

January 26, 2022

MEMO TO: Traci N. T. Fujita, Director
Office of Council Services

F R O M: Paige Greco, Legislative Analyst *PG*
Brittney Sunderland, Legislative Analyst ~~BS~~

SUBJECT: **“ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORS PANEL” WEBINAR ON
JANUARY 21, 2022** (PAF 21-012(29))

You have requested a brief report on the American Planning Association—Hawai‘i Chapter’s “Economic Development Directors Panel” webinar on January 21, 2022. Directors from the State and the four counties shared their focus areas and offered suggestions, as summarized below:

Mike McCartney, Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT), State of Hawai‘i

- Central thought: a plan is only as good as the people who support it and can manifest that plan into reality.
- Engaging with the community is important so they can understand plans and be a part of the process.
- There is a need to work on transition management as local governments develop plans around environmental and energy changes.

Nalani Brun, Director, Office of Economic Development, Kaua‘i County

- Communities want their office to focus on agriculture and small businesses.
- Focus on tourism management.
- Do everything with partners, whether governmental, private, or nonprofit, to break silos and build partnerships.

Amy Asselbayer, Executive Director, Office of Economic Revitalization, City and County of Honolulu

- The “Good Jobs for Our Community” approach:
 - Preserve good jobs through business-relief funds and employee-skill-building opportunities.
 - Create new jobs through technical assistance, fund programs for entrepreneurs, and invest in key economic sectors.
 - Help people get a good job by supporting struggling individuals through training and job placement.
- Successful programs:
 - O’ahu Get Back to Work, Emergency Meals for the Community, Rental and Utility Relief Program.
- Fiscal Recovery Funds:
 - \$386 million available.
 - Seeking community input on how to spend funds.

JoAnn Inamasu, Director, Office of Economic Development, County of Maui

- Four major areas:
 - Agriculture
 - Develop and manage agriculture parks.
 - Support backyard gardeners.
 - Small Businesses
 - Support job seekers and employers.

- Provide virtual entrepreneurial training and workforce development.
- Use Maui County Business Center and Maui American Jobs Center to meet the increased needs for business support.
- Film Industry
 - County have safely welcomed film crews during the pandemic.
 - Substantial revenue was generated, and employees have been brought back into the workforce during the pandemic.
- Workforce Development
 - Staff grant writers help leverage funds to establish and support new programs.

Doug Adams, Director, Department of Research and Development, County of Hawai‘i

- Focus on the future to ensure residents are being taken care of.
- Long-term plans include sustainability and climate action.
- New resources have been introduced to increase quality of life by working on community issues such as health literacy and mental health.

Several presenters discussed the importance of using a “regenerative tourism” approach. Examples include the State’s “Malama Hawai‘i” program and the City and County of Honolulu’s “Regenerative Tourism Program Manager” position.

We hope you find this information useful. Please let us know if we can provide anything further.

paf:pmg:21-012(29)a

cc: David Raatz, Deputy Director of Council Services