

MAYOR BERNARD CARVALHO, JR.



Bernard P. Carvalho, Jr. is the Mayor and chief executive of the County of Kauaʻi and the 2016 recipient of the Donald Wolbrink Chapter Achievement Award of the American Planning Association Hawaiʻi Chapter. This award recognizes an individual, firm or organization for exemplary planning-related activities that warrant special recognition by the Chapter.

First elected in 2008 to fill the unexpired term of the late-Mayor Bryan Baptiste, Carvalho was subsequently re-elected in 2010 and 2014. Shortly after his election, Carvalho laid out a vision for Kauaʻi as a healthy and vibrant community prepared for the challenges of the 21st century. He ushered in a distinct shift in Kauaʻi’s land use and transportation initiatives clearly grounded in innovative and best practice planning principles. In particular, he charged his administration to pay particular attention to the proven correlation between how the County handles mobility, planning and economic development with the need to collectively improve health outcomes of the island community via the built environment.

In September 2010, his administration led a coalition of partners, including health organizations like Get Fit Kauaʻi and community hospitals, as evidence of broad community support behind adopting complete streets principles for the County. The groundswell of public backing led the County Council to adopt State’s first complete streets policy – the resolution galvanized design principles as the mandate toward supporting safe access for pedestrians, bicyclists and public transportation users of county facilities.

In 2014, Carvalho led adoption of the County’s Multi-modal Transportation Plan, laying out guideposts toward flattening the rate of vehicular miles traveled per capita over the next twenty years. The recent adoption of the Līhu’e and South Kauaʻi Community Plans in 2015 led to the implementation of the first community-developed form-based code zoning regulations in the State., with South Kauaʻi receiving Best Practice and Outstanding Planning citations from the APA Hawaiʻi Chapter in 2015.

Carvalho has taken keen interest in other progressive planning initiatives, including those areas that relate to climate change and agriculture. Under his leadership, the County was the first to require a sixty-foot mandatory shoreline setback, well before the state mandated the change by statute. He has also embraced integrating sea level rise as a hazard consideration as part of its currently-ongoing general plan update process. The County moved forward with completing its Important Agricultural Lands study, and will achieve its self-identified quota of lands protected pending an upcoming decision on an application from one of Kauaʻi’s largest landowners by the Land Use Commission.

Beyond policy, Carvalho has worked toward imputing better health into our communities via hard infrastructure projects throughout the County. In 2009, the County opened an additional four-mile stretch of East Kauaʻi’s coastal path – Ke Ala Hele Makalae. Further segments have been added in the years since. Hardy Street in Līhu’e was converted to add bike lanes, additional parking, a roundabout and sidewalks to promote safe travel for school kids attending Wilcox Elementary School.

Most notably, the County competed in the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) VII discretionary grant process and was the once again the first county in the state to receive a rural award to revitalize Rice Street and adjacent roads in Līhu’e creating more multi-modal transportation options in and around the town core.

Examples above not exhaustive of the work Mayor Carvalho has done to implement progressive urban planning and transportation principles, yet exemplify the clear shift Kauaʻi has made toward a more sustainable, vibrant and healthy community. His efforts warrant recognition of its excellence in sound and innovative planning.



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