public resources and recreational areas;
- understands complex governance issues, knows how to successfully navigate federal-state-county relationships and laws, has a track record of public service leadership, and recognizes the potential statewide impact of the role and office of a City Councilmember;
- ensures effective implementation, accountability, and alignment with O'ahu's General Plan and the applicable sustainable community and development plans; promotes and

understanding of and adherence to the principles of the Oahu Watershed Management Plan.

- advances strict adherence to City and County ordinances and rules;
- does not engage in pay-to-play or any type of quid-pro-quo conduct, is not beholden to major donors and/or developers, and supports publicly funded elections;
- The leadership of Council District 2 will be at the forefront of these issues.



Explore the 2021 Honolulu Council Reapportionment map and boundary descriptions [here](#).

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