

1) The future of tourism in Hawai'i

Despite tourism's status as one of our state's top economic drivers, the COVID-19 pandemic has led some to call for our economy to diversify away from tourism. HLTA's longstanding position has been that our economy should look to diversify within tourism, i.e., develop and expand industries that complement tourism. Would you support this policy given the challenge of identifying industries that could immediately replace the number of jobs and revenue tourism generates for our state's economy? If not, what are your proposals for diversification?

No, I do not support diversifying away from tourism. To me, this COVID-19 pandemic makes it clear we will need to depend on tourism in rebuilding our economy. Still, as is being talked about by many leaders in our community who are working with our County on our Kaua'i Economic Recovery Strategy Team, we need to plan for a new kind of tourism; one that is focused on finding balance.

Although devastating economically, our citizens have also seen the benefits the break from tourism has brought to our natural environment and to traffic reduction. Most agree that we need to plan for tourism that balances our residents' quality of life and the resilience of our natural environment along with the visitor experience. We need to look seriously for ways to fairly manage the tourism footprint on our island at any given time. We need to manage how many tourists should be visiting a cultural site or participating in an outdoor activity at the same time. A large part of our tourism should ultimately transition responsibly into other forms like Eco-Tourism, Agri-Tourism, Cultural Tourism and other types of tourism that respects the authentic experiences and values of our people and our islands. Responsible Tourism!

2) Tourism Management

HLTA has long maintained that we believe in the "quality" tourism model rather than the "quantity" tourism model. Effective execution of this responsible management model takes many forms, one being the establishment of user impact fees at popular visitor attractions such as O'ahu's Hanauma Bay. Do you support user impact fees? Do you have other ideas that would embrace this model?

Taking into consideration the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on our economy, as well as our County GET & TAT tax revenues, it would be irresponsible to not be open to looking at user impact fees and other potential revenue sources that may be necessary to avoid any increases to real property taxes and any layoffs.

3) Real Property Tax

Hotels and lodgings historically have been among the highest real property taxpayers in all counties, paying from \$10.70 to \$13.90 per \$1,000 of assessed value. In FY2019-2020 alone, hotels were seven of the top ten taxpayers based on the amount of taxes levied. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, hotels have already come due on one installment of real property taxes, even though many of them have not generated revenue since March. As our industry looks to recover from the pandemic, will you oppose any increase in real property taxes over the next three years? Five years?

Although I strongly support our visitor industry, hotels and lodgings; taking into consideration the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on our economy, as well as our County GET & TAT tax revenues, it would also be irresponsible to commit to opposing any increase in real property taxes over the next three years or five years. What I am committed to as a strong numbers and budget person is to working my hardest along with the Mayor and his budget team to balance our budget without any tax increases or any layoffs.

4) Transient Vacation Rentals

HLTA's position has always been one of fairness, i.e., legal TVRs such as those on AirBnB or VRBO should be allowed to operate in areas that have been zoned for resorts so long as the property owner pays the real property taxes associated with a resort property, as well as the GET and TAT. Where do you stand on this issue? Would you support a measure to increase enforcement to rein in the proliferation of properties that are operating illegally? Moreover, would you support an increase in the amount of the fine assessed to illegal operators?

I absolutely agree with HLTA's position of "fairness". On a prior Council, I pushed for and helped ensure there was funding for increased efforts by our Code Enforcement staff to go after illegal TVRs. I also co-sponsored and helped pass a significant increase to the amount of fines assessed to illegal TVR operators to a maximum of \$10,000/day.

5) Homelessness Solutions

In recent years, HLTA has dedicated significant time and resources to address homelessness in our community. In addition to funds generated through our Visitor Industry Charity Walk, we secured \$1 million in State matching funds that we used to subsidize the efforts of homeless service providers around the state. Please provide a detailed description of an initiative that you would implement to address homelessness in your county.

The Mayor, our Housing Agency and our Council has been working together to address homelessness by continuing to build affordable rental projects such as the new twenty-two rapid rehousing `Ohana Zone project called Kealaula in the Pua Loke park near the Water Dept, as well as developing a model tiny home, kauhale-type, village project on the westside with COVID-19 CARES Act funds. With an additional \$650k just approved by the Council, we're adding another 7 units to Kealaula bringing it to 29. We have allocated \$2m of our \$28.7m in CARES Act recovery / stimulus funding to tiny home construction for houseless sheltering. Our hope and plan is to have these villages on different parts of the island where our houseless folks are. We're also working to increase our rental assistance program with newly available federal funding.

We will also continue collaborating for solutions to homelessness with our many partners through the Kaua`i Community Alliance; including Project Connect Kaua`i. One idea I'm talking with staff at our County Hale Kokua office about is a Safe Parking Lot program where we could identify sponsoring locations that would provide a safe place at night for homeless families to park at without being harassed.

6) Sustainability in the Visitor Industry

Hawai'i's visitor industry has gone to great lengths to make its businesses more "green" and eco-friendly. What government incentives would you propose or support to help our industry bolster these initiatives?

I continue to support our Kaua`i Bus expanding with shuttle routes that serve our visitor destination areas like Poipu and Wailua-Kapa`a. I also support the North Shore shuttle.

I will also continue to support the planning principles of smart growth, complete streets, place-making, transit-oriented development and more which is making it safer for visitors, like locals, to walk and bike instead of drive.

If there isn't one already, I'd be interested in looking into supporting a State income tax credit for resort properties that implement water conservation practices like water catchment for their landscaping and other uses.

7) Visitor Industry Health, Safety & Security Standards

As the COVID-19 pandemic began to spread throughout our state, it became clear that establishing health and hygiene standards would be critical to restoring trust in our industry. As such, we developed the HLTA Health, Safety & Security Standards. These were created after reviewing the latest information from the CDC, WHO, and EPA, as well as input from industry stakeholders. Our standards were submitted to the State Department of Health for its review. After receiving DOH approval, we shared our standards with the governor, HI-EMA, State Attorney General, and all the mayors. Please answer yes or no: Would you support the adoption of our standards as statewide

policy for lodging properties? If not, please explain. HLTA Health, Safety, & Security Standards – Click to view

Yes, I support the adoption of HLTA's COVID-19 Health, Safety & Security Standards.

8) Public Safety

To date, HLTA has held two highly successful Visitor Public Safety Conferences on O'ahu. These conferences have brought together hotel management, security professionals, lawmakers, law enforcement, social service providers, and other stakeholders to discuss possible solutions to issues such as late-night cabarets and the need for more security cameras throughout Waikiki, the homeless population in Chinatown, and a spike in shoplifting around the island. Each conference led to significant progress in addressing these community issues.

Neighbor Island Candidates Only:

Would you support HLTA in convening a Visitor Public Safety Conference in your county in 2021? If so, what specific public health and safety issues would you like to see discussed?

Yes, I would support HLTA in convening a Visitor Public Safety Conference in my county in 2021. Perhaps some of the public health and safety issues I would like to see discussed would include homelessness, activity precautions (i.e. places not to go), driving on the beach, driving off roads, safe driving on our island and respecting the locals / respecting the `aina / respecting the culture.

O'ahu Candidates Only: For O'ahu's third Visitor Public Safety Conference, to be held in 2021, what specific public health and safety issues would you like to see discussed?

9) *If elected, what do you hope to accomplish during your first year in office, which will undoubtedly be one of the most challenging and difficult times the state and counties have ever faced.*

The most important thing to accomplish in year one is to work closely with the Mayor and his Budget Team to pass a balanced budget without any real property tax increases or layoffs. Another important thing to accomplish would be continuing the work of improving our Housing Policy ordinance in order to incentivize more construction of affordable homes and rentals. I also hope to work towards getting our County-sponsored Adolescent Drug Treatment and Healing Center up and running.

10) *Please share with us one fun fact about yourself.*

In 1988/89 I got to travel with the 180-member international Cast A of Up With People; starting in Tucson, AZ then heading across the U.S. staying with many different host families in the Mid-West. I also got to experience different towns and families in Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden. As you can imagine, it was a lot of fun being "the guy from Hawai'i". A special project for Queen Noir of Jordan also took about 30 of us to Amman, Jordan where our group had the chance to perform in the ancient ruins of Jerash, ride camels in the stone city of Petra and float in the Dead Sea. While floating there, I remember hearing bombs exploding in the distant West Bank. That experience really made our mission of promoting world peace by bringing young people from all over the world together to share an uplifting, cultural stage production very real.